

UNITED KINGDOM 2020 INTERNATIONAL RELIGIOUS FREEDOM REPORT

Executive Summary

In the absence of a written constitution, the law establishes the Church of England as England's state church and the Church of Scotland as Scotland's national church. The law prohibits "incitement to religious hatred" as well as discrimination on the grounds of religion. The Emergency Coronavirus Bill was amended in March in response to concerns from Muslim and Jewish advocacy groups that the bill would permit cremation of COVID-19 victims "against the wishes of the deceased." In January, the Welsh government announced plans to make relationships, sexuality, and religion a mandatory part of the curriculum for all students over the age of five by 2022. In September, Conservative Member of Parliament (MP) Rehman Chishti resigned from his position as the Prime Minister's Special Envoy for Religious Freedom. Conservative MP Fiona Bruce was appointed his successor in December. In July, Imam Qari Asim, the Deputy Chair of the government's Anti-Muslim Hatred Working Group, was appointed independent advisor to propose a working definition of Islamophobia. On the one-year anniversary of the March mosque attacks in Christchurch, New Zealand, the government announced that funding for the Places of Worship Scheme, which provides physical security measures to Muslim, Christian, Sikh, and Hindu places of worship, would double from the previous year to 3.2 million pounds (\$4.37 million) in 2020-2021. In April, the government provided 14 million pounds (\$19.13 million) via a nongovernmental organization (NGO) to provide security at Jewish institutions, including schools and synagogues. In January, the Scottish government announced 500,000 pounds (\$683,000) to fund security at places of worship. In January, the government renewed its commitment to the founding principles of the 2000 Declaration of the Stockholm International Forum on the Holocaust (Stockholm Declaration). To mark International Holocaust Memorial Day and the 75th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau, the UK government announced a one-million pound (\$1.37 million) grant to the Auschwitz-Birkenau Foundation to help preserve the site of the former concentration camp. The main political parties and party members continued to face numerous accusations of religious bias. The Conservative Party faced allegations of anti-Muslim incidents, with the Muslim Council of Britain (MCB) submitting a dossier of 150 cases of alleged anti-Muslim incidents by party members to the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC). The party announced it would conduct a review into how complaints were handled and the EHRC accepted the party's terms of reference for the investigation, but the MCB

criticized the scope of the inquiry. In October, the EHRC released a report calling on the Labour Party to reform its handling of allegations of anti-Semitism within the party. In light of his negative reaction to the report, Jeremy Corbyn was suspended from both the wider Labour Party and the Parliamentary Labour Party and was forced to sit as an independent MP, a first for a former leader. While his wider-party membership was later reinstated in November, he continued to serve as an independent MP. In December, the Labour Party published a plan to implement the EHRC's recommended reforms.

The government reported a 5 percent decline (from 8,566 to 7,203 offenses) in religiously motivated hate crimes in England and Wales in the 2019-2020 period compared to the same period one year prior. This was the first period of decline in religiously motivated hate crimes since 2012-2013. Where the perceived religion of the victim was recorded (in 91 percent of cases), 50 percent (3,089 offenses) of religious hate crime offenses targeted Muslims, and 19 percent (1,205 offenses) targeted Jews. The annual report of the NGO Community Security Trust (CST) recorded 1,668 anti-Semitic incidents during the year, an 8 percent decline from 2019, yet still the second-highest ever annual figure recorded by the organization. Among the incidents were 97 assaults and three incidents classified as "extreme violence." (Due to privacy laws, CST did not provide details on cases of extreme violence.) There were a further 1,399 incidents of nonviolent abusive behavior. CST recorded 634 anti-Semitic online incidents, a 9 percent decline from the previous year. In September, the NGO Tell MAMA (Measuring Anti-Muslim Attacks), which monitors anti-Muslim activity, released its annual report for 2018. The report disclosed 3,173 reports of anti-Muslim hate incidents in 2018, including 1,891 recorded by police. This was the highest number since the NGO's founding in 2011. Several religiously motivated conspiracy theories surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic circulated online. According to a report by the Henry Jackson Society think tank, anti-Semitic conspiracy theories included claims that Jews used global lockdowns to "steal everything." Both Jewish and Muslim communities were vilified by media commentators such as Katie Hopkins, who alleged that Muslims were flouting lockdown restrictions and spreading COVID-19 by continuing Friday prayers at mosques.

U.S. embassy and consulate staff engaged with government officials, political parties, and religious groups to advance religious freedom issues, with a strong emphasis on digital engagement and use of social media in response to COVID-19 pandemic restrictions. In May, the Ambassador, along with the Ambassador at Large for International Religious Freedom, gave remarks at virtual iftars, which were part of the largest such series in the UK, entitled #RamadanatHome. In June,

the Ambassador hosted a virtual meeting with representatives of the Jewish community, and separately, with Labour Leader MP Sir Keir Starmer, to discuss the Labour Party's plan to confront the issue of anti-Semitism within the party. In April, the Ambassador spoke to the Chief Rabbi of the United Synagogues to extend his best wishes for Passover and to show support for the British Jewish communities during the COVID-19 pandemic. Similarly, in May, the Ambassador called Dr. Ahmad al-Dubayan of the Central London Mosque to commemorate Ramadan and discuss how the Muslim community was faring, given COVID-19 pandemic restrictions on gatherings. In December, a senior embassy official delivered remarks and conducted a virtual candle lighting in honor of Diwali, in partnership with the Hindu Forum of Europe. In January, a senior embassy official represented the United States at the UK's Holocaust Memorial Day Commemoration Ceremony marking the 75th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau and met with Trustees of the Holocaust Day Memorial Trust. To mark National Religious Freedom Day in January, the consulate general in Belfast hosted an interfaith dialogue. Throughout the year, the embassy's social media messaging on international religious freedom reached approximately 400,000 persons.

Section I. Religious Demography

The U.S. government estimates the total population at 65.8 million (midyear 2020 estimate). Census figures from 2011, the most recent, indicate 59.3 percent of the population in England and Wales is Christian. Of the remaining population, 4.8 percent identified as Muslim; 1.5 percent Hindu; 0.8 percent Sikh; 0.5 percent Jewish; and 0.4 Buddhist. Approximately 25 percent of the population reported no religious affiliation in the 2011 census, and 7 percent chose not to answer. Jehovah's Witnesses estimate there are 137,000 members in the country, and the Baha'i community estimates it has more than 7,000 members.

According to the 2019 British Social Attitudes survey, an annual survey conducted by the independent National Center for Social Research, 52 percent of those surveyed UK-wide described themselves as having no religion, 12 percent as Anglican, 7 percent as Catholic, and 9 percent as belonging to non-Christian religious groups. The survey showed 6 percent of individuals identified as Muslim, less than 0.5 percent as Jewish, and 3 percent as "other non-Christian."

The Muslim community in England and Wales is predominantly of South Asian origin, but it also includes individuals from the Arabian Peninsula, the Levant, Africa, and Southeast Asia, as well as a growing number of converts of British and

other European descent. Hindus, Sikhs, Jews, and Buddhists are concentrated in London and other large urban areas, primarily in England.

Census figures for Scotland in 2011 indicate 54 percent of the population is Christian, comprising the Church of Scotland (32 percent), Roman Catholic Church (16 percent), and other Christian groups (6 percent). The Muslim community constitutes 1.4 percent of the population. Other religious groups, which together make up less than 1 percent of the population, include Hindus, Sikhs, Jews, and Buddhists. Persons not belonging to any religious group make up 36.7 percent of the population, and the remainder did not provide information on religious affiliation.

A 2017 Scottish Social Attitudes Survey found 58 percent of those surveyed did not identify with any religion, 18 percent identified as part of the Church of Scotland, 10 percent as Roman Catholic, 11 percent as other Christian, and 2 percent as non-Christian.

