

Press release

## Statement and guidance for charities on the evolving situation in Iran

The Commission is aware that charities will be affected in different ways by the current volatile situation in Iran and the wider region. We aim to support charities in delivering their charitable purposes within the law.

From: **The Charity Commission (/government/organisations/charity-commission)**

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### Staff safety overseas

For those with staff operating in the region it is important to monitor the latest advice from the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office. Read the latest [travel information for British nationals in the Middle East](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/foreign-office-travel-advice-updates) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/foreign-office-travel-advice-updates>).

Further advice is available on [protecting staff, volunteers and those with whom charities work overseas](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/charities-how-protecting-staff-volunteers-and-those-with-whom-charities-work-overseas) ([https://www.gov.uk/guidance/charities-how-](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/charities-how-protecting-staff-volunteers-and-those-with-whom-charities-work-overseas)

[to-manage-risks-when-working-internationally](#)).

## Political activity and risks of supporting extremism or terrorism

Some charities will be considering responding publicly to recent events and wider regional context. At times of heightened international tension, the need for care when planning activity becomes even more acute, and trustees need to consider the context of their activities carefully.

The nature of the political framework in Iran also presents additional considerations in how statements and activities may be perceived. A number of individuals and groups in Iran are sanctioned and consequently subject to restrictions, though not proscribed under UK law. As a civil regulator we will respond robustly to evidence of links between charities and extremism or terrorism, and we will make referrals to other agencies where appropriate including where there is evidence of criminality.

The Commission's [compliance toolkit on protecting charities from harm](https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/protecting-charities-from-harm-compliance-toolkit) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/protecting-charities-from-harm-compliance-toolkit>) includes guidance on protecting your charity from extremist or terrorist abuse.

Charity trustees have a responsibility to ensure that their charity's activities further their charitable purpose and is in the organisation's best interests. This includes the holding of events and the posting of material on websites or social media. In the current context, the Commission urges charities to be careful to ensure that any political activity they are involved in furthers their charity's objects and complies with our guidance. The Commission's guidance on [campaigning and political activity by charities](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/speaking-out-guidance-on-campaigning-and-political-activity-by-charities-cc9/speaking-out-guidance-on-campaigning-and-political-activity-by-charities) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/speaking-out-guidance-on-campaigning-and-political-activity-by-charities-cc9/speaking-out-guidance-on-campaigning-and-political-activity-by-charities>), and [social media guidance](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/charities-and-social-media/charities-and-social-media) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/charities-and-social-media/charities-and-social-media>), separately set this out in more detail.

The Commission will always assess concerns raised with it about a charity's activities, in line with our published guidance [Raising a concern with the Charity Commission \(CC47\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/complaints-about-charities/raising-a-concern-with-the-charity-commission-cc47) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/complaints-about-charities/raising-a-concern-with-the-charity-commission-cc47>).

## Safety in UK

The heightened tensions noted above may also present challenges to charity operations in the UK, particularly where charities have perceived links to states involved in the current conflict. Trustees have a responsibility

to take reasonable steps to protect from harm staff, volunteers and members of the public who come into contact with their charity.

The Home Office offers [protective security schemes \(https://www.gov.uk/guidance/places-of-worship-security-funding-scheme\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/places-of-worship-security-funding-scheme) where faith community organisations can apply for grants to improve security.

## Other information and support

We are aware that many charities will be considering how best to support those in need in the region. The Commission has previously drawn together [guidance and support for charities operating in the Middle East \(https://www.gov.uk/guidance/charities-operating-in-the-middle-east-guidance-and-support-for-trustees\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/charities-operating-in-the-middle-east-guidance-and-support-for-trustees), which covers a range of issues including safeguarding and complying with financial sanctions.

The Commission encourages charities facing significant issues or incidents to report them to the Commission via our [online tool for reporting serious incidents \(https://rsi.charitycommission.gov.uk/web/register/reporting-or-updating-a-serious-incident\)](https://rsi.charitycommission.gov.uk/web/register/reporting-or-updating-a-serious-incident).

This enables us to assess the steps being taken by trustees and helps us provide support and advice where required. Clear information on the nature of incidents occurring in charities also informs our own policies and enables us to report to government and others on trends facing the sector.

We will continue to monitor the situation, including assessing incoming intelligence from individual charities and sector bodies. We will update the guidance pages above when required.

Press office

Email [pressenquiries@charitycommission.gov.uk](mailto:pressenquiries@charitycommission.gov.uk)

Out of hours press office contact number: 07785 748787

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