



## DEBATE PACK

CDP 019 (2020) | 3 February 2020

# Persecution of Christians

Main Chamber  
General Debate  
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### Contents

1.	<b>Background</b>	<b>2</b>
2.	<b>Press Articles</b>	<b>4</b>
3.	<b>Gov.uk</b>	<b>6</b>
4.	<b>APPG for International Freedom of Religion or Belief</b>	<b>13</b>
5.	<b>PQs</b>	<b>15</b>
6.	<b>Other Parliamentary material</b>	<b>25</b>
6.1	Written Statements	25
6.2	Debates	26
6.3	Early Day Motions	26
7.	<b>Further reading</b>	<b>31</b>

The proceeding of this debate can be viewed on [Parliamentlive.tv](https://www.parliamentlive.tv)

The House of Commons Library prepares a briefing in hard copy and/or online for most non-legislative debates in the Chamber and Westminster Hall other than half-hour debates. Debate Packs are produced quickly after the announcement of parliamentary business. They are intended to provide a summary or overview of the issue being debated and identify relevant briefings and useful documents, including press and parliamentary material. More detailed briefing can be prepared for Members on request to the Library.

# 1. Background

The non-Governmental organisation, [Open Doors](#), estimates that in the top 50 countries on their World Watch List for 2020, 260 million Christians are persecuted for their religious beliefs, compared to 245 million in 2019. In 2014 only one country, North Korea, was ranked as 'extreme' for its level of persecution of Christians. In its 2020 report, 11 countries fall into that category. In the last year, Open Doors estimates that attacks on churches have risen 500%, from 1,847 in 2019 to 9,488 in 2020.

Indeed, the International Society for Human Rights estimates that, worldwide, Christians are believed to be targets of about 80% of all acts of religious discrimination or persecution.

Acknowledging the seriousness of the situation, in December 2018 the then Government asked the Bishop of Truro to conduct an independent review into the Foreign Office's support for persecuted Christians worldwide, and to recommend improvements. An interim report of that review was published in May 2019, followed by a Final Report in July 2019.

Among its recommendations were:

- To seek a Security Council Resolution urging all governments in the Middle East and North Africa to protect Christians, and other persecuted minorities, and allow UN observers to monitor the necessary security measures.
- To identify a label for Christian persecution, to better inform and develop tailored Foreign & Commonwealth Office (FCO) policies in response.
- To consider imposing sanctions on perpetrators of serious human rights abuses against religious minorities, including Christians.
- To establish a stream of the Magna Carta Fund, dedicated to helping persecuted Christians.
- All Foreign Office staff – at home and abroad – should have mandatory training on religious literacy, subject to resources.
- British embassies and high commissions in relevant countries should deliver tailored responses to any violations of freedom of religion or belief.

In response to the Final Report, Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon, then Prime Minister's Special Envoy for Freedom of Religion or Belief said:

Freedom of Religion or Belief has been a key priority for the FCO within our human rights agenda in recent years. Both strategically and through a focus on priority countries, we have not only raised the profile of religious persecution and abuse, but also acted on the rising tide of Christian persecution across the world with some success.

We therefore note the findings of this independent report and will consider the recommendations carefully and how they may further enhance our work in tackling Christian persecution specifically and in strengthening our work on Freedom of Religion or Belief.

In January 2020 the Government confirmed that it had accepted the report's recommendations in full, and that work was ongoing to implement them "in a way that will bring real improvements in the lives of those persecuted because of their faith or belief".

## 2. Press Articles

The following is a selection of press and media articles relevant to this debate.

Please note: the Library is not responsible for either the views or the accuracy of external content.

### [Iraq's Assyrians Flee in the Face of Lawlessness and Sectarianism](#)

Assyrian International News Agency  
Colin Freeman  
2 February 2020

### [A Global Catastrophe: "260 Million Christians Experience High Levels of Persecution"](#)

Gatestone Institute  
Raymond Ibrahim  
2 February 2020

### [Why China's mass surveillance system threatens Christians worldwide](#)

Open Doors  
David Curry  
29 January 2020

### [Boko Haram beheads Christian leader in Nigeria](#)

Africa News  
Abdur Rahman Alfa Shaban  
22 January 2020

### [Time to pay attention to the persecution of Christians](#)

Irish Times  
Breda O'Brien  
30 November 2019

### [North Korea propaganda video details Christian martyr's 'mission from the enemy' to build underground church](#)

Fox News  
Caleb Parke  
10 September 2019

### [Anti-Christian Attacks in France Quietly Quadrupled. Why?](#)

Real Clear Investigations  
Richard Bernstein  
10 July 2019

### [Why Christians are dismayed by Modi's landslide victory](#)

Catholic Herald  
Andreas Thonhauser  
30 May 2019

**[Persecution of Christians 'coming close to genocide' in Middle East – report](#)**

Guardian  
Patrick Wintour  
2 May 2019

**[Sri Lanka and the global war on Christians](#)**

The Spectator  
Stephen Daisley  
23 April 2019

**[The persecution trap: vulnerable Christians are running out of allies](#)**

Catholic Herald  
John O'Sullivan  
4 April 2019

**[280 Christians killed in attacks in Nigeria](#)**

Baptist Press  
Diana Chandler  
18 March 2019

## 3. Gov.uk

### [UK appoints new Prime Minister's Envoy for Freedom of Religion and Belief](#)

#### **Foreign and Commonwealth Office**

**12 September 2019**

The Prime Minister has today appointed Rehman Chishti MP as his new Special Envoy for Freedom of Religion or Belief. In his new position, Rehman Chishti will bring together efforts across the UK Government, with faith actors and civil society to promote the UK's firm stance on religious tolerance abroad. The Special Envoy will continue to lead the implementation of the recommendations from the recent independent review into FCO support for persecuted Christians led by the Bishop of Truro. He will also advocate for the rights of all individuals here in the UK and around the world who are being discriminated against and persecuted for their faith or belief.

Rehman Chishti's appointment means that the Government will now have a dedicated person on the issue of religious freedom. The Envoy role was previously held by FCO Minister Lord (Tariq) Ahmad who will continue to champion human rights in his Ministerial capacity. This appointment will therefore increase the number of people working on the issue of religious freedom across government. Rehman has a strong track record for engaging and interacting with individuals, faith leaders and organisations here in the UK and abroad, and in promoting religious freedom and championing the cause of those being persecuted for their faith. Rehman was previously the Vice Chairman of the Conservative party covering faith and communities.

The Prime Minister has proclaimed the UK a champion of religious and other freedoms, and committed the UK to working with partners and friends around the world to ensure that everyone, everywhere is able to enjoy these freedoms.