Census figures from Northern Ireland in 2011 indicate 41.5 percent of the population is Protestant – consisting of the Presbyterian Church of Ireland (19 percent), Church of Ireland (14 percent), Methodist Church in Ireland (3 percent), and other Protestant groups (6 percent) – and 41 percent Roman Catholic. Less than 1 percent of the population belongs to non-Christian religious groups, and approximately 10 percent professes no religion; 7 percent did not indicate a religious affiliation.

In his 2019 ‘Sectarianism in Northern Ireland’ report, Ulster University Professor Duncan Morrow found there is a “clear statistical trend towards a change in the religious minority-majority structure of Northern Ireland.” His research illustrates a consistent decline of Protestants in all 26 district council areas of Northern Ireland since 2001, contrasted with an increased Catholic population in 19 of 26 council areas in the same time period. Morrow’s analysis of 2011 census figures also illustrates this trend is likely to continue. Census figures show a Protestant majority in the over-60 age bracket and a Catholic majority in the under-20 age bracket. Professor Paul Nolan of Queen’s University Belfast stated based on current statistical trends, there will be a Catholic majority in Northern Ireland by 2021, when the next census will be conducted.

Census figures from Bermuda in 2010 cite 22 religious groups in the population of 71,000; 78 percent identifies as Christian, including 16 percent Anglican, 15 percent Roman Catholic, 9 percent African Methodist Episcopal, and 7 percent

Seventh-day Adventist. Approximately 2 percent identifies with other religious groups, including approximately 600 Muslims, 200 Rastafarians, and 120 Jews. Approximately 20 percent did not identify with or state a religious affiliation.

Section II. Status of Government Respect for Religious Freedom

Legal Framework

In the absence of a written constitution, the law establishes the Church of England as England's state church. Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland do not have state religions. Legislation establishes the Church of Scotland as Scotland's national church, but it is not dependent on any government body or the Queen for spiritual matters or leadership.

The Human Rights Act 1998 protects freedom of thought, conscience, and religion. It states, "Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience, and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief, in worship, teaching, practice and observance." The Human Rights Act reaffirms the European Convention of Human Rights, Article 9, which guarantees freedom of thought, conscience, and religion, subject to certain restrictions that are "in accordance with law" and "necessary in a democratic society."

As the supreme governor of the Church of England, the monarch must always be a member of, and promise to uphold, that Church. The monarch appoints Church of England officials, including lay and clergy representatives, on the advice of the Prime Minister and the Crown Appointments Commission. Aside from these appointments, the state is not involved in the Church's administration. The Church of Scotland is governed by its General Assembly, which has the authority to make the laws determining how it operates.

Blasphemy and blasphemous libel remain criminal offenses in Northern Ireland under common law. To date, however, there have been no convictions for blasphemy or blasphemous libel there. Northern Ireland Humanists continues to run a campaign to repeal blasphemy laws originating from the 1888 Law of Libel Amendment Act and the 1819 Criminal Libel Act, which remain in force in the region. These laws prohibit "composing, printing or publishing any blasphemous libel or any seditious libel tending to bring into hatred...any matter in Church or State."

In England and Wales, the law prohibits religiously motivated hate speech and any acts intended to incite religious hatred through the use of words or the publication or distribution of written material. The law defines religious hatred as hatred of a group because of its religious belief or lack thereof. Police are responsible for investigating criminal offenses and for gathering evidence; the Crown Prosecution Service, which is an independent body and the main public prosecution service for England and Wales, is responsible for deciding whether a suspect should be charged with a criminal offense. The maximum penalty for inciting religious hatred is seven years in prison. If there is evidence of religious hostility in connection with any crime, it is a “religiously aggravated offense” and carries a higher maximum penalty than does the underlying crime alone.

Blasphemy is an offense under common law in Scotland. It is a crime against public order and decency and has two aspects: whether an individual’s spoken or written words against God or religion occurred, and the words are spoken or written with intent to cause disorder. The law relates only to Christianity and is punishable by fines or imprisonment or both. The law requires courts to consider the impact of religious bias when sentencing.

Northern Ireland does not have specific hate crime laws, but current legislation allows for increased sentencing if offenses are judged to be motivated by hostility based on religion, among other aggravating factors.

By law, the General Register Office for England and Wales governs the registration and legal recognition of places of worship in England and Wales. A representative of the congregation, for example, a proprietor, trustee, or religious head, must complete and submit an application form and pay a fee of 29 pounds (\$40) to a local registrar. The General Registrar Office typically provides registration certificates to the local superintendent registrar within 20 working days. The law also states buildings, rooms, or other premises may be registered as meeting places for religious worship upon payment of a fee; the General Register Office for England and Wales keeps a record of the registration, and the place of worship is assigned a “worship number.” Registration is not compulsory, but it provides certain financial advantages and is also required before a place of worship may be registered as a venue for marriages. Registered places of worship are exempt from paying taxes and benefit from participating in the country’s Gift Aid program. Gift Aid allows charities to claim back the 25 percent basic rate of tax already paid on donations by the donor, boosting the value of a donation by a quarter. The law only applies in England and Wales and does not cover the Church of England or in Wales.

The law requires religious education (RE) and worship for children between the ages of three and 18 in state-run schools, with the content decided at the local level. Specialist schoolteachers, rather than religious groups, teach the syllabus. Parents may request to exempt their children from RE, and in England and Wales, students may opt out themselves at age 14, although religious worship continues until students leave school at either age 16 or 18. State schools that are not legally designated as religious require the RE curriculum to reflect “Christian values,” be nondenominational, and refrain from attempts to convert students. It must also teach the practices of other principal religions in the country. Students and teachers, unless they are employed by faith-based schools, may decline participation in collective worship, without prejudice. All schools not designated as religious, whether private or state-run, must maintain neutrality in their interpretation of the RE syllabus and must avoid presenting one faith or belief as greater than another.

State schools in England and Wales that are not legally designated as religious are required to practice daily collective prayer or worship of “a wholly or mainly...Christian character.” Schoolteachers lead these assemblies; however, parents have the legal right to request their children not participate in collective prayer or worship. The law permits sixth form students (generally 16- to 19-year-olds in the final two years of secondary school) to withdraw from worship without parental permission or action. State schools not designated as religious are free to hold other religious ceremonies as they choose.

The government requires schools to consider the practices of different religious groups when setting dress codes for students. This includes wearing or carrying specific religious artifacts, not cutting hair, dressing modestly, or covering the head. Guidance from the Department of Education requires schools to balance the rights of individual students against the best interests of the school community as a whole; it acknowledges schools could be justified in restricting individuals’ rights to manifest their religion or beliefs when necessary, for example, to promote cohesion and good order.

In Scotland, only denominational (faith-based) schools practice daily collective prayer or worship; however, religious observance at least six times per year is compulsory in all Scottish schools. Religious observance is defined as “community acts which aim to promote the spiritual development of all members of the school’s community.” Examples of religious observance include school assemblies and events to recognize religious events, including Christmas and

Easter. Parents may make the decision to opt out their children from this requirement, but children may not make this decision themselves.

In Bermuda, the law requires students attending state schools to participate in collective worship, characterized by educational officials as reciting the Lord's Prayer, but it prohibits worship "distinctive of any particular religious group." At the high school level, students are required to take a course that explores various religions until year 9 (ages 11-14); in years 10 and 11 (ages 15-16), courses on religion are optional.

There are two faith-based private schools in Bermuda that operate from kindergarten through high school. One follows the guidance of the North American division of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. The other follows principles of the Catholic Church.

The government determines whether to establish a faith-based school when there is evidence of demand, such as petitions from parents, religious groups, teachers, or other entities. If a faith-based school is not oversubscribed, then the school must offer a place to any child, but if the school is oversubscribed, it may use faith as a criterion for acceptance. Nonstate faith-based schools are eligible to claim "charitable status," which allows for tax exemptions.

