

UNITED KINGDOM 2019 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 government created and filled two new positions dealing with religious freedom issues: an independent advisor on anti-Semitism and an independent advisor appointed to provide expert advice on a definition of "Islamophobia." The government also appointed a new special envoy for freedom of religion or belief. In addition to coordinating efforts among faith groups in the UK, the special envoy will play a key role in the UK's international advocacy for religious freedom and has been charged with implementing recommendations from an independent review into the Foreign and Commonwealth Office's (FCO's) support for persecuted Christians, completed in May. Following the Christchurch, New Zealand mosque attack, the government doubled the amount of funding from 800,000 pounds (\$1.06 million) in 2018-2019 to 1.6 million pounds (\$2.11 million) from 2019-2020 available to provide security at places of worship and related security training. This was in addition to a new five million pound (\$6.6 million) fund to provide security training for places of worship across England and Wales. The main political parties and party members faced numerous accusations of religious bias. The Conservative Party suspended several members who posted or endorsed anti-Muslim comments on Twitter. The Muslim Council of Britain (MCB) asked the Equalities and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) to launch an inquiry into "Islamophobia in the Conservative Party"; however, no inquiry was launched by year's end. Separately, after receiving a number of complaints, the EHRC launched an investigation into whether the Labour Party had "unlawfully discriminated against, harassed, or victimized people because they are Jewish." A BBC documentary reported allegations of anti-Semitism within the Labour Party and the party's and its leader's mishandling the issue.

The government reported a 3 percent increase (to 8,566 offenses) in religiously motivated hate crimes in England and Wales in the 2018-2019 period. The annual report of the nongovernmental organization (NGO) Community Security Trust (CST) recorded 1,805 anti-Semitic incidents during the year, the highest ever annual figure recorded by the organization, and 7 percent higher than the preceding year. This was the fourth year in a row in which CST documented a record high.

Among the anti-Semitic incidents were 157 assaults and one incident classified as “extreme violence.” There were a further 710 incidents of nonviolent abusive behavior. CST recorded 697 anti-Semitic online incidents, a sharp rise from 384 in 2018. The most recent annual report from NGO Tell MAMA (Measuring Anti-Muslim Attacks), which monitors anti-Muslim activity, showed 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. A European Commission (EC) survey published in September showed that 61 percent of respondents believed discrimination based on religion or belief was very or fairly widespread in the country, while 34 percent said it was fairly or very rare. A Special Eurobarometer survey of perceptions of anti-Semitism based on interviews conducted in December 2018 showed that 62 percent of respondents believed anti-Semitism was a problem in the country, and 44 percent believed it had increased over the previous five years. A number of interfaith initiatives took place throughout the year, including activities across the country during Inter-Faith Week in October.

Visiting senior U.S. government officials and embassy staff engaged with government officials and religious groups to advance international religious freedom issues, supported by a strong social media presence. In July and October, the U.S. Special Envoy to Monitor and Combat Anti-Semitism met with government officials and encouraged British Jewish and interfaith communities to continue to speak out against religious hatred and intolerance. In a roundtable with the Archbishop of Canterbury and other faith leaders in May, the Secretary of State welcomed input by faith leaders in the policymaking process. In April the Ambassador met with the top leaders of the British Jewish community to hear their concerns regarding the rise of anti-Semitism in the UK and Europe. In October the Ambassador co-hosted an event with the FCO to celebrate International Religious Freedom Day, joined by the Minister of State for the Commonwealth, UN, and South Asia. Throughout the year, the embassy’s social media messaging on international religious freedom reached approximately 170,000 persons.

Section I. Religious Demography

The U.S. government estimates the total population at 65.4 million (midyear 2019 estimate). Census figures from 2011, the most recent, indicate 59.3 percent of the population in England and Wales is Christian, comprising the Church of England (Anglican), the Church of Scotland (Presbyterian), other Protestant churches, the Roman Catholic Church, and other Christian groups. 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, and 7 percent chose not to answer. The 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 British 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 2014 Scottish Social Attitudes Survey found 44 percent of those surveyed did not identify with any religion, 21 percent identified as part of the Church of Scotland, 14 percent as Roman Catholic, 15 percent as other Christian, and 5 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 by 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 stated based on current statistical trends, there will be a Catholic majority in Northern Ireland by 2021.

