



NEWS RELEASE

07 February 2017

PRIME MINISTER URGED TO GET TOUGH WITH OVERSEAS TERRITORIES' LEADERS

Christian Aid is urging Prime Minister Theresa May to use the 'full weight' of her government's influence to persuade the UK's Overseas Territories to end the secrecy around the ownership of companies hosted on their shores.

This comes as press reports suggest that Theresa May is meeting leaders of the UK's Overseas Territories on Wednesday (8 February).

Christian Aid's UK Parliamentary and Political Adviser Simon Kirkland said: "Now is the moment for Theresa May to demonstrate her clear commitment to transparency and making an economy that works for everyone, including the world's poorest people.

"For years now the UK's Overseas Territories have acted as some of the most secretive tax havens in the world, facilitating tax dodging and corruption in the UK's own back yard. It's time to get tough.

"The government has repeatedly instructed the Overseas Territories to introduce registers of the companies they host. While some have made limited progress, only one – the tiny island of Monserrat – has adopted the same level of transparency as the UK. This double standard is not in the interest of the UK and undermines global efforts to stop secrecy and corruption.

Mr Kirkland continued: "Offshore tax havens like the British Virgin Islands and Cayman Islands are part of a network of secrecy jurisdictions that cost developing countries at least \$100bn every year, according to the United Nations. People in developing countries are losing out to UK-governed territories, and the Prime Minister needs to step in.

"The Prime Minister should heed the calls of nearly 90 MPs from eight parties who have signed an amendment to the Criminal Finances Bill, which would ensure that the Overseas Territories have these public registers by the time of the next general election."

**~~For further information, please contact Tomilola Ajayi on 020 7523 2427 or
tajayi@christian-aid.org. (24-hour press duty phone: 07850 242950.)~~**

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Notes to Editors:

1. Christian Aid works in some of the world's poorest communities in around 40 countries at any one time. We act where there is great need, regardless of religion, helping people to live a full life, free from poverty. We provide urgent, practical and effective assistance in tackling the root causes of poverty as well as its effects.

2. Christian Aid's core belief is that the world can and must be changed so that poverty is ended: this is what we stand for. Everything we do is about ending poverty and injustice: swiftly, effectively, sustainably. Our strategy document [Partnership for Change](#) explains how we set about this task.

3. Christian Aid is a member of [ACT Alliance](#), a global coalition of more than 130 churches and church-related organisations that work together in humanitarian assistance, advocacy and development.

4. [Follow Christian Aid's newswire on Twitter.](#)

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