

Foreign Secretary's remarks at the Freedom of Religion or Belief Conference

Good Morning,

Ladies and Gentlemen, Excellencies, I'm delighted to welcome you to the Freedom of Religion or Belief conference.

This is the first of its kind to be hosted in the United Kingdom.

I hope there will be many more. I'd like to thank Fiona Bruce for all her hard work as the Prime Minister's Special Envoy and Lord Ahmad as our Minister for Human Rights.

The freedom to believe, to pray and commit acts of worship, or indeed not to believe is a fundamental human freedom and has been one since the dawn of time.

Societies that allow their people to choose what they believe are better, stronger and ultimately more successful.

This fundamental right is covered in the very first clause of Magna Carta and Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

It is one of the Four Freedoms Franklin D. Roosevelt said were "essential everywhere in the world".

Yet throughout history, we have seen oppressors crack down on freedom of religion or belief in order to exert control. Whether it the appalling persecution of the Jewish community over centuries or Stalin trying to stamp out religion in the Soviet Union.

Today there is further evidence of this around the world.

In Nigeria, terrorist groups in the North East, including Islamic State West Africa and Boko Haram, indiscriminately attack those who do not subscribe to their extremist views.

Just a month ago, at least 40 people were killed in a heinous attack by gunmen while worshipping at the St Francis Catholic Church in Ondo State.

In Xinjiang, the evidence is clear of the extraordinary scale of China's targeting of Uighur Muslims and other ethnic minorities, including severe restrictions on the freedom of religion.

In Afghanistan, many of those with a belief the Taliban does not condone are forced to follow this in secret or flee for their safety. They also die at the hands of Da'esh, or see their places of worship attacked.

These are a handful of examples. And we know that Hindus, Humanists and many others are prosecuted and persecuted for their beliefs.

Persecution ranges from exclusion and discrimination to forced conversion, destroying places of places of worship and targeted killings.

The Bishop of Truro's 2019 review for the UK Government provided recommendations to support members of all faiths, beliefs and those of no religious belief.

I welcome all of those recommendations, and we have taken forward the 22 in a way that will make a real change for everyone persecuted for their religion or belief.

Over the next two days, we will see people from across the world come together to discuss freedom of religion or belief, and the practical steps we can take to advance it.

Ukraine is on the frontline of this struggle.

They are a free democracy, one of the first countries to join the International Religious Freedom or Belief Alliance, fighting for their future.

Vladimir Putin and his enablers claim that Russia is waging a holy war, but in truth they believe nothing is sacred.

We are seeing growing evidence of heinous war crimes committed by Russian troops.

Innocent civilians are having to shelter from Russia's indiscriminate bombardment in places of worship.

Churches, synagogues, and mosques have been reduced to rubble. Religion is proving to be collateral damage from Putin's aggression.

To Ukraine's delegation in the audience today, I want to say: the UK will not rest until you prevail and until your people are free to live, believe and thrive.

And I can see that sentiment is shared across this conference.

We all want a world where people are free to believe.

That is why since becoming Foreign Secretary I have taken a strong stand against anti-Semitism, condemning the hateful act of terrorism at a Texas synagogue earlier this year.

I continue to stand with our international partners in calling out the shocking persecution of Uighur Muslims in Xinjiang. I am at the forefront of standing up for all those suffering in Ukraine including Orthodox Christians.

Authoritarians and oppressors feel threatened by the freedom of religion or

belief, fearing it will encourage people to think freely and question their authority.

We cannot allow them to win. That is why we're deepening links with our allies and partners to build a Network of Liberty around the world.

As St Paul told the Corinthians: "Be on guard, stand firm, be courageous, be strong".

So let's work together in that spirit to defend freedom of religion or belief and show the potential for positive change.

Together, we can forge ahead to a fairer, safer world for people of faith across the globe.

Thank you.

[Residents and business owners to be given final say on proposed street name changes](#)

Press release

All councils in England will need to get agreement from two-thirds of people who live or run businesses on a street before changing its name.