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.

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. In Scotland the law requires courts to consider the impact of religious bias when sentencing.

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 (\$38) 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 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, unless they are employed by faith-based schools, teachers 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.” The Equality and Human Rights Commission (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 only 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 life and 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

The government, under former prime minister Theresa May and current Prime Minister (PM) Boris Johnson, announced three new government appointments to positions to advance religious freedom.

In July then-prime minister May appointed Lord John Mann as the government's Independent Advisor on Anti-Semitism. Then-prime minister May created the position to address reports of rising anti-Semitism in the UK. Lord Mann is responsible for providing the Ministry of Housing, Communities, and Local Government with independent advice on the most effective methods to tackle anti-Semitism. Lord Mann was charged with collaborating with the UK's special envoy for post-Holocaust issues and the Special Envoy for the Freedom of Religion and Belief to ensure a consistent approach across domestic and international policy and efforts on anti-Semitism. In addition to speaking publicly and making statements to the media on prominent cases of anti-Semitism, he partnered with several organizations to raise awareness of anti-Semitism in the UK, including the Chelsea Football Club's Say No to Anti-Semitism Campaign. In August new Home Secretary Priti Patel told the media that she would "stand up to the threat of anti-Semitism" in the country.

In July Imam Qari Asim, Deputy Chair of the government's Anti-Muslim Hatred Working Group, was appointed independent advisor to lead work to propose a definition of Islamophobia. The stated purpose of the appointment was to help strengthen government efforts to combat anti-Muslim sentiment by developing a formal 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 working group is the government's main forum for discussing issues of concern with Muslim leaders and the communities whose interests they represent and convey. It both disseminates and provides feedback on key policy messages and approaches. 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 FCO, and the Home Office.

In September the Johnson government appointed Member of Parliament (MP) Rehman Chishti as the new prime minister's special envoy for freedom of religion or belief. The special envoy was given a mandate to coordinate religious freedom efforts across the government, faith actors, and civil society; advocate for the rights of all individuals who are being discriminated against or persecuted because of

their faith or belief; and promote the country's stance abroad in favor of religious freedom. Special Envoy Chishti was charged with leading the implementation of recommendations from the independent review into FCO's support for persecuted Christians.

In January, then-foreign secretary Jeremy Hunt commissioned an independent report into the persecution of Christians worldwide and requested the Bishop of Truro conduct the research. The final report, released in May, stated, "Christianity is by most calculations the most persecuted religion of modern times." In addition to implementing the report's recommendations, the FCO team overseeing freedom of religion and belief was directed to "make freedom of religion or belief central to the FCO's culture, policies, and international operations."

In August Lord Ahmad, then serving as the prime minister's special envoy on freedom of religion or belief, read a statement from the prime minister at the UN General Assembly in which he underlined the country's commitment to freedom of religion or belief. The statement 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."

In March following the Christchurch mosque attack, then-secretary of state for home affairs Sajid Javid announced increased funding for the Places of Worship Scheme. The boost in funds included 1.6 million pounds (\$2.11 million) for protective security at places of worship. An additional 5 million pounds (\$6.6 million) was made available for security training to support the physical security measures provided by the places of worship fund.

The law continued to require religious accommodation for employees when it considered such accommodation feasible. The prison service recognized the rights of prisoners to practice their faith while in custody. 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. The Armed Forces Chaplaincy Policy Board was reviewing provision of chaplaincy for personnel of these religions and considering employing suitable chaplains in the reserve forces.

As of January 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. Of these, 6,179 were primary schools (ages three through 11), representing 37 percent of all state-funded primary schools, and 623 secondary schools (ages 11 through 16), representing 19 percent of all state-funded secondary schools. Church of England schools were the most common type among primary schools (26 percent); Roman Catholic schools were the most common at 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 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.

In October the Welsh government launched an eight-week public consultation on proposals relating to the future of RE and Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE). Proposed changes include renaming the RE and RSE lessons “Religions and Worldviews” and removing the parental right to withdraw children from the lessons. The Welsh action followed a 2018 report by the Commission on Religious Education that recommended reform of RE in England, Scotland, and Wales, including a name change to “Religion and Worldviews.” The 2018 report followed a 2015 high court ruling that as part of the General Certificate of Secondary Education (a nationwide syllabus and academic qualification pursued by all students 14-16), schools (other than faith schools) must teach all religious and nonreligious world views without bias.

