

## Can Christians wear the cross at work?

**Two Christian women are taking their fight to wear a crucifix in the workplace to the European Court of Human Rights, writes Dominic Burbidge.**



Two Christian women, Nadia Eweida and Shirley Chaplin, appealed to the European Court of Human Rights after being barred by employers from wearing the cross at work. Since both discrimination cases were [lost in the UK courts](#) in 2010, the two Christians sought redress under Article 9 of the European Convention on Human Rights. The article provides a right to [freedom of thought, conscience and religion](#), which includes a person's "freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief, in worship, teaching, practice and observance".

Eweida was placed on unpaid leave by British Airways for not covering up a necklace depicting a Christian cross. British Airways argued that the wearing of a crucifix falls under their general uniform regulation of not allowing jewellery. In a separate case, Shirley Chaplin, who works as a nurse in the UK, was moved to a desk job upon refusing to remove her crucifix. The NHS trust's uniform policy, which Shirley Chaplin works under, bans necklaces for frontline staff on the grounds that [they may be grabbed](#) by patients. The UK government argued against both Christians' appeal

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to the Strasbourg court on the grounds that wearing the cross is not a “requirement of the faith” and therefore not covered by European human rights legislation.

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