

03 April 2019

Brother Andrew
Founder of Open Doors



Foreign &
Commonwealth
Office

King Charles Street
London SW1A 2AH

Secretary of State

Dear Brother Andrew,

Earlier this year I launched an independent review into the persecution of Christians overseas, to see if the Foreign and Commonwealth Office was doing all it could to support persecuted Christians around the world. As part of this review, I have made a personal commitment to write 40 letters to persecuted Christians, or those supporting them, during the 40 days of Lent.

It is my honour to write the first letter to you.

I would like to express my personal thanks for the extraordinary and courageous support you have provided to the persecuted Church throughout the years. Having read 'God's Smuggler' as a child, I know that your story has inspired millions of people around the world to speak out on behalf of the voiceless and suffering. And as a parliamentarian who has received many letters over the years from Open Doors supporters, I am grateful for Open Doors' commitment to shine a light on this issue.

As a man of faith, free to practise in line with my conscience, I am appalled at the plight of the 245 million Christians worldwide currently facing persecution as a result of their belief.

I want you to know that the UK stands in solidarity with persecuted Christians around the world and that British diplomats will continue to advocate for them, and for those who are being denied the basic right to practise their faith.

Freedom of Religion or Belief is a human right enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It must be respected. People from all faiths or none should be free to practise as they wish. I will continue to make this case for the millions who suffer as a result of their beliefs. In this regard, I take inspiration from the words of wisdom in King George VI's Christmas message in 1939:

I said to the man who stood at the gate of the year. "Give me a light that I may tread safely into the unknown." And he replied. "Go out into the darkness and put your hand into the hand of God. That shall be to you better than light and safer than a known way."

Yours sincerely

Jeremy Hunt

THE RT HON JEREMY HUNT MP