



Ministry of Housing,
Communities &
Local Government

Rt Hon James Brokenshire

*Secretary of State for Housing, Communities
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Open letter in response to the Sri Lankan attacks

I am writing this letter to the Sri Lankans in Britain and throughout the world to express my deepest regrets in the wake of the Easter Sunday attacks in Colombo, Negombo and Batticaloa. The UK government stands with you and your friends and relatives at this difficult time.

These attacks once again targeted a faith community in their place of sanctuary and worship - Christians gathering for prayer on one of the holiest days of the year. And once again we witnessed indiscriminate attacks on people of all faiths and beliefs, families simply sitting down together for breakfast, workers going about their daily lives.

Terrorist attacks like these are intended to create tension between communities. However, as following earlier acts of hatred and violence, they have completely failed to achieve the divisions they seek. Muslims around the world have expressed revulsion at the attack and solidarity with Christian communities mourning the loss. In traumatic moments such as this it is more vital than ever that that we collectively recommit to remaining united as a society and resolute as an international community, in the face of attempts to tear us apart.

The UK government is committed to tackling anti-Christian hatred around the world. The Foreign Secretary has recently announced an independent review into the UK's responses to Christian persecution to be led by the Bishop of Truro, the Rev'd Philip Mounstephen. Our position is clear that all religious minorities should be fully protected, but we know that in some countries Christian communities can bear the brunt of this risk and we need to explore what more we could do across the world.

There is no evidence to suggest that churches or other places of worship here in Britain are at risk, but we urge you to stay vigilant and speak to the police if you notice any suspicious activity. The government has also opened the Places of Worship security fund to expressions of interest with the full scheme opening in July.

This government stands with Sri Lankan communities of all faiths and backgrounds and will always defend the rights of religious minorities at home and abroad.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'James Brokenshire', is centered on the page. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent initial 'J'.

RT HON JAMES BROKENSHERE MP