

CROSS-PARTY GROUP REGISTRATION FORM

NAME OF CROSS-PARTY GROUP

Cross-Party Group on Freedom of Religion or Belief

PURPOSE OF THE GROUP AND PROPOSED DISCUSSION TOPICS

1. Please state the purpose of the Group.
2. Please also provide a brief explanation of the purpose of the Group and why the purpose is in the public interest.
3. Please also provide details of any overlaps with the purpose of existing Cross-Party Groups and an explanation of why, regardless of any such overlap, the Group should be established.
4. Please also provide an indication of the topics which the Group anticipates discussing in the forthcoming 12 months.

1. The Group will discuss and consider how to promote freedom of religion or belief for any all.
2. In the last Parliament there was a Cross Party Group on Religious Freedom and while this is a new group, there are similarities with the previous one. One specific difference this time is that the purpose will be Freedom of Religion or Belief while the previous group was only for Freedom of Religion. No other CPG focusses specifically on religion or belief yet this is one of the protected characteristics in the 2010 Equality Act. The intention is primarily to take an interest in the position of religious people overseas but we have left it open that we could also look at issues in Scotland and the UK.
3. There is no other CPG dealing with religion. There are country specific CPGs which might also be of interest to this CPG in relation to freedom of religion or belief, e.g. China, Pakistan. International Development or Racial Equality might also have some connection. However, overall I consider that there would be minimal overlap.
4. At the inaugural meeting we had a speaker who gave an overview of the situations facing Christians around the world. The intention over the next few meetings would be to do a similar exercise with overviews in relation to Jews, Muslims, Baha'i, possibly Muslim minority groups, etc.

MSP MEMBERS OF THE GROUP

Please provide names and party designation of all MSP members of the Group.

John Mason (SNP),

Murdo Fraser (Conservative),
 Gordon Lindhurst (Conservative),
 Jeremy R Balfour (Conservative),
 Elaine Smith (Labour),
 Kate Forbes (SNP),
 Ross Greer (Green),
 Alex Cole-Hamilton (Liberal Democrat)

NON-MSP MEMBERS OF THE GROUP

For organisational members please provide only the name of the organisation, it is not necessary to provide the name(s) of individuals who may represent the organisation at meetings of the Group.

Individuals

Brian Miller,
 David Bradwell,
 Martin Dore,
 Bill Wishart,
 Ray Kelly

Organisations

Open Doors,
 Church of Scotland,
 Aid to the Church in Need,
 Scottish Council of Jewish Communities,
 Scottish Council of Muslims,
 Free Church of Scotland,
 Christian Solidarity Worldwide,
 SOLAS Centre for Public Christianity,
 Release International,
 Bahá'í Community,
 Iona Community,
 Steadfast Global,
 Scottish Churches Parliamentary Office,
 Evangelical Alliance,
 Catholic Parliamentary Office

GROUP OFFICE BEARERS

Please provide names for all office bearers. The minimum requirement is that two of the office bearers are MSPs and one of these is Convener – beyond this it is a matter for the Group to decide upon the office bearers it wishes to have. It is permissible to have more than one individual elected to each office, for example, co-conveners or multiple deputy conveners.

Convener	John Mason MSP
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Deputy Convener	Murdo Fraser MSP
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Secretary	TBC
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Treasurer	NA
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FINANCIAL BENEFITS OR OTHER BENEFITS

Please provide details of any financial or material benefit(s) the Group anticipates receiving from a single source in a calendar year which has a value, either singly or cumulatively, of more than £500. This includes donations, gifts, hospitality or visits and material assistance such as secretariat support.

None known at present. We have still to resolve secretarial support.

SUBSCRIPTION CHARGED BY THE GROUP

Please provide details of the amount to be charged and the purpose for which the subscription is intended to be used.

No Subscriptions

CONVENER CONTACT DETAILS

Name	John Mason MSP
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Parliamentary address	john.mason.msp@parliament.scot
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Telephone number	07879 430 877
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STATEMENT ON COMPLIANCE WITH THE CODE OF CONDUCT

I declare that the Cross-Party Group on Religious Freedom is constituted and will comply with the terms of Section 6 of the Code of Conduct for Members of the Scottish Parliament.

Signed

Date

16/03/17