Almost all schools in Northern Ireland receive state support, with approximately 90 percent of students attending Protestant or Catholic schools. Approximately 7 percent of school-age children attend religiously integrated schools with admissions criteria designed to enroll equal numbers of Catholic and Protestant children without the intervention of the state, as well as children from other religious and cultural backgrounds. Students of different faiths are able to attend Protestant or Catholic schools but tend to gravitate toward the integrated schools. These integrated schools are not secular but are "essentially Christian in character and welcome all faiths and none." RE – a core syllabus designed by the Department of Education, Church of Ireland, and Catholic, Presbyterian, and Methodist Churches – is compulsory in all government-funded schools, and, "The school day shall include collective Christian worship whether in one or more than one assembly." All schools receiving government funding must teach RE; however, students may request to opt out of the classes and collective worship. Catholic-managed schools draw uniquely on the Roman Catholic tradition for their RE, while other schools may draw on world religions.

An estimated 30 sharia councils operate parallel to the national legal system. They adjudicate Islamic religious matters, including religious divorces, which are not recognized under civil law. Participants may submit cases to the councils on a voluntary basis. The councils do not have the legal status of courts, although they have legal status as mediation and arbitration bodies. As such, rulings may not be appealed in the courts.

The law prohibits discrimination on the grounds of “religion or belief” or the “lack of religion or belief” and requires “reasonable” religious accommodation in the workplace for employees. The EHRC – a body sponsored by the Department of Education’s Government Equalities Office – is responsible for enforcing legislation prohibiting religious discrimination. The EHRC researches and conducts inquiries into religious and other discrimination in England, Scotland, and Wales. The Minister for Women and Equalities appoints the members. If the commission finds a violation, it may issue a notice to the violator and seek a court order to enforce the notice. The EHRC receives government funds but operates independently. The Northern Ireland equivalent to the EHRC is the Equality Commission.

In Northern Ireland the law bans discrimination on the grounds of religious belief in employment; however, schools may be selective on the grounds of religion when recruiting teachers. In the rest of the country, the law prohibits any discrimination, including employment discrimination, based on religious belief, unless the employer can show a genuine requirement for a particular religion.

Citing a limited broadcast spectrum, the law prohibits religious groups from holding national radio licenses, public teletext licenses, more than one television service license, and/or radio and television multiplex licenses, which would allow them to offer multiple channels as part of a single bundle of programming.

Twenty-six senior bishops of the Anglican Church sit in the House of Lords as representatives of the state Church. Known as the Lords Spiritual, they read prayers at the start of each daily meeting and play a full role in the work of the upper house.

The law requires visa applicants wishing to enter the country as “ministers of religion” to have worked for at least one of the previous five years as a minister and to have at least one year of full-time experience or, if their religion requires ordination, at least two years of part-time training following their ordination. A missionary must also be trained as such or have worked previously in this role.

The country is a party to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

Government Practices

On March 23, Muslim and Jewish advocacy groups issued statements in response to proposed burial measures in the Emergency Coronavirus Bill ahead of its debate in the House of Commons. The draft bill allowed designated local authorities to disregard the section of public health legislation designed to “prevent a local authority from being able to cremate a body against the wishes of the deceased.” Religious groups, including the Muslim Engagement and Development advocacy group and the Board of Deputies of British Jews, strongly criticized the bill, which they said would give medical professionals the ability to override the religious beliefs of the deceased and their families in regard to the treatment of their body after death. Labour MP Naz Shah proposed an amendment to the bill intended “to ensure if local authorities reach their capacity, they do not proceed to cremate the deceased from faith backgrounds automatically” without appropriate consultation. In response, the government agreed to amend the bill to reflect Shah’s concerns, negating the need for a vote.

On January 21, the Welsh government announced that relationships, sexuality, and religion will be compulsory for all children over the age of five as part of the new “Curriculum for Wales Framework,” being developed and refined before use in schools in 2022. On March 12, Education Minister Kirsty Williams announced the establishment of a Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) working group to agree on topics to be covered by schools and to prepare detailed guidance on the proposed changes. The working group includes key stakeholders, teachers, teachers unions, and faith organizations, and is cochaired by the government and regional consortia. Religious objections include concerns that children will be taught values that contradict their parents’ beliefs or religion, such as LGBTQI+ relationships, constituting an erosion of parental rights. Expressing concerns surrounding the lack of detail on what will be in the RSE curriculum and at what age children will learn various aspects, religious groups stated that young children should be allowed a childhood free of “sexualization.” Humanists UK and the National Secular Society supported ending of the right to withdraw children from classes, in principle. They argued that religious worldviews must be taught impartially before the right to withdraw is removed.

In September, MP Rehman Chishti resigned from his position as the Prime Minister’s Special Envoy for Freedom of Religion or Belief, which he had held for

one year. Chishti said his resignation was not related to differing views on religious freedom, but instead on his opposition to economic legislation dealing with internal markets. Conservative MP Fiona Bruce was appointed to the role in December. Bruce is also vice chair of the All-Party Parliamentary Group for Freedom of Religion or Belief. Groups including Humanists UK and the Council of Christians and Jews expressed concerns over Bruce's previous support of mandatory prayer in schools and hope that the government would not pursue a Christians-only agenda.

In July, Imam Qari Asim, Deputy Chair of the government's Anti-Muslim Hatred Working Group, was appointed independent advisor to propose a working definition of Islamophobia after an existing definition came under question for potentially undermining freedom of speech. The Anti-Muslim Hatred Working Group was established in 2012 to develop and implement proposals to address anti-Muslim sentiment in the country. The group is made up of representatives from Muslim communities, independent experts, academics, and a range of government departments, including the Attorney General's Office, the Crown Prosecution Service, the Foreign, Commonwealth, and Development Office (FCDO), and the Home Office. The Anti-Muslim Hatred Working Group did not agree on a working definition by year's end. Separately, the London Metropolitan University became the first UK university to adopt the All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on British Muslims' working definition of Islamophobia in November. The APPG's definition states, "Islamophobia is rooted in racism and is a type of racism that targets expression of Muslimness or perceived Muslimness."

On February 25, the All-Party Parliamentary Humanists Group (APPHG) published a report entitled "Time for Reflection: A report of the All-Party Parliamentary Humanist Group on religion or belief in the UK Parliament." The report called for parliamentary prayers to be replaced with a "time for reflection"; for the House of Commons Speaker to consider introducing additional forms of religious and pastoral support alongside that already provided by the Anglican chaplain; and for an end to automatic seats in the House of Lords for Anglican bishops. The report highlighted the exclusive nature of "Prayers," a parliamentary tradition to open the day's proceedings, which also serves as a way to obtain a seat for the day, since these are not formally reserved. The report argued that MPs who chose not to participate in the religious prayers could miss out on seats in the parliamentary chambers for key debates including during the Prime Ministers Questions and the Budget sessions. The report also revealed details of nine cases in which bishops in the House of Lords changed the outcomes of votes, including two votes that directly benefited the Church of England.

Timed to coincide with the one-year anniversary of the Christchurch, New Zealand mosque attacks, on March 15, the government's Home Office announced that during 2019-2020, the Places of Worship Scheme provided 1.6 million pounds (\$2.19 million) to fund physical security measures at 27 mosques, 13 churches, five Sikh gurdwaras, and four Hindu temples. This was the highest level of funding for the scheme since it was established in 2016. The government announced that funding for the period covering March 2020-2021 would be doubled to 3.2 million pounds (\$4.37 million).

The government simultaneously launched an eight-week public consultation period, from March 15 to June 28, to improve the government's response to religiously motivated hate crimes at places of worship. Consultation results were not published at year's end.

On April 1, the Home Office granted the CST 14 million pounds (\$19.13 million) for the Jewish Community Protective Security Grant to cover protective security at Jewish institutions, including schools and synagogues.

In 2019, the government simplified the application system for the Places of Worship security funding scheme by commissioning a central contractor to install physical security measures. Applicants were no longer required to show they had already experienced a hate crime, and became eligible to apply if they showed they were vulnerable to hate crime. Associated faith community centers were also eligible to apply. The Chair of the Anti-Muslim Hatred Working Group welcomed the developments and said, "The simplified process will hopefully make it even easier for mosques to improve their security and will go some way in building community confidence."