The Conservative Party faced allegations of anti-Muslim sentiment and anti-Semitism. During the Conservative Party leadership contest in June, candidate Sajid Javid in a televised leadership debate urged his rivals to pledge an independent investigation into “Islamophobia within the party;” which they all agreed to do. In November PM Johnson apologized publicly for Islamophobia in his party and said an earlier inquiry into all forms of discrimination in the Conservative Party would continue. Shortly after the general election in December, PM Johnson appointed a psychiatry expert, Professor Swaran Singh, to

investigate how the party handled complaints of discrimination. Singh is a former Commissioner of the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC), the country's semi-governmental human rights watchdog. Then-Conservative Party chairman James Cleverly said Singh's appointment would help the party "stamp out unacceptable abuse." The Muslim Council of Britain (MCB) stated it was angered by the broad scope of the investigation into "discrimination" rather than specifically into Islamophobia and accused PM Johnson of breaking his promise. MCB General Secretary Harun Khan commented, "This appointment is at risk of being seen in the same light as the Conservative Party's customary approach to Islamophobia, that of denial, dismissal, and deceit," adding, "We were promised an independent inquiry into Islamophobia specifically." The inquiry did not begin by year's end.

In September during a session of prime minister's questions on the floor of the House of Commons, Labour MP Tanmanjeet Singh Deshi publicly called on PM Johnson to apologize for his comments about Muslim women in a 2018 opinion article. Johnson did not do so. In November, when asked by media if he apologized for the Islamophobia that existed in the Conservative Party, PM Johnson replied, "Of course, and for all the hurt and offence that has been caused."

In September the Conservative Party suspended several members, including at least one official, who posted or endorsed anti-Muslim comments on Twitter, one of which stated Islam was "the religion of hate." The BBC highlighted 20 new cases to the party. While the number of suspensions was not revealed, the party told media that those found to be party members were suspended immediately, pending investigation. After calling for the Conservatives to launch an independent investigation into the alleged Islamophobia since 2018, in May the MCB formally asked the EHRC to open an inquiry. By year's end, the EHRC did not take action.

Members of the Muslim community in Northern Ireland expressed concern that they could not apply for funding from the UK government's "Places of Worship Protective Security Scheme" because Northern Ireland is not included in the plan. They pointed to attacks on mosques in recent years as evidence that funding is needed to increase security. Leaders of the Belfast Islamic Centre reported excellent relations with local Police Service of Northern Island (PSNI), which they said reliably responded to calls and provided additional security at mosques during periods when mosques had additional worshippers, including Ramadan.

In October Conservative MP Crispin Blunt suggested in an interview that the British Jewish Community demanded “special status” regarding circumcision and ritual slaughter. Blunt supported calls for eliminating subsidies to the CST, an organization that provided security for the British Jewish communities and reported anti-Semitic incidents in the country. When questioned by the *Jewish Chronicle*, Blunt said the “Jewish community has a special place in Britain” and while the CST “does a good job in protecting” British Jews, his “anxiety is that we have got to get to where faith and non-faith communities all feel secure.” He added the country needed to get to “a place where the Jewish community does not feel the need to have its own security.”

CST recorded over 100 anti-Semitic incidents monthly during the year. The highest single monthly totals came in February and December and, according to CST, coincided with months when anti-Semitism within the opposition Labour Party was under particular scrutiny and the party and its leader, Jeremy Corbyn, faced further allegations of anti-Semitism. The CST stated it was “hard to precisely disaggregate the impact of the continuing Labour anti-Semitism controversy upon CST statistics, but it clearly has an important bearing.”

A poll commissioned by the Jewish Leadership Council in March found 87 percent of Jewish adults in the country viewed Jeremy Corbyn as anti-Semitic, compared to just 1 percent for former Prime Minister Theresa May and 21 percent for the leader of the far-right UK Independence Party, Gerard Batten. The same poll found 42 percent of respondents would “seriously consider emigrating” if Corbyn became Prime Minister.

