

UNITED KINGDOM 2022 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 or belief. The law requires religious education (RE) and worship for children between the ages of three and 18 in state-run schools, although there are opt out provisions.

In November, a court convicted Abdullah Qureshi of assaulting three Orthodox Jews in two separate attacks in August. The court postponed sentencing to early 2023 pending a mental health evaluation. Media outlets reported that as of year's end, the Scottish government had not implemented hate crimes legislation passed in 2021, although police encouraged victims to report incidents and said these would be investigated. The law remained contentious among the public and the police force. At year's end, Parliament had not adopted a working definition of "Islamophobia"; critics said the lack of a definition hindered efforts to fight anti-Muslim sentiment and incidents. After a two-year consultation, the University of Aberdeen decided in October to adopt the Jerusalem Declaration of Antisemitism (JDA) rather than the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) Working Definition of Antisemitism, saying the JDA offered "a fairer and clearer definition and set of guidelines." In October, the nongovernmental organization (NGO) National Secular Society publicly called on the government to repeal blasphemy laws in Northern Ireland.

Under the Places of Worship Scheme, which applied to England, Scotland, and Wales, the government provided £24.5 million (\$29.5 million) to Muslim places of worship and schools to fund enhanced security measures and £3.5 million (\$4.2 million) to other religious communities for increased security at places of worship

and associated faith-based, group-run community centers. The government introduced a separate new program to provide additional protection to Muslim schools. It also provided £14 million (\$17 million) between April 2021 and March 2022 through the NGO Community Security Trust (CST) to provide security at Jewish institutions, including schools and synagogues. NGOs called for a Places of Worship Scheme to be introduced in Northern Ireland.

The main political parties continued to address or face accusations of religious bias. Conservative MP and government minister Nusrat Ghani told the press she was fired from her previous ministerial position because her “Muslimness” made colleagues uncomfortable. The NGO Humanists UK stated that nonreligious belief (i.e., humanist) marriages, which are legally recognized in Scotland and Northern Ireland, should receive legal recognition in England and Wales and that the state should increase the availability of nonpastoral support in prisons and hospitals. In a November statement, Humanists UK chief executive Andrew Copson said the results of the 2021 census showing that 37 percent of the population in England and Wales stated they had “no religion” “should be a wake-up call which prompts fresh reconsiderations of the role of religion in society.” The NGO Humanist Society Scotland urged people who did not believe in or practice a religion to select “No religion” on the 2022 Scottish census.

In May, the Department for Education suspended engagement with and funding for the National Union of Students (NUS) over long-running allegations of antisemitism in the organization, despite the NUS’s pledge to work with Jewish students on an internal investigation. In November, the communications regulator Ofcom found the BBC had made a “serious editorial misjudgment” in its coverage of a November 2021 antisemitic incident in London. A rabbi who was a longtime contributor to BBC programming resigned in January over the broadcaster’s handling of the incident. Numerous public officials, including the Scottish First Minister and the Prime Minister’s Special Envoy for Freedom of Religion or Belief, made public statements supporting religious freedom. In July, the country hosted the International Ministerial Conference on Freedom of

Religion or Belief, which brought together representatives from governments, Parliament, religious and belief groups, and civil society.

The government reported 8,730 religiously motivated hate crimes in England and Wales between March 2021 and March 2022, a 37 percent increase from one year prior. Where the victim's perceived or known religion was recorded, 40 percent of religious hate crime offenses targeted Muslims, 21 percent targeted Jews, and 8 percent targeted Christians. Other targeted groups included Hindus and Sikhs. The Home Office said the increase in incidents could reflect a real increase in hate crime, improvements in reporting, or the lower levels of incidents that occurred during the previous reporting year, when the country was under COVID-19 restrictions. In Scotland, the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service (COPFS) reported 512 religiously motivated crimes in the 12 months ending in March, a 16 percent decrease from the year prior. In Northern Ireland, police reported 54 religiously motivated hate crimes during 2021-22, an increase from 37 crimes reported in 2020-2021, and 780 sectarian crimes where religion was described as being among the motivating factors, a slight decrease from the year prior.

In March, the NGO Campaign Against Antisemitism published its *Antisemitism Barometer 2021*, which found that 22 percent of 1,768 Jews surveyed said they felt somewhat or very unwelcome in the country and 46 percent said they did not display visible signs of their Judaism in public due to antisemitism. The survey also found that 57 percent of 1,790 non-Jewish respondents did not hold antisemitic views. CST's annual report recorded 1,652 antisemitic incidents during the year, including assault, threats, graffiti, damage or desecration of property, and hate mail. In June, the NGOs Muslim Engagement and Development (MEND) and Muslim Census published a survey of 113 mosques (representing 6 percent of mosques in the country), in which 42 percent reported they had experienced religiously motivated incidents since 2019. The incidents involved violence, threats, vandalism, and theft. In June, the Scottish-based data research firm Savanta published a survey that found 69 percent of employed Muslims reported some sort of anti-Muslim behavior during work-related

encounters, and Black Muslims reported experiencing the highest incidence of workplace anti-Muslim discrimination. In April, a coalition of Christian organizations published a study that found non-Christians had a more negative view of the “Christian Church” than of individual Christians they knew.

U.S. embassy and consulate general staff in Scotland, Northern Ireland, and Bermuda engaged with government officials and political parties as well as a broad spectrum of religious communities and civil society groups, including humanist groups, to broaden understanding of, and advocacy for, freedom of religion and belief. Senior State Department officials, including the U.S. Special Envoy to Monitor and Combat Antisemitism, and the U.S. Ambassador-at-Large for International Religious Freedom, visited the country during the year to engage with government, religious, and civil society representatives to promote religious freedom and counter antisemitism.

