

## Release International

### Fundraising Policy

#### Introduction

Release International is a Christian organisation and this is expressed in our [Ethos Statement](#) and [Statement of Faith](#). The values, attitudes, motivation and relationships of staff and the way the work is achieved is as important as the work itself. We are committed to high standards and we aim to treat everyone in accordance with the Christian values at the heart of our ministry.

#### About us

Through the ministry of Pastor Richard Wurmbbrand and Hebrews 13:3, Release International has been called by God to love and serve persecuted Christians.

We do this by:

- Raising their voice;
- Calling UK Christians into fellowship with them;
- Learning lessons of Christian discipleship with them;
- Giving them the 'Tools' they need to live for Jesus Christ.

Around the world we prayerfully, pastorally and practically help:

- Families of Christian martyrs;
- Prisoners of faith and their families;
- Christians suffering oppression and violence;
- Christians forced to flee.

This policy sets out the standards for Release International's efforts to raise funds for our Ministry.

In this policy, fundraising refers to the engagement of individuals and organisations in their financial support of Release International's work, as well as commercial and retail activities we carry out in order to generate income.

In our fundraising, we strive to give our supporters the best supporter journey we can, so that together we can do more to raise awareness of persecution and serve persecuted Christians worldwide. It is critical that our fundraising is biblically based, transparent, ethical and responsible.

This policy is consistent with the Charity Commission's and the Office for the Scottish Charity Regulator's guidance. We are also registered to raise funds in the Irish Republic. Release International is a member of the Fundraising Regulator's Registration System, which is an independent self-regulatory organisation in the United Kingdom.

Release International is a company limited by guarantee, registered in England (company number 01506576). Release International is a charity registered in England and Wales (number 280577), registered in Scotland (SCO40456) and registered in the Republic of Ireland. (Registration no. pending.)

Release International is a member of the International Christian Association (ICA), which exists to help, love and encourage persecuted Christians. All ICA members around the world trace their roots to Richard and Sabina Wurmbbrand's testimony and mission. These organisations continue the Wurmbbrands' mission of standing with persecuted Christians and urging other Christians to join in fellowship with those being persecuted. Each mission is

autonomous with its own independent leadership, staff and board of directors, but we cooperate relationally through the ICA. While each country's mission has its own focus and management, through the ICA we share information and jointly fund some international projects. Each office is funded through donations. There is no world headquarters or main office as each organisation is an independent, self-supported entity.

## Aims

- To explain why we need to fundraise and the standards we use to evaluate our fundraising activities;
- To explain our commitments to our supporters and outline the seven principles of fundraising practice as set out in our Supporter Charter;
- To explain why and how our fundraising is biblically based through reference to the *Giving in Grace* Programme;
- To outline our obligations under the Fundraising Regulator's Registration System;
- To outline our funding relationship with the International Christian Association;
- To explain how we raise funds;
- To explain where our funds come from;
- To explain the Charity Commission's *Know your Donor* principle;
- To outline our approach to responsible fundraising;
- To explain how we use gifts given for specific projects;
- To outline our approach to ethical purchasing and the use of third-party services;
- To signpost to related policies and resources;
- To signpost relevant legislation and good practice;
- To explain how supporters can make complaints or send us feedback about our fundraising practice;
- To explain how we carry out implementation, monitoring, evaluation and review of this policy.

## Christian Stewardship *Giving in Grace* Programme

Our first principle of fundraising is to adhere to our calling in Christ and to look to the Bible as our primary source of how to develop, manage and fund our Ministry.

Release International subscribes to the principles for Christian giving as set out in the [Giving in Grace Stewardship Programme](#). It helps us to build a culture of generous discipleship which is underpinned by a clear theological framework. It offers a range of practical resources to enable us to fund our Ministry and mission; and to help us reach out to supporters and churches who 'excel in this grace of giving' 2 Corinthians 8:7. (See Appendix 1.)

## Fundraising Regulator

As a member of the Fundraising Regulator's Registration System, we are committed to the highest standards in fundraising. We abide by the [Fundraising Promise](#) and the [Fundraising Regulator's Code of Fundraising Practice](#).

This Code sets the standards for fundraising activity throughout the UK, and we use the Fundraising Regulator badge publicly to show that we are following these standards.



