

Press release: Lord Ahmad pledges £800,000 for women's peacebuilding

To mark International Women's Day, the Prime Minister's Special Representative for Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict, Lord (Tariq) Ahmad announced £800,000 of UK funding to enhance local women's involvement in preventing conflict.

The Prime Minister's Special Representative for Preventing Sexual Violence In Conflict, Lord (Tariq) Ahmad of Wimbledon said:

The £800,000 funding announced today will support organisations that work with women to include their perspectives in peacebuilding processes. This is essential to creating lasting peace agreements, because when women participate meaningfully in peace agreements they are 35% more likely to last at least 15 years.

The announcement, made at an event hosted by the Norwegian Government, pledges the money for the UN Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund. The UK is one of the largest donors to the fund and has provided approximately \$3 million over the last three financial years.

Later in the day, at an event hosted by HRH The Countess of Wessex at Buckingham Palace, The Countess announced her support of the UK's work on Women, Peace and Security and the Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict Initiative. Her Royal Highness's involvement comes in the lead up to the 20th anniversary of UNSCR 1325 in 2020. UNSCR 1325 reaffirms the important role of women in conflict prevention and building peace and stability.

200 guests including women peacebuilders from around the world, civil society and UN agencies attended the event where they heard from The Countess of Wessex and Lord Ahmad, the Prime Minister's Special Representative on Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict.

Visaka Dharmadasa, a peacebuilder from Sri Lanka, also spoke about her experience. She is a member of the Women Mediators across the Commonwealth network which connects women mediating for peace. The network is hosted by Conciliation Resources and funded by the UK Government.

On the event hosted by HRH The Countess of Wessex, Lord (Tariq) Ahmad of Wimbledon said:

It is inspiring to hear the powerful, personal stories of women who have fought for their voice to be heard and rightfully proved they have a role to play in ending bloodshed.

The UK is acting as a champion for women mediators in conflict-affected countries alongside our international partners. It is great to have the support of HRH The Countess of Wessex and continue to raise the profile of this important issue.