The Prime Minister said:

People across the world deserve the chance to practise their beliefs freely. I'm delighted to appoint Rehman as my new Special Envoy and look forward to him building on the important work we have already done on this issue. The UK will always be a passionate advocate for greater tolerance, respect and understanding internationally.

Foreign Secretary, Dominic Raab, said:

A staggering 83% of the world's population live in nations where religious freedom is threatened or banned. It is an area where the UK can and must make a difference. I'm delighted to be working with Rehman to enhance the UK's support for those suffering persecution based on their faith, and standing up for this essential freedom.

Rehman Chishti MP said:

I am delighted to have been appointed as the PM's Special Envoy. I have championed freedom of religion and beliefs for much of my life. I shall

use the UK Government's global network to take real action to support those persecuted for their faith or belief, and promote greater understanding and respect between faiths.

As someone whose family came to the UK when I was six years old, and my father had taken up a role as an Imam, my family and I have always been able to openly and freely practise our faith. I want to ensure every citizen around the world is able to enjoy this basic right. Freedom of Religion, practice and belief is one of the foundations of a free society.

I pay tribute to Lord Ahmad for all his work on this area over recent years

**PM underlines UK's commitment to freedom of religion or belief**  
**Foreign and Commonwealth Office**  
**22 August 2019**

Prime Minister, Boris Johnson, has proclaimed the UK a champion of religious and other freedoms, and committed the UK to working with partners and friends around the world to ensure that "everyone, everywhere is able to enjoy these freedoms"

The statement was read out by Lord Ahmad, the Prime Minister's Special Envoy on Freedom of Religion or Belief, during discussion on safeguarding religious minority groups with his international counterparts at the UN in New York today.

The meeting takes place on the first-ever International Day Commemorating the Victims of Acts of Violence Based on Religion or Belief, which was established by a resolution of the General Assembly following a resolution led by the Polish government.

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office today also announced that research into measures that will help those persecuted for their religion or beliefs will be boosted by more than £200,000 of new funding. The funding is available to those with an interest in exploring the best ways that the UK Government can tackle the problem of persecution as it affects particular countries or groups.

The UK's Prime Minister Boris Johnson in a statement read out at the meeting said:

Freedom of religion or belief is at the heart of what the UK stands for. We will do everything possible to champion these freedoms and protect civilians in armed conflict, including religious, ethnic or other minorities. We are determined to use the tools of British diplomacy in this cause, including our permanent seat on the UN Security Council.

In light of mounting evidence that Christians suffer the most widespread persecution, we asked the Anglican Bishop of Truro to carry out an independent review to ensure that our work in this area matched the scale of the problem. We have accepted, and will implement, all of the Review's challenging recommendations. We will use the UK's global reach and programme funding to improve the lives of persecuted people. Today we are opening a call for bids on how to take this forward.

Lord Ahmad, who is also Minister of State for the Commonwealth UN and South Asia at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, said:

Those belonging to religious minorities face a number of challenges, from armed conflicts, mass murders and violent assaults to everyday discrimination.

The heinous attacks this year on places of worship from the Philippines to Burkino Faso, New Zealand to Sri Lanka, have reminded us all that the fundamental human right of freedom of religion or belief is increasingly under threat.

Today, as we commemorate the victims of such acts of violence, we demonstrate our commitment to supporting research to change people's lives and help build a world free of religious intolerance and hatred.

The funding announcement builds on the recommendations of the Bishop of Truro's recent review into the persecution of Christians. The total amount of new funding for the 2019-20 financial year is a little over £200,000. Applicants can find further information on how to submit bids [here](#).

The New York meeting, hosted by Polish foreign minister Jacek Czaputowicz, will also be attended by Sam Brownback, US ambassador for religious freedom, Michelle Bachelet, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and Naveed Walter, President of Human Rights Focus Pakistan.

### **[Persecution of Christians review: Foreign Secretary's speech following the final report](#)**

**Foreign and Commonwealth Office  
8 July 2019**

When I was moving house last year, I came across a book called God's Smuggler which I first read when I was about 10. At the height of the Cold War, Brother Andrew van der Bijl would smuggle Bibles across the Iron Curtain to communist countries where Christianity was ruthlessly suppressed.

When the Berlin Wall fell 30 years ago, the European nations that Brother Andrew had visited undercover won their liberty and achieved one of the greatest advances of human freedom in modern history.

Yet when I became Foreign Secretary, I learned that almost a quarter of a billion Christians were still enduring persecution around the world.

The evidence shows sadly that the situation is becoming worse. The number of countries where Christians suffer because of their faith rose from 128 in 2015 to 144 a year later. In the Middle East, the very survival of Christianity as a living religion is in doubt.

A century ago, 20% of the region's people were Christians; today the figure is below 5%.



Britain has always championed freedom of religion or belief for everyone. I would particularly like to thank Lord Ahmad, our Minister for Human Rights – who was appointed the Prime Minister’s Special Envoy in 2018 – for his vital work in this field.

And he has made an immense personal contribution, working across Government, visiting 13 countries to reach across religious divides, and securing funding for programmes in Iraq, Malaysia, Burma and Sudan. And as someone who himself comes from a persecuted minority, I have always valued his wise counsel and his passion for this cause.

In my first weeks as Foreign Secretary, I prioritised the plight of the Rohingya Muslims, who are targets of a brutal campaign of ethnic cleansing mounted by the army of Burma.

But I am not convinced that our efforts on behalf of Christians have always matched the scale of the problem, or indeed have reflected the evidence that it is Christians who frequently endure the heaviest burden of persecution. Indeed around the world, Christians are believed to be targets of about 80% of all acts of religious discrimination or persecution.

Perhaps because of a misguided political correctness – or an instinctive reluctance to talk about religion – British governments have not always grappled with this problem.

So in December [I asked the Right Reverend Philip Mounstephen](#), the Anglican Bishop of Truro, to review the Foreign Office’s support for persecuted Christians and recommend improvements. I am grateful to Bishop Mounstephen for submitting his [final report](#), which describes in harrowing detail the scale of the suffering and the moral obligation that rests on all of us.

So I thank him and all his team for the work they put into this excellent review which I hope will lead to a sea change in our approach at the Foreign Office.

The Bishop writes: “If one minority is on the receiving end of 80% of religiously motivated discrimination, it is simply not just that they should receive so little attention.” His report highlights the “decimation” of some of Christianity’s “oldest and most enduring communities”. When Islamist terrorists struck Sri Lanka on Easter Sunday, killing over 250 people, this was the third Easter in a row disfigured by a terrorist attack somewhere in the world. And these attacks stand alongside the equally appalling attacks on worshippers in mosques in Christchurch in New Zealand, reminding us how people across the world, of all faiths are still in this, the 21st century, being murdered for their religion.

So I warmly welcome this report and its recommendations. We are working across Government to agree a formal collective response as soon as possible. Let me highlight some of those recommendations in particular.