Section I. Religious Demography

The U.S. government estimates the total population at 67.8 million (midyear 2022). National census figures from 2021 indicate 46.2 percent of the population in England and Wales are Christian. Of the remaining population, 6.5 percent identify as Muslim; 1.7 percent as Hindu; 0.9 percent as Sikh; 0.5 percent as Jewish; and 0.5 as Buddhist. Approximately 37 percent of the population reported no religious affiliation, 0.6 percent said they belonged to other religious groups, and 6 percent chose not to answer the optional question, “What is your religion?” The government report *Religion, England and Wales: Census 2021* stated, “For the first time in a census of England and Wales, less than half of the population ... described themselves as Christian.”

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

A 2017 Scottish government survey found 58 percent of those surveyed did not identify with any religion, 18 percent identified as belonging to the Church of Scotland, 10 percent as Catholic, 11 percent as other Christian, and 2 percent as non-Christian.

According to the 2021 Northern Ireland census, 42.3 percent of residents identified as Catholic, while 37.5 percent are Protestant (compared with 48 percent in the 2011 census). This represents the first time in the region's history when it has a Catholic-plurality population. Census figures indicate 16.6 percent of the population identify as Presbyterian, 11.6 percent as Church of Ireland, 2.4 percent as Methodist, 6.9 percent as other Christian denominations, 1.3 percent as belonging to other religions, and 17.4 percent as having no religion; 1.6 percent chose not to answer the question.

Census figures from Bermuda in 2010 (the most recent for which religious demographic data are available) cited 22 religious groups in the population of 71,000. 78 percent identify as Christian, including 16 percent Anglican, 15 percent Catholic, 9 percent African Methodist Episcopal, and 7 percent Seventh-day Adventist. Approximately 2 percent identify 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, with the monarch as its head. 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 monarch for spiritual matters or leadership.

The 1998 Human Rights Act 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, which provides for 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 church administration. The Church of Scotland is governed by its General Assembly, which has the authority to make laws determining how it operates.

Blasphemy and blasphemous libel remain criminal offenses in Northern Ireland under common law. To date, however, there have been no convictions for blasphemy or blasphemous libel there. These laws prohibit "composing, printing, or publishing any blasphemous libel or any seditious libel tending to bring into hatred ... any matter in Church or State." The law applies only to Christianity.

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 2021, the Scottish Parliament passed legislation that criminalized “stirring up hate” on the basis of, among other things, religion or perceived religious affiliation.

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

By law, the General Register Office for England and Wales governs the registration and legal recognition of places of worship in England and Wales. A representative of the congregation, for example, a proprietor, trustee, or religious head, must complete and submit an application form and pay a fee of £29 (\$35) 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 one quarter. The law only applies in England and Wales.

The law requires 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 be nondenominational and refrain from attempting to convert students. RE instruction must also include the practices of principal non-Christian religions in the country. All schools not designated as religious, whether private or state run, must maintain neutrality in their interpretation of the RE syllabus and 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 that their children not participate in collective prayer or worship. Teachers, unless they are employed by faith-based schools, may decline participation in collective worship, without prejudice. 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 for 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 belief 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 occasions, including Christmas and Easter. Parents or legal guardians may elect to have their children opt out from this requirement, but students may not make this decision themselves.

In Bermuda, by law, students attending state schools may participate in collective worship, characterized by educational officials as reciting the Lord's Prayer, but the law 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. There is one primary school that follows Islamic principles.

In England and Wales, 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. Faith-based schools must follow the national curriculum but may choose what to teach in religious studies. They also have different admissions criteria and staffing policies, which may relate to religious beliefs, from state schools. 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. Independent (private) faith-based schools are eligible to claim “charitable status,” which allows for tax exemptions.

In Scotland, local authorities may establish a denominational school for any denomination or faith if they are satisfied that such a school is required, either in response to representations made to them by any church or denominational body acting on behalf of parents, or on their own initiative. These schools are run in the same way as nondenominational state schools, except that special time may be set aside for religious services, and an unpaid religious supervisor reports to the local authority on the religious instruction in the school. Independent faith-based schools are eligible for some tax exemptions, such as Gift Aid.

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 that have admissions criteria designed to enroll equal numbers of Catholic and Protestant children as well as children from other religious and cultural backgrounds. Students of different faiths may attend Protestant or Catholic schools but tend to gravitate toward the integrated schools. These integrated schools are not secular but, according to the Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education, are “essentially Christian in character and welcome all faiths and none.” RE – a core syllabus designed by the Northern Ireland Department of Education, Church of Ireland, and Catholic, Presbyterian, and Methodist Churches – is compulsory in all government-funded schools, and by law each school day must include collective Christian worship. All schools receiving government funding must teach RE; however, students may opt out of the classes and collective worship. Catholic-managed schools draw on the Catholic tradition for their RE, while other schools may draw on world religions.

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

have legal status as mediation and arbitration bodies. As such, rulings may not be appealed in the courts.

The law prohibits discrimination on the grounds of religion or belief or the lack of religion or belief and requires “reasonable” religious accommodation in the workplace for employees. The Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) is responsible for enforcing legislation prohibiting religious and other 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 EHRC finds a violation, it has a range of powers at its disposal, including offering guidance or initiating court proceedings, resulting in binding, legally enforceable judgments. The EHRC receives government funds but operates independently. The Northern Ireland equivalent to the EHRC is the Equality Commission.

