



**CHARITY COMMISSION  
FOR ENGLAND AND WALES**

## **Trustees' Annual Report for the period**

**From 6 April 2024 to 5 April 2025**

**Charity name: The Lindisfarne Centre for the Study of Christian Persecution**

**Charity registration number: 1204527**

### **Introduction**

The Lindisfarne Centre for the Study of Christian Persecution is a Christian research organisation which exists to help the general public, churches, media, governments and international bodies understand both the nature and causes of persecution of Christians with a particular focus on Christian minorities in Islamic contexts.

The Charity is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) which has a Christian ethos set out in its basis of faith which forms part of its constitution. This states that *"the organisation will be evangelical in its own ethos and membership but will seek to research and report on the persecution of Christians of all denominations. For the avoidance of doubt, this refers to those who hold to Christ's divinity and are persecuted for the name of Christ."*

This report is the charity's second annual report to the Charity Commission. It covers the period from 6 April 2024 to the end of the financial year on 5 April 2025.

### **Objectives and Activities**

#### Summary of the purposes of the charity as set out in its governing document

The objects of the CIO are:

*4.1 To promote fundamental human rights (in particular, those relating to freedom of religion or belief and freedom of speech exemplified in: The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948; The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, 1966; The UN Declaration on the Elimination of all forms of Intolerance or Discrimination based on Religion or Belief, 1981), of the Christian community.*

*4.2 The advancement of the Christian faith by supporting Christians in the practice of their faith by undertaking research and educating the general public in relation to the persecution of Christians throughout the world*

#### Summary of the main activities in relation to those purposes for the public benefit, in particular, the activities, projects or services identified in the accounts

Research on global persecution of Christians.

Publication of research on global persecution of Christians.

Both for the benefit of the public in general and the Christian community in particular. This includes both

a) the general public and Christians in western countries, by enhancing their understanding of persecuted Christians and the causes of that persecution

b) Christians in countries where they face persecution, by drawing the attention of churches, media and governments in the west to their suffering and to possible actions which could help alleviate that suffering.

#### Guidance issued by the Charity Commission on public benefit

The trustees have complied with their duty to have due regard to the commission's public benefit guidance when exercising any powers or duties to which the guidance is relevant.

### **Additional information**

#### Policy on grant making

The charity does not make grants to individuals or organisations.

#### Contribution made by volunteers

All work is currently undertaken by volunteers. However, the charity's business plan sets out an aim to achieve grant funding to move to a position of initially two part time posts.

The charity's CEO currently works part time unsalaried. During the reporting period this is estimated at approximately 400 hours professional work, which is notionally assessed as being the equivalent of £12,000.

## **Achievements and Performance**

### **Establishment of the charity**

#### Financial administration

The charity's bankers are Virgin Money UK. The charity also has an account with Stewardship Services who act the primarily vehicle for donations, as well as reclaim of tax on donations.

#### Policies

The following policies are reviewed and approved by the trustees on an annual basis. They were last approved at the October 2024 quarterly trustees meeting:

- Advocacy policy
- Conflicts of interest policy
- Council of Reference policy
- Donor policy
- Media and publications policy
- Research Ethics policy
- Risk register
- Safeguarding policy
- Statement of values.

The charity also has a basis of faith which is set out in its constitution.

#### Business plan

The business plan was also updated and approved by trustees at their January 2025 meeting.

#### Trustees

During this period the trustees have continued to hold quarterly meetings.

## Research undertaken and published

During this first reporting year the charity has sought to

- undertake research into human rights issues
- educate the public about human rights
- raise awareness of human rights issues

through two principal means:

### 1. Country profiles

The publication of detailed country profiles of the situation in a number of countries where Christians face persecution. These country profiles include a summary of current issues faced by Christians in that country, analyses of the legal situation and of ideologies linked to persecution, an assessment of future risk i.e. how persecution is likely to increase either geographically or in severity in the future; as well as short summary of the history of the church in that country. Country profiles published include:

- Afghanistan
- Egypt
- Iran
- Iraq
- Maldives
- Nigeria
- Qatar
- Saudi Arabia
- Somalia
- Syria

Each country is also assessed according to 10 aspects of freedom of religion, which historically developed in the UK and other countries of the English-speaking world.