## **Supporter Charter**

In addition, our approach to responsible fundraising is driven by seven key principles, laid out in our Supporter Charter: (See Appendix 2.)

1. Our fundraising is based on the Bible and its teaching;
2. Our fundraising respects and protects our independence and our Ministry;
3. We fundraise with integrity;
4. We work in partnership with those who support us;
5. We value and respect our supporters;
6. We fundraise in faith and with courage;
7. We are transparent in our fundraising and use of funds.

This policy describes the minimum standards for Release International to raise funds. All Release International staff, suppliers and volunteers involved in fundraising are required to have a thorough understanding of this policy and adhere to it and its associated procedures.

It is the responsibility of managers in the UK Engagement team to ensure that staff, suppliers, and volunteers are aware of Release International's fundraising policy, principles and associated procedures.

UK Engagement staff also need to ensure that they equip individuals and groups fundraising for Release International with the guidance they need to enable them to act in a manner which is consistent with this policy. In addition, this document forms our agreement with our supporters across the UK in how we will undertake our fundraising activities.

## **Why we Need to Raise Funds**

Release International is passionate about our calling to love and serve persecuted Christians worldwide. To do this, we need funds, which we believe God provides for us predominantly through the Church, which is the 'Body of Christ'. In raising these funds, we will share our calling and mission, our plan of work and our impact; and we will seek to engage as many Christian supporters in the UK as possible.

Raising funds does not drive the Ministry of Release International; it resources our ability to deliver our Ministry. In seeking donations and raising funds, our supporters are taking an active and compassionate role in the 'one body of Christ' standing side by side with their persecuted Christian brothers and sisters, to help meet their needs and give them the 'tools' they need to live for Jesus Christ.

## **How we Raise Funds**

We are honest and behave with integrity in all our fundraising. We raise funds in accordance with our fundraising policy, principles and associated procedures, and with our [Data Protection Policy and Procedures](#). These comply with relevant UK laws and regulations, including those related to privacy.

We respect our supporters' privacy and right to decide how and if Release International contacts them. We treat people equally and fairly and we have a policy in place for how we

engage with supporters who may be in vulnerable circumstances. (link to fundraising with people in vulnerable circumstances policy).

In our fundraising, we aim to bring UK Christians into fellowship with persecuted Christians through supporting Release International. We bring issues related to persecuted Christian communities to life by sharing honest, powerful stories, sometimes with emotional impact. When we tell these stories to raise funds, in appeals or in the *Voice* magazine, our primary concern is to respect the wishes, dignity and security of the individual or community facing persecution. Therefore, we only share stories where we have informed and prior consent to do so. Where we comment on general issues concerning persecuted Christians that are featured in the wider Christian or global media, we do so where that information is in the public domain and has been verified by reputable media outlets. We aim to report on countries or cases that we are connected to in country. (See Appendix 7. Reputable Christian Media Sources, where directly reported verification of facts or cases has not been sought.)

### **Where our Funds Come From**

Release International is an inter-denominational, evangelical Christian Ministry, which does not support any political ideology and is not tied to any business or private company. We ensure that our fundraising respects, maintains and protects our Christian calling, foundations, identity, ethos and values.

Our primary source of funding for our work is, and will remain, donations from Christian individuals and Christian churches. Our individual and church supporters, who support us in prayer and with funding, are highly valued and trusted. We will also seek to generate income and donations from a diverse range of sources to ensure we maintain our sustainability, and do not become dependent on any single source of income. We actively seek funding in pursuit of our charitable and strategic objectives.

We ensure that projects for which we raise funds reflect our Ministry, priorities, and that neither the funding opportunities we pursue, nor the requirements of funders, will deflect us from our strategic objectives or Christian calling, foundations, identity, ethos and values. We accept donations from a range of organisations – trusts, foundations, companies, commercial organisations, non-government organisations, missions and churches – where there will be a benefit to our work, without compromising our Ministry, independence, integrity and credibility.

We accept funds from governments only for projects to educate people and communities about their Christian faith and legal protections; as well as to support Christians overseas where possible to improve their lives.

We will not accept gifts from individuals, governments or organisations that might use their funding relationship with Release International to deflect criticism from their own involvement in the persecution of Christian communities, or with whom association would significantly risk our reputation.

