

# UNITED KINGDOM 2017 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 stepped up security for Muslims and said it would spend 13.4 million pounds (\$18.1 million) over the following year to protect Jewish sites. The government outlawed groups Scottish Dawn and National Socialist Anti-Capitalist Action (NS131) as aliases for banned neo-Nazi group National Action. The Labour Party adopted new rules on anti-Semitism after the party came under criticism for anti-Semitic rhetoric by some of its members at the party's annual conference. The Labour Party extended the suspension of former London Mayor Ken Livingstone for saying Hitler had supported Zionism. Jewish leaders issued a manifesto calling on the government to take steps to promote religious freedom and tolerance and ensure the rights of the Jewish community. The government adopted the working definition of anti-Semitism of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA).

The government reported significant increases in religiously motivated hate crimes and incidents in England, Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland. Community Security Trust (CST), a nongovernmental organization (NGO) monitoring anti-Semitism, reported 767 anti-Semitic incidents in the first six months of the year, a record high for that period. Incidents included 80 assaults. The 1,346 anti-Semitic incidents CST recorded in 2016 was a record for a calendar year. London police reported significant increases in anti-Muslim attacks, to 1,260 in the year through March 2017, compared with 343 in the same period just four years earlier. Tell MAMA, an NGO fighting anti-Muslim sentiment, cited a rise in anti-Muslim crimes following terrorist attacks and after the EU Brexit referendum. There were multiple incidents of violence, arson, threats, and vandalism against religious groups. In June a man killed one Muslim and injured several others when he drove his vehicle into a group of worshippers leaving a mosque. Muslims were also victims of an acid attack and a stabbing. According to a National Union of Students survey, more than a quarter of Jewish students were afraid of becoming victims of an anti-Semitic attack. Another survey by two Jewish groups reported low levels of anti-Semitism, although 30 percent of respondents either held an unfavorable view of Jews or endorsed at least one of seven anti-Semitic statements

in the survey. There were incidents of religiously motivated hate speech against Muslims, Jews, and Christians.

U.S. embassy and Department of State officials engaged with multiple Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) representatives and officials at the Ministry of Defense, as well as with Church of England leaders and civil society to assess common goals of engaging religious minority populations at risk of radicalization and building religious tolerance. The Consulate General in Edinburgh hosted an interfaith Thanksgiving dinner with representatives of the Muslim, Christian, Buddhist, and Bahai communities in which participants discussed ways to promote religious tolerance in their communities.

### **Section I. Religious Demography**

The U.S. government estimates the population at 64.8 million (July 2017 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 as Hindu, 0.8 percent as Sikh, 0.5 percent as Jewish, and 0.4 as Buddhist. Approximately 25 percent of the population reported no religion, and 7 percent chose not to answer. The Jehovah's Witnesses estimate there are 137,000 members in the country, and the Bahai community estimates there are more than 7,000 members in the country.

According to the 2017 British Social Attitudes survey, an annual survey of approximately 3,300 persons throughout the country conducted by the National Center for Social Research, an independent, nonprofit social research agency, 53 percent of the population describes itself as having no religion, 15 percent as Anglican, 10 percent as Catholic, and 6 percent as belonging to non-Christian religions.

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

Census figures from 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 comprises 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.

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), the 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.

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.

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. The General Assembly consists of 850 ministers and clergy members and meets once a year for a week in May.

In England and Wales the law prohibits religiously motivated hate language, 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. The 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 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. 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 can 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.

Throughout the country the law requires religious education (RE) and worship for children between the ages of three and 13 in state-run schools, with the content decided at the local level. Specialist school teachers, rather than religious groups, teach the syllabus. Parents may request to exempt their children from RE. At age 13, students themselves may choose to stop RE or continue, in which case they study two religions. Nonreligious state schools 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.

Nonreligious state schools in England and Wales are required to practice daily collective prayer or worship of “a wholly or mainly...Christian character.” School teachers 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. Nonreligious state schools are free to hold other religious ceremonies as they choose.

In Scotland only denominational (faith-based) schools practice daily collective prayer or worship.

In Bermuda the law requires students attending state schools to participate in collective worship, characterized by educational officials reciting the Lord's Prayer, but 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.