Firstly, the report recommends that we seek a new UN Security Council Resolution urging all governments in the Middle East and North Africa

to protect Christians and allow UN observers to monitor the necessary security measures.

Secondly, it says that for too long, governments have preferred the vague language of general condemnation rather than face the specific problem of anti-Christian discrimination and persecution. The report recommends that I instruct my officials to define this abuse, and I believe we should do that by calling it out clearly with the label Christophobia.

Thirdly, as we establish independent national sanctions regimes after Brexit, the report says we must be prepared to consider imposing such measures on perpetrators of serious, religiously-driven human rights abuses.

Fourthly, it proposes that we establish a John Bunyan stream of the Magna Carta Fund, named in honour of the author of Pilgrim's Progress, dedicated to helping persecuted Christians. This would, for example, be used to fund trauma care for survivors.

Fifthly, all Foreign Office staff – at home and abroad – should in the view of the report, undergo mandatory training on religious literacy, subject to resources.

And finally, I already expect British Embassies and High Commissions in relevant countries to deliver tailored responses to any violations of freedom of religion or belief.

There will be, for example, a new focus on this subject by our High Commission in Nigeria, including greater engagement with Christian leaders and visits to those communities affected by persecution.

Bishop Mounstephen's review was independent and, in some respects, he is critical of our approach. We must accept such criticism in the constructive spirit in which it was intended. For example, the report highlights different views of the causes of conflict between largely Muslim herders and Christian farmers in the central belt of Nigeria.

But whether or not the bloodshed is driven principally by competition over land and water, it would be a mistake to overlook religious hatred as an important factor.

Indeed it's hard to avoid concluding that the gunmen who raided a church in Benue state last year, murdering 2 priests and 17 worshippers, just one of the atrocities highlighted in the report, were motivated by anything else.

So in closing, I repeat my thanks to Bishop Mounstephen for calling our attention to a terrible burden of suffering. As the Christian doctrine of Original Sin reminds us, the capacity for wickedness is inherent in the human condition. We will never be able to extirpate anti-Christian bigotry.

But nor must we shrug our shoulders and walk on the other side of the road. As a country that has always been a beacon for freedom and

tolerance, the United Kingdom will not shirk its responsibilities and I am determined we will look up to them.

### **[Review into Christian persecution catalyst for action](#)**

**Foreign and Commonwealth Office**

**8 July 2019**

The [report](#), carried out by the Bishop of Truro and published today, records widespread evidence of the kind of persecution and discrimination that Christians face worldwide.

It also points to evidence that Christians constitute by far the most widely persecuted religion.

The review into the persecution of Christians outlines the seriousness of the challenge, and makes recommendations for how the Foreign Office can better address the issue. This includes calling for action at the United Nations, including a Resolution to allow UN observers to monitor necessary security measures.

Speaking ahead of the launch, the Right Reverend Philip Mounstephen said:

Addressing this issue with the seriousness it deserves represents a step change for democratic governments. My hope is that in adopting my recommendations the Foreign Office will be able to bring its considerable experience and expertise to bear in helping some of the planet's most vulnerable people.

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon, the Prime Minister's Special Envoy for Freedom of Religion or Belief said:

Freedom of Religion or Belief has been a key priority for the FCO within our human rights agenda in recent years. Both strategically and through a focus on priority countries, we have not only raised the profile of religious persecution and abuse, but also acted on the rising tide of Christian persecution across the world with some success.

We therefore note the findings of this independent report and will consider the recommendations carefully and how they may further enhance our work in tackling Christian persecution specifically and in strengthening our work on Freedom of Religion or Belief.

The report highlights the shocking impunity with which discriminatory laws, fear and violence are used by state and non-state actors to discriminate appallingly against Christians in countries across the world.

Recommendations for the Foreign Office include:

- seek a Security Council Resolution urging all governments in the Middle East and North Africa to protect Christians, and other persecuted minorities, and allow UN observers to monitor the necessary security measures

- identify a label for Christian persecution, to better inform and develop tailored Foreign & Commonwealth Office (FCO) policies in response
- consider imposing sanctions on perpetrators of serious human rights abuses against religious minorities, including Christians
- establish a stream of the Magna Carta Fund, dedicated to helping persecuted Christians
- all Foreign Office staff – at home and abroad – should have mandatory training on religious literacy, subject to resources
- British embassies and high commissions in relevant countries should deliver tailored responses to any violations of freedom of religion or belief

## 4. APPG for International Freedom of Religion or Belief

### [APPG publishes Commentary on the current state of FoRB](#)

**5 November 2019**

The APPG for International Freedom of Religion or Belief have published their 2019 Commentary on the current state of Freedom of Religion or Belief. It is the second time this report has been provided, alongside other publicly available information, to support both Posts and country desks in the Foreign Office to assess actual and potential FoRB violations and to formulate, implement and evaluate appropriate responses.

The Introduction states that reliable, detailed, evidence-based monitoring and analysis of FoRB violations is essential for formulating, implementing and evaluating realistic policies and actions to address FoRB and interlinked human rights violations. Expertise in both FoRB and country contexts is necessary to accurately monitor and analyse FoRB violations. Expertise is also required to navigate some actors' minimisation or denial of FoRB violations. With limited resources, the FCO can struggle to internally find the expertise essential for accurate assessments. The FCO FoRB Toolkit requires internal assessments to use non-FCO sources including 'the reports of civil society and other organisations,' which includes this APPG.

The APPG and its stakeholder organisations would strongly welcome a partnership in the accurate monitoring and analysis of FoRB violations that the Toolkit requires of posts. Such a partnership could enhance HMG and Parliament's knowledge about vulnerable groups who are at risk or who may require urgent assistance. It could also warn when these groups might be harmed by public comment on their situation.

The Foreword, written by Dr Ahmed Shaheed, United Nations Special Rapporteur for Freedom of Religion or Belief, Dr Nazila Ghanea, Associate Professor of International Human Rights Law at the University of Oxford and Sir Malcolm Evans, Professor of International Law at Bristol University, states that violations of the right to Freedom of Religion or Belief (FoRB) are a truly global and growing phenomenon. Indeed, data suggests that 83% of the world's population live in countries with severe Governmental and/or societal restrictions on the right to Freedom of Religion or Belief. Studies that have monitored global trends over the past decade note that the number of countries that violate FoRB rights has been rising significantly.

It continues all of humanity has to face the challenge of increasing violations of FoRB, there is not one type of victim or perpetrator, and the scale and frequency of these attacks highlight the terrible danger that intolerance towards others and their beliefs poses to societies everywhere. The attacks suffered by victims in these contexts go far beyond violations to FoRB and stretch to violations of a wide range of human rights including the rights to life, liberty and security of person.