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

There are separate legal regimes for civil marriage and civil partnerships. Civil partnerships are formed when parties sign and register a civil partnership document, with no words required to be spoken. Civil marriages are solemnized by saying a prescribed set of vows. In England, Northern Ireland, and Wales, civil partnership ceremonies must be nonreligious. They must not include religious music or readings and must be free of obvious, specifically religious connotations. In Scotland, civil partnership ceremonies may be conducted by religious or humanist leaders. Nonreligious belief (i.e., humanist) marriages are legally recognized in Scotland and Northern Ireland but not in England and Wales, where “religious” marriages must take place in registered places of worship. In England and Wales, humanists must have a civil marriage alongside any humanist wedding if they want to be legally married. There are four categories of religious marriage:

Church of England and Church in Wales, Jewish, Quaker, and others (e.g., Muslim or Hindu). Anglican marriages must be conducted by a member of the clergy, who registers the marriage. Jewish and Quaker marriages are conducted in accordance with appropriate religious rites, and the officiant registers the marriage. Other religious marriages must take place in a registered place of worship, have at least two witnesses present, and include the necessary declarations; a registrar or a person certified by the registrar general (e.g., the imam) must then register the marriage.

In Bermuda, laws support the legality of religious marriages, including Christian, Jewish, Muslim, and Baha'i marriages. The law supports civil unions for heterosexual and same-sex couples. Ceremonies must be performed by the registrar general, deputy registrar, or domestic partnership officer, with two witnesses.

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 a group to offer multiple channels as part of a single bundle of programming.

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

The law requires visa applicants wishing to enter the country as "ministers of religion" to have a certificate of sponsorship for their job from a bona fide religious organization, proof of their knowledge of English, personal savings, and a travel history over the last year. The law defines "minister of religion" as a religious functionary whose main regular duties include leading a congregation in performing the rites and rituals of the faith and in preaching the essentials of the creed. "Minister of religion" includes anyone doing preaching and pastoral work or coming to the country as a missionary or member of a religious order.

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

Government Practices

Media outlets reported that in November, the Stratford Magistrate's Court convicted Abdullah Qureshi of three counts of inflicting religiously aggravated grievous bodily harm and two counts of religiously aggravated assault. On August 18, Qureshi carried out two separate attacks against three Orthodox Jews: two adults on their way to synagogue in one incident and a 14-year-old boy walking to school in another. Qureshi told the court it was "just a coincidence" his three victims were all wearing traditional Orthodox Jewish clothing, but the court rejected this argument. The court postponed sentencing until early 2023 pending a mental health evaluation.

Media outlets reported that as of year's end, the Scottish government had not implemented hate crimes legislation passed in 2021. In March, Police Scotland issued a press release appealing for anyone who has been targeted by hate crime to come forward. In September, Police Scotland provided a progress report to the Scottish Parliament's Policing Performance Committee on its continued efforts to implement Police Scotland's Hate Crime Improvement Plan. The report stated, "Our inability to implement the new Hate Crime and Public Order Act, and ensure our duties with respect to providing data to Scottish government, will have significant public confidence impacts, particularly as the Act is extremely contentious in parts of society." On October 17, the Scottish Parliament published its *2022 Universal Periodic Review*, in which it reiterated its commitment to "to tackle all forms of hatred and prejudice," including those based on religion, and "encourage[d] anyone who has experienced or witnessed a hate crime or incident to report it directly to the police or by using a third-party reporting center."

During the year, the National Secular Society (NSS) conducted an online campaign encouraging citizens to lobby the Northern Ireland Legislative Assembly to repeal

the region's blasphemy laws, stating such laws were "illiberal, anachronistic, and incompatible with the fundamental human rights to freedom of expression and freedom of religion or belief." According to sources, all major political parties in Northern Ireland supported repeal except for the Democratic Unionist Party, Northern Ireland's second largest political party.

As of year's end, the UK Parliament had not adopted a working definition of "Islamophobia." In June, the government dismissed Imam Qari Asim, the deputy chair of the government's Anti-Muslim Hatred Working Group, from his independent advisory role due to controversial statements he made regarding a film about the Prophet Muhammad's daughter, Aisha. The government had appointed him as an advisor in 2019 to propose a new working definition after the government rejected the then proposed working definition. That definition stated, "Islamophobia is rooted in racism and is a type of racism that targets expressions of Muslimness or perceived Muslimness." At the time, the chair of the National Police Chiefs' Council said the proposed definition was "too broad... and could be used to challenge legitimate free speech." The government and Muslim groups established the Anti-Muslim Hatred Working Group in 2012 to develop and implement proposals to address anti-Muslim sentiment in the country, although government sources said the group had never met. The government had not appointed a replacement for Asim by year's end.

After a two-year consultation, the University of Aberdeen decided in October to adopt the JDA rather than the IHRA's non-legally binding Working Definition of Antisemitism. The university's Race Definitions Task and Finish Group originally recommended the adoption of the IHRA definition but changed its stance after the university's senate and faculty raised academic freedom concerns. According to the *Jewish Chronicle*, those opposed to IHRA's definition said it encouraged a stifling of free expression by conflating criticism of the state of Israel with antisemitism. The Race Definitions Task and Finish Group said the JDA offered "a fairer and clearer definition and set of guidelines." In its guidelines, the JDA provides for "evidence-based criticism of Israel as a state." The NGO Campaign

Against Antisemitism accused the university of taking a “scandalous position” by not adopting the IHRA definition.

Sources said the Green Party of England and Wales upheld its 2021 decision to adopt both the IHRA Working Definition of Antisemitism and the JDA, despite ongoing criticism from the Board of Deputies of British Jews that the JDA and the IHRA definitions of antisemitism were contradictory.

In May, the NGO Humanist Society Scotland stated compulsory religious observance in Scottish schools was a breach of students’ right to “freedom of belief.” Citing a 2016 United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child report that addressed Scotland, the organization stated children should have the right to opt out of compulsory worship. The group stated that on May 24, then-Scottish Deputy First Minister John Swinney “said he wanted to be ‘bold’ on children’s’ rights” but that he had “continually kicked the can down the path on stopping compulsory religious worship in schools” during his time in government.