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 the 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. 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, the Church of Ireland, and the 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 can issue a notice to the violator and seek a court order to enforce the notice. The EHRC receives government funds and must account for its use of those funds, but it 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 discriminate 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 out 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**

*Summary Paragraph:* The government stepped up protection for Muslim communities following a June attack outside a mosque and said it would spend 13.4 million pounds (\$18.1 million) to protect Jewish sites in the following year. The government banned two groups whose names it said were aliases of previously banned neo-Nazi group National Action, and police arrested 11 of their members. The government instructed prosecutors to treat online hate crimes, including religiously motivated ones, as seriously as other crimes and coauthored a guide for victims and witnesses of anti-Muslim, anti-Semitic, and other hate crimes. The House of Commons ended its examination of the role of sharia councils without issuing a report of its findings. In September the Labour Party adopted new rules against anti-Semitism after the founder of Jewish Voice for Labour, Naomi Wimborne-Idrissi, chaired an event where a speaker said people should be allowed to question whether the Holocaust happened. The Labour Party extended the suspension of former London Mayor Ken Livingstone for saying Hitler had supported Zionism. Jewish leaders issued a “Ten Commandments” manifesto calling on the government to take steps to promote religious freedom and tolerance and defend Jewish practices, culture, and heritage. Political leaders responded to the manifesto by expressing support for the Jewish community and pledging to combat anti-Semitism, intolerance, and extremism. The government adopted the IHRA’s working definition of anti-Semitism.

In March Home Secretary Amber Rudd said the government would provide 13.4 million pounds (\$18.1 million) to protect Jewish sites during the coming year. She said Jews had been identified as a “legitimate and desirable target,” and called anti-Semitism a “deplorable form of hatred.”

Police forces around the country stepped up protection for Muslim communities in following the June 19 attack on Muslim worshippers outside a Finsbury Park mosque, and the government assigned more officers to patrol near churches, mosques, and synagogues. Home Secretary Rudd pledged the extra resources would remain in place for as long as needed.

In June the Scottish government responded to a report on religiously motivated crimes that its Independent Advisory Group on Hate Crimes issued in 2016. The Scottish government accepted the recommendations in the report, which included the development of clearer terminology and definitions related to hate crimes and

prejudice, as well as a public education program to improve understanding of the nature and extent of hate crimes. The report had found “facing prejudice and fear remained part of the everyday life of too many people.”

On August 21, the Crown Prosecution Service issued new guidance to prosecutors to treat online hate crimes, including religiously motivated ones, as seriously as face-to-face hate crimes. The guidance did not require changes to existing laws. The move followed an unprecedented number of anti-Semitic and anti-Muslim hate crimes in the previous year.

In August the Crown Prosecution Service and the Department of Communities and Local Government coauthored a guide for victims and witnesses of hate crimes, particularly those motivated by anti-Semitic or anti-Muslim sentiment, with CST and Tell MAMA. The guide aimed to protect the rights of victims and explained the processes and procedures for reporting these crimes and how statutory bodies, such as the police and Crown Prosecution Service, worked with victims.

In September Home Secretary Rudd banned the Scotland-based Scottish Dawn group and National Socialist Anti-Capitalist Action (NS131) under the antiterror laws, and police arrested 11 of their members. The government said it had identified their names as aliases of the previously banned neo-Nazi group, National Action. Members or anyone found supporting the group could face up to 10 years’ imprisonment. Rudd stated, “National Action is a vile...anti-Semitic group which glorifies violence and stirs up hatred...I will not allow them to masquerade under different names.” On September 13, three alleged members of National Action – two British soldiers, Lance Corporal Mikko Vehvilainen and Private Mark Barrett, and a civilian, Alexander Deakin – appeared in court charged with terror offenses.

The government continued to provide religious accommodation for employees when it considered such accommodation feasible. Muslim employees of the prison service regularly took time off during their shifts to pray. 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 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. As of 2007 there were approximately 280 recruited chaplains in the armed services, all of whom were Christian, but the armed forces retained civilian chaplains to care for their Buddhist, Hindu, Sikh, Jewish, and Muslim recruits. The Chaplaincy Council monitored policy and practice relating to such matters.

The House of Commons Home Affairs Select Committee continued its inquiry into the role of sharia councils, examining how they operated within the legal system and resolved disputes and whether they discriminated against women by legitimizing forced marriages or issuing unfair divorce settlements. It also looked at best practices among sharia councils; however, due to disruption caused by the snap general election in June, the committee closed the inquiry early and did not issue a report on its findings. In parallel, The Home Office conducted its own inquiry and was expected to issue a report in early 2018.

