

Mohammad Yasin MP
Member of Parliament for Bedford and Kempston



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

Ms. Jennifer Tomlinson
[REDACTED]

Our Ref: MY33792

Please quote this reference in any future correspondence

6 December 2022

Dear Ms. Tomlinson,

Re: World Watch List 2023

Thank you for contacting me about the persecution of Christians worldwide. I am aware that we have discussed this issue in the past, and I appreciate how important it is to you.

The persecution of Christians, or any other religious group, is entirely unacceptable. Everyone should be able to practice and profess their religious faith free from persecution.

According to Open Doors' 2022 World Watch list, the persecution of Christians is at the highest levels it has seen. An estimated 360 million Christians around the world are facing high levels of persecution. Some 5,898 Christians are reported to have been killed for faith related reasons in 2021, and 5,100 churches reported to have been attacked. These statistics are deeply concerning. I await Open Doors' latest findings in its 2023 World Watch List due to be launched on 18 January 2023.

As you will know, the UK hosted an international ministerial conference on 5-6 July 2022 to promote freedom of religion or belief. This conference was an important opportunity for the Government to ensure it continues to advocate for the rights of individuals being discriminated against or persecuted on the basis of their religion or beliefs.

As you may recall from my previous correspondence, I think the protection of human rights, including freedom of religion or belief, should be at the heart of UK foreign policy. That means using the full range of the financial and political resources that we have to intervene in religious persecution of all kinds. It also means using all diplomatic tools available, including bilateral relations and multilateral forums such as the UN, to ensure that international law is adhered to where there are humanitarian issues and breaches of human rights.

Thank you once again for sharing your views.

Yours sincerely,

Mohammad Yasin MP
Bedford & Kempston

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