

Submission to the Inquiry into Cults and Coercive Control

29 July 2025

We submit that the coercive control victims of cults and organised fringe groups need legal protection. The effects of coercive control in these situations are no less than in domestic violence cases. The victims suffer violations of their basic rights and freedoms.

The fact that such violations may occur as the result of religious beliefs should offer no justification.

Article 18 of the UN Universal declaration of human Rights states that:

Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance.

There should be no coercion in religion. The Inquiry's Guidance states that:

If a religious organisation does that (causes harm), it, like anyone else, should be guilty of the appropriate criminal offence. "Freedom of religion" is not freedom, for example, to defraud, nor is it freedom to cause significant psychological or psychiatric harm to any person.

Therefore it is clear that as a result of this Inquiry, legislation should be introduced to prohibit coercive control practised by any cult or organised fringe group.

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