In May the EHRC launched a formal investigation into whether the Labour Party had “unlawfully discriminated against, harassed, or victimized people because they are Jewish.” This was only the second such EHRC formal investigation taken against a political party. According to media reports, the EHRC opened the investigation based on complaints from party members, including Jewish members of parliament, about anti-Semitism within Labour. In a press statement, the EHRC said the party had committed to fully cooperate with the investigation. A party spokesperson reiterated Labour’s intention to assist the investigation and rejected “any suggestion that the party does not handle anti-Semitism complaints fairly and robustly.” The announcement was welcomed by the Campaign Against Anti-Semitism, the NGO that first referred the Labour Party to the EHRC in July 2018. At year’s end, the EHRC did not release any interim findings of its investigation.

In July the BBC's investigative program Panorama aired a documentary detailing allegations of anti-Semitism within the Labour Party and the party's alleged mishandling of the issue. The program focused on the testimony of eight former members of the party's Disputes Team staff and Jewish party activists who stated that the party leader's office's interfered in the handling of anti-Semitism cases; the general secretary interfered in the party's top disciplinary body, the National Constitutional Committee; and members suffered anti-Semitic abuse at Labour constituency meetings. The Board of Deputies of British Jews said the Panorama episode added weight to their concerns that anti-Semitism had been "treated with disdain" by the Labour leadership. The Labour Party sent a complaint to the BBC on July 4 stating, "The Panorama programme was not a fair investigation." A party spokesperson rejected the claim that Labour was anti-Semitic.

In October the Jewish Labour Movement (JLM), an organization affiliated with the Labour party, announced its refusal to campaign for Labour in the event of a general election, and it carried out this pledge in the approach to the December 12 general election. The JLM cited a "culture of anti-Semitism," but said it intended to remain affiliated to the party to "fight racism, rather than disaffiliate." The JLM adopted a policy to campaign for certain Labour candidates who "have been unwavering in their support" for JLM.

Three weeks prior to the general election in December, spiritual leader of the nation's Orthodox Jews Ephraim Mirvis wrote in *The Times* that the Jewish community was deeply anxious about the prospect of Jeremy Corbyn becoming prime minister if Labour won because he had failed to stand up to anti-Semitism, including in his own party. The same day Mirvis' commentary appeared, Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby posted on Twitter, "That the Chief Rabbi should be compelled to make such an unprecedented statement at this time ought to alert us to the deep sense of insecurity and fear felt by many British Jews."

During the general election campaign, the Scottish National Party suspended its candidate for Kirkcaldy and Cowdenbeath, Neale Hanvey, over anti-Semitic social media posts. Hanvey remained on the ballot as the party's candidate because the suspension came too late for changes to be made. He was elected with a majority of 1,243 votes and will sit as an independent Member of Parliament until a disciplinary process is completed. Observers stated that his election is thought to be the first time a candidate who was dropped by his party was elected as an independent.

In May vandals drew a 30-foot swastika on the side of the East London warehouse of Brexit Party candidate for the European Parliament and Jewish businessman Lance Forman, whose father was a Holocaust survivor. Police investigated the incident, but no arrests were made.

In March an Iranian Christian who said he converted to Christianity because it was a peaceful faith was denied asylum after a Home Office official used the Bible to argue that Christianity was violent and denied the applicant's request. The *Independent* reported the refusal letter cited several biblical passages, including the book of Revelation, to say the Bible was "inconsistent" with the asylum seeker's claim. The refusal letter said, among other things, "These examples are inconsistent with your claim that you converted to Christianity after discovering it is a 'peaceful' religion, as opposed to Islam, which contains violence, rage, and revenge." The Home Office then said the case of the Iranian Christian did not follow proper procedure and the asylum request was being reconsidered, with a resulting withdrawal of its refusal and a commitment to reconsider the application.

In March the Northern Ireland Humanists group publicly called for the repeal of the region's 1891 and 1888 blasphemy laws. The Catholic Church and the Irish Council of Churches responded by referring to a 2013 statement acknowledging "that the current reference to blasphemy is largely obsolete" and suggesting new legislation against discrimination and hate crimes could be introduced to provide more effectively for the freedom of individuals to practice their faith openly. All major political parties declared support for repeal, except for the Democratic Unionist Party, which stated antidiscrimination and hate crime legislation did not provide adequate protection for Christians.