As of January there were 6,813 state-funded faith schools in England. Of these, 6,176 were primary (ages 3 through 11) schools (37 percent of all state-funded primary schools), and 637 secondary (ages 11 through 16) schools (19 percent of all state-funded secondary schools). Church of England schools were the most common type among primary schools (26 percent of all primaries); Roman Catholic schools were the most common at secondary level (9 percent). Additionally, at either the primary or secondary level, there were 26 Methodist, two Greek Orthodox, one Quaker, one Seventh-day Adventist, one United Reform, 145 other Christian, 48 Jewish, 27 Muslim, 11 Sikh, and five Hindu state-funded 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 August a campus serving both Catholic and Jewish primary school children opened in East Renfrewshire, Scotland. The East Renfrewshire council built the joint campus, which brought together Catholic St Clare's Primary and the Jewish Calderwood Lodge, to address an increasing demand for Catholic education.

The government continued to require schools to consider the needs of different religions when setting dress codes for students. This included wearing or carrying specific religious artifacts, not cutting hair, dressing modestly, or covering the head. Guidance from the Department of Education required schools to balance the rights of individual students against the best interests of the school community as a whole; it noted 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 April the Church of England said parents should not be allowed to withdraw their children from religious education classes. Derek Holloway, the Church's lead on RE policy, stated students "must learn about other religions and world views so that they know how to get along with people from different backgrounds and beliefs," and those withdrawing children from RE lessons wanted to "incite religious hatred."

In September the Labour Party adopted new rules against anti-Semitism and other forms of hate speech, including "Islamophobia." According to the new rules, "no member of the Party shall engage in conduct which...is prejudicial, or in any act which...is grossly detrimental to the Party." The change was approved by 98 percent of voters and was expected to make it easier for the party to expel members who breached the new rules. The Jewish Labour Movement (JLM), a formal party affiliate comprised of Labour-supporting members of the Jewish community, proposed the change, backed by Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn.

The Labour Party made the rule change after Naomi Wimborne-Idrissi, founder of the group Jewish Voice for Labour, a network for Jewish members of the Labour Party which describes itself as "standing for rights and justice for Jewish people...and against wrongs and injustice to Palestinians and other oppressed people," chaired a side event at the party's annual conference in September. At that event, a speaker compared Zionists to Nazis and said people should be allowed to question whether the Holocaust happened, and participants cheered calls for Jewish and pro-Israel groups to be expelled from the party. During the same meeting, Michael Kalmanovitz of the "International Jewish Anti-Zionist Network" called for the JLM and the Labour Friends of Israel (LFI) to be expelled, stating, "What are JLM and LFI doing in our Party? It's time we campaigned to kick them out."

Deputy Labour Leader Tom Watson said the side event had "nothing to do with the official Labour Party Conference," and that he was sure the party would investigate the allegations made. Watson added that he would attempt to reassure colleagues in the JLM that the Party had no tolerance for anti-Semitism. Jeremy Newark, JLM's chair, told Sky News, "[Labour] allowed their meeting to become an arena for what effectively amounts to a call for Jews and Jewish groups to be purged from the party." Labour's shadow health secretary, Jon Ashworth, called for members who made "disgusting" anti-Semitic comments to be expelled from the

party. In response to these events, EHRC Chief Executive Rebecca Hillsenrath said, “Anti-Semitism is racism, and the Labour Party needs to do more to establish that it is not a racist party.”

During a hearing in April Labour’s National Constitutional Committee extended the suspension of former London Mayor Ken Livingstone for another year, until April 27, 2018. The Labour Party first suspended Livingstone in April 2016 after he said in a radio interview that Hitler had supported Zionism.

In January the Labour Party readmitted Ilya Aziz , a counselor in the city of Nottingham, after suspending him in May 2016 for calling for Jews in Israel to “relocate” to America.

In June a Labour Party election campaign banner in Bristol superimposed a Star of David as an earring on Prime Minister Theresa May, provoking accusations that Labour had tapped into anti-Semitic sentiment. A designer of the banner, Nina Masterson, told the press the earring referenced May’s support of Israel and was not anti-Semitic.

In July Member of Parliament (MP) John Mann, leader of the All-Party Parliamentary Group Against Anti-Semitism, called for action to be taken against “racists,” following the publication of a report written by pro-Israel blogger David Collier and funded by Jewish Human Rights Watch citing links between the Scottish Palestinian Solidarity Campaign and anti-Semitism in Scotland. The report stated there was a correlation between anti-Semitism and anti-Israel attitudes. Jewish Human Rights Watch commissioned the report in 2016 after protestors at a festival in Edinburgh celebrating Israeli culture chanted, “No to Brand Israel.”