Despite the scale and severity of the problem, thus far political responses have been muted. There have, however, recently been positive moves which indicate that Governments are starting to take this issue more seriously, such as the US Ministerial on Religious Freedom, the growth in the number of dedicated ambassadors or special envoys for FoRB, the observance of 27 October as international FoRB day, and the designation by the United Nations General Assembly of 22 August as the international day to commemorate the victims of acts of violence based on their religion or belief.

The authors quote their joint letter to the Sunday Telegraph on 10 February 2019:

“Seeking to protect some from persecution necessarily requires seeking to protect all from persecution. Upholding full enjoyment of freedom of religion or belief (which includes the freedom of worship) would enhance its enjoyment by all, whether believer, non-believer or ambivalent. Britain can rightly draw attention to the inclusive nature of its diplomacy in advancing this freedom over many years. This is an opportunity for redoubling and reinforcing these efforts in the light of increasingly abhorrent violations.”

They conclude As reliable, detailed information is vital to developing and implementing effective policies to promote FoRB, we encourage the UK Government to make use of this report. We also encourage the UK to adopt the recommendations the report outlines regarding making more use of the FCO’s own excellent FoRB toolkit, as there is a significant lack of engagement with the toolkit across the FCO network. Making use of the toolkit and this excellent report will significantly support the UK Government’s efforts to promote FoRB. We commend this report to all those who serve in the UK government and elsewhere in defence of human rights.

The report also highlights a number of recommendations:

1. That FCO posts further implement the FCO FoRB toolkit as a normal part of their work.
2. That the FCO in London continues to encourage, support and monitor posts’ implementation of the FCO FoRB toolkit’s recommendations.
3. That, building on the welcome appointment of a Prime Minister’s Special Envoy for Freedom of Religion or Belief by two successive Prime Ministers, this post be made a permanent role.
4. That the commitment that the International Roving Ambassador for Human Rights will work with the Special Envoy for Freedom of Religion or Belief is expressed in visible public activity at the United Nations, including the Human Rights Council, as well as elsewhere including with FCO posts worldwide.
5. That FCO posts actively engage with the Prime Minister’s Special Envoy for Freedom of Religion or Belief by proactively seeking ways that they can concretely advance freedom of religion and belief in country, as well as monitoring the Special Envoy’s work on social media.

*\*See the further reading section of this Debate Pack for the report.*

## 5. PQs

### [Middle East Peace Plan](#)

30 Jan 2020 | 670 c121

**Asked by: Jim Shannon**

I welcome the potential for a peace plan, and we must accept that. Christians are being attacked, persecuted and killed across the middle east, so what is being done within the peace plan to assist and help persecuted Christians in the middle east directly?

**Answering member: Dr Andrew Murrison | Foreign and Commonwealth Office**

The hon. Gentleman has a great deal of experience in such matters. He will forgive me if I do not answer for the peace plan, because it is not the UK Government's plan. We can welcome its publication, and we can welcome the process that may follow, but we cannot be answerable for the contents of the plan.

### [Christianity: Oppression](#)

30 Jan 2020 | 7147

**Asked by: Andrew Rosindell**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to help support Christians at risk of religious persecution in countries around the world.

**Answering member: Heather Wheeler | Foreign and Commonwealth Office**

As I stated in my answer of 21 January, the persecution of Christians, and indeed individuals of all faiths or beliefs, remains of profound concern to us. The NGO Open Doors estimate that 260 million Christians experience high or extreme persecution around the world. The scale of this persecution prompted the former Foreign Secretary to ask the Bishop of Truro to examine how the British Government could better support the plight of persecuted Christians around the world.

As you know Bishop Philip published a hard-hitting report with 22 ambitious recommendations which we have accepted in full. Only two of the 22 recommendations are Christian specific, with the others focussing on FoRB for all. Work is ongoing to implement the recommendations in a way that will bring real improvements in the lives of those persecuted because of their faith or belief. 10 recommendations have already been implemented, or are in the process of being implemented. The work on the Truro recommendations sits within our strong commitment to stand up for those persecuted on account of their religion or belief all over the globe. We have encouraged our diplomatic missions to consider what they can do in response to the Review, and to use it as a lever to engage their host governments where human rights violations and abuses relating to freedom of religion or belief are of concern.

**Nepal: Christianity**  
**30 Jan 2020 | 7131**

**Asked by: Andrew Rosindell**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent assessment he has made of the treatment of Christians in Nepal.

**Answering member: Heather Wheeler | Foreign and Commonwealth Office**

Freedom of religion and belief remains a human rights priority for our Embassy in Kathmandu. We remain concerned that legal provisions on conversion do not align with international human rights norms. We regularly lobby the Government of Nepal on this issue, and our Embassy in Kathmandu hosts a regular interfaith meeting to promote harmony and religious dialogue.

The persecution of Christians, and indeed individuals of all faiths or beliefs, remains of profound concern to us. The NGO Open Doors estimate that 260 million Christians experience high or extreme persecution around the world. The scale of this persecution prompted the former Foreign Secretary to ask the Bishop of Truro to examine how the British Government could better support persecuted Christians around the world. Bishop Philip published a hard-hitting report with 22 ambitious recommendations which we have accepted in full. Work is ongoing to implement the recommendations in a way that will bring real improvements in the lives of those persecuted because of their faith or belief. 10 have already been implemented, or are in the process of being implemented.

**Iran: Prisoners**  
**28 Jan 2020 | 6718**

**Asked by: Patrick Grady**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, if he will make representations to the Government of Iran on the imprisonment of (a) Pastor Yousef Nadarkhani and (b) other Christian prisoners of conscience.

**Answering member: Dr Andrew Murrison | Foreign and Commonwealth Office**

We have repeatedly expressed our concerns to the Government of Iran at the ongoing incarceration, and the shocking sentencing of Christians for practicing their faith. We welcome the recent release of Pastor Yousef Nadarkhani following his unjust imprisonment, and urge the Iranian authorities to release anyone currently detained based upon their religion or belief.

While Christian minorities are formally protected in the constitution of Iran, the reality is that many non-Muslims face discrimination. We regularly call upon Iran to cease harassment of all religious minorities and to fulfil its international and domestic obligations to protect freedom of religion or belief. Defending persecuted Christians, and persecuted individuals of all faiths or beliefs, remains a priority for the



British Government. We will continue to take action, both bilaterally and with the international community, to press Iran to improve its poor human rights record.

### **Business of the House**

**23 Jan 2020 | 670 c423**

#### **Asked by: Jim Shannon**

In the last Parliament, I approached the Backbench Business Committee to request a debate on the persecution of Christians to tie in with a date in November. Of course, that did not happen. May I ask the Leader of the House whether it is possible to have that debate brought forward? Some 260 million people across the world are suffering persecution, which is an important issue for many Members of the House.