In June the Northern Ireland Department of Justice requested a judicial review of hate crime legislation in Northern Ireland. At year's end the review was ongoing, with a full report due in May 2020. Northern Ireland was the only part of the country that did not have specific hate crime laws; rather, current legislation allowed for increased sentencing if offenses were judged motivated by hostility based on race, religion, disability, or sexual orientation. Crown Court Judge Desmond Marrinan led the independent review with the goal of extending coverage to marginalized communities currently not protected by legislation, including those discriminated against because of age and gender.

On July 30, the House of Commons Foreign Affairs Select Committee launched an inquiry entitled, "Human Rights: Freedom of religion and belief, and human rights defenders." The inquiry examined the FCO's human rights programs and

priorities, with a focus on freedom of religion and belief, and the work of human rights defenders overseas. The inquiry remained open to public input at year's end.

In May then-prime minister May and several former prime ministers backed a proposal for a new Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre to be constructed in Victoria Tower Gardens, adjacent to the Houses of Parliament. The government committed 25 million pounds (\$32.98 million) to the project, which was matched by a contribution from a newly established charity for the purpose. At year's end, the project was pending approval by the local planning authority and Westminster City Council.

In September the Foundation for Jewish Heritage bought a former synagogue in Merthyr Tydfil, South Wales with a grant from Cadw, the Welsh government's historic environment service. Cadw contributed 44,000 pounds (\$58,000), equating to 55 percent of the overall costs, towards the purchase of the building, which will be transformed into a Jewish Heritage Center.

Section III. Status of Societal Respect for Religious Freedom

According to Home Office figures for the 12 months ending in March, there were 8,566 recorded offenses of religiously motivated hate crimes in England and Wales, a 3 percent increase from the previous year. There was no breakdown by type of crime. Home Office statisticians said the increase likely reflected both a genuine rise in hate crime and ongoing improvements in crime recording by the police. According to Tell MAMA, a national project that records anti-Muslim hate crimes, the figures rose sharply in March immediately following the mosque shootings in Christchurch, New Zealand. Tell MAMA recorded 95 incidents in the week following that 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. The report noted two significant spikes in incidents in 2018. The first related to "Punish a Muslim Day" letters sent to Muslim homes, institutions, and places of work in March and April 2018. The second more significant spike occurred in August after then-former foreign secretary and current Prime Minister Boris Johnson wrote a column which likened veiled Muslim women to "letterboxes" and "bank-robbers." 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 September David Parnham was sentenced to 12.5 years in prison after admitting to police that he wrote letters encouraging individuals to commit acts of violence against Muslims by awarding points for anti-Muslim offenses.

In Scotland, the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service reported 529 religiously motivated crimes in the 12 months ending in March, an 18 percent decrease from the 642 crimes recorded in the same period in 2017-18. In the year ending in March, court proceedings commenced in 92 percent of cases. A spokesperson for the EHRC attributed the decrease to improvements in the methods victims used to report hate crime, but added more work needed to be done to give victims the confidence to come forward.

The PSNI reported 22 religiously motivated hate crimes committed in 46 incidents during 2018-19, a decrease from 41 crimes reported in the previous period.

The annual report of CST recorded 1,805 anti-Semitic incidents during the year, the highest ever annual figure recorded by the organization and 7 percent higher than the preceding year. This was the fourth year in a row in which CST documented a record high. CST recorded 697 anti-Semitic online incidents, a sharp rise from 384 in 2018.

CST recorded 158 violent anti-Semitic assaults during the year, an increase of 25 percent in 2018 and the highest number of violent incidents ever recorded by CST in a single year. Almost half of these were recorded in three locales: Barnet and Hackney in London, and Salford in Manchester. There were 88 incidents of “damage and desecration” of Jewish property; 98 direct anti-Semitic threats; 1,443 incidents in the category of “abusive behavior,” which included verbal and online abuse, anti-Semitic graffiti, and individual cases of hate mail; and 18 incidents of mass-mailed anti-Semitic leaflets or emails.