The pastoral needs of prisoners continued to be addressed, in part, through chaplains paid for by the UK 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 number of inmates in the prison and their religious composition. Prison service regulations stated, “Chaplaincy provision must reflect the faith denomination requirements of the prison.”

There were approximately 257 regular chaplains in the armed forces, 256 of whom were Christian. There were 111 reserve chaplains serving in the military, 108 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 service personnel.

Under the Places of Worship Scheme, which applied to England, Scotland, and Wales, Conservative MP and then Security Minister Damian Hinds announced on May 19 that mosques and Muslim schools were given access to £24.5 million

(\$29.5 million) for security measures to protect their places of worship and schools. In addition, the government made available £3.5 million (\$4.2 million) to other religious communities through its Places of Worship Fund, compared with £1.7 million (\$2 million) in 2021 and £1.6 million (\$1.9 million) in 2020.

Applications were open to all places of worship and associated religious group-run community centers that believed themselves vulnerable to hate crime. As part of this increased package, the government introduced a new, separate, program for Muslim schools to provide additional protection.

The Places of Worship Scheme was open to all religious groups apart from the Jewish community, which received £14 million (\$17 million) from a separate government grant administered by CST, compared with £13.5 million (\$16.3 million) in 2021. The grant funded commercial security guards at Jewish community buildings across the country, with priority placed on schools. The grant to CST did not apply in Northern Ireland.

The Christian charitable organization Care NI continued to campaign for the Northern Ireland government to introduce the Places of Worship Scheme there, where it did not currently apply.

In January, the government announced an extension to March 2025 of funding available for the Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme (LPW). The LPW, run by the Department of Digital, Culture, Media, and Sport, focused on preserving cultural heritage, provided value added tax relief on repairs to worship structures, turret clocks, pews, bells, and pipe organs, in addition to associated professional fees. All faiths and areas of the country were eligible for the plan.

In April, the High Court overturned a government decision to locate the planned Holocaust Memorial and Learning Center in Victoria Tower Gardens, a Grade-II-listed royal park adjacent to Parliament. Grade-II indicates a property of “more than special interest.” The Westminster Council, the local authority, refused planning permission in 2019. In 2021, Conservative MP and then Housing Minister Chris Pincher overturned the council’s decision following a public inquiry.

Former Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams and members of the public objected to the planned site for the £100 million (\$120.4 million) project. The London Historic Parks and Gardens Trust described the memorial as “the right idea in the wrong place,” and argued that the process used to approve permission was “flawed.” In the High Court ruling, Justice Justine Thornton wrote, “All parties before the Court support the principle of a compelling memorial to the victims of the Holocaust and all those persecuted by the Nazis....” She said she based her decision in part on a 1990 Act that “imposes an enduring statutory obligation to maintain Victoria Tower Gardens as a public garden” and refused the government permission to appeal her judgement. Leaders from the country’s Jewish community expressed disappointment, arguing the memorial was needed to continue to educate people about the Holocaust and that the age of Holocaust survivors meant time was short to build one in their lifetimes. The government stated it remained committed to building the memorial and learning center.

According to 2019 data, the latest available, there were 6,802 state-funded, faith-based schools in England, representing 34 percent of all state-funded mainstream schools and serving approximately 1.9 million students. Church of England schools were the most common type among primary schools (26 percent); Catholic schools were the most common at the secondary level (9 percent). Additionally, at the primary and secondary levels, there were 72 “other Christian,” 36 Jewish, 25 Methodist, 14 Islamic, six Sikh, five Hindu, and two multifaith state-funded 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.

On November 1, MPs debated RE in “modern Britain.” The parliamentary debate in Westminster Hall included widespread expressions of support for a national plan for RE and improved teacher training on the subject, although it did not enact a plan by year’s end. During the debate, Fiona Bruce, Conservative MP and the Prime Minister’s Special Envoy for Freedom of Religion or Belief, stated, “It is important that today’s generation, who will grow up to be tomorrow’s citizens and leaders, should have a knowledge-based understanding of religion and

religious beliefs. It is important that that is taught in schools because... [school] is often the only place in today's increasingly secular society where it will be heard by young people." Humanists UK issued a statement saying, "When taught well, in a curriculum inclusive of nonreligious worldviews, RE is a vital tool for promoting mutual understanding and challenging prejudice in modern Britain. However, without a coherent national framework for RE, a narrowly focused RE often on offer can be worse than no RE at all." In response to the debate, Shadow Education Minister and Labour Party MP Stephen Morgan said a Labour government would introduce a national plan for RE. He said that "an education in religion and worldviews is an important part of the school curriculum" and criticized the government's approach, noting an RE Policy Unit report released earlier in the year indicated that 25 percent of RE lessons were taught by teachers with limited qualification in the subject, which the unit said was "more than three times the proportion for history [teachers]." The debate followed the 2019 introduction of the course Religions and Worldviews, which replaced RE, into the national curriculum in Wales.

Bermuda's Human Rights Commission reported that in 2021 and 2022, 6 percent of formal public submissions (intakes) were religion-based complaints of discrimination or requests for guidance under the Human Rights Act 1981. The commission reported it resolved or continued to consider the intakes received during the year, and that none were referred for investigation.

On October 24, the Commercial Court at Glasgow Sheriff Court found the organization Scottish Events Campus Limited (SEC) had discriminated on religious grounds against what the court called a "contentious American evangelist" from the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association (BGEA) by cancelling an event scheduled in Glasgow in 2020 "because of: (a) the religious or philosophical beliefs of [BGEA] and [the speaker], as viewed by the defender [i.e., defendant]; and (b) the reaction by others to the religious or philosophical beliefs professed by [BGEA] and/or [the speaker]." SEC management at the time cited "adverse publicity" in refusing to host the event, following local protests. The judge found SEC had

breached the Equality Act by not honoring the booking. The court awarded BGEA £100,000 (\$120,000) in damages.

