

THE APPG FOR INTERNATIONAL FREEDOM OF RELIGION OR BELIEF (FoRB) WORK OVERVIEW 2020

132 Members, 32 New including:

Tim Farron MP

Sir Iain Duncan-Smith MP

3 Full Debates Organised:

[Main Chamber - Persecution of Christians](#)

[Westminster Hall – Freedom of Religion or Belief](#)

[Westminster Hall - FoRB and Covid-19](#)

1 Report Published:

[Nigeria: Unfolding Genocide](#)

1 Select Committee Submission

[IDSC - Secondary Impacts of Covid-19](#)

50+ Oral Questions in Chambers including:

[FoRB and International Development](#)

[Nigeria Report](#)

[China, PMQs on Pakistan and FoRB](#)

300+ Written Questions including:

[Eritrea](#), [Mexico](#), [Ukraine](#), [Burma](#)

17 Briefings for Debates and Questions including:

[Briefing for Oral Question on China](#)

[Briefing for FoRB and Int Development Question](#)

40+ Speeches for Debates and Events including:

[Progress on Bishop of Truro's Report](#)

[Freedom of Religion or Belief](#)

[Telecommunications Infrastructure Bill](#)

[Rohingya Crisis and Covid-19](#)

[FoRB and Covid-19](#)

[Gender and International Development](#)

45+ Advocacy Letters including:

Letter to FASC about FoRB Inquiry

Letters to Foreign Secretary on impact of COVID-19

Letters to Chinese, Pakistani, Nigerian, Indian and Eritrean Ambassadors

Letter to Leader of the Opposition on FoRB as a priority

Letter to PM on Christmas Message

60+ Meetings and Events Organised including:

Nigerian Presidential Chief of Staff

Pakistani Commissioner for Minority Rights

PM's Special Envoy for FoRB

Al-Azhar University Delegation

Nigeria Report Launch

FCO and DFID FoRB representatives

15 Early Day Motions including:

[Iran](#)

[FoRB and COVID-19](#)

[Forced Marriage and Conversion](#)

35+ Media Mentions/Apearances including:

[The Telegraph](#)

[Cumberland Lodge Podcast and Webinar](#)

[Africa Independent Television](#)

[The Telegraph](#)

[The Independent](#)

[Premium Times Nigeria](#)

6 Public Statements and Press Releases including:

[COVID-19 and Prisoners of Conscience](#)

[EU Special Envoy for FoRB](#)

[Red Wednesday and the International Day for the](#)

[Elimination of Violence Against Women and Girls](#)

1966 Tweets, 706 New Followers

46 Weekly Monitoring E mails, 6 E-mail Newsletters and 7 Media E-mails

Monitoring e-mails feature roundups of FoRB Issues in Parliament and articles on FoRB which are circulated to APPG database.

5 Public Panels/Presentations including:

Cumberland Lodge Emerging Int Leaders Programme

Never Again – Genocide Awareness Event

2 Stakeholder Tours to Parliament Organised:

Brigham Young University Class

Global Education Network Students Visit

HIGHLIGHTS:

The work of APPG Members, staff and stakeholders contributed to many positive outcomes in 2020. For example:

- APPG Vice-Chair Fiona Bruce MP was appointed the [Prime Minister's Special Envoy for FoRB](#).
- Following the General Election of December 2019, the APPG lost over 30 members. However, the APPG now has a greater membership than in 2019 (132). The list of these members and officers can be found [here](#).
- Recommendations from the APPG's [2019 report on Pakistan](#) were adopted by Pakistani authorities. For example, the Punjab Government introduced a legal quota in higher education institutions which means that [2% of their students](#) must be from marginalised religious minority groups. This change will have an impact on countless lives.
- One of the APPG's key objectives for 2020 was to ensure that the new Government implemented the recommendations of the Bishop of Truro's review. Members pursued this objective throughout the year through meetings, questions and [debates](#). According to the former UK Special Envoy for FoRB Rehman Chishti MP, by the end of October 2020, [17 of the 22 Truro recommendations](#) were either fully implemented or progressed.
- The APPG has called for targeted sanctions against FoRB violators, including Burmese military leaders, [many times over the years](#). On 6 July, the Foreign Secretary introduced such a system to target human rights abusers and named Burmese General Min Aung Hlaing as one of its first targets. The APPG also [called for the mandate of the EU Special Envoy for FoRB to be renewed](#) which it was on 8 July 2020.
- In February, [the FCO and Wilton Park organised an international conference](#) on the farmer-herder conflict in Nigeria following the APPG's inquiry on the issue and the Bishop of Truro's report. The President of Nigeria's Chief of Staff also specifically requested a meeting with the APPG to discuss this issue. This meeting took place in January.
- The APPG published the report of its inquiry into violence involving farmers and herders in Nigeria. The report, entitled "[Nigeria: Unfolding Genocide?](#)" was mentioned in dozens of media articles in the UK and Nigeria. APPG Members also appeared on Nigerian television. The FCO Minister for Africa raised the report directly with the office of the President of Nigeria who responded and invited APPG members to visit to directly assess the situation.
- The APPG also raised concerns about the impact of Covid-19 on vulnerable religious or belief minorities. The APPG published a statement on this topic and sent letters which helped convince the Home Secretary and the DFID Secretary to act to support these groups during the pandemic. The APPG also organised [a debate on this issue](#) which took place on Nov 26th.

*"Guidance has been circulated across DFID highlighting that inclusion must be central to our response and that the specific needs of refugees and all marginalised religious communities should be taken into account when developing practical programmes to tackle COVID-19" – **Government Minister Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon in response to APPG advocacy.***