



American
Sephardi
Federation

SPRING - FALL HIGHLIGHTS REPORT

2025

April 4-6

Sephardi House
Leadership
Summit, Miami

June 5-30

27th New York Sephardic
Jewish Film Festival &
Inaugural Festival Sefarad

August 10-11

Inaugural
Sephardic Rabbinic
Conference, NYC

October 24-28

World Sephardi
Federation
Centennial, Jerusalem

April 7-9

3rd Jewish Africa
Conference,
Cape Town

June 25

Golden Age of Jews
of Al-Andalus Exhibit,
Washington D.C.

September 29

Jews & the Persianate
World Conference,
Washington D.C.

November 7-9

Sephardi House
Leadership
Summit, NYC

Sephardi House's Spring National Shabbaton & Leadership Summit, Miami

4-6 April 2025

To mark the 5th anniversary of our trailblazing Sephardi House initiative on college campuses across the country, the ASF hosted our first Miami-based Sephardi House Shabbaton and National Leadership Summit. Current Fellows and alumni gathered for an enriching weekend of learning, community building, and celebrating a spirited Sephardic Shabbat together. Congregation Mikveh Israel's Rabbi Emeritus, Hakham Albert Gabbai, served as our rabbi-in-residence. Highlights included student-led prayer services, activities, and panels, as well as a visit to Temple Moses - Sephardic Congregation of Florida, where we were warmly welcomed by Rabbi Daniel Hadar.



Third Edition of the Jewish Africa Conference, Cape Town

7-9 April 2025

Taking place in Cape Town, South Africa, the Third Edition of the Jewish Africa Conference (JAC) brought together participants from over 20 African countries, alongside leading experts on African Judaism from around the world, including renowned scholar and ASF Board Member, Dr. Ephraim Isaac. The 3rd JAC was a powerful moment of dialogue and reflection on the past, present, and future of Jewish life on the continent. During the conference, special awards were presented to individuals from South Africa, Tanzania, and Morocco who have made outstanding contributions to the preservation and celebration of African Jewish heritage.

Following three days of learning and connection, the American Jewish Committee, Mimouna Association, and American Sephardi Federation issued the Cape Town Declaration, a joint call for increased unity among Africa's Jewish communities. The declaration highlights the importance of collaboration across the continent to achieve a peaceful and prosperous future, as well as the need to better protect African Jewish heritage and enhance these communities' integration and visibility within the Jewish diaspora and the broader international community.

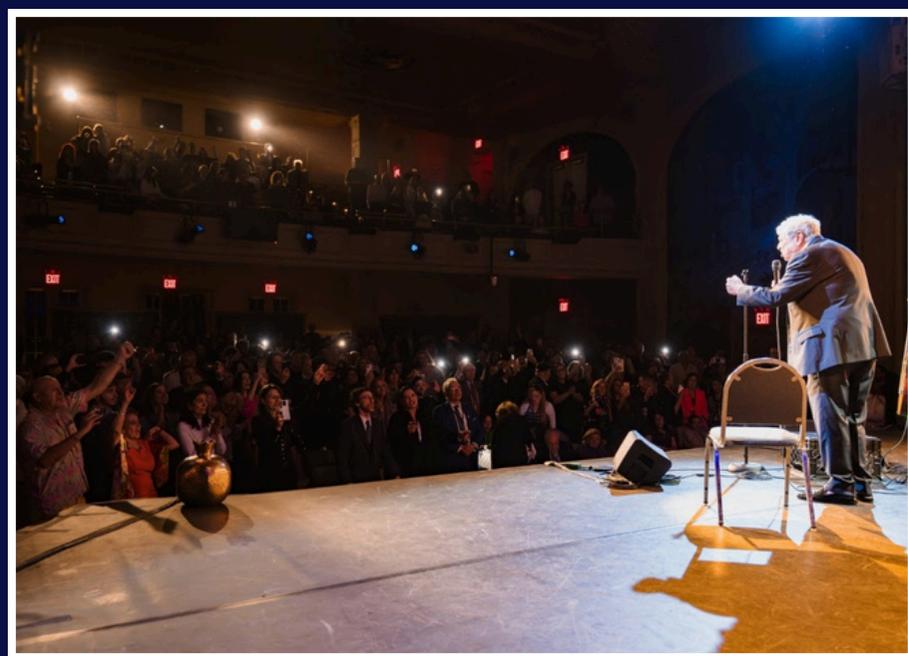


27th New York Sephardic Jewish Film Festival & Inaugural Festival Sefarad

June 2025

The ASF's 27th New York Sephardic Jewish Film Festival (NYSJFF) was an unforgettable celebration of Sephardic cinema, music, and community at venues throughout New York City. The Festival opened on NYC's historic Museum Mile at El Museo del Barrio, America's leading Latin American cultural institution, with a star-studded ASF Pomegranate Awards Ceremony, honoring Yael Naim (Music), Roya Hakakian (Literature), Michel Boujenah (Stage & Screen), and Fortuna (Cultural Preservation). The week-long Festival concluded with a live concert by Sephardic musical legend Enrico Macias before a sold-out audience. As always, NYSJFF was dedicated to Ike, Molly, & Steven Elias.

This year's NYSJFF was part of the inaugural Festival Sefarad NYC, America's first-ever month-long citywide cultural celebration of the Greater Sephardi world. In collaboration with 60 communal partners representing many Sephardic and Mizrahi communities, and with the generous support from the UJA-Federation of NY, Festival Sefarad NYC hosted 40 intellectual, cultural, and communal events in Manhattan, Brooklyn, Queens, and Long Island.



The Golden Age of the Jews of Al-Andalus Exhibit, Washington D.C.