#### **Answered by: Jacob Rees-Mogg | Leader of the House**

I know that a couple of Members in the last Parliament were keen to ensure that the plight of persecuted Christians was raised at this slot every week, so that it was not simply forgotten about. I am well aware that the hon. Gentleman had secured a debate through the Backbench Business Committee in the last Parliament, and I encourage him to take that up with the new Backbench Business Committee, perhaps even prior to its reformation.

### **Persecution of Christians across the Globe Independent Review**

**23 Jan 2020 | 3702**

#### **Asked by: Andrew Rosindell**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, when the Cabinet plans to consider the recommendations of the Bishop of Truro's Independent Review for the Foreign Secretary of FCO Support for Persecuted Christians.

#### **Answering member: Heather Wheeler | Foreign and Commonwealth Office**

The persecution of Christians, and indeed individuals of all faiths or beliefs, remains of profound concern to us. The scale of this persecution prompted the former Foreign Secretary to ask the Bishop of Truro to examine how the British Government could better respond to the plight of persecuted Christians around the world. The Bishop of Truro published a hard-hitting report with 22 ambitious recommendations. We have accepted the recommendations in full and work is ongoing to implement them in a way that will bring real improvements in the lives of those persecuted because of their faith or belief, Mr Rehman Chishti MP. This work is being overseen by the Prime Minister's Special Envoy for Freedom of Religion or Belief.

[Wang Yi](#)

15 Jan 2020 | HL198

**Asked by: Lord Alton of Liverpool**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made as to whether the trial of Pastor Wang Yi met standards of impartiality for a fair trial; whether they intend to raise his case with the government of China; and what assessment they have made of the suppression of the open practice of religious beliefs.

**Answering member: Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon | Foreign and Commonwealth Office**

We have raised our concerns about the closure of churches in China, including the Early Rain Covenant Church which Pastor Wang Yi founded, directly with the Chinese authorities. On 2 January, I issued a tweet expressing serious concerns about the recent sentencing of Pastor Wang Yi to nine years in prison following a secret trial and called on China to uphold the fundamental rights and freedoms guaranteed by China's constitution and international law. More broadly, we remain deeply concerned about the persecution of Christians, Muslims, Buddhists, Falun Gong practitioners and others on the grounds of their religion or belief in China. The freedom to practise, change or share ones faith or belief without discrimination or violent opposition is a human right that all people should enjoy.

[Persecution of Christians across the Globe Independent Review](#)

15 Jan 2020 | HL196

**Asked by: Lord Alton of Liverpool**

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon on 7 January (HL6) about implementation of the Truro Review that "some of the recommendations will take longer to implement and many will require an ongoing effort to embed into the working practices of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and other departments", which recommendations they have in mind; and how long they expect the implementation of those to take.

**Answering member: Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon | Foreign and Commonwealth Office**

The Government remains committed to implementing the recommendations of the Bishop of Truro's Review in full and in a way that will bring real improvements to the lives of those persecuted because of their faith or belief. Some recommendations will take longer to implement than others, including developing religious literacy training, which will need to go out to tender, and agreeing a consistent international approach to Freedom of Religion or Belief (FoRB) across Government. In addition, developing and delivering tailored responses to FoRB violations at Post level will always be an ongoing process.

**Christianity: Oppression****10 Jan 2020 | 299****Asked by: Jim Shannon**

To ask the hon. Member representing the Church Commissioners, what steps the Church of England is taking to provide support to (a) Kurdish Christians and (b) other persecuted Christian groups.

**Answering member: Andrew Selous | Church Commissioners**

(a) The Church of England is working closely to support Christian development and aid agencies to meet the humanitarian need of those who are displaced from the conflict in Syria.

The Church is continuing to encourage the Department for International Development and the wider international community to bolster the capacity of local civil society groups operating in the region. These groups, many of them faith-based, will be on the frontline of the humanitarian response in the months and years to come.

(b) The Church of England welcomes the decision by the Government to accept and implement the recommendations of the Truro Report to strengthen Foreign and Commonwealth Office support for persecuted Christians. Church of England officials are providing advice and support to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office as it takes forward the implementation of these recommendations. The Church welcomes the Prime Minister's commitment made in his Christmas message to stand in solidarity with Christians everywhere and to defend their right to practice their faith.

**Persecution of Christians across the Globe Independent Review****07 Jan 2020 | HL6****Asked by: Lord Alton of Liverpool**

To ask Her Majesty's Government how, and when, they intend to fully implement all of the recommendations in the Bishop of Truro's Independent Review for the Foreign Secretary of FCO Support for Persecuted Christians, published in July.

**Answering member: Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon | Foreign and Commonwealth Office**

The British Government is committed to implementing the recommendations from the Bishop of Truro's Review in a way that will bring real improvements to the lives of those persecuted because of their faith or belief. The recommendations have been divided into short, medium and longer term priorities and we have already implemented a good number of them. This includes recently appointing a Director General level champion for Freedom of Religion or Belief and marking Red Wednesday in support of persecuted Christians and members of other minority groups. Some of the recommendations will take longer to implement and many will require an ongoing effort to embed into the working practices of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and other departments.

**[Persecution of Christians across the Globe Independent Review](#)**  
**07 Jan 2020 | 284**

**Asked by: Steve Baker**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what his timescale is for implementing the recommendations of the Bishop of Truro's Independent Review for the Foreign Secretary of FCO Support for Persecuted Christians; and if he will make a statement.

**Answering member: Heather Wheeler | Foreign and Commonwealth Office**

The British government is committed to implementing the recommendations from the Bishop of Truro's Review. The recommendations have been divided into short, medium and longer term priorities and we have already implemented a good number of them. This includes recently appointing a Director General level champion for Freedom of Religion or Belief and marking Red Wednesday in support of persecuted Christians and members of other minority groups. Some of the recommendations will take longer to implement and many will require an ongoing effort to embed into the working practice of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and other Departments.

**[Human Rights](#)**

**05 Nov 2019 | 667 c635**

**Asked by: Rehman Chishti**

Mr Speaker, may I join all colleagues around the House in congratulating you on your elevation to Speaker of the House?

The key human right is article 18 of the universal declaration of human rights and people being able to practise their religion openly and freely. May I pay a huge tribute to the former Foreign Secretary, my right hon. Friend the Member for South West Surrey (Mr Hunt), for commissioning the Truro review on the persecution of Christians and the current Foreign Secretary for all the work that he and his team are doing in taking forward that review? Recommendation 10 requested the Foreign Secretary to write to key organisations such as the British Council, the Westminster Foundation for Democracy and Wilton Park, so may I thank him for writing that within 24 hours? Will he review this in 12 months to see how they are doing in taking forward freedom of religion and belief as part of that?