In May the Board of Deputies of British Jews, representing Jews in the country, issued a manifesto in the form of “10 Commandments” to the government. The manifesto had the professed aim of informing policymakers about the most important interests and concerns of the Jewish community. The manifesto asked policy makers to: oppose extremism and hate crime, including anti-Semitism and anti-Muslim hatred; promote good relations among all communities; defend the right to a Jewish way of life, including kosher meat, religious clothing, circumcision, and accommodation for holy day observances; support efforts to remember the Holocaust and prevent any future genocide; advocate a permanent solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict; promote peace projects and resist boycotts; affirm the importance of faith schools; support religiously sensitive youth

and social care services; promote a just and sustainable future; and celebrate and support Jewish heritage and cultural institutions. The manifesto also highlighted that in 2016, the country recorded the highest number of anti-Semitic incidents since 1984.

Leaders of the Conservative, Labour, Liberal Democrat, and Scottish National Parties all delivered responses to the manifesto. Prime Minister May cited the Conservative Party's "zero-tolerance" approach to anti-Semitism and efforts to counter extremism and committed to delivering a Holocaust Memorial and Learning Center in London. She also denounced the Boycott, Divest, and Sanction movement against Israel. Labour leader Corbyn said, "We should all be deeply troubled by the rise of anti-Semitic, Islamophobic, and other racially motivated hate crimes," and stated his intention to work with the Jewish community to tackle discrimination. Liberal Democrats Leader Tim Farron reiterated his party's opposition to hate crime and proposed increasing money spent on policing. Scottish National party leader Nicola Sturgeon emphasized the importance of a safe and thriving Jewish community in Scotland and the collective responsibility to ensure there was no place for anti-Semitism in Scotland.

On December 12, 2016, the government adopted the IHRA working definition of anti-Semitism, which included examples of discourse that could be considered anti-Semitic. This definition was subsequently adopted by the Labour Party, the National Union of Students, the Scottish and Welsh governments, several local authorities, and used by the Crown Prosecution Service when assessing potential prosecutions for anti-Semitic hate crime.

The government is a member of the IHRA.

### **Section III. Status of Societal Respect for Religious Freedom**

*Summary Paragraph:* The government reported charges of religiously motivated crimes in the most recent 12-month periods for which data were available increased by 35 percent in England and Wales, to 5,949, by 16 percent in Scotland, to 673, and by 32 percent in Northern Ireland, to 29. CST reported 767 anti-Semitic incidents in the first six months of the year, a record high for that period. Police reported anti-Muslim incidents in London rose to a record high of 1,260 in the 12 months ending in March, a 367 percent increase from four years earlier. Home Secretary Rudd said figures suggested more than half of those experiencing hate because of their religion were Muslim. Incidents targeted Muslims, Jews, and Christians and included a killing and attempted killings, physical attacks, threats,

attempted arson, and hate speech. A survey by CST and a Jewish research group found low rates of anti-Semitism, although 30 percent of respondents held at least one anti-Semitic attitude. There were multiple incidents of vandalism against Muslim and Jewish sites.

According to Home Office official figures for the 12 months ending in March, there were 5,949 religiously motivated hate crimes recorded in England and Wales – 7 percent of total hate crimes – a 35 percent increase over the 4,400 crimes in 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. Police reported an increase in racially or religiously aggravated offenses in March, possibly connected with the March 22 terrorist attack on Westminster Bridge in London.

Relying on Home Office statistics, Tell MAMA cited a rise in racially and religiously motivated crimes in England and Wales following the EU referendum and the terrorist attacks on Westminster Bridge, Manchester Arena, and London Bridge in the first half of the year. The number of these aggravated crimes peaked at 6,000 in June, according to Tell MAMA, following a sustained spike after the Westminster Bridge terror attack. The number increased somewhat, immediately following the Finsbury Park mosque attack; however, the Home Office Report stated this was likely a continuation of the sustained increase after the London Bridge attack two weeks earlier. The number of reported crimes decreased shortly after the Finsbury Park attack.

In Scotland the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service reported 673 religiously motivated crimes in the 12 months ending in March, a 16 percent rise (581 in the previous year). The most recent figures included 384 anti-Catholic crimes (299), 165 anti-Protestant crimes (141), 113 anti-Muslim crimes (134 in the previous year), and 23 anti-Semitic crimes (18). Cases did not add up to the total number reported as some of the crimes related to conduct that targeted more than one religious group.

The Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) reported 29 religiously motivated hate crimes committed in 21 incidents during the 12 months ending in September, an increase of seven from the previous reporting period. PSNI cited 21 other religiously motivated incidents in the same period that did not constitute crimes, the same number as in the previous 12 months.