Sizeable gifts and legacies from individuals will be subject to screening prior to acceptance. If we turn down a gift or offer of support, we will explain why. We can only accept donations that are lawfully made. (See Appendix 3. Accepting and Refusing Donations.)

We do not encourage our supporters to raise funds from lotteries or raffles. These fundraising activities are regulated by the UK Gambling Commission. Many Bible passages underpin the principle that gambling could be seen as ungodly. Hebrews 13:5, Keep your life free from love of money, and be content with what you have, for he has said, 'I will never leave you nor forsake you'.

### **Charity Commission's *Know your Donor* principle**

We operate the Charity Commission's *Know your Donor* principle (see Appendix 4) and will make reasonable and appropriate attempts to identify any individual or organisation that gives us financial support, particularly where significant sums are being donated, or the circumstances of the donation give rise to notable risk. We will not knowingly accept anonymous corporate donations.

We may accept donations from anonymous individuals as these gifts are based on biblical teaching to give generously and 'in secret'. Matthew 6:1-4. (See Appendix 5.)

If a supporter makes themselves known to Release International but wishes their gift to remain anonymous, we will honour those wishes, on the basis that the donation carries no significant reputational risk.

We will accept charity and private trust donations where there has been a third-party due diligence process, to confirm that Release International is not potentially compromised.

### **Responsible Fundraising**

We do not fundraise for the sake of fundraising; we fundraise for the sake of the 'body of Christ' (1 Corinthians 12:27-31), particularly to love and serve persecuted Christians and in pursuit of our charitable and strategic objectives.

We recognise and respect that when we invest in fundraising activity, we do so with funds donated to us for serving Christian communities facing persecution worldwide and for the pursuit of our Ministry in the UK and Ireland.

Any investment in fundraising must have the potential to raise additional funds for supporting and serving persecuted Christian communities; and our UK Ministry. We communicate our fundraising costs and strive to be as cost-effective as possible. We are accountable to our supporters whose generosity enables our Ministry to continue.

We put our supporters' donations into our Ministry as quickly as we can and do this responsibly. We always seek God's grace, guidance and wisdom to inform our decision-making. We thank our supporters for their contributions in a timely and appropriate manner and we keep our supporters updated on the impact of their support through our *Voice* magazine and via online channels of communications including web, email and social media.

We monitor our fundraising activities closely to ensure compliance with our fundraising policy, principles and procedures, and with relevant regulation and legislation. If we get things wrong, we will be open and transparent about our mistakes, and take swift action to fix them. We report on our strategic, operational and financial performance in full compliance with all UK laws and regulations.

### **Gifts for Specific Projects**

We encourage all supporters to give financial support as general, unrestricted funds. This allows us the freedom to use funds where and when they are needed most, including responding to crisis situations or unexpected opportunities to fulfil our mission.

Sometimes we will ask our supporters to fund specific projects, campaigns or areas of work. We will use any donations raised in this way for the restricted purpose for which they were provided and will include a 12.5% contribution to support our UK Ministry. Should excess funds for such initiatives be collected, we will transfer the gift to other specific projects or our general activities.

### **Ethical Purchasing and Use of Third-Party Services**

When we purchase products and services in our efforts to raise funds, we will endeavour to ensure that we source materials, products and agencies' services for the best possible value while protecting our reputation, managing any risks and ultimately aiming to work with organisations that reflect our own Christian values and ethical standards. (See Appendix 6.) We may enter into commercial agreements with third-party organisations for the purposes of raising funds, but in order to maintain our independence, we do not endorse any third-party commercial products or services.

### **Related Policies and Resources**

This policy is supported by the following materials:

- [Data Protection Policy](#)
- [Equal Opportunities and Diversity Policy](#)
- [Privacy Policy](#)
- [Supporters' Complaints Policy and Procedure](#)
- UK Supporter Charter
- Reserves Policy

### **Relevant Legislation and Good Practice**

- Direct Marketing Association Code
- Fundraising Regulator Code of Fundraising Practice
- Privacy and Electronic Communications (EC Directive) Regulations 2003
- The Charities (Protection and Social Investment) Act 2016
- The Charities Act 2011
- The Data Protection Act 2018
- The Charitable Institutions (Fund-Raising) Regulations 1994
- The Charities Act 1992
- The Gambling Act 2005
- The House to House Collections Act 1939
- The Police, Factories and (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1916 and Regulations
- UK Code of Non-Broadcast Advertising and Direct and Promotional Marketing
- UK Code of Broadcast Advertising

### **Complaints and Feedback:**

We recognise that although our supporters may share our statement of Christian faith and values, they may not agree with everything we say or do – for persecuted Christians or in raising funds.