On November 29, Humanists UK released a statement in the wake of the government publishing the results of the 2021 census showing that 37 percent of the population in England and Wales stated they had “no religion.” The NGO said the result likely underestimated the number of nonreligious people because the census question (“What is your religion?”) was optional and was also a leading one. Humanists UK chief executive Andrew Copson said laws such as those establishing a state church and mandating prayer in schools had “failed to keep up with the pace of change, and as a result, the enormous nonreligious population in England and Wales face everyday discrimination – from getting local school places to receiving appropriate emotional support in hospitals. This census result should be a wake-up call which prompts fresh reconsiderations of the role of religion in society.”

The 2022 census in Scotland contained the question, “What religion, religious denomination or body do you belong to?” The NGO Humanist Society Scotland urged people who did not believe in or practice a religion to select “No religion.”

Humanists UK stated nonreligious belief marriages, which are legally recognized in Scotland and Northern Ireland, should also receive legal recognition in England and Wales. In October, the All-Party Parliamentary Humanists Group (APPHG) published its second report on humanist marriages. The APPHG cochair, Baroness Joan Bakewell, said the report found the lack of legal recognition for humanist marriages constituted discrimination. At the report’s public release, Hannah McKerchar, a humanist celebrant (i.e., a person who officiates at humanist ceremonies), spoke of the difficulties couples faced in securing a civil ceremony (in addition to a non-legally binding humanist ceremony) to make their marriage legally recognized. Humanists UK chief executive Copson called on the government to give humanist marriages legal recognition and stated the change would not require an act of Parliament but could be done using secondary legislation.

Humanists UK continued to say the state should increase the availability of nonpastoral support in prisons and hospitals.

Media outlets reported that in May, the Department for Education suspended engagement with the NUS over long-running allegations of antisemitism within the organization, despite the NUS's pledge to work with the Union of Jewish Students in an internal investigation. A government statement advised that as part of the disengagement, the NUS would not receive government funding. Then-Education Secretary Nadhim Zahawi said, "Jewish students need to have confidence that this is a body that represents them, and we need to be sure that the student bodies that we engage with are speaking fairly for all students, which is why we are disengaging with the NUS until the issues have been addressed." Then Higher Education Minister Michelle Donelan said the NUS needed to take "decisive and effective action in response to these repeated allegations of antisemitic behavior." In May, the NUS, in consultation with the Union of Jewish Students, instructed King's Counsel (barrister) Rebecca Tuck to conduct an internal investigation into allegations of antisemitism. She had not published her findings as of year's end. Media outlets reported that in October, NUS dismissed its president, Shaima Dallali, over allegations of antisemitism.

In January, in an interview with the *Sunday Times*, Conservative MP and former government minister in the Department for Transport Nusrat Ghani stated the government of Prime Minister Boris Johnson in 2020 had removed her from her ministerial position for being Muslim, reigniting accusations that the Conservative Party was institutionally anti-Muslim. Ghani was the first Muslim woman to speak from the House of Commons dispatch box, which is where government ministers deliver their addresses to Parliament. Ghani stated that a member of the Johnson administration raised her "Muslimness" as an issue at a meeting at the Prime Minister's residence and said her "Muslim woman minister status was making colleagues feel uncomfortable." The *Sunday Times* reported Conservative MP and then-Chief Whip Mark Spencer subsequently identified himself as the person to whom Ghani referred and that he denied the allegation. Responding to Ghani's

statements, the Muslim Council of Britain said it was “now time” for the EHRC to investigate the party and determine if any breaches had taken place. In January, Shockat Patel, a board member of MEND, told the *Guardian*, “Islamophobia is still alive and kicking within the Tory [Conservative] Party.”

In November, Labour Party sources told the *Guardian* that former party leader Jeremy Corbyn, subsequently an independent MP, would never again be allowed to stand as a Labour Party candidate in elections, even if he were to apologize for saying in 2020 that the EHRC’s findings into antisemitism in the party under his leadership were “dramatically overstated for political reasons.” After Corbyn refused to apologize at the time, party leaders suspended him from the Parliamentary Labour Party.

In November, the communications regulator Ofcom found the BBC had made a “serious editorial misjudgment” in its online and on-air coverage of a November 2021 antisemitic incident in London. At the time, the BBC reported that men spat at and hurled antisemitic abuse at a bus of Jewish youths who were celebrating Hanukkah. The BBC said the Jewish youths had incited the incident by uttering anti-Muslim slurs that were captured on an audio recording. The BBC subsequently learned the phrase the Jewish individuals uttered in Hebrew was actually, “Call someone; it is urgent.” Ofcom stated the BBC failed to promptly report that the initial interpretation of the recording was disputed and did not update the online article for almost eight weeks. Ofcom stated, “During this time the BBC was aware that the article’s content was causing significant distress and anxiety to the victims of the attack and the wider Jewish community. This, in our opinion, was a significant failure to observe its editorial guidelines to report news with due accuracy and due impartiality.” The BBC apologized for not acting sooner to highlight that the recording’s contents were contested.

On January 4, in an open letter, Rabbi YY Rubinstein, a BBC contributor for more than three decades, resigned, calling the broadcaster’s handling of the 2021 Hanukkah incident “simply inexcusable” and saying, “I simply don’t see how I or in fact any Jew who has any pride in that name can be associated with the

corporation anymore.” A BBC spokesperson expressed regret at Rabbi Rubenstein’s decision and said, “Antisemitism is abhorrent and we [the BBC] strive to serve the Jewish community, and all communities across the UK, fairly.”