Anti-Semitism and anti-Semitic hate crimes continued to rise. CST recorded 767 anti-Semitic incidents across the country in the first six months of the year, a record high for January-June and a 30 percent increase from the 589 incidents recorded during the same period in 2016. The total of 1,346 incidents in 2016 was the highest CST recorded in a calendar year. Through June CST had recorded 100 or more anti-Semitic incidents for 15 consecutive months. For the January-June period, incidents targeted Jewish public figures (16), Jewish schools (22), synagogues (35), Jewish homes (51), and Jewish cemeteries (four). CST categorized 80 incidents as assaults, a 78 percent increase from the previous year. Three quarters of the incidents, 425 and 145 respectively, occurred in the main Jewish centers of greater London and greater Manchester. CST characterized 74 percent of reported incidents as “abusive behavior,” including 142 involving verbal abuse on social media.

According to CST, the increase in anti-Semitic incidents reported may have resulted in part from improvements in information collection, including better reporting from victims and witnesses as a result of growing communal concern about anti-Semitism; an increase in the number of security guards (many of whom the government funded through a CST-administered grant to provide security at Jewish locations); and ongoing improvements to CST’s information sharing with police forces around the country.

According to a July report by the NGO Campaign Against Antisemitism (CAA), there were 1,078 anti-Semitic hate crimes in 2016, an increase of 44 percent from two years earlier. There were 105 violent crimes reported, according to CAA, only one of which resulted in prosecution. In total, authorities prosecuted only 15 cases, leading to 17 convictions. CAA called for specific training and guidance on anti-Semitic hate crime for police and prosecutors, appointment of a senior officer in each police force with responsibility for overseeing responses to anti-Semitic crimes, and a requirement for the Crown Prosecution Service to record and regularly publish details of cases involving anti-Semitism and their outcomes, as police forces were already required to do.

Police recorded a continuing increase in anti-Muslim hate crimes. According to *The Guardian* newspaper, London police recorded 1,260 anti-Muslim crimes in the 12 months ending in March, compared with 1,109 in 2015-16 and 343 incidents over the same period four years earlier. According to Shahid Malik, chairman of Tell MAMA, following the Brexit vote, there was an “explosion of anti-Muslim hate both online and on our streets, with visibly Muslim women being disproportionately targeted by cowardly hatemongers.” *The Guardian* cited Home

Secretary Rudd as stating that figures suggested more than half of those who experienced hate because of their religion were Muslim.

*The Guardian* reported the number of anti-Islamic crimes in Manchester increased fivefold in the week after the May 22 terrorist bombing of the Manchester arena, with 139 crimes reported to Tell MAMA, compared with 25 in the previous week. Police statistics, according to *The Guardian*, indicated reported anti-Muslim crimes in June, the month after the bombing, increased to 224, compared with 37 a year earlier. According to the BBC, Wasim Chaudhry, the Manchester police's lead officer for hate crime, Muslims underreported hate crimes because of privacy and other concerns. On June 7, London Mayor Sadiq Khan stated police would take a “zero-tolerance approach” to hate crimes.

In August Tell MAMA, CST, the Crown Prosecution Service, and the Department for Communities and Local Government published a Hate Crime Guide to help those affected. The guide provided guidance on navigating the criminal justice system, reporting or reacting to hate crimes, and understanding the court system. The organizations repeatedly stated that as levels of reported hate crimes, including religiously motivated ones, continued to grow, the need for collaborative efforts to educate and inform those affected became increasingly important.

In September Scottish NGO Victim Support Scotland (VSS) said stakeholders should undertake a collaborative approach to tackle hate crime. VSS said tackling hate crime should mirror the approach to dealing with public health issues, where organizations worked together to support victims and their communities. VSS added there could be an overlap between racial and religious hate crimes; for example, anti-Muslim and anti-Semitic incidents could contain elements of both racial and religious prejudice and it was not always clear whether a victim had been targeted because of their race or religion. The VSS also stated the mixed motivation for hate crimes was relevant to those of an Irish background in Scotland. While the police would define such crimes as “sectarian,” the victims might not define themselves as being a victim of a religiously motivated hate crime.

In June authorities charged Darren Osborne, 47, with the terrorism-related murder of Makram Ali, 51, and attempted murder. Osborne was accused of driving his van into a group of Muslim worshipers outside a mosque in Finsbury Park in north London on June 19, while yelling, “I’m going to kill all Muslims...” Osborne’s trial was set for January 2018.

On April 1, individuals attacked a 17-year old Kurdish-Iranian at a Croydon bus stop after forcing him to admit he was an asylum seeker. The attackers chased, punched, and kicked the teenager until he was unconscious, leaving him with a fractured skull and a blood clot in the brain. *The Guardian* reported police arrested 17 persons in connection with the investigation. According to press reports, on November 9, three of the attackers were convicted of violent disorder, and three other individuals were acquitted of the same charge. A seventh defendant pled guilty before the start of the trial. Local MP Gavin Barwell said he was “appalled” by the incident, calling the attackers “scum.” Labour Leader Corbyn tweeted he was “absolutely shocked at the attack.”