In January, the Scottish government announced 500,000 pounds (\$683,000) of funding for security at places of worship. Justice Secretary Humza Yousaf and Communities Secretary Aileen Campbell announced the new scheme on Holocaust Memorial Day during a visit to a synagogue in Glasgow. Yousaf said the government was committed to ensuring "safety and security for our faith communities" and he hoped the "scheme will provide reassurance to all faith communities and their places of worship that hate crime and prejudice will not be tolerated."

On January 19, the government renewed its commitment to the founding principles of the 2000 Declaration of the Stockholm International Forum on the Holocaust

(Stockholm Declaration). As part of the commemorations to mark the 20th anniversary of the Stockholm Declaration, and to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the liberation of Nazi concentration and extermination camps, Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon, Minister for Human Rights, represented the country at an International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) meeting held to adopt a renewed commitment. Lord Ahmad said, “It is important that we reaffirm our collective commitment to combatting prejudice and intolerance, and pledge to the victims and survivors of the Holocaust that they will never be forgotten.”

On January 27, to coincide with International Holocaust Memorial Day, the government announced a one-million pound (\$1.37 million) grant to the Auschwitz-Birkenau Foundation endowment fund to help preserve the Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camp. In a statement, Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab said, “The government is supporting the Auschwitz-Birkenau Foundation because we must never forget history’s darkest moment, and we must educate future generations so it can never be repeated.” Communities Secretary Robert Jenrick said, “The UK stands shoulder to shoulder with our Jewish countrymen and women.” Separately, the City of London committed 300,000 pounds (\$410,000) to the Auschwitz-Birkenau Foundation to support the preservation of the gas chambers, crematoria, barracks, and other exhibits.

In January, the royal family and members of the cabinet marked Holocaust Remembrance Day via social media. Additionally, Prince Charles delivered a speech at the World Holocaust Forum at Yad Vashem, Jerusalem, on January 23. At the event to mark 75 years since the liberation of Auschwitz, Prince Charles warned, “Hatred and intolerance still lurk in the human heart” and, with lessons of the Holocaust still “searingly relevant,” he called on the 40 world leaders in attendance to be “fearless in confronting falsehoods” and violence.

The Holocaust Memorial Day Trust hosted a remembrance service at which Prime Minister Boris Johnson and Prince William spoke. The Prime Minister said, “I feel a deep sense of shame that here in Britain – in 2020 – we seem to be dealing with a resurgence of the virus of anti-Semitism – and I know that I carry responsibility as Prime Minister to do everything possible to stamp it out.” He also committed to constructing the National Holocaust Memorial and Education Centre, which was announced in 2015 but remains in planning stages. The Scottish Parliament, National Assembly for Wales, and cities and towns across the United Kingdom also hosted Holocaust Memorial Day events, with many focusing on this year’s theme, “Stand Together,” to promote interfaith engagement.

The pastoral needs of prisoners were addressed, in part, through chaplains paid for by the Ministry of Justice, rather than by religious groups. All chaplains worked as part of a multifaith team, the size and breakdown of which was determined by the size of the prison and the religious composition of the prisoner population. Prison service regulations stated that “...chaplaincy provision must reflect the faith denomination requirements of the prison.”

The military generally provided adherents of minority religious groups with chaplains of their faith. There were approximately 240 recruited chaplains in the armed forces, all of whom were Christian. The armed forces also employed five civilian chaplains as full-time civil servants to care for Buddhist, Hindu, Sikh, Jewish, and Muslim recruits. During the year, the Armed Forces Chaplaincy Policy Board reviewed how chaplain services were provided to minority religious groups and was considering the use of suitable chaplains in the reserve forces.

In January 2019 (the latest data available), there were 6,802 state-funded faith-based schools in England, representing 34 percent of all state-funded mainstream schools and serving approximately 1.9 million students. Church of England schools were the most common type among primary schools (26 percent); Roman Catholic schools were the most common at the secondary level (9 percent). Additionally, at the primary and secondary levels, there were 72 “other Christian,” 36 Jewish, 25 Methodist, 14 Islamic, six Sikh, five Hindu, and two multifaith state-funded faith-based schools. There were 370 government-funded denominational schools in Scotland: 366 Catholic, three Episcopalian, and one Jewish. The government classified schools with links to the Church of Scotland as nondenominational.

The Conservative Party faced allegations of anti-Muslim sentiment. In March, the MCB submitted a dossier of 150 cases to the EHRC that catalogued alleged anti-Muslim incidents attributed to members of the Conservative Party, increasing pressure on the EHRC to launch a formal investigation. The dossier was in addition to 150 cases submitted in 2019, making a total of 300 cases. The submission catalogued evidence of what the MCB stated were anti-Muslim comments and actions by hundreds of party activists, local councillors, MPs, and advisors to the Prime Minister. Examples include MP Sally Ann Hart, who in 2017 posted on Facebook a claim by an anti-Islamist activist that a women’s march had been hijacked by the Muslim Brotherhood to promote the “Muslim agenda.” Hart publicly apologized for her comments.

In May, the EHRC dropped plans for an inquiry into “Islamophobia” in the Conservative Party after the party announced it would conduct its own review of how complaints were handled. On May 12, the party established the terms of reference for the investigation, which were formally supported by the EHRC. The party confirmed that the review would examine the “nature and extent” of complaints of anti-Muslim statements by party members since 2015 and would also consider what sanctions could be taken against members who quit the party before being investigated. Furthermore, the investigation would consider allegations of discrimination relating to all “protected characteristics” in the 2010 Equalities Act, including not only religion, but also age, race, sexual orientation, and disability.

The MCB criticized the scope of the inquiry. On May 12, MCB Secretary General Harun Khan said, “By restricting the terms to an inquiry merely into the complaints received, the party is choosing to summarily dismiss all the issues of the toxic culture of racism that have been raised by the Muslim Council of Britain.” MP Amanda Milling, Co-Chairman of the Conservative Party, said that having the terms of reference agreed upon was a positive step forward. She said the party is “committed to this investigation, to ensure that any abuse that is not fit for public life is stamped out.”

In September, a YouGov poll commissioned by the Hope Not Hate political action group found that 47 percent of Conservative Party members surveyed in July believed Islam is “a threat to the British way of life.” The poll of 1,213 Conservative Party members found that more than 33 percent believed that Islamist terror attacks reflected a widespread hostility towards Britain among the Muslim community, and that 58 percent thought “there are no-go areas in Britain where Sharia Law dominates and non-Muslims cannot enter.” However, 53 percent of those asked thought it was wrong to blame all Muslims for the actions of a violent minority. Former Conservative Party Chair Baroness Warsi said, “This latest poll is further evidence that the party has a real and serious issue with racism directed at Muslims.”

Media reported in October that Rakhia Ismail, the former ceremonial mayor of the London district of Islington, resigned from the Labour Party and joined the Conservative Party, citing the anti-Muslim sentiment she experienced within Labour as her reason for leaving.

In January, all five Labour Party leadership candidates signed the “Ten Pledges to End the Anti-Semitism Crisis,” a document prepared by the Board of Deputies of

British Jews. The 10 pledges included an agreement to resolve outstanding cases, to reform the party disciplinary process to ensure complaints were properly handled, and to engage the British Jewish community on a way forward. The move was criticized by the left-wing paper *Morning Star* and far-left Labour members, who said it was wrong for an outside body to interfere in the party's leadership election. In a parallel deputy leadership contest, two candidates – Shadow Justice Secretary Richard Burgnon and Shadow Equalities Minister Dawn Butler – refused to sign the declaration.

