



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
LONDON SW1A 0AA

January 2018

*Dear Constituent,*

Thank you for contacting me about the Open Doors campaign on non-violent persecution of Christians.

I am appalled by the persecution suffered by millions of Christians across the world who seek only to practise their beliefs openly, in peace and safety. Here in the West those freedoms are all too often taken for granted. I am pleased that the Prime Minister used her Christmas message to talk about freedom of religion or belief, demonstrating the Government's commitment to this priority globally. This is an issue upon which there is much Parliamentary consensus and within Government much cross-departmental work is being done on these issues.

The UK's project work overseas is an important part of this effort to promote and protect religious freedoms. During this tax year, the Government is spending £758,000 on freedom of religion projects worldwide, including in Pakistan and Iraq.

One project is helping to develop lesson plans for secondary school teachers in the Middle East and North Africa. The aim is to teach children about religious tolerance, religious acceptance, and the absolute right to freedom of religion or belief. I strongly believe that teaching children in that way is a vital part of promoting tolerance and respect at grassroots level and of helping to build future resilience against extremism.

The UK Government remains determined to promote and defend human rights more generally. UK activity is both multilateral, through institutions such as the UN, striving to build and maintain consensus and bilateral, through the UK's diplomatic network.

Once again, many thanks for taking the time to contact me.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Chris'.

**CHRIS HEATON-HARRIS MP**  
**MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT FOR DAVENTRY**