

UK to host international conference to promote freedom of religion or belief next summer in London

- Foreign Secretary Liz Truss announces that the conference bringing together international governments and faith leaders will be hosted next July in London.
- The conference follows previous FoRB events held by the US and Poland, and will boost global efforts to tackle persecution.
- The Foreign Secretary sees FoRB as a key part of the UK's foreign policy and development agenda.

The Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO) will host a global summit to promote freedom of religion or belief (FoRB) next summer (Tuesday 5 July – Wednesday 6 July) in London.

The Summit will drive collective action in promoting respect between different religious and non-religious communities around the world so that everyone, everywhere can practise their own religion or belief freely. It will play a key role in shaping the network of liberty the UK, as a fierce champion of freedom, is building around the world.

Promoting FoRB for all is one of the UK's long-standing human rights priorities and is a key pillar of the Integrated Review of security, defence, development and foreign policy. In February 2020, the UK became a co-founding member of the International Religious Freedom or Belief Alliance. Since then, the group's membership has grown from 27 to 33 countries, and we continue to strongly encourage other countries to join.

Throughout 2021, the UK has made great strides with our international partners in collective efforts to stamp out intolerance and persecution relating to religious and non-religious beliefs. In May, under our G7 presidency, the UK secured – for the very first time – the inclusion of FoRB issues in the communique the G7 Foreign and Development Ministers' Meeting.

Foreign Secretary Liz Truss said:

I want all people, everywhere, to be free from discrimination and persecution regardless of their opinions and beliefs. We have used our G7 Presidency this year to defend and advance these fundamental freedoms and will build on that next year when we host friends and partners from across the world.

FCDO Minister Lord Tariq Ahmad of Wimbledon said:

I warmly welcome that the UK will be hosting an international

conference on freedom of religion or belief next summer in our vibrant capital, London.

The UK continues to take any form of human rights abuses and violations extremely seriously, which is why we are laying the foundations for further global action to protect and promote freedom of religion or belief for all.

International collaboration is the only way to bring about real change.

Fiona Bruce MP, UK Special Envoy for Freedom of Religion or Belief (FoRB) said:

As the UK's Special Envoy for Freedom of Religion or Belief, I whole-heartedly welcome today's announcement regarding the UK-hosted international conference next summer, here in London to promote freedom of religion or belief for all.

The conference will be a pivotal opportunity to engage with our international partners to ensure that the rights of all individuals, regardless of their religion or belief, are fully protected and respected, no matter where they are in the world, without fear of prejudice or persecution.

Notes to Editors:

- FoRB at the United Nations. FCDO Minister Lord Ahmad hosted a successful Arria meeting focused on Religion, Belief and Conflict in the margins of the UN Security Council in March this year.
- Human Rights Reporting. Every year, the FCDO releases an Annual Human Rights and Democracy Report. Freedom of religion or belief is a key theme of this report.