1. Freedom of the church from state interference, including freedom to interpret scripture without government interference.
2. Freedom to translate and own scripture in the vernacular and read it publicly.
3. Freedom of worship.
4. Freedom from being required to act against one's beliefs.
5. Freedom to establish places of worship.
6. Freedom to preach and try to convince others of the truth of one's beliefs.
7. Freedom to choose or change one's faith.
8. Freedom from being required to affirm a particular worldview i.e. religious or philosophical beliefs, in order to hold public office, enter various professions or study at university (repeal of Test Acts).
9. Freedom of parents to educate children according to their own beliefs.
10. Freedom to criticise the religious or philosophical beliefs of others (absence of blasphemy law).

The trustees believe this is an innovative approach which complements existing human rights declarations on FoRB, such as article 18 of the UDHR and ICCPR, by providing a much more specific analyses of FoRB in each country.

As such, as well educating and informing the general public, churches, media and governments in western countries about persecution of Christians in these countries, it also

helps educate the governments of the country profiled as to the nature of freedom of religion and the specific aspects they need to improve.

## 2. Lindisfarne Analysis

Through undertaking and publishing detailed research analyses on issues related to the persecution of Christians as soon as they occurred. These research analyses have covered the following persecution situations

- The implications of an Iran-Israel war: a potential catastrophe for Christians in Lebanon (May 2024)
- 10 years on: how the abduction of the Chibok schoolgirls was a paradigm shift (June 2024)
- How the erosion of freedom of religion in the west is already harming persecuted Christians (July 2024).
- Another Christian sentenced to death in Pakistan: Christians are victims of politicians playing identity politics and virtue-signalling their support of Islamic blasphemy laws (August 2024).
- New Taliban law removes all 10 aspects of freedom of religion for Afghan Christians (September 2024).
- Iran shows what full Hezbollah control would mean for Lebanese Christians (October 2024)
- How should Lebanon's Christians respond to Hezbollah? (November 2024).
- New threat to Syrian Christians as jihadist group seize Aleppo (November/December 2024).
- Syrian Christians allowed to celebrate Christmas – for now (January 2025).
- Lindisfarne Centre Commentary on BBC's Jeremy Bowen interview with leader of HTS Ahmed al-Sharaa (January 2025).
- Abduction, rape and forced marriage of Christian women and girls: the UK's grooming gang scandal has been imported – and Pakistan isn't the only country it's happening in (February 2025).
- What is happening to Christians in Syria under HTS? (March 2025).
- Lindisfarne Centre for the Study of Christian Persecution: statement on the massacres in Syria (March 2025).
- Is the West abandoning Syria's Christians? (April 2025).

## **Research Ethics**

The Lindisfarne Centre for the Study of Christian Persecution believes that a properly thought-out Research Ethics policy is essential for any form of academic related research and publication.

1. The trustees have adopted a Research Ethics Policy which is similar to those used by many western universities, but which additionally addresses a number of specific issues which could potentially arise in relation to research on persecution of Christians.

2. The policy specifically commits the charity to following both the core principles of the 2012 *Concordat to Support Research Integrity* and the specific responsibilities set out in the 2009 *Singapore Statement on Research Integrity*.

3. Our Research Ethics policy is also an expression of the Lindisfarne Centre's wider values (belief, character, courage, compassion, honesty, integrity, justice, patient endurance, research integrity, respecting people, selflessness, trustworthiness, wisdom). These values reflect both our Christian ethos and more widely accepted standards of public life. These

values are intended to shape daily culture and establish standards of conduct against which actions and decisions can be assessed.

## **Research impact**

This is an area where we feel that although the Lindisfarne Centre for the Study of Christian Persecution is currently a very small organisation, without significant financial resources, we nevertheless punch well above our weight – in terms of impact.