In accordance with our [Supporters' Complaints Policy and Procedure](#), we respond to questions and feedback from supporters promptly and consider fully the points of view expressed. We will acknowledge a complaint about any aspect of our fundraising within seven working days and aim to resolve complaints within 28 working days of receipt.

If the complainant remains dissatisfied, their complaint will be referred to our Board of Trustees. If this does not resolve the issue the complainant may take their complaint to the Fundraising Regulator.

To make a complaint about Release International's fundraising activity, please contact us by writing to: The Supporter Relations Team, Release International, PO Box 54, Orpington, BR5 4RT.

For more information about giving feedback to Release International, please refer to our [Supporters' Complaints Policy and Procedure](#).

**Implementation, Monitoring, Evaluation and Review**

Release International's CEO is ultimately responsible for compliance with this policy. The Director of UK Engagement is responsible for its implementation. Both are supported in compliance and implementation by Release International's Leadership Team. Its effectiveness will be monitored, and it will be evaluated and reviewed annually.

Laura Hayes  
Review

December 2019  
March 2020

## **APPENDIX 1**

### **GIVING IN GRACE STEWARDSHIP PROGRAMME**

Key principles of the *Giving in Grace* Stewardship Programme include an outline of the [Theology of Christian Giving](#).

Mature Christian giving will always abundantly meet the material need. It will also go beyond the need and our calculations about what we can afford to give. The question is not how much we should give, but how much of ourselves, our life in Christ and all that God has entrusted to us is reflected in our giving.

Generous giving is born of grace, an obedient, grateful response to God's gift in creation and in Christ, and to the commands of Scripture. To practise generosity is to release our grip on wealth and so make wealth release its grip on us. In a world where billions cry for justice and resources are not distributed equally, generous giving is transformative.

The *Giving in Grace* website provide three useful factsheets on the theology of giving:

- [First to the Lord: The Bible and Giving](#)
- [The Grace of Giving: Grace as the Hallmark of Financial Discipleship](#)
- [Remember the Lord: Money as Gift, Obligation and Temptation](#)

## **APPENDIX 2**

### **SUPPORTER CHARTER**

#### **ABOUT US**

Through the ministry of Pastor Richard Wurmbbrand and our guiding scripture Hebrews 13:3, Release International has been called by God to love and serve persecuted Christians.

We do this by:

- Raising their voice;
- Calling UK Christians into Fellowship with them;
- Learning lessons of Christian discipleship with them;
- Giving them the 'Tools' they need to live for Jesus Christ.

Around the world we prayerfully, pastorally and practically help:

- Families of Christian martyrs;
- Prisoners of faith and their families;
- Christians suffering oppression and violence;
- Christians forced to flee.

We value and respect the supporters engaged in our Ministry, and we strive to give them the best experience we can, so that together we can do more to raise the issue of Christian persecution and serve persecuted Christian communities worldwide.

This Supporter Charter sets out seven fundraising principles which we use to guide Release International's fundraising policy, strategy and the behaviour of our fundraisers and partner agencies. It forms our commitment to our supporters.



## **Principle One**

### **Our Fundraising is Based on the Bible and its Teaching**

As a biblically based, evangelical Christian Ministry, all our communications, marketing and fundraising activities are based on the Bible and its teaching. Many Christians in hostile or restricted countries live in poverty, suffering abuse, discrimination, violence or are even killed for their faith. Jesus taught us that we should care for our brothers and sisters who are poor, sick, those who are widows, those who are mentally or physically unwell, those who are in pain, and we should pray for them and with them. Our calling in Jesus is to faithfully serve Christians based on the teachings in the Bible.

Our guiding scripture is Hebrews 13:3:

‘Continue to remember those in prison as if you were together with them in prison, and those who are mistreated as if you yourselves were suffering.’

