

Press release: Lord Ahmad appointed as PM's Special Envoy to promote religious freedom

Lord Ahmad has today been appointed as the Prime Minister's Special Envoy on Freedom of Religion or Belief.

The role, which supports the Prime Minister's commitment to religious tolerance in the UK, will allow Lord Ahmad to demonstrate the country's commitment to religious freedom by promoting inter-faith respect and dialogue internationally.

Lord Ahmad, who is also Minister of State for the Commonwealth and the UN at the Foreign & Commonwealth Office, will promote the UK's firm stance on religious tolerance abroad, helping to tackle religious discrimination in countries where minority faith groups face persecution.

The appointment underscores the Prime Minister's commitment to tackling religious prejudice in all its forms and follows the government's recent announcement of a further £1 million funding for places of worship that have been subjected to hate crime attacks.

Prime Minister Theresa May said:

Religious discrimination blights the lives of millions of people across the globe and leads to conflict and instability. Both here and abroad, individuals are being denied the basic right of being able to practise their faith free of fear.

Tolerance for those of different faiths is fundamental to our values, and is an issue I know is already of great importance to Lord Ahmad, who is constantly looking for fresh ways to promote religious liberty in his role as Minister for Human Rights at the Foreign Office.

I look forward to supporting him in this new role as he works with faith groups and governments across the world to raise understanding of religious persecution and what we can do to eliminate it.

The PM's Special Envoy for Freedom of Religion or Belief, Lord Tariq Ahmad of Wimbledon said:

In too many parts of the world, religious minorities are persecuted, discriminated against and treated as second class citizens. As a man of faith, I feel this very keenly.

Freedom of Religion or Belief is a human right enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It must be respected. People from all faiths or none should be free to practise as they wish. This respect is key to global stability, and is in all our interests.

I am delighted to have been appointed as the PM's Special Envoy. I shall use the UK Government's global network to reach across religious divides, seek the elimination of discrimination on the basis of religion or belief and bring different communities together.