After winning the Labour Party leadership election on April 4, Sir Keir Starmer used his victory speech and his first op-ed as leader in *The Sunday Times* to apologize publicly to the British Jewish community concerning previous allegations of anti-Semitism on the part of Labour Party leaders and members. On April 7, both Starmer and newly elected deputy leader Angela Rayner held a virtual meeting with representatives of Jewish community organizations to discuss ways to repair the party's relationship with the British Jewish community. In a joint statement, the Board of Deputies of British Jews, the NGO CST, and Jewish Labour welcomed Starmer's commitment, describing it as a "good start," and praising him for achieving "in four days more than his predecessor did in four years." Starmer also outlined a plan to rid the party of anti-Semitism and rebuild trust between Labour and the Jewish community.

In July, newly appointed Labour Party General Secretary David Evans formally apologized and settled a defamation case brought by seven whistle-blowers who appeared in a 2019 BBC *Panorama* documentary accusing the party of mishandling cases of anti-Semitism. The whistleblowers had previously sued the Labour Party for attempting to undermine their reputations after it released a statement referring to them as "disaffected former staff" with "personal and political axes to grind."

In October, the EHRC completed an 18-month investigation and published its final report into complaints of anti-Semitism within the Labour Party. The report found the party had allowed "unlawful harassment," political interference in the party's complaints process, and a lack of education and training for staff handling the complaints process. Targeted recommendations included commissioning an independent process to handle anti-Semitism complaints; implementing clear rules and guidance to prohibit and sanction political interference in the complaints process; publishing a comprehensive policy and procedure setting out how anti-Semitism complaints will be handled; commissioning and providing education and training for all individuals involved in the anti-Semitism complaints process; and

monitoring and evaluating improvements to ensure lasting change. In addition to the targeted recommendations that the EHRC has a legal mandate to enforce, the commission urged changes to both the party culture and its processes.

The EHRC report heavily criticized the former party leadership under Jeremy Corbyn and found that the party breached the Equality Act by committing “unlawful harassment” in several cases in which Labour MPs were found to have used “anti-Semitic tropes and suggesting that the complaints of anti-Semitism were fakes or smears.” A case cited in the report involved former London Mayor Ken Livingstone, who said “the Israel Lobby,” which aimed “to undermine Corbyn’s leadership,” was responsible for allegations of anti-Semitism against fellow Labour MP Naz Shah. Livingstone later resigned from the party. The EHRC found a further 18 “borderline cases” involving local councillors, election candidates, and branch officials. It also noted several incidents of political interference by the Leader of the Opposition’s Office in addressing complaints of anti-Semitism. The EHRC’s report provided recommendations, and the watchdog requested that the Labour Party submit an implementation plan.

During a press briefing following the release of EHRC’s report, Labour Party leader Starmer said an action plan would be submitted to the EHRC before year’s end, apologized formally to the Jewish community and Jewish Labour party members, and provided assurances that Labour accepted the report without qualification. Former Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn released his own statement decrying anti-Semitism, but he suggested the findings of the report were “dramatically overstated for political reasons” by opponents and media. Party leaders subsequently suspended Corbyn from the Labour Party and removed him from the Parliamentary Labour Party, forcing him to sit as an independent MP – a first for a former leader. Corbyn contested the suspension and his wider-party membership was subsequently reinstated, but he continued to sit as an independent MP at year’s end.

British Jewish organizations and some Labour figures welcomed the EHRC report, while expressing concern about existing conditions within the Labour Party. The Campaign Against Antisemitism said, “The EHRC’s report utterly vindicated Britain’s Jews, who were accused of lying and exaggerating, acting as agents of another country, and using their religion to ‘smear’ the Labour Party.” In December, Labour published the anticipated action plan for tackling anti-Semitism within its ranks. The plan was developed within six weeks of the EHRC report’s publication and sent to Parliament on December 10, after the National Executive Committee, Labour’s ruling body, unanimously agreed. The plan commits the

party to establish an independent complaints process by December 10, 2021 and to deal with the backlog of existing anti-Semitism complaints. Labour also committed to establish an advisory board of Jewish members and develop educational material on anti-Semitism. The EHRC approved the plan before publication.

In January, Conservative Party Councillor in Dudley, Colin Elcock, was suspended indefinitely from the party and was removed from the Conservative Group of councillors after tweeting that Islam was “domination not integration,” and asking if people in Iran were “all on the dole.” Council leader Patrick Harley described the comments as “inappropriate” but did not rule out a return for Elcock.

Also in January, media criticized Dominic Cummings, the Prime Minister’s chief of staff, for approving the publication of a cartoon in 2006 that depicted the Prophet Muhammad with a bomb under his turban on *The Spectator* website at a time when he had “overall responsibility” for the website. In February, Andrew Sabisky, an advisor to the Prime Minister, resigned after media uncovered a 2014 book review of Tatu Vanhanen’s *Ethnic Conflicts*, in which Sabisky questioned whether the growing Muslim population in the UK should be met with violent resistance.

On February 3, *The Jewish Chronicle* reported that a Labour member was expelled from the party for accusing television presenter Rachel Riley of “prostituting” her Jewish heritage. Bob James, from North Wales, was suspended from the party in March 2019 over a series of tweets aimed at Riley that included the claim that her campaign against anti-Semitism under Corbyn was “poisoning the memory of your ancestors.” He also tweeted, “Judaism is a religion but what Israel does in the name of God is pure Satanic.” *The Jewish Chronicle* commended Steve Cooke, a member of the Stockton North Labour Party and a party political education officer, for being “instrumental in demanding the party launch an investigation into Mr. James’s conduct.” According to the article, during the disciplinary process, it emerged that James had been subject to an earlier complaint over social media posts in which he said, “Israel is using the Holocaust as an excuse for murder.” A party source confirmed that James had been expelled and commented, “Under the previous administration, some complaints weren’t dealt with adequately,” and “Since Jennie Formby became General Secretary [in 2018], we’ve used a comprehensive, central complaints system.”

In late June, the Labour Party removed MP Rebecca Long-Bailey from her position as Shadow Education Secretary for tweeting her support for an interview that

contained anti-Semitic rhetoric. Individuals described as party moderates praised Long-Bailey's dismissal, but those characterized as more leftist within the party criticized the move.

The CST recorded 180 incidents of anti-Semitism connected to specific political parties or their supporters. Of these, 175 incidents were related to the Labour Party, one to the Conservative Party, one to the Scottish National Party, one to Plaid Cymru, and two to smaller parties.

In August, Care NI, a Christian charitable organization, stated that since 2015, 601 cases of criminal damage to religious buildings had occurred in Northern Ireland, one every three days. Care NI called for the Places of Worship security scheme to be introduced in Northern Ireland, the only region of the UK where it did not apply.

The Northern Ireland Humanists group continued to publicly call for the repeal of the region's blasphemy laws, passed in 1891 and 1888. All major political parties supported repeal except for the Democratic Unionist Party, the largest party in the Northern Ireland Assembly, which stated, "Anti-discrimination and hate crime legislation did not provide adequate protection for Christians."

During the year, the Scottish Parliament agreed to support the principles of the Hate Crime and Public Order (Scotland) Bill, and the legislature's Justice Committee was scrutinizing and amending the legislation at year's end. The bill would repeal Scotland's blasphemy laws. However, the National Secular Society warned that the replacement legislation risked creating a more wide-ranging definition of blasphemy, describing the bill as a "de facto clampdown on freedom of expression."

In June, Northern Ireland Justice Minister Naomi Long announced that new hate crime legislation, including measures covering hate crimes based on religion, would not be brought forward for at least two years. An independent review into hate crime legislation, including religious hate crime, concluded in November, with 34 recommendations made to improve support for victims, widen the range of protections, as well as opportunities for restorative justice. Northern Ireland Justice Minister Long welcomed the review report, stating the recommendations will help to strengthen and update Northern Ireland's hate crime legislation.

In July, the Christian Institute, a nondenominational Christian charity dedicated to the "furtherance and promotion of the Christian religion in the United Kingdom,"

criticized the hate crime legislation review and said the report would propose extending the definition of hate crime to apply to religious practitioners opposed to same-sex marriage ceremonies. In September, the Northern Ireland Office confirmed that legislation passed in July providing for religious same-sex marriages also included equality law protections, which shield religious bodies and officiants from charges of discrimination against same-sex couples should they refuse to officiate.