Release International subscribes to the principles for Christian giving as set out in the [Giving in Grace Stewardship Programme](#). It helps us to build a culture of generous discipleship which is underpinned by a clear theological framework. It offers a range of practical resources to enable us to resource our Ministry and mission; and to help us reach out to supporters and churches who ‘excel in this grace of giving’ (2 Corinthians 8:7).

## **Principle Two**

### **Our Fundraising Respects and Protects our Independence and our Ministry**

Release International is independent of any government, political ideology, or company, and our fundraising activity respects and protects that. Our primary source of funds for our work is, and will remain, donations from individuals and churches.

We raise funds in accordance with our fundraising policy and principles. We will not accept gifts from individuals or organisations that might use their funding relationship with Release International to deflect criticism from their own involvement in the abuse of Christian communities, or with whom association would risk our reputation. If we turn down a gift or offer of support, we will explain why.

We will ensure that projects for which we raise funds reflect our Ministry and priorities, and that neither the funding opportunities we pursue, nor the requirements of funders, will deflect us from our strategic objectives, Christian calling, foundations, identity, ethos and values.

## **Principle Three**

### **We Fundraise with Integrity**

We are honest and behave with integrity in all our fundraising, ensuring we comply with our fundraising policy, and that this complies with UK regulation and legislation.

When we tell the stories of those who are facing Christian persecution, our primary concern is to respect the wishes, dignity and security of the individual or community. Therefore, we will only share stories where we have informed and prior consent to do so. Where we comment on general issues concerning persecuted Christians that are featured in the wider Christian or global media, we do so where that information is in the public domain and has been verified by reputable media outlets. We aim to report on countries or cases that we are connected to in country.

#### **Principle Four**

##### **We Work in Partnership with those who Support us**

Release International stands together with our supporters to be a voice of Christian persecution in the UK and Ireland. Building true Christian relationships as the ‘one body of Christ’ is central to our Ministry.

We are led by a Board of Trustees and supported by a national network of around 200 volunteers.

We regularly meet with our volunteers and carry out a nationwide supporter survey every five years to ensure that we are meeting their needs.

#### **Principle Five**

##### **We Value and Respect our Supporters**

Our supporters enable our Ministry, and we value and respect them for their contributions and their evangelical Christian faith which drives our Ministry. We put our supporters’ donations to work as quickly as we can and do this responsibly.

We recognise that although our supporters may share our Christian ethos and values, they may not agree with everything we say or do – about Christian persecution or in raising funds. We respond to questions and feedback from supporters promptly and will fully consider the points of view expressed. We offer many ways to support Release International and value each gift made and pound raised.

We treat people equally and fairly. We have a policy in place for how we engage with supporters who may be in vulnerable circumstances.

We respect our supporters’ privacy and right to decide how and if Release International contacts them. We make it easy for supporters to choose how they want to hear from us, and if they ask us not to contact them, we won’t, unless it is a legal or administrative requirement.

Our fundraising activity is carried out in accordance with our [Data Protection Policy and Procedures](#). We will never sell our supporters’ data. We will never share data outside of Release International, unless there is an ethical or legal requirement to do so, for example, to preserve life or comply with the law.

#### **Principle Six**

##### **We Fundraise in Faith and with Courage**

Our staff and volunteers raise funds in accordance with our fundraising policy and principles, and we monitor our fundraising activities to check this. If we get things wrong, we will be open about our mistakes and take swift action to fix them.

We aim to inspire Christians in the UK to engage with persecuted Christians worldwide by supporting Release International. We share honest, powerful stories, sometimes with emotional impact, to bring Christian persecution to life and show the joy and suffering for followers of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and which highlight abuses of Christian communities.

Our fundraising needs to adapt to changes in the external world. We review our fundraising activity and constantly seek to improve it. We look for new opportunities to raise funds, where these comply with our fundraising policy and principles. We are transparent in our fundraising and use of funds.

We are accountable to our supporters whose generosity enables our work and keep our supporters updated on how we have used their gifts and the impact of their support.

### **Principle Seven**

#### **We are Transparent in our Fundraising and use of Funds**

We will not allow any funding relationship with an individual or organisation to constrain us from criticising that body or from exposing Christian persecution for which it may be responsible.