Almost two-thirds of anti-Semitic incidents were recorded in Greater London and Greater Manchester – the two largest Jewish communities in the country. CST recorded 947 anti-Semitic incidents in Greater London during the year, three fewer than the 950 incidents recorded in London in 2018. CST recorded a decline of 11 percent in anti-Semitic incidents in Greater Manchester, from 251 incidents in 2018 to 223 in 2019.

According to a Catholic news service, in late April in Glasgow, Scotland, two Catholic churches were targeted by vandals. Anti-Catholic slogans were painted on a bus stop outside of Holy Family Church and vandals entered the sanctuary of St. Simon's Church, smashing a statue of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and overturning a Marian shrine.

In January Ephraim Borowski, the director of the Scottish Council of Jewish Communities, said Jews were "actively considering" emigrating from Scotland because of rising anti-Semitism. He added, "In recent years there has been a very worrying increase in the level of anti-Semitism in the country." His comments led a number of Scottish politicians to call for a renewed effort to address anti-Semitism.

In February Jacek Tchorzewski, a self-described radical Nazi and Polish national, was arrested at London's Luton Airport on suspicion of terrorism offenses as he attempted to board a flight to Poland. Police recovered an "enormous amount" of digital documents, which included manuals on making explosives and weapons and material praising Hitler, neo-Nazism, and anti-Semitism and calling for genocide. In June Tchorzewski pled guilty to 10 counts of possession of information likely to be useful to a person committing or preparing for an act of terrorism, and in September he was sentenced to 4.5 years in prison.

In March Jayda Fransen, deputy leader of Britain First, a nationalist party widely described as far right, was convicted of anti-Muslim hate speech by a Belfast court after making remarks at a "Northern Ireland against Terrorism" rally held in Belfast in August 2017. Fransen was sentenced to 180 hours of community service. Britain First leader Paul Golding and two other English men, John Banks and Paul Rimmer, were acquitted on similar charges.

In April Israeli author Tuvia Tenenbom noted that during a trip to Northern Ireland, he asked patrons in a Derry pub about Palestinian flags flying in the area. The patrons responded by describing Jews as the "scourge of the earth" and Israelis as "child-murdering scum." At year's end, the PSNI was investigating the incident. Leaders and representatives from across the all main political parties condemned the comments as "disgusting," "vile," and "disgraceful."

According to The Daily Mail, an elementary school teacher was fired after telling Jewish students she would "ship them off to the gas chambers" if they didn't finish their schoolwork.

Mark Meechan, who was fined in April 2018 for posting online videos of a pet dog taught to perform Nazi salutes, was selected as a candidate for Scotland from the right-wing United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP) in the May European elections. He was not elected after UKIP won less than 2 percent of the vote in Scotland. During the campaign, media reports highlighted he had previously used Twitter to promote racist and anti-Muslim views.

In June a Belfast resident was sentenced to four months in prison after phoning in a death threat in March to a Muslim resident of Birmingham, England whom he had identified on Facebook.

In July the founder of the self-styled anti-Islamic English Defence League, Tommy Robinson, was sentenced to nine months in prison on contempt of court charges for interrupting 2017 and 2018 trials of mainly Muslim men accused of sexual assaults against minors. In 2017, Robinson had called the defendants “Muslim child rapists.” He was released in September after serving nine weeks in solitary confinement.

In August media reported Jay Davison in Cardiff posted anti-Muslim and pro-Nazi comments on his social media account along with photographs of himself holding a shotgun. A jury convicted him of one count of stirring up religious hatred and two counts of stirring up racial hatred. A judge sentenced him to four years in prison.

In late August and early September there were violent clashes in Glasgow on consecutive weekends between Protestant and Catholic groups during public processions. Approximately 1,000 persons were involved when marchers clashed with counterdemonstrators. Riot police were deployed to restore order. Police made 13 arrests, and one police officer was injured with a flare. Scottish government First Minister Nicola Sturgeon condemned the violence as “utterly unacceptable,” and the Glasgow City Council banned a further five planned marches. Police opened a criminal investigation; efforts to identify the rioters were ongoing at year’s end.

