

Faith and belief joint letter to MPs, February 2022

To all Members of Parliament

Re: Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill

We write as faith and belief groups to ask you to support the Lords' amendments to Part 3 of the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill and speak out against Part 4 of the bill.

As people of faith and belief, we share common principles of equality and justice. We believe human beings have inherent dignity, which is protected by human rights. We find this bill to be incompatible with these values.

Part 3 of the bill will have a chilling effect on nonviolent protest. It will hinder people of faith and belief, and many others, in speaking out on the issues they care passionately about. It is also likely to affect prayer vigils, public acts of worship, community events and street preaching. It will have a disproportionate negative impact on already over-policed groups such as People of Colour. We urge you to support the Lords' amendments to this part of the bill, particularly the removal of the power to put noise restrictions on protests. We also ask you to speak out against the draconian measures that remain in the bill, such as increased fines and sentences for protest-related offences.

Part 4 of the bill is a direct attack on Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller communities and their way of life. It creates a new trespass offence at a time where the government has failed in its duty to provide sufficient sites and permitted stopping places. This further criminalises marginalised communities who already suffer profound stigma and economic hardship. It also risks making many members of the community homeless. We ask you to speak out against this discriminatory approach and call on the government to do more to provide Gypsy and Traveller sites and stopping places.

Thank you for taking the time to read our letter. We will hold you in our thoughts and prayers as you consider this bill.

Yours sincerely

National faith and belief leaders (31)

Lord Indarjit Singh of Wimbledon, Director, Network of Sikh Organisations UK

Zara Mohammed, Secretary-General, Muslim Council of Britain

Mia Hasenson-Gross, Executive Director, René Cassin

Paul Parker, Recording Clerk, Quakers in Britain

Jamie Cresswell, Director, Centre for Applied Buddhism

Revd Lynn Green, General Secretary, The Baptist Union of Great Britain

Neil Thorns, Director of Advocacy, Communications and Education, CAFOD

Alistair Dutton, Chief Executive, SCIAF

Barbara Easton, Vice-President of the Methodist Conference, The Methodist Church in Britain

Dr R Harilall, Founder, Buddhists across Traditions

Dr Shanon Shah, Director, Faith for the Climate

Elizabeth Slade, Chief Officer, General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches

Fr Thomas Reece, Priest, Old Catholic Church

George Dow, Co-Chair, Green Christian
Graeme Hodge, CEO, All We Can - Methodist Relief & Development
Isobel Ingham-Barrow, CEO, Community Policy Forum
John Cooper, Director, Fellowship of Reconciliation
John Reynolds, CEO, International Nepal Fellowship
Minister David Bruton, President, The Spiritualists' National Union
Mr Joseph Mishan, Co-founder, Extinction Rebellion Buddhists
Mr M J Burrell, Chair, Churches Network for Gypsies, Travellers and Roma
Mrs Yogi Sutton, Chairperson, Catholic Association for Racial Justice
Olivia Fuchs, Eco Dharma Network
Pete Moorey, Head of Campaigns & UK Advocacy, Christian Aid
Revd Clare Downing, Moderator of General Assembly, United Reformed Church
Revd Dr Darrell Hannah, Chair, Operation Noah
Revd Paul Rochester, General Secretary, Free Churches Group
Revd Sonia Hicks, President of the Methodist Conference, The Methodist Church in Britain
Sarah Kerr, President, Pagan Federation
Sister Helen Burke PBVM, Union of Presentation Sisters
Sue Claydon, Chair, Anglican Pacifist Fellowship

Local faith and belief leaders (51)