25 June 2025

The World Jewish Congress (WJC) and American Sephardi Federation were hosted in the US Congress by the Co-Chairs of the Friends of Spain Caucus, Representatives Carlos A. Giménez (FL) and Pablo José Hernández (PR), for a special event commemorating the 10th Anniversary of Spain's Sephardi Citizenship Law. The event, in partnership with the Embassy of Spain in the U.S., featured "The Golden Age of the Jews of Al-Andalus" exhibit, a performance by Trio Sefardi, and remarks by Spain's Ambassador to the U.S. Ángeles Moreno Bau, U.S. Rep. Teresa Leger Fernández, U.S. Rep. Pete Sessions, WJC's Executive VP Maram Stern, ASF's Executive Director Jason Guberman, Sephardi scholar Matt Gatton, and Doreen Alhadeff (the 1st American Sephardi to receive citizenship under the law).



Inaugural Sephardic Rabbinic Conference, New York City

10-11 August 2025

Over 50 leading Sephardic rabbis and educators from around the world convened in New York City for the inaugural Sephardic Rabbinic Conference. Hosted by The Habura, Sephardic Brotherhood of America, American Sephardi Federation, and Orthodox Union, this groundbreaking gathering was anchored by the timely theme: “The Future of Sephardic Education.”

Esteemed presenters included many friends of the ASF, such as Rabbi Joseph Dweck (Former Senior Rabbi of the S&P Sephardic community of the U.K.), Rabbi Dr. Elie Abadie (ASF Board Member, Founding Rabbi of the Edmond J. Safra Synagogue, Former Director of the Jacob E. Safra Institute of Sephardic Studies at Yeshiva University, and Senior Rabbi Emeritus of the UAE), and Rabbi Yamin Levy (Senior Rabbi at the Iranian Jewish Center in Great Neck, NY and International Director of the Maimonides Heritage Center in Tiberias, Israel). Panelist Ruben Shimonov, ASF’s National Director of Sephardi House & Education, spoke about Sephardi House’s unique approach of enriching Jewish campus life through the integration of Sephardi heritage and wisdom. The conference, which also included a presentation by ASF’s Director of Publications Dr. Aryeh Tepper and remarks by Jason Guberman, concluded with a special Sephardic musical concert at TriBeCa Synagogue, which featured, among others, ASF Broome & Allen Fellow Dr. Samuel Torjman Thomas.



Jews and the Persianate World Conference, Washington D.C.



29 September 2025

Hosted by the Afghan Institute for Strategic Studies and Georgetown University's Center for Jewish Civilization, in partnership with American Sephardi Federation and Muslim American Leadership Alliance, this international conference convened scholars, diplomats, and community leaders to explore the historical, cultural, and intellectual intersection of Jewish and Persianate civilizations. The conference delved into the deep-rooted ties between Jewish communities and the Persianate world—a region encompassing Iran, Afghanistan, and Central Asia—via scholarly lectures and panel discussions, including one featuring Jason Guberman and ASF Pomegranate Award Honoree Roya Hakakian.

The conference concluded with “Rumi Night in Washington,” a cultural evening hosted by the Museum of the Bible—where the world’s oldest Hebrew book, discovered in an Afghan cave has been made accessible to the public through a partnership between the Museum and institutions representing Afghan Jews, including the ASF. Highlights included the launch of a Persian-language version of Sara Aharon’s book on Afghan Jewish history (originally published by the ASF), as well as a presentation by Ruben Shimonov that showcased his artistic work at the nexus of Jewish and Persian cultures, highlighted aesthetic connections between Jewish and Persian traditions, and celebrated the multilayered culture of Bukharian Jews.



ASF @ the World Sephardi Federation Centennial, Jerusalem

24-28 October 2025

The American Sephardi Federation proudly represents the USA at the World Sephardi Federation (WSF). ASF Board Member and Young Leaders President Lauren Gibli, ASF Young Leaders Board Member Ezra Mosseri, and Jason Guberman attended the WSF's Centennial in Jerusalem. The conference began with scholarly

presentations and communal meetings at the Ben-Zvi Institute and North African Jewry Heritage Center. 700+ people then gathered in the Binyanei HaUma for a historic celebration headlined by Israel's President Isaac Herzog and Israel's Former Sephardic Chief Rabbi and current Chief Rabbi of Jerusalem Shlomo Moshe Amar. The monumental international gathering showcased the contributions, continuity, and cultural brilliance of the Greater Sephardi world through stirring addresses and moving musical performances by singers from many communities performing with the Jerusalem Orchestra East & West under Maestro Tom Cohen.



Launch of Sephardi House Cohort 6; Fall Shabbaton & Leadership Summit, NYC

7-9 November 2025

For the 2025-26 academic year, ASF has welcomed 28 new Fellows. From UCLA, Yale, and the University of Miami to NYU, Vanderbilt, and Brandeis, these exceptional college students are helping shape the future of Sephardic and Mizrahi young leadership. Since launching in 2020, Sephardi House has accepted over 140 Fellows who have engaged more than 6,000 of their peers on 55 campuses.

In November, the Fellows gathered for 3 days of learning, bonding, and experiencing a meaningful Sephardic Shabbat together. The students enjoyed Shabbat meals and melodies at Kehila Kedosha Janina Synagogue and Congregation Magen David in Manhattan, gathered for a soulful Havdalah and Saturday evening outing in a chic Midtown lounge with Sephardi House alumni and ASF Board Members, and ended the retreat with a special visit to the ASF space at the Center for Jewish History. While Ruben Shimonov facilitated many of the team-building and learning sessions, we were also joined by guest educators Joshua Benaim (Founder of Sephardi House), Carlos Benaim (ASF Board Member & ISEF's President), Rabbis Yamin Levy and Joey Faur, and Jason Guberman. Furthermore, two Sephardi House alumni served as student mentors and assistants during the weekend.