The Lindisfarne Centre for the Study of Christian Persecution seeks to assess research impact in a similar manner to universities i.e. with research not merely contributing to knowledge and understanding, but also in terms of public engagement and social, economic or political impact which is in line with the charitable objectives. There are two aspects to our research impact:

### Advocacy

During the reporting period a number of MPs and peers subscribed to our regular Lindisfarne Analysis communications providing detailed analysis of a current persecution situation faced by Christians.

We sent a copy of our detailed report *Christians at Risk of Genocide: Radicalisation and Traditionalist Islam among the Fulani: The religious background to Fulani militia attacks on Christians in Nigeria's Middle Belt* to a carefully selected group of MPs and peers with an interest in either FoRB or Nigeria. This report challenges the narrative promoted by the Nigerian government which currently dominates western media that the attacks on Christian villages in Nigeria's middle belt are primarily caused by a conflict between herders driven south by climate change and settled farmers, with the religious identities of both groups being largely incidental. Instead it demonstrates that international jihadist organisations have inspired groups of Fulani to re-awaken the traditionalist form of Fulani Islamic belief and practice which prior to the commencement of in west Africa colonial rule at the start of the twentieth century, involved regular raids on the non-Muslim villages in the Middle Belt to gather booty, including livestock and slaves. Eight months later, an MP made precisely this point in a debate in the House of Parliament on persecution of Christians.

In March 2025 we also sent a copy of this report to a US Congressman who was proposing a US House of Representatives motion calling on the US State Department to redesignate Nigeria a country of Particular Concern' in view of the ongoing Fulani attacks on Christian villages.

We have also sent multiple briefing notes to MPs and peers providing important updates on situations currently in the headlines regarding persecuted Christians in countries such as Syria.

### Media

During the reporting period we have undertaken interviews with both print and broadcast media in the UK and USA. These have included multiple interviews on Premier Christian Radio as well as US media outlet World News Group. A survey by ComRes found that 1.2 million adults listened to this radio station.<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> 'Record figures show more people listening to Premier than at any time before *Premier Christian News* 23 March 2018 <<https://premierchristian.news/en/news/article/record-figures-show-more-people-listening-to-premier-than-at-any-time->

We have also written articles for publication in both Christian and secular media, including *The Critic* and *Premier Christianity* been asked for comment and been quoted on persecution of Christians in a number of other media outlets.

We are now in a situation where we are approached by media organisations asking us to either comment or write an article for them on urgent issues relating to persecution of Christians.

## Syria

The Lindisfarne Centre for the Study of Christian Persecution's response to the unfolding situation in Syria illustrates the impact of its work. The Lindisfarne Centre has an existing country profile on Syria on our website: which summarised Current issues related to FoRB and persecution; recent religious cleansing and potential genocide; the legal situation; ideologies linked to persecution and future risk as well as a short section summarising Church History in Syria.

**30 November 2024** 'New jihadist threat to Syrian Christians as jihadist group seize Aleppo' our monthly Lindisfarne Analysis for December – we believe this was the first report/analysis by any Christian persecution organisation and was published while only part of Aleppo had been seized.

This concluded:

*"There is, therefore, a grave risk that a jihadist group with a similar ideology to al-Qaeda and a very recent record of atrocities against Christians could take over the parts of inland Syria with large Christian populations. Added to this, the one place where Syrian Christians have been able to flee in the past – Lebanon – is literally just emerging from the devastation of a war with a truce only days old.*

*Christian aid agencies need to prepare for a massive relief operation."*

**3 December 2024** we began to be contacted by Christian media organisations such as *Evangelicals Now* and *Premier Christianity* asking for either comments or articles.

**10 December 2024** letter published in the *Times*.

**10 December 2024** article on the situation in Syria by our chair of trustees and published Middle East historian, David Charlwood published by Premier Christianity 'Assad's fall leaves Syrian Christians in peril'. This was an article Premier approached us and specifically asked us to write.

