

END OF SUMMER 2018 NEWS UPDATE

Dear Members, Supporters and Friends,

Welcome to the End of Summer News Update for 2018. In this issue we have collated the latest news and events in the UK and overseas. There have been some major events over the past few months, including the publication of the UK Government's Consultation on Caste in the UK.

DSN-UK News:

- The big news of the Summer has been the decision to repeal the duty to include 'caste' in the Equality Act 2010. Following publication of the Government's response to the Caste in the UK Consultation, one day prior to the beginning of the government's summer recess, Dalit groups have expressed their disappointment at the lack of commitment to end caste discrimination. And the sneaky timing of the announcement.
- Both the consultation and its analysis have been called into question, perhaps leading to a Judicial Review, but it is early days. DSN-UK has been working to co-ordinate a response and we hope to have more news for you soon. The statement made by Rt. Hon. Penny Mordaunt MP - Minister for Women and Equalities' can be found [here](#). Her Majesty's Government confirms that caste discrimination does exist in Great Britain – and is unacceptable, but does not wish to provide any legal protection to those who may be victims of such discrimination.
- This is the first time that anti-discrimination legislation of the Equality Act 2010 has been repealed before it has even been implemented. – it sets a dangerous precedence.

A number of articles have been published following the results of the consultation

[UK backs off anti-caste discrimination legislation](#)

[UK rules out separate law for caste discrimination among Indians](#)

[Separate laws for caste discrimination among Indians not required](#)

[Britain backs off anti-caste discrimination legislation](#)

[UK govt decides against creating new anti-caste legislation](#)

[UK government decides not to enact law on caste discrimination, Indian community divided](#)

[UK Govt Says Caste Discrimination Among Indian Diaspora Does Not Need New Law](#)

[No separate law for caste discrimination among Indians, rules UK govt](#)

[Caste in the UK: Denial of Discrimination Is Not the Solution](#)

[UK Backs Off Anti-Caste Discrimination Legislation: A Critique](#)

- DSN-UK have been delighted to support film makers Priyanka Mogul and Damiano Petrucci with their documentary '[Caste Aside](#)', about the British government's controversial decision to legislate against caste discrimination. Tackling both sides of the argument, post-screening discussions have led to heated debates.
- On 25 April 2018, DSN-UK in collaboration with Amos Trust, Churches Dalit Support Network and with the support of the Methodist Church held an event in London on '[Dalit Theology on Caste Discrimination](#)'. Among the special guests was DSN-UK patron Revd Dr Vincent Manoharan from Tamil Nadu in India. As the keynote speaker Vincent spoke passionately about discrimination faced by Dalits in India.

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Other UK news

- The Special Rapporteur (SR) on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance concluded her official visit to the UK on 11 May and issued her [end of mission statement](#). DSN-UK sent a briefing note to Ms Tendayi Achiume prior to her visit, and we are delighted that she highlighted the legal status of caste. Her full report on the country visit to the United Nations Human Rights Council will be published in June 2019.
- Human rights groups have voiced serious concerns following the defeat of the House of Lords' amendments to the [EU Withdrawal Bill](#), which sought to preserve human rights protections after the UK leaves the European Union. A recent YouGov poll found that three quarters (75%) of those who expressed a view said they'd be concerned to be left with

fewer rights after Brexit. With the repeal of the caste duty in the Equality Act 2010, the removal of the Charter of Rights as a security net will also adversely affect those who may be victims of caste discrimination – and now have nowhere to go.

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Events

- Our AGM is coming up in October. We will update you with the details nearer the time.

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International News

- The newly released [Human Rights Watch World Report 2018](#), [Amnesty International Report 2018](#) and the US State Department reports on India and Nepal, find that caste-based discrimination and violence remain a serious threat as hate crimes against Dalits are widespread. Some of the other themes raised in the reports include discrimination in accessing services, 'manual scavenging' and bonded labour.
- Continuing with IDSN's ten-year battle to gain [consultative status at the UN](#), the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs has been asked by MEP Jean Lambert to outline any specific steps that the EU has taken to support IDSN's application and what future backing they will receive. A reply is expected in September. Our fingers are crossed!
- The Australian Parliament has passed a landmark motion urging the Government to take action on [fighting caste-based discrimination](#). The motion requests the government to consider interventions in inclusion and non-discrimination in humanitarian aid; inclusive recruitment practice and management practice in all business partners; and strengthening policy and human rights dialogues for the elimination of caste-based discrimination in Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. The motion also urges the Government to support projects combating caste-based discrimination through Australian International Development Programmes.

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India

- Citizens for Justice and Peace have reported a '[one man hate factory](#)' to the NHRC for fake news of forced conversion of Dalits in Amroha district of Uttar Pradesh. Prashant P Umrao was exposed by Alt News as having circulated a tweet claiming that 1500 Dalits were living in fear of forced conversion to Islam, in an attempt to sow discord between Dalits and Muslims. The journalist that exposed him has reported the perpetrator to the police, who is renowned for his hate speech.
- A case has been registered against two right-wing Hindu organisations for inciting violence after an incident in [Bhima Koregaon](#) where one person was killed and thirty vehicles were torched. The latest violence highlights the continuing suppression of Dalits by higher caste Hindus. Union Minister of State for Social Justice Ramdas Athawale demanded police protection for Dalits in the wake of the violence.
- For the ninth year the [Muthu Mariyamman temple](#) in Tamil Nadu has remained locked by the ruling Hindu caste to Dalits who wish to celebrate their annual festival. Despite approaching the Madras court, the ruling was that the temple was 'privately owned' and therefore up to the administration to resolve the issue. Police reported that when Dalits were refused entry, they sealed the temple in order to prevent civil unrest.

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Nepal

- Following on from submissions by IDSN and Dalit groups in Nepal the [2018 CERD report](#) has made a number of strong recommendations to tackle caste discrimination in the country. It is hoped that the UN's intervention will have the required tangible and measurable results.
- Conversion to Christianity by Dalits in Nepal has risen dramatically, in part due to the increased access to health care and education usually denied to them. It is estimated that now [65% of Christians are Dalits](#), but allegations of 'buying' people's faith are rife, and rich foreign missionaries are being accused of taking advantage.

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Pakistan

- In March of this year Pakistan elected its [first Hindu Dalit senator](#), Krishna Kumari Kohli, member of the Pakistan People's Party (PPP). She has vowed to continue fighting for the oppressed. Dalits in Pakistan mostly belong to Hinduism, and are frequently subjected to bonded labour, with an illiteracy rate of over 70%. Human rights activists have offered their support to her.

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Bangladesh

- Despite reports provided by the UN itself and civil society groups working on Dalit rights in Bangladesh, only one recommendation addressing the rights abuses faced by Dalits was brought forward at the UN [Universal Periodic Review \(UPR\) of the human rights situation in Bangladesh](#). Fortunately, the long-awaited adoption of the Anti-Discrimination Bill should have an indirect but positive affect for Dalits.