



On behalf of faith or belief & civil society leaders (as listed below)

Michelle Donelan
Secretary of State for Science, Innovation and Technology
100 Parliament Street
London SW1A 2BQ

Dear Secretary of State,

The implications of Artificial Intelligence raise significant ethical and arguably existential questions that demand our collective attention. We therefore strongly welcome the UK's leadership in highlighting its potential risks, and establishing a common understanding around them.

When faced with questions of such consequence, it is essential that all parts of society can fully contribute to the principles and processes that will shape future governance. Given the speed at which these technologies are developing, it is understandable that the relatively small number of technical and policy specialists in this space will dominate early discussions. There is clearly a risk, however, that short-term commercial and economic interests will outweigh long-term social and ethical concerns if we do not find ways to engage a wide range of religious and cultural perspectives. While we recognise the limited and practical focus of this week's AI Safety Summit, it is notable that there will be almost no civil society representation beyond several academic institutes.

That's why, ahead of this important summit, 30 leaders across faith or belief & civil society met last week to discuss the implications of Artificial Intelligence and to submit their reflections for your consideration, under the distinguished chairmanship of The Rt Hon Sajid Javid MP. This meeting marked the inception of an ongoing initiative designed to ensure the active involvement of faith or belief communities and civil society in the discourse surrounding Artificial Intelligence. This first step in building a collaborative coalition was made possible through the generous support of the Abu Dhabi Forum for Peace and the Vatican's Pontifical Academy for Life and hosted by Google. We will follow developments in the AI Safety Summit closely and plan to reconvene in December this year. The December event will officially inaugurate a UK-based AI for Faith and Civil Society Commission with the aim of harnessing the opportunities of Artificial Intelligence for human flourishing while protecting communities from potential harm.

During the meeting, we discussed the aims of the AI Safety Summit at Bletchley Park, and emphasised the paramount significance of incorporating the perspectives of faith or belief and civil society organisations into these discussions.

It is our shared belief that, in addition to bridging the gap between technological experts and the broader public, faith or belief and civil society organisations serve as critical watchdogs holding both AI developers and policymakers accountable. We also discussed how faith or belief and civil society groups are often the first to identify harms which may affect specific communities. Therefore, while



faith or belief and civil society leaders may not be experts on AI, it is imperative that their diverse set of concerns, viewpoints and recommendations are given due consideration in the upcoming AI Safety Summit.

This initial gathering was a testament to the rich diversity of perspectives across faith or belief and civil society sectors, attended by leaders from various faiths or beliefs and sectors across the UK, Europe, the US, and the UAE, with representatives from Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Humanist, Jewish, Muslim, and Sikh communities, as well as different civil society sectors and representatives of academic institutions with a focus on ethics and human rights.

Following these discussions, we would like to bring to your attention the following points, ahead of the AI Safety Summit:

1. **Ensuring Accountability:** International Human Rights frameworks and rules-based orders are helpful tools which should be effectively used to manage the risks and harms of AI and ensure accountability.
2. **Enabling the Accessibility of Progress:** Much of the benefit and impact of AI is limited to a small number of firms. It is important that the ownership of AI is democratised, and the right of communities to benefit from scientific progress and its application under both article 15 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and article 27 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights is re-emphasised.
3. **Establishing Ethical Guidelines:** New robust, specific and sustainable ethical guidelines which incorporate values and beliefs shared across different sectors and faith or belief groups must be established to reflect the diverse viewpoints which make up our society.
4. **Addressing Short-Term Harms:** It is important to consider and address the *current* AI harms which are often overlooked in favour of the longer-term harms. This includes the current threats posed by the use of AI in surveillance, algorithmic biases, copyright infringement, decision-making in the social welfare sector and overdependence in technologies that are not accessible to all, as well as the risks of AI to children and vulnerable workforces.
5. **Including Diverse Voices:** Decision-makers must engage with more diverse voices and perspectives in the conversation around governance framework and AI harms. This is especially relevant to disabled people, for whom technology can already play a massive role in their lives. It also includes faith or belief and civil society organisations more broadly, which are often the first to identify harms facing specific communities and are able to engage with the public and represent their concerns.
6. **Closing the AI Literacy Gap:** There is a lack of AI literacy across civil society sectors and especially among faith or belief communities. This must be acknowledged and urgently addressed to avoid widening the technology gap and preserve people's right to make informed choices about AI risks.

We hope that you will take these points into consideration during the forthcoming AI Safety Summit and beyond. Following that, as part of your post-summit engagement, it would be an honour if you



would be willing to speak at the inauguration of the AI Faith & Civil Society Commission. With your support we will be delighted to work with your office and finalising a date in December that works best for your diary. We eagerly anticipate the opportunity to work with you in advocating for the interests of faith or belief and civil society.

The strength of the Commission lies in its collaborative approach of diverse communities. We look forward to contributing to the wider discussion so that we may harness the potential of AI responsibly and in line with ethical and societal values.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Susie Alegre, Director, Alegre International

Rabbi Dr Harris Bor, Barrister

Graham Budd, Executive Director, The Faraday Institute for Science and Religion

Clive Gilbert, Policy Connect

Dilwar Hussain MBE, Chair, New Horizons in British Islam

Jonas Kurlberg, Centre for Digital Theology, Spurgeons College

Kishan Manocha, The OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR)

Revd Professor Philip McCormack MBE PFHEA CMgr FCMI, Principal and Vice-Chancellor Centre for Digital Theology, Spurgeons College, London

Rachel Miner, Bellwether International

Nathan Mladin, Theos Think Tank

Debbie Moss, Director of Strategy and External Affairs, Barnardo's

Jeremy Peckham, Author and AI Entrepreneur

Revd Dr Peter Phillips, Centre for Digital Theology, Spurgeons College, London

Krish Raval OBE, Director, Faith in Leadership

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Liam Whitton, Humanists UK

Zeshan Zafar, Executive Director, Abu Dhabi Forum for Peace