In March the Irish Football Association condemned an online video appearing to show Northern Ireland soccer fans chanting, “We hate Catholics, everybody hates Roman Catholics.” Sinead Ennis, Sinn Fein Member of the Legislative Assembly and party spokeswoman for sport, called on the Irish Football Association to “identify and punish those involved.”

In the fall, a couple who said their children were being religiously indoctrinated during Christian school assemblies entered a judicial review claim, supported by national charity organization Humanists UK, that Burford primary school in Oxfordshire forced their children take part in Christian prayers and watch re-enactments of Bible stories, including the crucifixion. The couple withdrew their children from the assemblies but said the school refused to provide a meaningful alternative of equal educational worth. At the time the children enrolled, Burford primary school was a community school with no religious character. In 2015 it became an academy and joined the Church of England's Oxford Diocesan Schools Trust.

In May the EC carried out a study in each EU-member state on perceptions of discrimination and published the results in September. According to the findings, 61 percent of respondents believed discrimination on the basis of religion or belief was widespread in the United Kingdom, while 34 percent said it was rare; 93 percent would be comfortable with having a person of different religion than the majority of the population occupy the highest elected political position in the country. In addition, 97 percent said they would be comfortable working closely with a Christian, 96 percent said they would be with an atheist, 96 percent with a Jew, 96 percent with a Buddhist, and 95 percent with a Muslim. Asked how they would feel if a child were in a "love relationship" with an individual belonging to various groups, 94 percent said they would be comfortable if the partner were Christian, 91 percent if atheist, 91 percent if Jewish, 89 percent if Buddhist, and 88 percent if Muslim.

In January the EC published a Special Eurobarometer survey of perceptions of anti-Semitism based on interviews it conducted in December 2018 in each EU-member state. According to the survey, 62 percent of residents in the country believed anti-Semitism was a problem, and 44 percent believed it had increased over the previous five years. The percentage who believed anti-Semitism was a problem in nine different categories was as follows: Holocaust denial, 53 percent; on the internet, 53 percent; anti-Semitic graffiti or vandalism, 50 percent; expression of hostility or threats against Jews in public places, 51 percent; desecration of Jewish cemeteries, 43 percent; physical attacks against Jews, 50 percent; anti-Semitism in schools and universities, 40 percent; anti-Semitism in political life, 56 percent; and anti-Semitism in the media, 49 percent.

In November the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) released the results of a survey on anti-Semitic views of the country's residents. The survey cited stereotypical statements about Jews and asked respondents whether they believed such

statements were “probably true” or “probably false.” The proportion agreeing that various statements were “probably true” was: 33 percent that Jews are more loyal to Israel than to the UK; 20 percent that Jews have too much power in the business world; and 18 percent that Jews talk too much about the Holocaust.

In December the EU’s Agency for Fundamental Rights conducted a survey of 4,731 individuals who identified as Jewish EU residents in order to understand their perceptions of anti-Semitism. Twenty-four percent said they had witnessed other Jews being insulted, harassed, or physically attacked in the previous 12 months, and 25 percent reported being harassed over the same period. Seventeen percent of respondents said they had felt discriminated against because of their religion or belief, and 88 percent thought anti-Semitism had increased over the previous five years.

In May the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland voted to adopt the working definition of anti-Semitism held by the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA). The move, initiated by the Reverend Dr. Richard Frazer, the convener of the Church and Society Council, highlighted that anti-Semitic incidents in the UK, per the CST report, were “at a record high for the third year in a row.”

In June bishops of the Church in Wales adopted the IHRA definition, stating, “We note that the IHRA definition itself does not preclude criticism of the State of Israel, and that legitimately holding the Israeli government to account is not anti-Semitic.” They added, “In making the decision we recognize the excellent relationships between faith communities in Wales.” The decision was welcomed by the President of the Board of Deputies of British Jews, Marie van der Zyl.

On November 6, the Chelsea Football Club adopted the IHRA working definition of anti-Semitism – the first English soccer club to do so. The announcement was made via a press conference alongside the prime minister’s independent advisor on anti-Semitism, Lord Mann. As part of the soccer club’s “Say No to Anti-Semitism” campaign, Chelsea played the New England Revolution team in Foxborough, Massachusetts in a first of its kind friendly charity match named “The Final Whistle on Hate.” The match raised \$4 million for organizations promoting equality and tolerance including the World Jewish Congress, CST, the Tree of Life Synagogue (Pittsburgh), the ADL, and the Holocaust Educational Trust.

