

**TOM PURSGLOVE MP**  
CORBY & EAST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE



**HOUSE OF COMMONS**

LONDON SW1A 0AA

27<sup>th</sup> November 2018

*Dear Government,*

**RE: FREEDOM OF RELIGION.**

Thank you for contacting me recently about freedom of religion; your comments upon which I read with great interest.

It is completely abhorrent that millions of Christians worldwide are persecuted for seeking to practise their beliefs openly, in peace and safety. Here, in the UK, our freedoms are all too often taken for granted. I am pleased that the Prime Minister has shown a longstanding commitment to address the persecution of religious minorities around the world.

The UK's multiple overseas programmes are an important part of this work to promote and protect religious freedoms. This includes raising concerns over provisions that are being used to limit the freedom to adopt, change, or practise a religion around the world. I was encouraged to learn that almost £1 million of funding has been allocated to pursue the Government's freedom of religion and belief policy objectives through the Magna Carta Fund for Human Rights and Democracy.

I can assure you that the Government will continue to defend the fundamental right of religious freedom, alongside its commitment to promote and defend human rights more generally. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office has recently reissued its toolkit on Freedom of Religion or Belief (FoRB) to all of our overseas embassies and missions across the world, and encouraged them to promote and defend this important human right. Additional funding of £12 million has also been made available through UK Aid Connect, to work with faith groups, NGOs, and academics to promote religious diversity and help countries worldwide embed FoRB policies alongside poverty reduction and development.

The UK acts both multilaterally, through institutions such as the UN, striving to build and maintain consensus, and bilaterally, through the UK's diplomatic network to address the persecution of religious minorities.

Unfortunately, I am unable to attend the event on the 16<sup>th</sup> January 2019, due to a long-standing parliamentary commitment, but I am encouraged that the persecution of Christians abroad is high on the Government's agenda via its project work and work at a bilateral and multilateral level.

Once again, thank you for having taken the time to contact me and if I can ever be of any further assistance to you then please do not hesitate to contact me again.

*With best wishes*

**TOM PURSGLOVE MP**  
**MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT**  
**CORBY & EAST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE**