

Catholic Union calls for Queen's Speech commitment on religious freedom

The Catholic Union has called on the Prime Minister to include a commitment to promote freedom of religion or belief as part of its programme for Government.

The Prime Minister, Boris Johnson, said he will implement the recommendations of the recent Truro report into religious persecution. The Catholic Union has written to him to ask that this commitment be included in the Queen's Speech.

Planning is taking place for a Queen's speech on Monday 14 October, which would bring to an end one of the longest sessions of Parliament in history. It will set out plans for the Government's domestic agenda as well as new legislation to leave the EU.

The Bishop of Truro's report revealed that 250 million Christians face persecution around the world, accounting for 80 per cent of all religiously motivated discrimination.

A number of recommendations were made in the report, including using the UK's position on the UN Security Council to seek protection for Christians and other minorities in the Middle East. The Catholic Union has previously called on the Government to implement all of the recommendations in the report.

Catholic Union Head of Public Affairs, James Somerville-Meikle commented: "It's great that the Government has given the Truro report such a warm welcome. Steps have already been taken to put the recommendations of the report into practice and we welcomed Rehman Chishti MP as the Prime Minister's Special Envoy last month. However, there is still a lot of work to do to make sure the report has an impact on the ground. It will take money and political leadership to make this happen.

If the Government is serious about promoting freedom of religious belief then we need to see a commitment in the Queen's Speech. We are not asking for new law, but a non-legislative commitment would send a strong message that the Government is serious about this. With so much else going on, it is vital that promoting religious freedom does not get overlooked. A mention in the Queen's Speech would go a long way to help this".