In February, during an online forum with students organized by the Scottish Council of Jewish Communities, a student asked Scottish First Minister Nicola Sturgeon for her view on the fact that the Scottish National Party’s (SNP) governing partner, the Scottish Green Party, had not backed adoption of the IHRA Working Definition of Antisemitism. Sturgeon stated, “All ministers in my government, without exception, are expected to comply” with the IHRA definition. In April, more than 200 members of Scotland’s Jewish community sent the First Minister a letter expressing further concern with the Scottish Green Party’s stance. A spokesperson for the Scottish government said, “All ministers in the Scottish government, including those from the Green Party, sign up and adhere to the IHRA definition of antisemitism.”

In January, leaders of multiple faith and belief communities and political leaders from across the country commemorated International Holocaust Memorial Day in a ceremony. King Charles III, then Prince of Wales, stated that the “strength shown by the survivors of the Holocaust, and of more recent genocides, is as courageous as it is inspiring.”

In December, Prime Minister Rishi Sunak and Leader of the Opposition Sir Keir Starmer joined MPs in the House of Commons to commemorate the 80th anniversary of the first public announcement by the British government that the Nazis were committing the mass murder of Europe’s Jewish population. The chamber marked the anniversary with a moment of silence led by Speaker of the House of Commons Lindsay Hoyle. Seven Holocaust survivors and representatives of the country’s Jewish community also attended.

On July 5 and 6, the national government hosted the International Ministerial Conference on Freedom of Religion or Belief. Then-Foreign Secretary and Conservative MP Liz Truss said in a speech, “The freedom to believe, to pray and

commit acts of worship, or indeed not to believe is a fundamental human freedom and has been one since the dawn of time.... Societies that allow their people to choose what they believe are better, stronger, and ultimately more successful.” The conference brought together representatives from governments, Parliament, religious and belief groups, and civil society. Representatives of national governments at the conference cosigned an overarching statement on the conference itself and thematic statements covering freedom of religion or belief issues.

Conservative MP Bruce, the Prime Minister’s Special Envoy for Freedom of Religion or Belief, also served as vice chair of the All-Party Parliamentary Group for Freedom of Religion or Belief. Throughout the year, she attended domestic and international events and posted to social media in support of religious freedom and belief. On November 23, for example, she posted on Twitter, “No one should be targeted for what they believe.”

Section III. Status of Societal Respect for Religious Freedom

According to Home Office figures for the 12 months that ended in March, religious hate crimes increased by 37 percent, to 8,730 offenses in England and Wales, up from 6,383 in the previous year. The 2021-22 number was the highest recorded since monitoring began in the year ending March 2012. Where the perceived religion of the victim was recorded, 40 percent of religious hate crime offenses (3,459) targeted Muslims, 21 percent (1,919) targeted Jews, 8 percent (701) targeted Christians, 3 percent (301) targeted Sikhs, 2 percent (161) targeted Hindus, 5 percent (403) targeted members of other religions, and 2 percent (209) targeted individuals professing no religion. In 17 percent of offenses, the targeted religion was not known, and some incidents targeted multiple religions. The Home Office said the increase in incidents could reflect a real increase in hate crime, improvements in reporting, or the lower levels of incidents that occurred during the prior reporting year, when the country was under COVID-19 restrictions.

In Scotland, the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service reported 512 religiously motivated crimes in the 12 months that ended in March, a decrease from the 573 crimes reported over the same period in 2020-21. The office cautioned against making direct comparisons with previous data sets due to a change in methodology.

The Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) reported 54 religiously motivated hate crimes committed in 68 incidents during 2021-22, an increase from 37 crimes reported in 2020-21. The PSNI additionally reported 780 sectarian crimes in which religion was described as being among the motivating factors in 1,067 incidents during 2021-22, compared with 792 sectarian crimes in 2020-2021.

In March, the NGO Campaign Against Antisemitism published its *Antisemitism Barometer 2021*, combining two surveys it commissioned that were carried out by King's College London. The first survey asked 1,790 non-Jewish respondents 12 questions relating to anti-Jewish and anti-Zionist sentiment in December 2021. The report found that 57 percent of respondents did not agree with any of the statements and did not hold antisemitic views, compared with 55 percent in 2020; 43 percent agreed with at least one antisemitic statement, compared with 45 percent in 2020. The most popular antisemitic statement was, "Israel treats the Palestinians like the Nazis treated the Jews," with which 24 percent of respondents agreed, compared with 23 percent in 2020. A separate survey of 1,768 Jewish respondents conducted between August and October 2021 found that 22 percent of said they felt somewhat or very unwelcome in the country. According to the survey, Jews' confidence in the criminal justice system was at a record low, with 67 percent believing that every branch of the system did not do enough to protect them. For the first time in the survey's history, this included low confidence in government policy. More than 80 percent of Jews surveyed said the Labour Party was too tolerant of antisemitism. A majority also felt this way about the Green Party. Almost all Jews surveyed believed antisemitism in universities and on social media was a problem. Fewer than 60 percent believed Jews had a long-term future in the country, and 46 percent said they avoided

displaying outward signs of Judaism in public due to a fear of antisemitism, the highest figure the survey had ever recorded for that question.

CST's annual *Antisemitic Incidents Report 2022* recorded 1,652 antisemitic incidents during the year. This was a decrease of 27 percent from the 2,261 incidents recorded in 2021. According to CST, the decrease reflected the magnitude of the spike in anti-Jewish sentiment observed in May and June 2021 in the aftermath of the escalation of violence between Israelis and Palestinians. CST stated, "More than 100 antisemitic incidents were recorded in every month in 2022, perpetuating the pattern of historically high incident totals reported in recent years." Of the 1,652 incidents, 1,294 took place offline and included face-to-face verbal abuse, assault, threats, graffiti, damage and desecration of property, and hate mail. CST reported 16 incidents referenced or appeared to be inspired by the war in Ukraine. These cases included a range of antisemitic discourse, including conspiracy theories accusing Jews of causing and bankrolling the war, pro-Russian sentiment favorably comparing Putin to Adolf Hitler, and comparisons between Russia's aggression and Israel's actions. CST reported that 56 antisemitic incidents took place in the context of professional soccer matches during the year, compared with 43 in 2021.