In London on June 21, a man threw acid on two Muslim cousins, Jameel Muhktar and Resham Khan, while they sat in a car stopped at a traffic light in Beckton. Both suffered severe burns to the face and body; Muhktar was initially placed in an induced coma. Authorities treated the attack as a hate crime and charged John Tomlin with grievous bodily harm. On November 27, Tomlin pled guilty to the charges on the first day of his trial. His sentencing hearing was scheduled for January 2018.

In September a man stabbed Dr. Nasser Kurdy, an orthopedic surgeon and imam, as he arrived at the Altrincham Islamic center in greater Manchester for evening prayers. Kurdy suffered a noncritical stab wound in the neck, which required stitches. Authorities treated the incident as a hate crime and charged Ian Anthony Rooke with unlawful and malicious wounding with intent to cause grievous bodily harm and possession of a lethal weapon. Rooke’s trial was scheduled for March 2018.

In November a male attacker pushed a Muslim woman to the ground and pulled off her hijab. The police treated the incident as a racially or religiously aggravated hate crime.

On December 5, Marek Zakrocki, a supporter of the Britain First Party, was convicted of dangerous driving. On June 23, after shouting “white power” and giving a Nazi salute, he drove a van over the curb at Kamal Ahmed, who was standing in front of an Indian restaurant. When arrested in Harrow that evening, Zakrocki was carrying a knife and a Nazi coin and stated he was “going to kill a Muslim.” Zakrocki was remanded into custody, and a sentence hearing was scheduled for January 2018.



On May 9, police arrested a man waving a meat cleaver and threatening customers and staff at two kosher stores in North London.

In July police arrested a man armed with two knives when he attempted to enter a London synagogue.

In June unidentified individuals in a car threw a bag of vomit at two Muslim women wearing hijabs in another car in Blackburn.

In Manchester in November a woman shouted “black scumbag” and other epithets at a Muslim woman wearing a headscarf and spat in the face of the Muslim woman’s young son.

Sufia Alam, manager of the Maryam Center at the East London Mosque, said Muslim women reported being verbally abused on buses following the June attack at the London Bridge, including one whom an individual grabbed around the throat at a bus stop, and others whom persons verbally abused, spat on, or threatened with attack. He described the abuse as “part of the course of being a Muslim in the UK today.”

In August a man threw glass bottles and yelled, “Hitler was a good man” at two teenage Jewish girls in London.

In London on January 20, unknown individuals pelted a group of Jewish pedestrians with eggs as they returned home from Shabbat evening services.

In January St. Clare’s School in Handsworth prohibited a four-year-old Muslim girl from wearing a headscarf at school because it went against the school’s uniform policy. The city council said because the school was faith-based, it was within its rights to insist on a particular dress code.

In Surrey on June 24, suspects used hostile language against a group of Muslims who had just visited a mosque, then pushed and rocked the vehicle in which the group was travelling. East Surrey Superintendent Clive Davies said a thorough investigation was underway to identify the suspects and stepped up patrols in the area.

In June members of the Sikh Sewa Organization, a Sikh group that provided food to the homeless, said they had to flee the site where they were working at

Piccadilly Gardens in Manchester after members of the English Defense League, a group professing opposition to “global Islamification,” became abusive.

Police investigated two arson attacks on kosher restaurants in Prestwich, a Jewish area of Manchester. Shortly before midnight on June 2, two men approached the Ta’am restaurant and threw a milk carton filled with gasoline and a lit rag at the premises. On June 6, offenders forced open a window in JS Restaurant and poured accelerant inside and lit it. No one was hurt in either incident, as both restaurants were closed at the time of the attacks. Both restaurants reopened.

CST, which worked closely with police to help reassure and protect Jewish communities, increased security patrols in greater Manchester and the surrounding area following the Manchester and London terror attacks.

According to a National Union of Students survey of students conducted from November 2016 to February 2017, 26 percent of Jewish university students were fairly or very worried about being physically attacked, and 28 percent said they had been subjected to abuse on social media or other communication channels. Two thirds said they believed they had been targeted due to their religion, and the same proportion reported difficulties with classes and exams being scheduled on Jewish holidays. Almost half reported difficulties accessing kosher food on campus.