**13 December 2024** Podcast with US based World News Organisation.

**27 December 2024** article by Lindisfarne CEO Dr Martin Parsons published in *The Critic* 'Will Syria's Christians really be safe under HTS?'

**1 January 2025** Lindisfarne Centre publishes commentary on BBC's Jeremy Bowen interview with leader of HTS Ahmed al-Sharaa.

**1 January 2025** 'Syrian Christians allowed to celebrate Christmas...for now' monthly Lindisfarne Analysis for January.

**17 February 2025** 12 minute podcast for Premier Christian Radio 'The fall of Assad: what now for Christians in Syria.

**4 March 2025** 'What is happening to Christians under HTS?' Lindisfarne Analysis for March – analysing changes to the school curriculum imposed by HTS.

**10 March 2025** live interview on Premier Christian Radio – Syrian Christians.

**10 March 2025** Lindisfarne Centre statement on the massacres in Syria - correcting exaggerated claims by some western media which implied there had been large scale massacres of Christians.

**3 April 2025** 'Is the west abandoning Syria's Christians? Lindisfarne Analysis for April. Examining the impact of US pressure on the Syrian Democratic Forces in NE Syria to hand over control to the new HTS government in Damascus, followed three days later by the imposition three days later of a new Islamist constitution with almost unchecked powers for the leader of HTS and no elections for at least five years.

### Relationship with other organisations

A number of other persecution organisations have asked to receive our regular analysis articles. In March 2025 we were invited by the international president of a US based persecution organisation to do a podcast alongside their local staff on situation in Syria. This was subsequently broadcast to their supporters in USA and other countries.

## **Financial review**

### Review of the charity's financial position at the end of the period

This report covers the first 6-18 months following charity registration. During this period the charity has raised funds both by donations from individuals and through the covering of some of its initial costs by the Lindisfarne Centre for the Study of Christianity CIC which has similar objectives to the charity. The total income during this period was £2,885.

The trustees also acknowledge the payment of the cost of the website for the charity by the Lindisfarne Centre for the Study of Christianity CIC at a cost of £150. This is NOT included in the income figures stated above, but is in addition to them, representing a total income of £3,035 (excluding payments due but not yet received of a further £121).

The trustees also acknowledge approximately 400 hours of unremunerated professional work were undertaken for the charity during this accounting period by the CEO who worked unsalaried. This is notionally recognised as valued at £12,000, although provided on a voluntary basis at no cost to the charity.

The bulk of the donations came through two appeals to supporters launched during the year. This has expanded the donor base and led to a significant increase in donations from the earlier accounting period. As we now have a stream of both regular and occasional donations we anticipate that the level of donations will continue to grow in the next financial year.

### Reserves policy

At the first trustees' meeting following charity registration it was agreed to adopt a policy of keeping 3 months' operating costs in reserves. The amount of reserves held at the end of the reporting period was £600, which more than adequately meets this policy criteria.

### Principal risks

The charity has a risk register which assesses risk in six general categories

Risk is assessed in 5 general areas

1. Governance risk
2. Operational risks

3. Financial risks
4. External risks
5. Compliance and regulatory risks

Risks for each category are identified then categorised a) according to potential impact from 1 (insignificant) to 5 (extreme/catastrophic); b) according to likelihood from 1 (remote) to 5 (highly probable) with mitigation actions taken to reduce any combined risk.

There is no retained net which falls into the RED category (11-25) risk of more categorised as more than RED (11-25).

## **Structure, Governance and Management**

The Lindisfarne Centre for the Study of Christian Persecution gained charity registration as a CIO on 30 August 2023

### Governing document

The Charity's governing document is its constitution.

