

[Afghanistan: UK Minister for Human Rights, South Asia and the Commonwealth to address UN Human Rights Council](#)

News story

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon will address the UN Human Rights Council tomorrow on Afghanistan.



Lord (Tariq) Ahmad of Wimbledon, Minister for Human Rights, South Asia and the Commonwealth and the Prime Minister's Special Representative on Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict, will virtually address the UN Human Rights Council and hold urgent discussions with humanitarian partners about the situation in Afghanistan.

The UK's Minister for Human Rights, South Asia and the Commonwealth will make a statement on Tuesday morning at an emergency session of the UN Human Rights Council focussed on Afghanistan.

Speaking on behalf of the UK, Lord (Tariq) Ahmad will say:

Over the last twenty years, the UK and our NATO allies have worked to promote human rights in Afghanistan, especially for women and girls.

Twenty years ago almost no girls went to school, and women were banned from positions of governance. Now, 3.6 million Afghan girls are in school, and women hold over a quarter of the seats in Afghanistan's parliament. Maternal mortality has almost halved, and infant mortality has decreased faster than in any low income country.

These gains must not be reversed.

The Taliban need to respect human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Lord (Tariq) Ahmad is expected to speak with the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Michelle Bachelet. He will underscore the UK's commitment to protecting the human rights of the Afghan people.

The Minister will also meet with key humanitarian partners – including leaders from the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, the International Organisation for Migration, the UN High Commission for Refugees and the UN Population Fund – to discuss the humanitarian emergency in Afghanistan.

Last week the UK supported a UN Security Council statement which called for all parties to allow immediate, safe and unhindered humanitarian access for humanitarian agencies and actors providing assistance in Afghanistan. Lord (Tariq) Ahmad's discussions in Geneva with humanitarian partners will focus on what more the international community can do to ensure this remains the case.

Background

- The Human Rights Council will hold a special session on 24 August, to address the "serious human rights concerns and situation in Afghanistan". The special session is being convened following an official request submitted jointly by Pakistan, Coordinator of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, and Afghanistan. The United Kingdom supported the request for a Special Session. The Special Session can be watched live via UNTV.

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