

# JOINT STATEMENT

## EQUALITY BILL - CASTE DISCRIMINATION IN THE UK

**Joint Statement by organisations listed overleaf calling on the Government to provide protection for victims and future victims of Caste Discrimination in the UK.**

Over 200 years ago William Wilberforce described what he called “the cruel shackles” of the Caste system as, “*a detestable expedient ... a system at war with truth and nature*”. On 8 October 2009, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Navi Pillay, issued a strong call to end Caste Discrimination “*the time has come to eradicate the shameful concept of Caste*” and calling on the international community to come together “*as it did when it helped put an end to apartheid*”.

The Caste system has been imported into the UK with the Asian Diaspora and the associated Caste Discrimination affects citizens in ways beyond personal choices and social interaction and occurs in employment, education and in the provision of goods, facilities and services.

At present, if someone is discriminated against or harassed because of their Caste in places of employment, education or if they are in receipt of public services like health and social care for example, there is no legislation in place in the UK to protect them. This lack of legal protection and prevention of Caste-based Discrimination is not consistent with other forms of legal protection against Discrimination in the UK

Evidence of Caste Discrimination in the form of case studies and testimonies have been presented to Government by a number of organisations since 2004 in the UK including the Anti Caste Discrimination Alliance (ACDA), Dalit Solidarity Network UK, CasteWatchUK, the Federation of Ambedkarites and Buddhists Organisations UK, Voice of Dalit International, British Asian Christian Council, Shri Guru Valmik Sabha International, Central Valmik Sabha International and the Association for Community Cohesion. More recently, the report ‘*Hidden Apartheid – Voice of the Community – Caste and Caste Discrimination in the UK*’ November 2009 by the ACDA in collaboration with Professor Stephen Whittle OBE , Professor of Equalities Law University of Manchester and Dr Roger Green, Centre for Community Research, University of Hertfordshire has been presented to Government. This study in which over 300 people participated provides the clear evidence that is required by Government.

If Caste Discrimination is not treated in the same way as other forms of unacceptable discrimination in the UK, it will continue to flourish because it will have been left unchecked. In the long term this would hinder the creation of the much fairer and cohesive society to which the Government says it is committed.

**We call on the Government to treat Caste Discrimination like it does other forms of unacceptable Discrimination and include an amendment clause in the Equality Bill 2009 to provide protection for victims (or possible victims) of Caste Discrimination in the UK.**

**20 January 2010**

**Anti Caste Discrimination Alliance (ACDA)**

**Anti Slavery International**

**Association for Community Cohesion (ACC)**

**British Asian Christian Council**

**CasteWatchUK (CWUK)**

**Central Valmik Sabha International**

**Shri Guru Valmik Sabha International**

**Catholic Association for Racial Justice (CARJ)**

**Coalition Against Caste Discrimination (CACD)**

**Dalit Solidarity Network UK (DSN UK)**

**Federation of Ambedkarite and Buddhist Organisations UK (FABO-UK)**

**Bhagwan Valmik Sabha, Bedford**

**Dr. Ambedkar Mission Society, Bedford**

**Jagat Guru Valmik Ji Maharaj Temple**

**Indian Workers Association (GB)**

**Indian Christian Concern**

**Asian Rationalist Society, Britain**

**Anti Land Grab and Forced Displacement of People**

**Voice of Dalit International UK (VODI-UK)**

**Shri Guru Ravidass Temple (Foleshill, Coventry)**

**Shri Guru Ravidass Sabha UK (SGRS-UK) and is the voice for all Shri Guru Ravidass Temples in the UK:**

<b>Shri Guru Ravidass Sabha Coventry</b>	<b>Shri Guru Ravidass Sabha Strood, Medway</b>
<b>Shri Guru Ravidass Sabha Darlaston,</b>	<b>Shri Guru Ravidass Sabha, East Ham</b>
<b>Shri Guru Ravidass Sabha Bedford,</b>	<b>Ravidassia Community Centre, Hitchin</b>
<b>Shri Guru Ravidass Sabha Derby</b>	<b>Shri Guru Ravidass Sabha Birmingham</b>
<b>Shri Guru Ravidass Sabha Southall</b>	<b>Shri Guru Ravidass Sabha Leicester</b>
<b>Shri Guru Ravidass Sabha Luton</b>	<b>Shri Guru Ravidass Sabha Walsall</b>
<b>Shri Guru Ravidass Sabha Glasgow</b>	<b>Shri Guru Ravidass Sabha Wolverhampton</b>
<b>Shri Guru Ravidass Sabha Strood</b>	<b>Shri Guru Ravidass Sabha Erith Kent</b>
<b>Shri Guru Ravidass Sabha Southampton</b>	<b>Shri Guru Ravidass Sabha Bradford</b>
<b>Shri Guru Ravidass Sabha Northampton</b>	<b>Shri Guru Ravidass Sabha Darlaston</b>
<b>Shri Guru Ravidass Sabha Willenhall</b>	<b>Shri Guru Ravidass Sabha Gravesend</b>