In July the University of Essex announced plans to introduce mandatory training on anti-Semitism for university staff and to expand current “bystander training” for

students, to include anti-Semitism. The training was recommended in a review conducted by the university following anti-Semitic incidents earlier in the year, according to media reports.

Several interfaith organizations operated in the country, including Faith Matters, the Inter Faith Network, and Interfaith Scotland. Various interfaith efforts took place throughout the year, including an LGBT Faith and Coffee evening in Camden, North London; high school interfaith days in Scotland; and interfaith seminars throughout the country. During Inter Faith week November 10-17, organizations across England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland hosted events to strengthen interfaith relations at all levels, increase awareness of different and distinct faith communities, and increase understanding between people of religious and nonreligious beliefs. Interfaith Scotland hosted a cross-party Holocaust Memorial Day in the Scottish Parliament.

Section IV. U.S. Government Policy and Engagement

Visiting London in May, the Secretary of State stressed to Foreign Secretary Jeremy Hunt, FCO Minister of State for the Commonwealth, UN, and South Asia Lord Ahmad, and leaders from the major faiths represented in the country the importance of like-minded governments and communities working together to protect religious freedom. The faith leaders called for more collaboration between the faith community and policy planners to ensure freedom of religion is well integrated into foreign and domestic policy.

In July the Special Envoy to Monitor and Combat Anti-Semitism visited London and Oxford and met with key figures working to combat anti-Semitism, including religious leaders, government officials, parliamentarians, and representatives from the Jewish community. The special envoy stressed the United States views anti-Semitism from all sources – “whether the far left, far right, or radical Islam” – as equally abhorrent. He also delivered the keynote speech at the Institute for the Study of Global Antisemitism and Policy’s annual summer Oxford Institute for Curriculum Development in Critical Anti-Semitism Studies, and he addressed members of the House of Lords. The special envoy also spoke about the importance of unity within the Jewish community and the opportunities for interfaith cooperation on shared interests, including countering threats to religious slaughter practices, and security issues. In October the special envoy addressed participants at a global anti-Semitism event at the House of Commons in Parliament and met with the independent advisor on anti-Semitism. Discussions centered around perceptions within British society of anti-Semitism on the far left

of British politics, particularly accusations that the opposition Labour Party and its leaders had not adequately addressed allegations of anti-Semitism among its members, and the use of sports diplomacy to widen the campaign against anti-Semitism.

In April the Ambassador hosted a roundtable for Jewish organizations, including the Board of Deputies of British Jews, the CST, and the Jewish Leadership Council. Roundtable participants discussed challenges facing the Jewish community, including allegations of anti-Semitism within the Labour Party.

On October 28, the embassy hosted an event to celebrate International Religious Freedom Day and to honor the Hindu festival of Diwali. Approximately 100 guests, including senior religious leaders, government officials, civil society representatives attended. The program, cosponsored by the FCO and the embassy, featured speeches by the Ambassador and Lord Ahmad.

In December the Ambassador hosted a Hanukkah celebration attended by more than 100 members of the Jewish community, including several Kindertransport survivors, representatives of the Israeli Embassy, and representatives from other religious and nonreligious groups. The reception celebrated the Jewish Festival of Light and the hope it signifies for the future of the freedom of religion or belief.

In March the Department of State Special Advisor for Religious Minorities delivered a video message to the Retford Religious Tolerance Forum that highlighted the U.S. government commitment to defending the rights of individuals to believe, or not to believe, free from discrimination or violence.

The embassy used social media to promote the recognition of International Religious Freedom Day on October 27, including tweets highlighting the International Religious Freedom Act, the 2019 Ministerial to Advance Religious Freedom, and the Secretary of State's statement on the importance of promoting religious freedom and defending vulnerable minorities. Similarly, the embassy used social media to call attention to International Holocaust Remembrance Day on January 27.

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

Staff from the consulate general in Belfast maintained regular contact with Northern Ireland's predominant and minority religious leaders, 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.