



Chris Heaton-Harris
Member of Parliament for Daventry
House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA
Tel: 020 7219 7048

June 2021

Dear Constituent,

Thank you for contacting me about the persecution of humanists and atheists worldwide and for inviting me to the All-Party Parliamentary Humanist Group AGM on the 24th May, which, due to a pre-existing diary commitment I am unfortunately unable to attend.

The UK Government is committed to defending freedom of religion or belief (FoRB) for all persons everywhere, and to promoting respect between different religious and non-religious communities. Nobody should live in fear because of their identity or beliefs, including those who have no religious convictions or beliefs. The Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) monitors FoRB globally, and regularly raises concerns with governments, where they exist, including at a ministerial level – not least in the countries to which you specifically refer.

The UK also works via multilateral fora, such as the UN, OSCE, Council of Europe, and the International Religious Freedom or Belief Alliance to promote and protect FoRB for all.

On the 20th December 2020, the PM reaffirmed his commitment to FoRB by appointing Fiona Bruce MP as his Special Envoy for FoRB. Mrs Bruce works with ministers, officials and others to deliver the Government's goal of seeing everyone, everywhere able to have and practise a faith, belief, or no religious belief, in accordance with their conscience.

Most prominently, Mrs Bruce is working with the Minister for Human Rights, Lord Ahmad, to drive forward the implementation of the recommendations from the Bishop of Truro's report on FCDO support for persecuted Christians in a way that improves the lives of those persecuted for their faith, or belief, or for not holding a religion.

As of January 2021, the FCDO have fully delivered on 10 of the 22 recommendations made by the Bishop of Truro in 2019 in relation to improving the lives of people facing persecution for their religion, faith or belief. The department have also made good on a further 8 of these recommendations and, as I understand, are confident that all 22 will be delivered by 2022.

As a beacon for freedom and tolerance, I firmly believe the UK should not shirk its responsibilities in this area and I welcome that defending FoRB for all remains a UK foreign policy priority.

Thank you again for taking the time to contact me.

Yours faithfully,

CHRIS HEATON-HARRIS MP
MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT FOR DAVENTRY