**Answering member: Andrew Stephenson | Foreign and Commonwealth Office**

May I start by paying tribute to my hon. Friend for all the work he does and his recent appointment as the Prime Minister's envoy for freedom of religion or belief? As he says, huge numbers of Christians around the world are being persecuted—it is currently estimated that 125 million Christians experience high or extreme levels of persecution. The Government have accepted all the recommendations from the bishop's report, but my hon. Friend's suggestion of a review is a good idea.

**UK Soft Power****05 Nov 2019 | 667 c628****Asked by: Eddie Hughes**

I thank the Minister for that answer, Mr Speaker, but more importantly I thank you, because I believe that our soft power overseas has already been enhanced as a result of your appointment to the Chair. May I ask the Minister what we will do with this newly enhanced soft power to speak up for persecuted Christians around the world?

**Answered by: Heather Wheeler | Foreign and Commonwealth Office**

Congratulations from the west midlands as well, Mr Speaker: everybody is congratulating you.

We actively use our influence to speak up for persecuted Christians and individuals of all faiths or beliefs at the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe and the UN, among other bodies. Throughout our diplomatic network, we lobby Governments for changes in laws and practices and raise individual cases of persecution in countries recently including Egypt, Indonesia and Sudan. I am delighted that my hon. Friend the Member for Gillingham and Rainham (Rehman Chishti), the PM's special envoy for freedom of religion or belief is working very hard as well.

**Persecution of Christians across the Globe Independent Review****31 Oct 2019 | 6339****Asked by: Fiona Bruce**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what funding has been allocated to the implementation of the recommendations of the Bishop of Truro's Review into the Persecution of Christians Worldwide in each of the next five years; and if he will publish his strategic plan for delivering those recommendations.

**Answering member: Heather Wheeler | Foreign and Commonwealth Office**

For financial year 19/20, a programme fund of £201,401 has been allocated for implementing the Bishop of Truro's recommendations. Separately, the office of the Prime Minister's Special Envoy on Freedom of Religion or Belief has been allocated £73,453 this financial year to cover admin and travel costs. Funding for future years, both for the implementation of the recommendations and for the Special Envoy's office, will be decided at a later stage. We have accepted and are working to deliver all the recommendations contained in the Bishop of Truro's report. We do not intend to publish a strategic plan for delivering the recommendations, given the sensitivities around some of them.

**Persecution of Christians across the Globe Independent Review**  
**24 Oct 2019 | 1091**

**Asked by: Eddie Hughes**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, with reference to the Answer of 30 September 2019 to Question 291141 on Persecution of Christians Across the Globe Independent Review, what the timescale is for his Department to implement the recommendations of the Bishop of Truro's Independent Review for the Foreign Secretary of FCO Support for Persecuted Christians.

**Answering member: Heather Wheeler | Foreign and Commonwealth Office**

We have drawn up an implementation plan for the Bishop of Truro's various recommendations, dividing them into short, medium and longer term priorities. We hope to have implemented, or to be in the course of implementing a good number of them by the end of 2019. Others will take longer, while many will require an ongoing effort to embed into the working practice of the FCO and other Departments. The Bishop of Truro's Review itself recommends reviewing the implementation of the recommendations after 3 years.

**Christianity: Oppression**  
**08 Oct 2019 | 294747**

**Asked by: Laura Smith**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, if he will have discussions with his counterparts in (a) the G20 and (b) the G7 on tackling persecution of Christians overseas.

**Answering member: Heather Wheeler | Foreign and Commonwealth Office**

Over recent months, the UK has raised Freedom of Religion or Belief concerns, including the worldwide persecution of Christians, bilaterally and through multilateral institutions such as the UN, EU and OSCE. At the G7 Foreign Ministers' meeting in April, we discussed our concerns on the resurgent forms of racism, and discrimination that includes the targeting of Christian minorities. We reaffirmed our dedication to uphold the rights of all to hold and manifest their religion or belief, both privately and in public. We will consider whether to raise our concerns in subsequent G7 and G20 Foreign Ministers' meetings.

**Burma: Religious Freedom**  
**08 Oct 2019 | 292866**

**Asked by: Emily Thornberry**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, if he will make it his policy to submit a resolution to the UN Security Council requiring members of the Myanmar military responsible for the persecution of Christians and Muslims to be investigated by the International Criminal Court.

**Answering member: Dominic Raab | Foreign and Commonwealth Office**

We are clear that there should be accountability for the atrocities set out in the reports of the UN Fact Finding Mission on human rights abuses in Myanmar. We assess, however, that there is insufficient support amongst Security Council members for a referral to the International Criminal Court at this time. The UK has nonetheless taken steps to maintain the international spotlight on the atrocities committed. In October 2018 the UK organised for the UN Fact Finding Mission to brief the UN Security Council on its findings. The UK was also instrumental in securing a resolution at the UN Human Rights Council to set up an independent UN mechanism to collect and preserve evidence on the atrocities. This will help to ensure future prosecutions are possible through domestic or international mechanisms.

**China: Religious Freedom**  
**04 Oct 2019 | 291327****Asked by: Emily Thornberry**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent representations he has made to his Chinese counterpart on the persecution of Christians in that country.

**Answering member: Dominic Raab | Foreign and Commonwealth Office**

On 26 September during an Urgent Question on Hong Kong, I set out the UK's position on the persecution of groups in China on the grounds of religion or belief. As I stated in the House, we are concerned that Chinese Government guidelines on unapproved religious activity, education and travel may restrict the peaceful observation of those rights. We take a proactive approach to influencing on freedom of religion or belief; in July 2019, the UK attended a US-led Ministerial to Advance Religious Freedom. The UK also signed a declaration to address religious persecution and discrimination worldwide, and to promote freedom of religion or belief for all.

Furthermore, at the 41st session of the UN Human Rights Council in July 2019, we raised our concerns about freedom of religion or belief in our 'Item 4' national statement. At the 40th session of the UN HRC in March, the Prime Minister's former Special Envoy for Freedom of Religion or Belief, Lord (Tariq) Ahmad, highlighted our concerns about restrictions on FoRB in China – including on Muslims in Xinjiang and Christians. Lord Ahmad also set out the Government's position when answering an Oral Question in the House of Lords on 4 April.

**West Africa: Religious Freedom**  
**30 Sep 2019 | 291144****Asked by: Eddie Hughes**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to help tackle religious oppression against (a) Christians and (b) other religious groups in (i) Burkina Faso and (ii) other parts of West Africa.

**Answering member: Andrew Stephenson | Foreign and Commonwealth Office**

The UK is deeply concerned about the security deterioration in Burkina Faso and the Sahel, including attacks in recent months against religious minorities. We are committed to working with all partners, including Burkina Faso and other countries in West Africa, to protect freedom of religion and belief for all. As the UK increases its work to encourage stability and prosperity in the Sahel, we will continue being vocal champions for the protection of fundamental rights and freedoms.