In July, the legal regulations required to hold the next census in England and Wales on March 21, 2021 were passed into law. Humanists UK raised concerns, arguing that “What is your religion?” is a leading question, as it presumes respondents have, or should have, a religion. Humanist UK’s Director of Public Affairs and Public Policy Richy Thompson said, “We are hugely disappointed that the ONS [Office for National Statistics], despite its own admission that the Census religion question is leading, has chosen to continue with it for the 2021 Census.” He said “Census data is used across the country to determine religion or belief provision in public services; from school places, to hospital services, to the provision of public services.” Humanists UK conducted a public outreach campaign to ensure that individuals identifying as nonreligious understood they should mark the “no religion” box when responding.

Section III. Status of Societal Respect for Religious Freedom

According to Home Office figures for the 12 months ending in March, there were 6,822 recorded offenses of religiously motivated hate crimes in England and Wales, a 5 percent decrease from the previous year (7,203 in 2018/19). This marked the first decrease in religious hate crimes since the year ending March 2013, when there was a 1 percent drop. There was no breakdown by type of crime. Where the perceived religion of the victim was recorded (in 91 percent of cases), 50 percent (3,089 offenses) of religious hate crime offenses targeted Muslims, and 19 percent (1,205 offenses) targeted Jews. Of the other offenses where perceived religion was recorded, 9 percent (531 offenses) targeted Christians, 3 percent (202 offenses) Sikhs, and 2 percent (114) Hindus. According to Tell MAMA, a national project that records anti-Muslim hate crimes, figures rose sharply in March 2019 immediately following the mosque shootings in Christchurch, New Zealand. Tell MAMA recorded 95 incidents in the week following the attack; in a typical week the total was 30-35.

In September, Tell MAMA released its annual report for 2018. The report showed the highest number of anti-Muslim incidents since its launch in 2011 and a

doubling from the previous year. In 2018, Tell MAMA recorded a total of 2,963 reports of anti-Muslim hate incidents, compared with 1,330 such reports in 2017. The 2018 incidents included 1,891 incidents recorded by police forces. Of the 1,282 incidents reported directly to Tell MAMA, 745 took place in person and 327 online. The report noted, “Tell MAMA has recorded a steady increase in street-based (offline) incidents compared with the previous reporting period of 2017.”

In Scotland, the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service (COPFS) reported 660 religiously motivated crimes in the 12 months ending in March, a 24 percent increase from the 529 crimes recorded in the same period in 2018-19. The COPFS cautioned against making direct comparisons with previous data sets due to a change in methodology.

The Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) reported 15 religiously motivated hate crimes committed in 41 incidents during 2019-20, a decrease from 22 crimes reported in the previous period. The PSNI additionally reported 622 sectarian crimes, described as religion being among the motivating factors, in 640 incidents during 2019-20.

The CST’s annual report recorded 1,668 anti-Semitic incidents during the year, an 8 percent decline from the previous year, yet still the third highest recorded in the CST’s recording history. January, February, and June saw the highest totals. Conversely, March, April, and December saw the lowest monthly totals. The CST recorded 634 online anti-Semitic incidents, a 9 percent decrease from 2019’s record total of 700, marking the second highest number of reported online anti-Semitic incidents recorded by CST over the course of a year. CST noted that the COVID-19 pandemic influenced how anti-Semitism was manifested throughout the year. Of the 634 online incidents, 19 were reports of educational, religious, or social virtual events being “hijacked” with anti-Semitic content or behavior. CST also recorded 41 incidents of anti-Semitic rhetoric related to COVID-19, such as conspiracy theories accusing Jews of inventing the COVID-19 “hoax,” or of creating and spreading the disease for malevolent and financial purposes, as well as statements wishing that Jews would catch the virus and die. CST noted that these totals were only indicative, as the actual amount of anti-Semitic content generated and disseminated on online platforms was much larger.

The CST recorded 97 violent anti-Semitic assaults during the year, a 39 percent decrease from the 158 reported in 2019. The report noted that this was unsurprising, given that COVID-19 pandemic restrictions greatly reduced social interactions. An additional three incidents were classified by CST as “extreme

violence,” meaning the incident involved potential grievous bodily harm or a threat to life, compared to one such recorded incident in 2019. There were 72 incidents of damage and desecration of Jewish property; 1,399 incidents of abusive behavior, including verbal abuse, graffiti, social media, and hate mail; 85 direct anti-Semitic threats; and, 12 cases of mass-mailed anti-Semitic leaflets or emails. Of the 72 incidents of damage and desecration of Jewish property, 45 (63 percent) involved damage to the homes and vehicles of Jewish people, compared to 53 percent in 2019. All of the listed totals were lower than those recorded over the same period in 2019. Approximately two-thirds of the 1,668 anti-Semitic incidents were recorded in the Greater London and Greater Manchester administrative regions – which are home to the two largest Jewish communities in the UK. The CST recorded 941 anti-Semitic incidents in Greater London, a decrease of 1 percent compared with 2019. The CST recorded a decrease of 31 percent in anti-Semitic incidents in Greater Manchester. The CST reported that the decrease in reported incidents was likely correlated with COVID-19 pandemic restrictions, but might also be due to lapses in information sharing between CST and the Greater Manchester Police. CST observed a broader geographical spread of anti-Semitic incidents in 2020 than in 2019. Elsewhere in the UK, CST recorded at least one anti-Semitic incident in 42 of the 43 national police regions. Several of the incidents were reported to CST by police via a national data-sharing agreement.

In July, Heshmat Khalifa, a trustee of the country’s largest Muslim charity, Islamic Relief Worldwide, stepped down after media reported his Facebook postings from 2014 and 2015 described the President of Egypt as a “pimp son of the Jews,” and Israeli authorities as “grandchildren of monkeys and pigs.” The entire board of the organization resigned in August when media reported that Khalifa’s successor, Almoutaz Tayara, and senior director Tayeb Abdoun had also posted anti-Semitic and pro-Hamas content online. Following the revelations, the Charity Commission initiated a compliance review that was ongoing at year’s end.

An attacker stabbed the muezzin of the London Central Mosque during prayers at the mosque premises on February 20. The victim survived the attack and was treated for non-life threatening wounds. London’s Metropolitan Police confirmed the attack would not be treated as a terror-related incident. The assailant, Daniel Horton, was apprehended by worshippers until police arrived. Witnesses to the attack said the assailant had been praying behind the muezzin before the attack and that he had attended the mosque previously. In response to the attack, the Muslim Council of Britain stated, “It is deeply concerning that this has happened. Given other recent attacks elsewhere, many Muslims are on edge.” Prime Minister Johnson tweeted that he was “deeply saddened,” and that his “thoughts are with the

victim and all those affected.” Mayor of London Sadiq Khan announced that the Metropolitan Police would be “providing extra resources in the area,” adding, “Every Londoner is entitled to feel safe in their place of worship.” On October 12, Horton, who had converted to Islam and had been attending the mosque in recent years, pleaded guilty to charges of wounding with intent and possession of an offensive weapon. No motive has been established for the stabbing; however, when arrested, Horton told police officers, “This is not a religious attack and is not a racist attack.”

In January, a 17-year-old from northeast England was sentenced to six years and eight months for planning terrorist acts between October 2017 and March 2019, becoming the youngest person in the UK to be convicted for this crime. In November 2019, following a six-week trial, he was found guilty of planning terrorist acts, disseminating a terrorist publication, possessing an article for a purpose connected to terrorism, and three counts of possessing documents useful to someone preparing acts of terrorism. During his sentencing, the court heard of his “admiration” for Adolf Hitler and fixation on the Columbine high school massacre. His attorneys argued that the defendant was autistic, citing a psychiatric assessment in which a doctor stated that the defendant’s “cognitive age was significantly affected by his disability.” At sentencing, the judge described the defendant as a “highly intelligent” boy who had “contempt for Jewish people, black people, gay people, and disabled people.” The teenager was also sentenced to five years’ parole after his release.

