

# BRIEFING: BRITAIN IN THE WORLD

Christians recognise that we live our lives on a broader canvas than our own self-interest, with responsibilities that do not stop at our national borders. We believe that every human being in the world is made in God's image and are commanded to love our neighbours as ourselves. When Jesus is asked 'who is my neighbour?', he tells the parable of the good Samaritan, illustrating that our responsibilities to each other transcend earthly boundaries. We are called to seek justice and peace for all of God's children. Britain has a part to play in this as part of an international community of interdependent nations.



10% of the world's population, 736 million people, live below the international poverty line of £1.50 a day.

## CONTEXT

### DEFENCE AND SECURITY

For the majority of the world's population 'security' is about reliable access to food, water, education and healthcare, around which the armed forces have little impact. However, UK military spending has increased to 2% of GDP, three times the amount spent on international development aid. The new United Nations [Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons \(TPNW\)](#) has growing international support but is opposed by the UK.

### INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Despite good progress in tackling global poverty over the last three decades, there is still a very long way to go to address global inequalities and ensure that all people have the opportunity to thrive. Successive British governments have committed to spending 0.7% of national income on overseas development aid, and this is an important tool in tackling poverty. It is vital that this funding is focused on the poorest people and contributes to achieving the UN's Sustainable Development Goals.



The number of countries experiencing 'high' or 'very high' levels of government restrictions on religion has risen over the past decade from 40 to 52.

### FUTURE TRADE RELATIONSHIPS

If the UK leaves the European Union and the customs union, it will be able to develop independent new trading relationships with other countries. These create opportunities, but at what cost should these trade deals be pursued? Subjecting them to impact assessment and parliamentary scrutiny would ensure that they do not undermine or erode commitments to tackling global poverty, upholding human rights and meeting high environmental standards.

### FREEDOM OF RELIGION AND BELIEF

In many places in our world people's freedom to exercise religion and belief is under threat. People find themselves denied opportunities and rights, and vulnerable to physical violence, jail and torture, because of their faith. State authorities are often complicit in this and fail to protect religious minorities from intimidation or persecution. A future UK government could play a key role in promoting freedom of religion or belief as a foundational human right.

## QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

- What role and responsibilities does Britain have in tackling global poverty?
- What compromises do you think should be acceptable to secure a trade deal?

## QUESTIONS FOR CANDIDATES

- What will you do to ensure Britain continues to play a role in tackling global poverty?
- Would you support MPs having a role in scrutinising new trade deals negotiated by the UK after Brexit, especially with regard to their impact on human rights, poverty and the environment?
- How would you encourage progress towards a world free of nuclear weapons?