## 6. Other Parliamentary material

### 6.1 Written Statements

#### [Independent Review of Foreign and Commonwealth Office support for persecuted Christians](#)

**08 July 2019 | HCWS1698**

**Jeremy Hunt | Foreign and Commonwealth Office**

I have today deposited in the libraries of both Houses of Parliament the Independent Review of Foreign and Commonwealth Office support for persecuted Christians, conducted by the Anglican Bishop of Truro, the Right Reverend Philip Mounstephen.

The Review is the conclusion of a project that began in December 2018, when I asked Bishop Mounstephen to carry out this important research with the full support of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO).

The UK has always been a leading champion of human rights. In recent years, the FCO has stepped up its work on Freedom of Religion or Belief (FoRB). In response to new evidence and as a sign of the UK's commitment, the Prime Minister appointed Lord (Tariq) Ahmad of Wimbledon in 2018 as the UK's first Special Envoy for Freedom of Religion or Belief.

In that role, Lord Ahmad has championed FoRB across government, through the FCO's diplomatic network, and in his travel overseas. The UK has raised the rights of religious minorities at the highest levels, including in Nigeria, Iraq and Pakistan. Lord Ahmad has also worked with British diplomatic missions - including at the United Nations in Geneva and New York - to defend FoRB. Furthermore, he has overseen the provision of significant funding through various projects and programmes, including over £250 million to support people who were driven from their homes by Daesh's persecution.

Today, about 245 million Christians worldwide are believed to face persecution for their faith. The evidence suggests the problem is getting worse. The number of countries where Christians face religiously-motivated harassment rose from 128 in 2015 to 144 a year later, according to the Pew Research Centre.

The Review builds on the Bishop's Interim Report published in May 2019, which examined the scale and character of religious persecution. It includes further findings and recommendations about how the FCO might improve its response.

The Review draws on information from: non-governmental organisations; Church leaders; reporting from the FCO's diplomatic missions; interviews with FCO staff and analysts; FCO written sources (including reporting from the network, research papers and policy notes); interviews with retired members of the FCO and with those who have suffered directly from discrimination or persecution. I offer my

particular thanks to those who bravely shared their harrowing experiences.

I welcome Bishop Mounstephen's report and its recommendations. We are working across government to agree a formal collective response.

The Review will also be available on the [gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk) website, and further information is available on the Review's website at <https://christianpersecutionreview.org.uk/interim-report/>.

## 6.2 Debates

### [Persecution of Christians Overseas](#)

18 Jul 2019 | 663 cc1018-1049

### [Religious Persecution](#)

11 July 2019 | 798 cc1933-1974

### [Persecution of Christians: Role of UK Embassies](#)

04 Jul 2017 | 626 cc1-25WH

### [Nigeria: Armed Violence \(Rural Communities\)](#)

27 November 2018 | 650 cc45-66WH

### [Christians Overseas](#)

22 May 2018 | 641 cc338-356WH

### [Persecution of Christians: Role of UK Embassies](#)

04 July 2017 | 626 cc1-25WH

### Petitions

### [Persecution of Christians](#)

17 July 2017 | 627 cc5-6P

## 6.3 Early Day Motions

### [Persecution of Christians](#)

EDM 55 (session 2019-19)

Jeremy Hunt

23 October 2019

That this House notes the 2019 report of Aid to the Church in Need entitled *Persecuted and Forgotten?* which shows that the Christian population of Iraq has declined by 90 per cent within a generation from 1.5 million before 2003 to less than 150,000 today; recognises that any Daesh resurgence in Syria or Iraq could pose an existential threat to Christians in the region; and calls on the Government in line with its commitment to implementing the recommendations of the Bishop of Truro's review of Foreign and Commonwealth Office support for

persecuted Christians to take urgent and immediate steps to safeguard the presence of Christians and other minorities in Iraq and Syria.

### **Persecution of Christians**

**EDM 2748 (session 2017-19)**

**Jim Cunningham**

**30 September 2019**

That this House condemns the persecution of Christians and other religious groups; is extremely concerned about the rising levels of Christian persecution; is deeply concerned by reports that persecution of Christians in some parts of the world is at near genocide levels; understands that Christians are the most persecuted group, with 80 per cent of religious persecution globally against Christians; notes that genuine action to tackle the persecution of Christians is long overdue; welcomes the Government's initiatives to bring attention to the persecution of Christians; calls on the Government to show its commitment to protecting religious minorities; and further calls on the Government to use all diplomatic means available to ensure that Christians across the world can freely pursue their beliefs.

### **UN International Day commemorating the victims of acts of violence based on religion or belief**

**EDM 2453 (session 2017-19)**

**Fiona Bruce**

**5 June 2010**

That this House welcomes the establishment by the UN General Assembly of the UN International Day Commemorating the Victims of Acts of Violence Based on Religion or Belief on 22 August each year; is deeply concerned that acts of violence based on religion or belief are increasing all over the world and often flourish with impunity; notes the concerning findings of the interim report of the Bishop of Truro's Independent Review for the Foreign Secretary of FCO Support for Persecuted Christians; recognises the dire situation of religious minorities in many parts of the world; calls on the Government to mark the International Day Commemorating the Victims of Acts of Violence Based on Religion or Belief and use the initiative to develop and implement a comprehensive action plan, across Departments to address religious persecution whenever and wherever it occurs; and further calls on the Government to use all its diplomatic powers to combat religious persecution around the world and bring impunity for such atrocities to an end.

05 Jun 2019 | Early day motions | Open | House of Commons |

### **EDWARDES COLLEGE, PESHAWAR, PAKISTAN**

**EDM 2414 (session 2017-19)**

**Jim Shannon**

**22 May 2019**

That this House expresses concern that Edwardes College Peshawar, Pakistan, which is owned by the Church of Pakistan with official recognition by the High Court Peshawar, is being forced by the Khyber

Pakhtunkhwa Governor and the Provincial Government into handing over administrative control; expresses further concern regarding the alleged continual interference in college affairs and the unacceptable pressure on management which usurps authority; notes that the College Principal and his family are feeling harassed; further notes the effect of these actions on the wellbeing of Christians in Pakistan as people are concerned for their safety; and requests that the Prime Minister of Pakistan ensures that the Governor and the Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa are restrained from taking illegal administrative control over the college and further provides security to prevent the harassment of the college Principal and his family as well as the broader Christian community in Pakistan.