According to CST, slightly more than two-thirds of the 1,652 antisemitic incidents that occurred during the year were recorded in the Greater London and Greater Manchester administrative regions, home to the two largest Jewish communities in the country. CST recorded 920 antisemitic incidents in Greater London, a decrease of 27 percent from the 2021 total of 1,259 incidents. CST recorded 210 antisemitic incidents in Greater Manchester, a decrease of 26 percent from the 284 incidents recorded in 2021. Elsewhere in the country, CST recorded antisemitic incidents in 38 of the 43 national police regions. CST stated conspiracy theories regarding Jewish influence over global politics, media, finance, and other walks of life continued to drive some antisemitic incidents.

According to CST's annual report, 15 percent of victims and 20 percent of perpetrators were minors, which, CST said, represented "a concerning trend."

There were 94 antisemitic incidents affecting people and buildings in the school sector across the country, including some involving Jewish schoolchildren on their way to or from school, who were identifiable by their uniform, and Jewish children or staff at non-faith-based schools. This marked a decrease of 49 percent compared with 2021 (183 incidents). There were also 56 antisemitic incidents at universities across the country, a decrease of 56 percent from the 128 incidents recorded in 2021. CST attributed the decreases, in part, to the lack of a “trigger event involving Israel,” as had occurred in 2021.

Media reported that in September, a small number of individuals left tributes for the passing of Queen Elizabeth II at the Holocaust Memorial in Hyde Park, central London. Daniel Sugarman, Director of Public Affairs for the Board of Deputies of British Jews described leaving flowers and notes to the late monarch there as “inappropriate” and stated it was not what the King would want, given his status as the Patron of the Holocaust Memorial Day Trust. Once notified, authorities moved the tributes from the Holocaust Memorial to the official floral tribute area, also in Hyde Park. Park authorities placed a steward by the memorial to direct visitors to pay their respects at the dedicated floral tribute area.

In January, the Guardian reported that rabbis and leaders from the main ultra-Orthodox, or Charedi, communities in north London, Manchester, Gateshead, and Essex established the Pinter Trust, to “build trust and dialogue with other organizations and groups,” including media, government, and members of the public, and to “seek to provide an accurate and truthful portrayal of the UK Charedi community.” Among other outreach activities, the trust created a website with information about the community.

On December 6, the Church of England’s Bishop’s Disciplinary Tribunal for the Diocese of Winchester issued a decision that Reverend Stephen Sizer had engaged in antisemitic activity, that his conduct was “unbecoming or inappropriate to the office and work of a clerk in Holy Orders,” and that he provoked and offended the Jewish community. The decision followed a review based on a complaint from the Board of Deputies of British Jews that between 2005 and 2018, Sizer posted

or reposted antisemitic articles online, including some that spread conspiracy theories, and promoted and shared platforms with Holocaust deniers. Sizer denied his actions were antisemitic, saying they were political and “aimed at the state of Israel,” not Jews. He said he had unintentionally provoked distress in the Jewish community.

In June, MEND and the NGO Muslim Census published a report titled *Attacks Upon Mosques and Islamic Institutions in the UK: A National Survey*. The survey encompassed data from 113 mosques, comprising 6 percent of the approximately 1,800 mosques in the country. Forty-two percent of mosques surveyed reported experiencing at least one religiously motivated incident since 2019, with 17 percent of those reporting they faced physical abuse directed at staff or worshippers. The most common form of attack experienced by mosques was vandalism, followed by theft. Of those mosques that experienced a religiously motivated attack or threat of attack, 85 percent reported the incidents to police; only 55 percent said they were satisfied with the police response.

In June, the Scottish-based data research firm Savanta published the *UK Muslim Attitudes Survey* on behalf of the online media outlet *Hyphen*, based on interviews with 1,503 British Muslims between April and May. The survey found that 69 percent of respondents who were then employed reported experiencing some form of anti-Muslim behavior during work-related encounters, including 44 percent during interactions with customers, clients, or other persons in the workplace, 42 percent during work-related social events, and 40 percent when they were seeking promotions. Black Muslims reported experiencing the highest incidents of workplace anti-Muslim discrimination (76 percent), including at the recruiting stage (58 percent, compared with 37 percent of non-Black Muslims).

In September, the Austria-based Leopold Weiss Institute published a report titled *European Islamophobia Report 2021*. In it, Professor Aristotle Kallis of Keele University wrote, “Since the publication of the landmark report compiled by the All-Party Parliamentary Group on British Muslims in 2018, the question of the legal definition of Islamophobia ... political parties and social stakeholders still

debate whether the definition is appropriate or even whether it is needed at all.... On the one hand, there are those who believe that the UK has been failing its citizens with a Muslim background by refusing to own up to the pervasive problem of Islamophobia as both institutional and everyday practice. On the other hand, there are those who view this discourse as unwarranted, exaggerated, and detrimental to freedom of expression.” Kallis stated, “Islamophobia remains encrypted in public attitudes to identity, sovereignty, and security. It remains woven into all spheres of public and private life, off- and online.”