We accept donations from governments only for projects to educate people and communities about Christian persecution or to support Christians overseas.

We communicate our fundraising costs through our Annual Trustees' Report and Accounts and strive to be as cost-effective as possible to achieve the biggest impact for our work. We recognise and respect that when we invest in fundraising activity, we do so with funds donated to us to achieve our charitable objects for the advancement of the Christian faith and to help persecuted Christians. Any investment in fundraising must offer the potential to raise additional funds for our Ministry.

### **APPENDIX 3 – ACCEPTING AND REFUSING DONATIONS**

The Fundraising Regulator's *Code of Fundraising Practice* specifies [key principles and behaviours in respect of donations](#).

The Institute of Fundraising has issued [guidance on Accepting and Refusing Donations](#).

Release International has a policy entitled: 'Fundraising with People in Vulnerable Circumstances' which affects the acceptance and refusal of donations. [Add link to this policy.]

### **APPENDIX 4 – THE CHARITY COMMISSION'S *KNOW YOUR DONOR* PRINCIPLE**

The Charity Commission has produced a '[Due Diligence](#)' toolkit to protect charities from harm.

They have issued guidance called [Charities: Due Diligence, Monitoring and Verifying the End Use of Charitable Funds](#)

They have produced a tool called [Know your Donor – Key Questions](#). This contains guidance for staff and Trustees.

## **APPENDIX 5 – ANONYMOUS DONATIONS: GIVING TO THE NEEDY AND THIRD-PARTY DUE DILIGENCE**

### **Anonymous Donations**

Release International will always refer to the Word of God in the Bible to inform our decision-making. For anonymous donations we remember the following scripture:

#### **Giving to the Needy**

Be careful not to practise your righteousness in front of others to be seen by them. If you do, you will have no reward from your Father in heaven. So when you give to the needy, do not announce it with trumpets, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and on the streets, to be honoured by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your giving may be in secret. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. Matthew 6:1-4. (NIV)

There have been cases in UK charities in the past where anonymous donations to charities have been used to facilitate criminal activity such as money laundering. To avoid enabling this, it's helpful to operate in line with the following 'know your donor' principles as set out by the Charity Commission:

- Know your donor
- Know your beneficiaries
- Know your partner

Essentially, this means knowing the people and organisations you work with so that you are able to identify and manage any associated risks.

#### **Third-Party Due Diligence**

The Charity Commission produces [Guidance on Prevention of Fraud and Serious Crime](#) for charities.

## **APPENDIX 6 – ETHICAL PROCUREMENT STANDARDS**

When commissioning third-party suppliers of any nature in the UK and overseas, Release International will endeavour to consider using Christian consultants, suppliers or other Christian third-party organisations where possible.

## **APPENDIX 7 – REPUTABLE CHRISTIAN AND OTHER MEDIA SOURCES**

We will always endeavour to seek permission to use content and testimony from our partners and persecuted Christians whose stories we share to raise awareness of our work for our Ministry as the 'voice of persecuted Christians' in the media. We also strive to comment on persecution issues in those hostile and restricted countries where we have a current active partner working on the ground with persecuted communities, pastors and families or individuals.

We engage with and make press statements to reputable Christian and other national media sources on issues about Christian persecution, which we may comment on and where cases of persecution are being debated in the public domain. These statements are based on reports or sources from reputable organisations.

The following organisations are some examples of reputable media sources that we work with and are contacted by Release International:

- The BBC
- Reuters
- Press Association
- Channel Four
- The Times
- The Telegraph
- The Guardian
- The Express
- British Government Ministries and Overseas Government Statements
- All Party Parliamentary Group for Freedom of Religion or Belief (FoRB) in the UK
- European Union and The United Nations persecution and freedom of religion departments and bodies
- The Christian Post
- Christianity Today
- Christianity Magazine
- The Church Times
- Evangelicals Now
- Morning Star News
- Premier Radio
- United Christian Broadcasting
- God TV
- Revelation TV
- The Evangelical Alliance
- The Religious Liberty Commission UK
- Persecution charity organisation including Open Doors, CSW and Barnabas Fund in the UK
- Voice of the Martyrs and International Christian Association organisations overseas.

This list is not exhaustive, and we engage with many national, international and global media outlets in print and online around the world, to further the calling and mission of Release International.