

Abolish Northern Ireland's blasphemy laws

England and Wales repealed their blasphemy laws in 2008. Scotland repealed theirs in 2021. It's time for Northern Ireland to follow suit.

Northern Ireland remains the only nation in the UK where 'blasphemy' and 'blasphemous libel' remain common law offences.

Blasphemy laws have no place in any country, and especially 21st century Northern Ireland. They are illiberal, anachronistic and incompatible with the fundamental human rights to freedom of expression and freedom of religion or belief.

The presence of blasphemy laws in Northern Ireland undermines efforts to repeal blasphemy laws worldwide. Blasphemy laws are used to persecute religious minorities, the non-religious, those who leave or change their religion, or simply those who speak their mind. In some countries, "blasphemy" carries the death penalty.

As long as blasphemy laws remain on the books, there is always the risk that they may be invoked to silence criticism or ridicule of religion within Northern Ireland. In the Republic of Ireland an [attempt to arrest](#) Stephen Fry was made in 2015 under the Defamation Act 2009, which at the time outlawed "utterance of blasphemous matter", by a person offended by Fry's comments about religion. The Republic of Ireland abolished its blasphemy laws in 2020.

And in 2014, Newtownabbey Borough Council in NI [banned a play](#) about the Bible on the grounds that it was "blasphemous".

The existence of blasphemy laws sends the dangerous and anti-democratic message that offence-takers have the right to censor that which offends their religious beliefs.

Abolishing its blasphemy laws would send a message that Northern Ireland is committed to the values of free speech, tolerance, democracy and freedom of conscience. It would also send a message to other countries that employ blasphemy laws that such laws are unacceptable in the 21st century, and so help to end global persecution in the name of religion.

Please support our campaign to abolish Northern Ireland's blasphemy laws by writing to your MLA today.

Repeal blasphemy laws in NI

Tell your MLAs why Northern Ireland should join England, Wales, Scotland and the Republic of Ireland in repealing its archaic and illiberal blasphemy laws.

MLAs receive a lot of research and correspondence from campaigning organisations. When their constituents also share these reports it shows that voters care about this issue.

You can use the below template to share the report and its findings and recommendations with your MLAs; just enter your postcode to get started. Please consider taking the time to personalise it. Let them know:

- Why this matters to you
- What you'd like them to do about it.
- Any other interesting perspectives you may be able to offer on the issue.

Name*:

Email*:

Postcode*:

Address:

Message*:

Dear {{name}},

I am writing today to urge you to work towards repeal of Northern

In your response I would like you to outline your views on this matter, and the ways you intend to address this issue on my behalf.

* Required Field

Preview Letter