In June, the *Guardian* reported the cinema chain Cineworld cancelled screenings of the film *The Lady of Heaven*, a historical drama about Fatima, the daughter of the Prophet Muhammad, in response to protests by Muslim activists. More than 120,000 individuals reportedly signed a petition calling for the film to be withdrawn from British cinemas. The Muslim Council of Britain, the country’s largest Muslim umbrella organization, described the film as “divisive and sectarian.” Cineworld said it cancelled the screenings “to ensure the safety of our staff and customers.” House of Lords Peer Baroness Claire Fox posted to Twitter that the decision showed that the “creep of extra-parliamentary blasphemy law” was now censoring film. Health Secretary Sajid Javid told *TalkTV*, “I am very concerned about the growing cancel culture in this country. There’s people out there who think they have a right not to be offended and, of course, no one has that right. You might not like what someone’s got to say, but they have a right to say it.” Javid said the country did not have blasphemy laws, adding, “What we have in this country is freedom of speech and expression, and that is a fundamental value.” An editorial in the National Secular Society’s online newsletter stated, “Blasphemy is not a crime.... Political leaders and civil society need to be much clearer that religion’s sacred cows – or any other sincerely held ideologies for that matter – are not beyond discussion, criticism, depiction, or mockery.”

On August 8, the English Football League Championship team Blackburn Rovers posted to Twitter that it would make a lounge available to Muslim fans wishing to observe *maghrib salaah* (sunset prayer) during the match.

In April, a coalition of NGOs Alpha, the Evangelical Alliance, HOPE Together, Luis Palau Association, and Kingsgate Community Church published a study titled *Talking Jesus Report 2022: What people in the UK think of Jesus, Christians, and evangelism*. The study found that among approximately 4,000 individuals (including Christians and non-Christians) surveyed, 62 percent of non-Christians said practicing Christians were “friendly” and 50 percent said they were “caring.” According to the study, “non-Christians have a more negative view of the Church than the individual Christian that they know.” Twenty-six percent of non-Christian respondents said the church was “hypocritical” and 26 percent said it was “narrow minded,” but 22 percent said the church was “friendly.” Seventy-five percent of non-Christians who had a conversation with a Christian about Christianity reported feeling “comfortable” during the conversation, and 33 percent said that because of the conversation, they wanted to know more about Jesus Christ.

Media outlets reported that in May, Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby apologized to the country’s Chief Rabbi, Ephraim Mirvis, for antisemitic decrees passed by the Catholic Church’s 1222 Synod of Oxford that ultimately led to the expulsion of Jews from the country in 1290. The Archbishop posted to Twitter, “Today’s service at Oxford Cathedral is an opportunity to remember, repent, and rebuild. Let us pray it inspires Christians today to reject contemporary forms of anti-Judaism and antisemitism and to appreciate and receive the gift of our Jewish neighbors.” Rabbi Mirvis said, “1222...was a notorious turning point. Let us guarantee that 2022 will be seen by future historians as a turning point for the better.... Let us ensure that we will strengthen Jewish-Christian understanding. Let us ensure that together we will fight for freedom of religious expression and identity in a world in which there are many who want to weaken the place of religion in the public square.”

Section IV. U.S. Government Policy and Engagement

In July, the U.S. Ambassador at Large for International Religious Freedom attended the UK government-hosted International Ministerial Conference on Freedom of Religion or Belief in London. In addition, the Ambassador at Large met with parliamentarians to discuss the status of freedom of religion or belief in the country. A senior embassy official hosted a reception at the conclusion of the conference that was focused on building coalitions between civil society and government to advance freedom of religion and belief. Members of the government, parliamentarians, International Religious Freedom and Belief Alliance member-state representatives, faith leaders, and civil society representatives attended the reception.

In March, a senior U.S. Department of State official visited London to attend the Jerusalem Post London Conference focused on monitoring and combating antisemitism and countering misinformation. He met with Conservative MP Bruce, the Prime Minister's Special Envoy for Freedom of Religion or Belief, Special Envoy for post-Holocaust Issues Lord Eric Pickles, and Lord John Mann, the government's independent advisor on antisemitism. He also met with members of the Jewish community, including representatives of national Jewish organizations, and visited the headquarters of CST.

In October, the U.S. Special Envoy to Monitor and Combat Antisemitism visited London to engage with parliamentarians and representatives of the Jewish community. The Special Envoy met with members of the government to discuss government practices and the proposed Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre, as well as with Labour Party leadership, including Deputy Leader and Labour MP Angela Rayner, to discuss the party's work to address its recent history of antisemitism. The Special Envoy also met with representatives of the Jewish community including Chief Rabbi Mirvis, the Board of Deputies of British Jews, CST, the Holocaust Educational Trust, the Union of Jewish Students, and others to discuss Jewish life in the country and how antisemitism presented itself in modern British life, including on social media and on university campuses.

Embassy officials met regularly with government officials, parliamentarians, and representatives from a wide variety of religious and humanist groups and organizations to broaden their understanding of and advocacy for freedom of religion and belief. In meetings with Labour MP Afzal Khan, embassy officers discussed anti-Muslim sentiment in the country and efforts to coalesce around a definition of “Islamophobia” that could be adopted in a manner similar to the IHRA Working Definition of Antisemitism. In meetings with the Board of Deputies of British Jews and CST, embassy officers discussed antisemitism in the UK and abroad, as well as the Labour Party's newly adopted rules on antisemitism. In meetings with Humanists UK, embassy officers discussed the lack of legal recognition of nonreligious belief marriage ceremonies in England and Wales, the place of RE in schools, and the need for additional provision of nonpastoral care in prisons and hospitals.

Staff from the consulate general in Belfast continued to engage with all religious communities in Northern Ireland to discuss ongoing difficulties in the region, such as sectarianism and religious intolerance. The consulate general in Edinburgh engaged with religious groups, including the Scottish Ahlul-Bayt Society, representing the Scottish Shia Muslim community, Scottish Catholic Church, and Church of Scotland. In Bermuda, the Consul General engaged with numerous religious communities, including many Christian congregations and the Jewish Community of Bermuda, a faith-based charity organization committed to sustaining meaningful Jewish life and traditions on the island. In September, the Consul General hosted a celebratory Rosh Hashanah dinner with members of the organization and the Rabbi Emeritus of Tifereth Israel in Columbus, Ohio, who served as Bermuda’s visiting Rabbi for the High Holy Days.