Bethan Rodden, Ordinand, Church of England
Canon Jonathan Herbert, Chaplain to Gypsies and Travellers, Diocese of Salisbury
Elizabeth Billington, Chair, Kushti Bok
Fr Joseph Fernandes, Area Dean of Spelthorne, Diocese of London, Church of England
John Summerwill, Chair, Concord Leeds Interfaith Fellowship
Mr Michael WE Chater, Church of England Licenced Reader, St John's Nevilles Cross
Rabbi Leah Jordan, Rabbi, Kehillah North London
Rev Alan Bing, Rector of Ulverston, Church of England
Rev Camon Angela Overton-Benge, House for Duty Priest and Prison Chaplain, Church of England in the Carlisle Diocese
Rev Dr Andi Phillips, Minister Upper Chapel (Unitarian), Sheffield
Rev Kristy Pattimore, Pioneer Minister, Church of England
Rev Lucy Foster, Assistant Curate, St Thomas' Church, Crosscraze, Carlisle Diocese
Rev Simon Bickersteth, Vicar, St James, Carlisle
Rev Sue Woolley, District Minister, Midland Unitarian Association
Rev. Dr Nichola Chater, Chaplain for Gypsy, Roma and Travellers, Durham Diocese, Churches network for Gypsy, Roma and travellers; Margaret Clitherow Trust; Durham Diocese.
Rev. Ian Parker, Minister in charge, Lamplugh, Kirkland and Ennerdale LEP
Rev'd Nicki Pennington, Priest in charge, Crosslacon Parish
Rev'd Robin Hanford Minister, Hinckley Great Meeting Unitarian Chapel
Revd Claire, Lewisham Unity
Revd Anna Jarvis, Minister, Monton Unitarian Church
Revd Canon Beth Smith, Assistant priest, St Elisabeth's Church, Harraby, Carlisle
Revd Canon Jane Charman, Leader, Grasmoor Mission Community
Rev'd Canon Katharine Butterfield, Rector, Church of England
Revd Carl Carter BA, Diocese of Carlisle
Revd Colin Gibson, Vicar of Horton and Wraysbury, Church of England
Revd Dr P Powell, Associate Priest, Diocese of Carlisle
Revd Dr Clive Hicks, Rector, Diocese of Carlisle, CofE

Revd Dr RPC Brown, Priest-in-Charge, Benefice of Bewcastle, Stapleton and Kirklington with Hethersgill, Diocese of Carlisle, Church of England
Revd J JH Smith, Retired, Church of England
Revd James Tyson, Assistant curate, Church of England
Rev'd Jens Mankel, Church Planting and Fresh Expressions Adviser, Diocese of Guildford, CofE Diocese of Guildford
Revd Justin Arnott, Anglican Priest, Church in Wales
Revd Lucinda Brewster, Assistant Curate, Church of England
Revd Maria Shepherdson, Rector, Upper Kennet Churches Diocese of Salisbury
Revd Mary Edwards, Deacon, Parish of Penrith
Rev'd Paul Gill, Chaplain to Gypsy, Roma, and Travelling People, Margaret Clitherow Trust
Rev'd Peter Gilroy, Team Vicar, Church of England
Revd Robert Jackson, Rector of Whitehaven, Church of England
Revd Tim Herbert, Priest-in-Charge Aspatria, Hayton and Gilcrux, Church of England
Revd Victoria Sekasi, Curate, St Thomas' Kendal
Revd. Jane Maycock, Associate Priest in the Cartmel Peninsula Team, Diocese of Carlisle
Rev'd. Jo James, Minister, Mill Hill Unitarian Chapel, Leeds
Revd. Sean Page, Prison Chaplain, HMP Manchester
Reverend Andrew Gardner, Assistant Curate, The Parish of Penrith within the Diocese of Carlisle
Reverend Laura Dobson, Minister, Chorlton Unitarian Church and King Edward Street Unitarian Chapel, Macclesfield
Reverend Mark Hutchinson, Minister, Cotswold Group of Unitarians, Unitarian and Free Christian Churches
Sister Philomena Purcell BEM, Prison Chaplain, Ursuline Sister
Stephen Pattison, Presbyter, Church of England
Terence R Ward, Voluntary worker, Church of England
The Venerable Lee Townend, Archdeacon of Carlisle, Diocese of Carlisle
The Very Revd Dr Frances Ward, Priest in charge, St Michael's and St John's Workington, Cumbria, Diocese of Carlisle