- Residents and business owners will be given the final say on whether their street name should be changed
- Follows a public consultation on the changes – with almost 90% of people supporting plans for the community to make the decision
- Councils will have to get agreement from two-thirds of people before they can change the name

Residents and business owners will have the final say over whether their street name can be changed, the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities announced today (5 July 2022).

Under the plans, all councils in England will need to get agreement from two-thirds of people who live or run businesses on a street before changing its name, subject to parliamentary approval.

The government set out plans to give local people more powers over proposed name changes earlier this year. Today's announcement follows a [public consultation](#) – with over 90% of those responding backing the plans.

The move will improve local democracy and make sure that names that are valued by the community and form a key part of an area's identity are not erased without proper consideration.

Consent to change street names has been a legal requirement in the past, but currently many councils can change names without consulting residents. The government wants to make sure that the law is consistent across England.

Housing Minister Stuart Andrew said:

Street names are often central to an area's identity and hold cherished memories for those that have lived in the community past and present.

It is right that we put the decision to change a street's name in the hands of the people who would be most directly affected – and the feedback we've received through our consultation shows that people strongly agree with this.

The changes we are bringing forward will strengthen local democracy and make sure councils can't push through changes that residents do not want.

These changes will also give residents the opportunity to oppose changes to street names, on the basis that they often cause additional costs and time for residents, who have to change their personal details with the bank and utility providers.

The changes will be introduced following the passage of the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill, which is currently making its way through Parliament.

Published 5 July 2022

UK to champion importance of freedom of religion or belief at global conference

- The UK will host over 600 faith, belief, government and civil society leaders from 100 countries in London on July 5 and 6 to call for more action to protect the freedom of religion or belief (FoRB) around the world.
- Foreign Secretary Liz Truss will call out abuses, including in China, Nigeria and Afghanistan, and say religion is “collateral damage” in Russia’s invasion of Ukraine.
- The UK will announce £500,000 of funding to support everyone’s “fundamental freedom” to follow a religion or belief.

The UK will today (Tuesday 5 July) welcome faith, belief, government and civil society leaders from around the world to London to boost efforts to promote freedom of religion or belief (FoRB) internationally.

In a speech at the QEII Centre, Foreign Secretary Liz Truss will say FoRB is a “fundamental freedom” like free speech or democracy.

More than 80% of the world’s population live in countries where FoRB is under threat.

The Foreign Secretary will call out the “appalling persecution of the Jewish community over centuries”, China’s targeting of Uyghur Muslims in the Xinjiang region, the persecution of Christians in Nigeria and the plight of minorities in Afghanistan.

Ms Truss is expected to say:

The freedom to believe, to pray and commit acts of worship is a fundamental human freedom and has been one since the dawn of time. Societies that allow their people to believe are better and ultimately more successful.

This fundamental right is covered in the very first clause of Magna Carta and Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

She will respond to Russia’s invasion of Ukraine and the impact it has on people’s ability to practice their faith or belief addressing an audience that will include a Ukrainian delegation, telling them the UK will not rest until “your people are free to live, believe and thrive”. She will add:

Vladimir Putin and his enablers think Russia is waging a holy war, but in truth nothing is sacred. We are seeing growing evidence of

heinous war crimes committed by Russian troops.

Innocent civilians are having to shelter from Russia's indiscriminate bombardment in places of worship. Churches, synagogues, and mosques have been reduced to rubble. Religion is proving to be collateral damage from Putin's aggression.

Opening the conference, His Royal Highness The Prince of Wales will say in a recorded statement:

Freedom of conscience, of thought and of belief is central to any truly flourishing society. It allows people to contribute to their communities without fear of exclusion, to exchange ideas without fear of prejudice, and to build relationships without fear of rejection.

A society where difference is respected, where it is accepted that all need not think alike, will benefit from the talents of all of its members.

The Prince of Wales will describe the "tragic paradox" of people with strong belief disrespecting others, and he will use the opportunity to urge delegates to "take us closer to our goal" of FoRB for everyone, everywhere.

The conference will showcase practical actions on how to achieve FoRB for all. This includes developing early warning systems, building more resilient societies, tackling online harm and discrimination, strengthening human rights education, and encouraging media freedom.