A joint study issued in September by the Institute for Jewish Policy Research (JPR) and the CST found not more than 2.4 percent of the country’s population held strong anti-Semitic views, while another 3 percent could be termed “softer” anti-Semites. According to the survey, 4 percent believed violence was often or sometimes justified against Jews, compared with 7.5 percent who felt violence was often or sometimes justified against Muslims. Approximately 30 percent of the population held an unfavorable view of Jews or endorsed at least one of seven anti-Semitic statements in the survey. The presence of anti-Semitic and anti-Israel attitudes were two to four times higher among Muslims than among the general population, but most Muslims disagreed with or were neutral about the seven anti-Semitic statements presented to them. The report concluded the levels of anti-Semitism in the country were among the lowest in the world. The findings came from the largest and most detailed survey of attitudes towards Jews and Israel ever conducted in the country. The JPR's researchers questioned 5,466 persons, including 995 Muslims, face-to-face and online in 2016-17.

In April Micheline Brannan, Chair of the Scottish Council of Jewish Communities, filed a complaint with the Scottish Parliament's Presiding Officer over an incident at Holyrood's Cross-Party Group on Palestine (CPG), a parliament-organized gathering of interested parties to discuss the issue of Palestine. Brannan stated the treasurer of the CPG, Philip Chetwynd, described her and her colleagues as "representatives of Zionist organizations" and "ideological terrorists" and asked them to leave the meeting. Other CPG members rejected the call for their ouster.

In August University of Glasgow rector and human rights lawyer Aamer Anwar, a Muslim, received hate mail and abusive tweets after he was interviewed on television following a Barcelona terrorist attack, where he narrowly avoided being hit by a van. Anwar said one of the messages was from former leader of the English Defense League Tommy Robinson, who called him "a lawyer for ISIS terrorist Aqsa Mahmood," while another read, "shame he didn't get hit by the van." Anwar said he had received death threats in 2016 after condemning ISIS and extremism and calling for unity in the Muslim community following the killing of a Muslim shopkeeper in Glasgow.

In August Cayman Islands news media reported a local activist, Kerry Tibbetts, had launched a campaign to replace the newly appointed governor of the territory, Anwar Bokth Choudhury, a Muslim, scheduled to take office in 2018. Tibbetts reportedly said the FCO was insensitive in appointing a non-Christian to the job. Also in August, according to the Cayman News Service, the local Christian community largely rejected the offer of a Toronto-based imam from the Ahmadiyya Muslim community, Aizaz Khan, to meet and discuss religion while he visited on vacation. According to the report, Khan said some Christians called him "scum."

Community organizing group Citizens UK, chaired by former Attorney General Dominic Grieve, released a report in July, "Missing Muslims: Unlocking British Muslim potential for the benefit of all," that recommended the British Muslim community appoint British-born and trained imams instead of foreign born ones and take a stronger stance against persecution of other faiths, including anti-Semitism and attacks against other branches of Islam. A racial equality think tank, Runnymede Trust, agreed with the report's findings and expressed hope it would stimulate debate. Leading website for Islamic and current affairs Islam21c.com criticized the report, stating there was "nothing radical or new about it" and only involved persons (Muslim and non-Muslim) who shared a particular establishment thinking and a stereotypical agenda about "Muslims as a problem community."

In March two street preachers in Bristol who told Muslims their God “did not exist” and called a crowd of shoppers “animals” were fined 330 pounds (\$450) each and ordered to pay court costs of 3,372 pounds (\$4,600) after being convicted of a religiously aggravated public order offense.

In September Chelsea soccer club sports fans sang a song about Alvaro Morata, a player on the team, that included an anti-Semitic slur reportedly directed against Chelsea rival Tottenham Hotspur, which has a large Jewish fan base. Morata told Chelsea supporters to “respect everyone,” and the club condemned the song, stating it would impose a life ban on any fans found guilty of joining in anti-Semitic songs.

Britain First, a nationalist party widely described as far-right, organized a “Persecuted Patriots Rally” in Bromley on November 4 to “show solidarity” with its leaders, Paul Golding and Jayda Fransen. In May authorities charged the leaders with causing religiously aggravated harassment in connection with a trial of four Muslim men, at least three of whom were migrants from Afghanistan, accused of gang-raping a 16-year-old girl. Authorities said that, during the trial of the four men, Golding and Fransen had distributed leaflets, posted videos, and harassed individuals whom they believed were associated with the accused rapists. Approximately 50 Britain First supporters turned out; they were outnumbered by a counterprotest organized by groups including Unite Against Fascism. Golding and Fransen appeared before Medway magistrates on October 17 and pled not guilty. Their case was adjourned to 2018.

Barbara Fielding-Morris, an independent candidate for parliament in the June general election, posted anti-Semitic comments on a blog from September 2016 to February, praising Hitler for trying to “clear” Germany of Jews and accusing Jews of being “cowardly.” Fielding-Morris pleaded not guilty to three counts of incitement of hatred. A hearing was set for February 2018.

