UN Human Rights Council 61: UK Statement on Freedom of Religion or Belief

3.3.2026 - Eleanor Sanders | Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs

UK Statement for the Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief. Delivered by the UK's Human Rights Ambassador, Eleanor Sanders.

Thank you, Madame Vice-President,

The UK reiterates its commitment to protecting and promoting freedom of religion or belief (FoRB) for all.

We thank the Special Rapporteur for her recent report on the important way in which FoRB relates to death and honouring of the deceased. As the Rapporteur makes clear, funeral rights are essential to human dignity, yet they are regrettably infringed upon widely across the world.

The report notes distressing cases of severe discrimination including the denial of burial rights to faith or belief groups, despite judicial directives. In many cases, minority communities, including the Baha'i, face such restrictions, and are thus marginalised further.

And Ahmadi Muslims suffer discrimination as well as mob desecration of graves. The UK continues to raise these issues constructively with governments.

Special Rapporteur, your report outlines the dual obligation of States to refrain from undue interference with funeral rights and to protect communities from infringements by non-State actors.

What are the key measures States should prioritise to do so?

https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/un-human-rights-council-61-uk-statement-on-freedom-of-religion-or-belief