Speakers will include the Most Rev and Rt Hon Justin Welby, Archbishop of Canterbury, Chief Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis, Islamic Scholar Sheikh Abdallah Bin-bayyah and Archbishop Bashar Warda of the Chaldean Catholic church in Erbil, Iraq.

The UK will also announce today £200,000 in new support for the protection and promotion of FoRB. This will fund awareness campaigns, community programmes and support conflict prevention, as well as providing direct assistance to those facing discrimination based on religion or belief

The UK will pledge another £300,000 to provide British legal expertise to countries where FoRB is under pressure. This support will ensure governments and advocates have a better understanding of the legal steps they can take to implement lasting and legislative change in their country.

Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Minister Lord Tariq Ahmad of Wimbledon said:

The international community shares a collective responsibility to ensure freedom of religion or belief for everyone, everywhere. Too

many people around the world are denied access to this fundamental human right, persecuted, or indeed tragically killed simply because of their faith I look forward to welcoming partners from around the world to London to help drive collective action in defending everyone's right to freedom of religion or belief.

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

I am delighted that the UK is hosting the International Ministerial Conference in London this week. This is an important opportunity to share best practice and strengthen international alliances, such as the International Religious Freedom or Belief Alliance (IRFBA), which I am chairing this year. We need greater collective action to ensure the right to freedom of religion or belief is protected for everyone, everywhere.

ENDS

[Technical Advisory Board appointments 2021/2022](#)

News story

Appointment of new members to the Technical Advisory Board (TAB) and reappointment of TAB Chair.



Following a recent open and fair recruitment exercise, conducted in line with the Governance Code on Public Appointments, the Home Secretary has appointed the below individuals as members of the Technical Advisory Board (TAB) as industry and independent representatives for a period of 3 years.

Industry members

- Alex Leadbeater (from 1 September 2021)
- Neil Brown (from 10 January 2022)
- Adrian Gorham (from 10 January 2022)
- Nicola Pierce (from 10 January 2022)
- Chris Diggins (from 1 March 2022)

Independent members

The Home Secretary has also agreed to reappoint the current independent Chair, Jonathan Hoyle, for a third term of 3 years from 1 May 2021, in line with the Governance Code on Public Appointments.

The TAB is a non-departmental public body which was established under the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 and whose remit was expanded under the Investigatory Powers Act 2016.

The TAB has 2 main duties:

- to consider the technical requirements and the financial consequences of a notice that is to be imposed upon a telecommunications operator (T0)
- to provide advice to the Secretary of State if the T0 seeks a review of the notice

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[Official shortlist announced to choose home of Great British Railways](#)

Today (5 July 2022), I am announcing the shortlist of the most suitable potential locations for the national headquarters of Great British Railways (GBR), which will go forward to a consultative public vote to be held online and by post.

The confirmed list of shortlisted towns and cities is:

- Birmingham
- Crewe
- Derby
- Doncaster
- Newcastle upon Tyne
- York

I announced on 4 October 2021 that a competition would be run to identify the headquarters for GBR, to be located outside of London. This was launched on 5 February 2022 and was overseen by the GBR Transition Team (GBRTT). Prospective local authorities were asked to submit a short expression of interest to GBRTT by Wednesday 16 March.

GBRTT received 42 applications and has analysed their suitability against the published set of criteria for the national headquarters. The selection criteria are:

- alignment to Levelling Up principles
- connected and easy to get to
- opportunities for GBR
- value for money
- railway heritage and links to the network
- public support

GBRTT will launch [a public vote](#) today that will give the public the opportunity to express their views. The vote is consultative and will be used to test public support for each shortlisted location, allowing the people that the railway serves the chance to have their say.

Ministers will then make a final decision on the headquarters' location based on all information gathered and against the above criteria, with a final decision expected later in the year.

The new national GBR headquarters will be supported by a number of new regional headquarters across the country, putting decision-making and investment at the heart of communities that use those railways day to day.

The government is committed to levelling up, delivering jobs and investment beyond the capital.

The national headquarters will be at the heart of the rail network and provide strategic direction for the running of GBR. Based outside of London, it will bring a number of high-skilled jobs to the winning location.