### How trustees are selected – including details of constitutional provisions

The charity's constitution states

*10.2.1. Every Charity Trustee must be a natural person who has confirmed agreement with the Basis of Faith.*

*11.1.1 Apart from the first Charity Trustees, every Charity Trustee must be appointed by a resolution passed at a properly convened meeting of the Charity Trustees.*

*11.1.2. In selecting individuals for appointment as a Charity Trustee, the Charity Trustees must have regard to the skills, knowledge and experience needed for the effective administration of the CIO.*

### Relationship with any related parties

The charity works closely with the Lindisfarne Centre for the Study of Christianity CIC, The CIC undertook similar research work to the charity, prior to the charity obtaining charity registration.

1. Both have objectives of the advancement of the Christian religion and the advancement of human rights.

2. Both have the same directors/trustees

3. Both have the same statement of values and Christian basis of faith.

In July 2024 the charity and the CIC signed a memorandum of understanding setting out the areas and purposes for which they would work together. The CIC directors have indicated their intention to at a future date hand over all work and assets to the charity and dissolve the CIC.

## **Reference and Administrative details**

### Charity name

The Lindisfarne Centre for the Study of Christian Persecution

### Registered charity number

1204527

### Charity's principal address

49 Station Road, Polegate, East Sussex, BN26 6EA



## **Names of charity trustees who manage the charity**

Mr David Charlwood – chair of trustees

Dr Martin Parsons – CEO

Mr Christopher Martin.

## **Other trustees declarations**

There are no corporate trustees.

No trustees hold title to property belonging to the charity.

The charity does not hold any funds as custodian trustee on behalf of others.

## **Council of Reference**

The Council of Reference is a non-executive body whose role is

- i) to provide some broad big picture advice both practical and spiritual to the management and trustees at an annual online meeting.
- ii) to provide occasional specific advice if asked to in an area where they have particular expertise, such as reviewing something before it is published.
- iii) informally helping promote the organisation in the wider world.

The members of the Council of Reference are:

Mrs Andrea Minichiello Williams, barrister and CEO of Christian Concern.

Rev Dr David Hull, Methodist minister, chair of Methodist Evangelicals Together, council member of the Evangelical Alliance.

Professor Peter G Riddell, Fellow of the Australian Academy of Humanities, Professorial Research Associate in the Department of History at SOAS University of London and Senior Research Fellow of the Australian College of Theology.

The Baroness Caroline Cox, Founder President of Humanitarian Aid Relief Trust.

## **Chief Executive**

Dr Martin Parsons

The Lindisfarne Centre for the Study of Christian Persecution

Registered charity No. 1204527

**ANNUAL STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS**

**6 April 2024 to 5 April 2025**

*Income & Expenditure Account*

*Balance sheet as at 5 April 2025*

	2023-24	2024-25		
	Full Year	Full Year	Fixed Assets	0
	£	£		
<b>Income</b>			Current Assets	360
			Debtors	121
Grants	0	0	Cash	1854
Donations	494	2885		<b>645</b>
	<u>494</u>	<u>2885</u>		
			Represented By	
<b>Expenditure</b>			Surplus 2023-24	260
			Surplus to April	
Travel Expenses	0	39	2025	1854
Website	75	0		<b>645</b>
Office Costs	159	1180		
Marketing	0	72		
	<u>234</u>	<u>1291</u>		
<b>Net Surplus</b>	<b>260</b>	<b>1594</b>		
Bank Balance at 5 April 2025		1854		



## NOTES

1. The trustees acknowledge the payment of the cost of the website for the charity by the Lindisfarne Centre for the Study of Christianity CIC at a cost of £150. This is NOT included in the income figures stated above, but is in addition to them, representing a total income of £3,035 (excluding payments due but not yet received of a further £121).
2. The trustees also acknowledge approximately 400 hours of unremunerated professional work were undertaken for the charity during this accounting period by the CEO who worked unsalaried. This is notionally recognised as valued at £12,000, although provided on a voluntary basis at no cost to the charity.

## Declarations

The trustees declare that they have approved the trustees' report above.

Signed on behalf of the charity's trustees

Signature(s)		
Full name(s)	Mr David Charlwood	Dr Martin Parsons
Position (eg Secretary, Chair, etc)	Chair of trustees	CEO
Date	28 April 2025	