### **EASTER SUNDAY ATTACKS IN SRI LANKA**

**EDM 2310 (session 2017-19)**

**Jim Shannon**

**23 April 2019**

That this House condemns the Easter Sunday attacks in Sri Lanka which killed 321 people and injured hundreds more; offers sympathies to all those killed or injured in the attack and their families and friends; recognises that many of those killed were Christians gathering peacefully for prayer; condemns all attacks on the right to freedom of religion of belief; stands in solidarity with the Sri Lankan people and all people everywhere who have suffered at the hands of terrorists; and offers its support to the Sri Lankan Government to defeat terrorism and to protect the right to freedom of religion of belief.

### **Sri Lanka Easter Sunday bombings**

**EDM 2308 (session 2017-19)**

**Virendra Sharma**

**23 April 2019**

This House utterly and totally condemns the heinous attacks on Christians at prayer on their most holy day in Sri Lanka; supports the Sri Lankan Government in its attempts to catch those responsible; urges the UK Government to lend all the support that it can to Sri Lanka in trying to apprehend the perpetrators; stands with those killed and injured on Sunday and their families in support of their right to freedom of religion; and calls on people of all religions to stand together against violence and persecution.

### **ATTACKS ON CHRISTIANS IN EGYPT (No. 2)**

**EDM 1956 (session 2017-19)**

**Jim Shanon**

**8 January 2019**

That this House condemns the latest attacks on Christians at their church in Egypt; sends sincere sympathies to the family of the bomb disposal expert who was killed whilst defusing the bomb; assures the Egyptian Government of UK support to defeat terrorism; and reiterates support for Christians in Egypt and their right to worship God in safety.

**The Christian church at Christmas****EDM 1917 (session 2017-19)****Jim Shannon****11 December 2018**

That this House expresses sincere thankfulness that we live in a country which allows us to celebrate the birth of Jesus and Christmas; considers those states in which to even whisper the name of Jesus would mean death; prays for those who can only celebrate Christmas in their heart; and affirms the dedication of this House to seek to influence by any diplomatic means possible, any state which continues to permit the persecution of Christians based solely on their love of Jesus.

**ANNUAL INTERNATIONAL DAY COMMEMORATING THE VICTIMS AND SURVIVORS OF RELIGIOUS PERSECUTION****EDM 1478 (session 2017-19)****Fiona Bruce****3 July 2018**

That this House is concerned about growing religious persecution of minority groups worldwide, which may amount to crimes against humanity, war crimes or even genocide; calls on the Government to better track such violations of the right to freedom of religion or belief and to consider developing strategic action plans to address such incidents before they reach the threshold of mass atrocities; and further calls on the Government to support a proposal for the establishment of an annual International Day Commemorating the Victims and Survivors of Religious Persecution, and to support the tabling of a UN General Assembly resolution for this, the proposed date being the 3 August each year, being the day when Daesh unleashed its genocidal campaign against the Yazidis in Sinjar, followed by a similar campaign against Christians and other religious minorities in the region and so engage the UN and its member states to strengthen their efforts to address religious persecution around the world.

**KILLING OF CHRISTIAN MINORITIES IN MYANMAR'S KACHIN PROVINCE****EDM 1408 (session 2017-19)****Ben Lake****15 June 2018**

That this House condemns severely the persecution and systemic killing of Christian minorities in Myanmar's Kachin province by the Myanmar military and government militias; calls on Aung San Suu Kyi to pursue a ceasefire and ensure the safety of those threatened with persecution and displacement, which since April 2018 has seen over 6,800 people flee Kachin; denounces the Myanmar security forces and the Kachin Independence Army for the role they have played in the violence, and asserts that both sides should look to come to a peaceful resolution as soon as possible; calls on the international community to assist to mediate the situation; and demands the allowing of human rights and groups to enter the province so as to help those in need.

**TERRORIST ATTACK ON A CHURCH IN QUETTA, PAKISTAN**

**EDM 1190 (session 2017-19)**

**Jim Shannon**

**23 April 2018**

That this House condemns the terrorist attack on Christians as they were coming out of a church service in the Essa Nagri, Quetta, Pakistan, on Sunday 15 April 2018, when two innocent worshippers were murdered and five seriously injured; notes that responsibility for this terrorist act was claimed by ISIS; passes condolences to the grieved families of the victims; and urges the Government of Pakistan to ensure the speedy arrest and trial of those terrorists.

**TREATMENT OF PATRAS AND SAJID MASIH BY PAKISTANI**

**AUTHORITIES**

**EDM 1074 (session 2017-19)**

**Jim Shannon**

**14 March 2018**

That this House is deeply shocked by the severe physical beating of a Pakistani Christian teenager Patras Masih, and his cousin Sajid Masih, by the Federal Investigation Authority (FIA) officers, who were supposed to be carrying out forensic checks of their mobile phones, after an alleged act of blasphemy; is appalled that both were put under pressure to commit sexual acts with each other; notes that Sajid Masih was so traumatised by this immoral suggestion he chose to jump out of a fourth floor window, rather than agree to this heinous act; and is disappointed that the Pakistani Government has promised an enquiry by the FIA about the conduct of the other FIA officers and instead suggests an independent judicial enquiry into the whole episode and particularly the facts leading up to Sajid Masih's desperate act, as described by him in his hospital bed video statement.

**ATTACK ON CHRISTIANS IN THE METHODIST CHURCH, PAKISTAN**

**EDM 752 (session 2017-19)**

**Jim Shannon**

**9 January 2018**

That this House condemns the terrorist attack on Christians in the Bethel Memorial Methodist Church, Quetta, Pakistan, on 17 December 2017, when nine innocent worshippers were murdered and over 50 seriously injured; notes that the quick action by the security forces prevented several more casualties; and urges the Government of Pakistan to ensure the safety of Christians and their right to freedom of worship.

## 7. Further reading

[\*\*Commentary on the current state of Freedom of Religion or Belief 2019\*\*](#), All Party Parliamentary Group for International Freedom of Religion or Belief, 5 November 2019

[\*\*Bishop of Truro's Independent Review for the Foreign Secretary of FCO Support for Persecuted Christians: Final Report and Recommendations\*\*](#), July 2019

[\*\*Bishop of Truro's Independent Review for the Foreign Secretary of FCO Support for Persecuted Christians: Interim report\*\*](#), May 2019

[\*\*Bishop of Truro's Review on Persecution of Christians Overseas\*\*](#), House of Commons Library Debate Pack, CDP 198, 16 July 2019

[\*\*Open Doors USA\*\*](#) (Website)

[\*\*Release International\*\*](#) (Website)

[\*\*Barnabas Fund\*\*](#) (Website)

[\*\*Christian Solidarity Worldwide\*\*](#) (Website)

[\*\*International Christian Concern\*\*](#) (Website)

[\*\*All Party Parliamentary Group for International Freedom of Religion or Belief\*\*](#) (Website)

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