On October 2, the Birmingham Crown Court convicted a 17-year-old of plotting neo-Nazi terrorist acts between April and September 2019. The individual, who was a member of the neo-Nazi group Feuerkrieg Division, was found guilty for researching how to create a firearm capable of “smashing heads.”

On January 13, a Muslim woman was assaulted outside a youth center in East London. The assailants physically assaulted the victim and pulled her hijab while shouting anti-Muslim slurs. The assault was reported to Tell MAMA and the Metropolitan Police.

On January 16, a teenager who was found guilty of committing an anti-Semitic attack on a bus in March 2018 was sentenced to a four-month youth rehabilitation program, ordered to write a letter of apology to the victim, and fined 100 pounds (\$140) in compensation to the victim. The incident took place on a bus in Muswell Hill, North London, when the adolescent was 14 years old. The youth lit the victim’s hair on fire, and when confronted by the victim, asked, “Are you Jewish?”

You can't be Jewish because you don't have horns. Do Jews keep money under their caps?" The teenager also threatened to beat up the victim and destroy his laptop. The teenager pled guilty to racially and religiously aggravated common assault at Highbury Corner Youth Court. He expressed remorse and was required to complete eight hours of "activities" and one-to-one behavioral sessions with educational staff.

In August, a man in a pub in Leeds was recorded making anti-Semitic comments to a Jewish student. The victim, Danielle Greyman, said the altercation began over COVID-19 pandemic regulations on social distancing when the man questioned, "Are you Jewish?" Greyman then began recording on her cell phone. The man, Stephen Smith, appeared on video saying the victim "looks like a Jew," that he is "German," and then said, "We should have gassed the lot of you." A spokesman for West Yorkshire police told press police were summoned to the pub following "a report of a hate crime." In September, the UK Lawyers for Israel reported Smith received a criminal caution and was required to "attend offence related sessions" to address his behavior.

On January 23, several Jewish pedestrians were verbally abused in Stamford Hill, North London. The incident, in which a man screamed "Hitler did a great job in Auschwitz by killing all the Jews," was reported by Stamford Hill Shomrim, the Jewish volunteer neighbourhood patrol.

Throughout the year, several "sticker" campaigns targeted Armagh in Northern Ireland and Liverpool in the northwest of England. On January 30, the PSNI responded to calls complaining of anti-Islam stickers in Armagh. The stickers depicted a skull and crossbones that included the phrase "No Islamic Takeover," followed by an email address and website for the Neo-Nazi group "Combat 18." In February, stickers allegedly from the "Hundred-Handers" white supremacist group were placed around St. Helens, near Liverpool. The stickers, found in public spaces including a bus station, featured captions such as "This is our land," "No to Halal," other anti-Muslim messages and anti-Semitic messages. Local police stated that the incident was being investigated as a racially aggravated hate crime. In August, Hope Not Hate stated that Sam Melia, a former member of a number of far-right organizations who had become a supporter of the government-proscribed organization National Action, was behind "Hundred Handers," which it said "was an anonymous network seeking to provide a faceless avenue for far-right activism." In October, similar stickers were found on street furniture across Liverpool. The stickers included anti-Semitic messaging such as "Britain is under

occupation,” written across a Star of David and, “They are sexualising your CHILDREN.”

Several religiously motivated conspiracy theories surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic circulated online. According to a report by the Henry Jackson Society think tank, anti-Semitic conspiracy theories included claims that Jews used global lockdowns to “steal everything,” that Jewish public leaders used the crisis “to test the population’s willingness to comply,” and that Israel had developed a vaccine but was withholding it from other nations. Both Jewish and Muslim communities were vilified by media commentators such as Katie Hopkins, who alleged that Muslims were flouting lockdown restrictions and spreading COVID-19 by continuing Friday prayers at mosques. In July, the independent government advisory Commission for Countering Violent Extremism published a report in the wake of increased accounts of extremists exploiting the crisis to sow division among religious groups in the UK. The commission found that British far right activists and neo-Nazi groups were promoting antiminority narratives by encouraging users to deliberately infect minority groups, including Jewish and Muslim communities.

In late January, venues in Liverpool, Newcastle, Sheffield, Birmingham, Newport, Milton Keynes, and London cancelled events associated with U.S. evangelical Christian preacher Franklin Graham’s tour. The Scottish Event Campus in Glasgow cancelled his appearance following pressure from its primary shareholder, Glasgow City Council. Referencing what they said was Graham’s preaching against Islam and LGBTQI+ people, Green Party Member of the Scottish Parliament Patrick Harvie commented that for “Glasgow’s biggest publicly owned venue” to provide a “platform of hatred” would be “an offence against the values that make this city so great.” An online petition started by a Church of Scotland minister stated that hosting the preacher would “have the real potential of alienating a large number of the population that they serve.” The Billy Graham Evangelistic Association (BGEA) then began legal proceedings against the venue, stating that the decision discriminated against the preacher’s Christian following. The BGEA asked the Glasgow Sheriff Court to grant an interim order requiring the venue to hold the event; however, the venue refused to respond and the court case did not proceed.

In January, Port Vale Football Club (FC) soccer player Tom Pope was widely criticized on social media for posting an anti-Semitic tweet predicting the course of a hypothetical Third World War: “We invade Iran then Cuba then North Korea then the Rothchilds [sic] are crowned champions of every bank on the planet – the

end.” Port Vale FC published the following statement from Pope: “Following the reaction to my response on Twitter about the Rothschilds, I was unaware of any link between the Rothchild [sic] family and the Jewish community. If I have caused offence to anyone, I’d like to apologise enormously as this was never my intention.” The UK Footballing Association (FA) found Pope guilty of an aggravated breach of its regulation on abusive speech and sentenced him to a six-game ban and a 3,500-pound (\$4,800) fine.

In July, music artist Wiley made a series of anti-Semitic comments on Twitter, including: “Listen to me Jewish community Israel is not your country I’m sorry....The Star of David that’s our thing.... Some people have gotten too comfortable on lands that don’t belong to them”; “There are 2 sets of people who nobody has really wanted to challenge #Jewish & #KKK;” and “Jewish people are the law....Work that out.” His tweets were widely criticized, and Twitter’s initial lack of action was followed by a 48-hour boycott of the platform by many leading journalists and politicians. Wiley’s tweets were reported to the Metropolitan Police as potential hate speech, and both Twitter and Facebook banned him for violating policies on hateful content. The rapper’s Jewish then-manager, John Woolf, later “cut ties” and said he no longer represented the artist. Wiley later rejected the claims of anti-Semitism, saying, “My comments should not have been directed to all Jews or Jewish people.” He went on to apologize for “generalizing” and said he wished to “apologise for comments that were looked at as anti-Semitic.”

In October, women’s lifestyle magazine *Grazia* fired its “Diversity Champion,” author and blogger Stephanie Yeboah, for posting anti-Semitic comments. Yeboah tweeted on the 75th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau: “There have been bigger and more horrific genocides. They happened to brown people, though, so I guess it doesn’t matter, huh?” Other tweets included, “Every Jew has an attic but not every attic has Jews,” and “AUSCHWITZ Gas Chamber Music LMAO SMH.” Yeboah issued an apology that suggested her intention was to “highlight the lack of visibility surrounding many genocides,” but she acknowledged she “ended up diminishing the seriousness of the tragedies that the Jewish community have faced.”

In late August, sectarian rioting between Catholic and Protestant groups took place in Glasgow. A police officer was left with hearing loss and burns after being struck by a firework thrown during the rioting. On October 13, a Protestant man was sentenced to 16 months in prison for throwing the projectile, which was intended to disrupt an Irish Republican march.

In July, the Sikh Federation withdrew a threat of legal action against the Scottish government after receiving assurances that Sikhs would be listed as a distinct ethnic group on Scotland's 2022 census. According to the Sikh Federation, the push for designation of Sikhs as an ethnic group was motivated by the fact that "ethnic group categories defined in the census" are used by public bodies in different sectors in Scotland to meet their legal duties under "equalities legislation," whereas religious group categories are not.