In September a gasoline bomb thrown at the central mosque in Edinburgh caused a minor fire and damage to a door. Police charged 29-year-old Thomas Conington with arson aggravated by religious and racial prejudice. Conington was convicted in June and sentenced to a minimum prison term of three years and nine months.

In October Tell MAMA reported an attack on Shia gravestones in the Pleasington Cemetery in Blackburn. The NGO said the desecration of Shia gravestones in a cemetery where other Muslim headstones were not touched showed anti-Shia hatred.

In June individuals defaced the Thornaby mosque in Stockton-on-Trees with anti-Muslim graffiti. The words “Muslim Cowards” were found spray-painted on the outside of the mosque. Police investigated the incident as a hate crime but did not charge anyone. Members of the Stockton-on-Trees community helped remove the graffiti, and the mosque organized a community day to clear up misconceptions about Islam.

On August 24, a severed pig’s head was left on the doorstep of an Islamic center in Newtownards, Northern Ireland. The wall of the building was also vandalized with anti-Muslim graffiti, which the PSNI investigated as a hate crime. Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) MP for Strangford Jim Shannon and other local politicians condemned the incident.

On September 25, the Inverary Community Center in East Belfast was targeted with graffiti containing swastikas and stating, “No Muslims, No Blacks” and a severed pig’s head. The Belfast City Council, which owned the center, quickly removed the messages. DUP MP for East Belfast Gavin Robinson described the attack as “appalling.”

In December 2016, individuals spray painted the words “Saracen go home” and “Deus Vult,” a Latin phrase associated with the Crusades meaning “God wills it,” on the walls of a mosque in Cumbernauld, Scotland. Police treated the vandalism as a hate crime; they made no arrests.

In February the Jewish community in Belfast held a rededication ceremony for 13 graves that unidentified vandals had destroyed in 2016. The Belfast Lord Mayor and representatives from the two largest Unionist parties attended the ceremony.

On January 21, unidentified vandals threw a brick with images of swastikas and anti-Semitic messages through the window of a Jewish home in the Edgware district of London. On the same day, unidentified individuals defaced the personal property of a Jewish resident in Mill Hill in London with swastikas.

On March 17, a Belfast mural honoring the life of Lieutenant Colonel John Henry Patterson was defaced with the words “scum” and “Nazi.” Patterson was an Irish Zionist who commanded a volunteer force known as the Jewish Legion during World War I. The PSNI treated the incident as an anti-Semitic hate crime.

According to press reports, members of St. Editha's Church in Tamworth, Staffordshire, England, discovered anti-Christian messages on the walls and doors of the church in July. Messages said "God has failed" and "Deliver us from evil." Police stop-searched and interviewed two teenagers in connection with the incident.

There were a number of interfaith efforts throughout the year. In January a London synagogue raised money to house a Muslim refugee family in the synagogue. In March an estimated 1,500 Jews participated in the Sadaqa Day of Muslim-led social action, according to British newspaper *Jewish News*. Muslims in turn participated in Mitzvah Day, the sister initiative to the Muslim event. Muslims and Jews collaborated on 15 joint Sadaqa Day and Mitzvah Day projects. Also in March Muslim youth, police officers, and hundreds of others linked hands on Westminster Bridge in honor of those who died in the Westminster terror attack. Children held signs which read, "Islam says no to terror."

#### **Section IV. U.S. Government Policy and Engagement**

In March U.S. embassy and Department of State officials engaged with multiple FCO and Ministry of Defense representatives to assess common goals for engaging religious minority populations at risk of radicalization, building religious tolerance, and preventing recruitment by violent extremist groups.

The embassy facilitated three two-way exchange programs during the year to bring together religious leaders, police officers, academics, local government representatives, and Home Office officials to discuss issues surrounding religious tolerance and combating the risk of violent extremism among members of religious minorities and to share best practices. Partnered cities included London and Los Angeles, Birmingham and Denver, and Manchester and Boston. Participants from each city visited their partner city before hosting a delegation in return.

The Consulate General in Belfast invited religious leaders on April 3 to discuss challenges in their communities, including those pertaining to religious freedom and tolerance. Catholic, Protestant, Jewish, and Muslim leaders participated.

On November 20, the Consulate General in Edinburgh hosted an interfaith Thanksgiving dinner. Consulate general staff and representatives of the Muslim, Christian, Buddhist, and Bahai communities discussed the importance of collective group efforts to promote religious tolerance in their specific communities, and how to include and recruit the next generation to work for religious freedom.