On January 26, a swastika and a Celtic cross were painted on a Caribbean food shop in Greenwich, in southeast London, while another Celtic cross, the Star of David, and the word "Jews" were written across the facade of a Barclay's bank half a mile away. The leader of Greenwich Council, Danny Thorpe, condemned the "totally appalling and horrific" messages, adding that local residents were "worried and upset" but that the community would come together. The Greenwich council quickly removed the graffiti, and the Metropolitan Police opened an investigation. On February 4, more than 150 members of the local community staged a rally against anti-Semitism and racism. One of the organizers told the local newspaper that the incident was not "just an attack on the Jewish and West Indian communities, it is an attack on all of us."

COVID-19 pandemic regulations greatly limited opportunities for interfaith collaboration from March through the end of the year. In January, faith and belief communities came together to commemorate International Holocaust Remembrance Day and the anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau.

The Chelsea FC hosted a Holocaust Remembrance reception on January 15 to unveil a commemorative mural painted on the Chelsea stadium by British-Israeli street artist Solomon Souza commemorating soccer players imprisoned in Auschwitz. The event brought together prominent members of the Jewish community, parliamentarians, and players and leading figures from the Chelsea organization. In January, Chelsea became the first sports team in the world to formally adopt the IHRA working definition of anti-Semitism. Five other Premier League clubs subsequently adopted the IHRA definition: West Ham United, Crystal Palace, Bournemouth, Burnley, and Brighton.

Throughout the year, a number of universities adopted the IHRA definition; however, several from the Russell Group, which represents 24 leading UK universities, fell short of adopting the working definition in its entirety, despite pressure from the government to do so before the year's end. In September,

freedom of information requests submitted by the Union of Jewish Students found that only 29 of 133 higher education institutions had done so. In October, Secretary for Education Gavin Williamson wrote to vice chancellors stating it was “frankly disturbing” that not all had adopted the IHRA definition and accused them of “dragging their feet.” Williamson warned that the Office for Students could take regulatory action against the noncompliant, which could include suspending funding streams. Speaking to the House of Commons Education Select Committee in October, Universities Minister Michelle Donelan said she wanted “every university to adopt this definition.” An end-of-year tally by the Union of Jewish Students found that 48 of the 133 higher education institutions had adopted the IHRA definition.

In commemoration of the 75th Anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau, The Holocaust Memorial Day Trust ran a school project entitled “75 Memorial Flames.” The trust encouraged schools, organizations, and community groups to submit designs featuring a flame. More than 300 groups from across the country registered for the project, which aimed to bring persons from all backgrounds together to remember the six million Jews killed in the Holocaust. Seventy-five memorial flames were chosen by an expert panel of artists, Holocaust survivors, and the CEO of the Holocaust Memorial Day Trust, Olivia Marks-Woldman. Of the final 75 designs, only one was from a Jewish school.

The Board of Deputies of British Jews hosted a roundtable discussion in January, bringing together representatives from across the Jewish community to meet Dolkun Isa, the President of the World Uyghur Congress. The Board of Deputies Vice-President Amanda Brown said, “In the week that we are marking International Holocaust Memorial Day,” it is “intolerable that the Uyghur Muslims are being persecuted on this scale.” She added, “It is the responsibility of all of us in the Jewish community to stand up and make our voices heard in their support.”

On March 3-5, the Churches Together in Britain and Ireland, an interfaith organization, hosted a two-day interreligious conference entitled “Towards a Christian Theological Understanding of Inter-religious Participation: Challenges, Risks, and Opportunities.” The conference focused on situations in which members of faith communities cross the boundaries between their traditions to engage in the practices of other traditions, or to share in ritual activity with members of other faiths. In September, representatives from the Catholics Bishops Conference said that a number of interfaith initiatives occurred during the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown. These consisted mainly of information sharing, in

addition to working together to ensure that charitable efforts continued throughout the pandemic.

Section IV. U.S. Government Policy and Engagement

Embassy and consulate staff engaged with government officials, political parties, and religious groups to advance religious freedom issues, with a strong emphasis on digital engagement and use of social media, in response to COVID-19 pandemic restrictions. In June, the Ambassador spoke with Labour Leader Sir Keir Starmer to discuss the party's plan to confront anti-Semitism. Throughout the year, embassy officials met counterparts from the Foreign, Commonwealth, and Development Office; the Special Envoy for Post-Holocaust Issues, Lord Sir Eric Pickles; the government's Independent Special Advisor on Anti-Semitism, Lord Mann; and the Honorary President of the Conservative Friends of Israel, Lord Polak, in addition to Members of Parliament and advisors.

Embassy officials regularly met with representatives from a wide variety of religious groups and initiated engagement with organizations such as Humanists UK in an effort to broaden understanding of and messaging on freedom of religion and belief.

Staff from the consulate general in Belfast maintained regular contact with a wide range of religious leaders in Northern Ireland, conducting regular visits to diverse places of worship, as well as convening formal and informal gatherings to discuss religious freedom, tolerance, and the shared societal challenges faced by their communities.

On January 27, a senior embassy official represented the United States at the UK's Holocaust Memorial Day Commemoration Ceremony, held to mark International Holocaust Remembrance Day and the anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau. The official met with current and past Trustees of the Holocaust Memorial Day Trust. The Ambassador also used social media to mark the date.

In April, the Ambassador had a telephone conversation with Chief Rabbi of the United Synagogues, Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis, to pass on his best wishes for Passover and to show support for local Jewish communities during the difficult time of the COVID-19 pandemic. In May, the Ambassador called Ahmad al-Dubayan, Director General of the London Central Mosque, to commemorate Ramadan, discuss how the local Muslim community was coping with COVID-19 pandemic restrictions, and to underline the U.S. commitment to promoting religious freedom.

In June, the Ambassador hosted a virtual meeting with representatives of Jewish community organizations to discuss the Labour Party's plan to confront the issue of anti-Semitism within the party.

In May, the Ambassador and Ambassador at Large for International Religious Freedom gave remarks during a virtual iftar co-hosted by the Naz Legacy Foundation as part of its #RamadanAtHome series, the largest virtual iftar series in the UK. Other speakers included prominent faith leaders from the Muslim, Jewish, and Catholic communities, as well as the Church of England. Approximately 19,000 viewers viewed the Ambassador's remarks on the importance of promoting international religious freedom on platforms including Zoom, Facebook, and British Muslim TV. Aggregate audience figures for #RamadanAtHome totaled 76,700 livestream viewers, and globally more than 300,000 watched highlight videos on social media.

In December, a senior embassy official delivered remarks at a virtual Diwali celebration convened by the Hindu Forum of Europe. He said that despite "being faced with the difficulties of COVID-19, we saw people across our communities roll up their sleeves and get to work...to find new ways to celebrate." The senior embassy official said that the continuation of celebrations this year was a powerful reflection of the real spirit of Diwali, the spirit that light triumphs over darkness, and that such celebrations are "a reminder for all faiths – and none – that even during the darkest times, we will continue to find light and hope and joy in each other." The senior official also conducted a virtual candle lighting. The event included remarks from interfaith and secular leaders from across Europe. To mark National Religious Freedom Day, the Ambassador tweeted a quote from the President. The consulate general in Belfast hosted an interfaith dialogue on January 16. The event convened a diverse group of Northern Ireland's religious leadership representing the region's Catholic, Protestant, Buddhist, Jewish, Hindu, and Islamic communities to discuss shared concerns. Participants welcomed the U.S. initiative fostering interfaith dialogue.

To mark International Religious Freedom Day on October 27, the embassy created and tweeted a video highlighting the U.S. commitment to the promotion of religious freedom. The video included remarks made by the President and the Secretary of State. The video was viewed 3,285 times and was displayed on social media feeds more than 20,493 times.