



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
In the name of Allah the Most Gracious the Ever Merciful

Ahmadiyya Muslim Jama'at
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PRESS RELEASE

MUSLIM LEADER CALLS FOR MEDIA RESPONSIBILITY IN FIGHT AGAINST EXTREMISM



- Hazrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad says media should highlight peaceful teachings of Islam practiced by majority of Muslims
- Head of Ahmadiyya Muslim Community says he is in favour of UK remaining part of the European Union

On 19 March 2016, the *World Head of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, the Fifth Khalifa* (Caliph), His Holiness, Hazrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad delivered the keynote address at the *13th National Peace Symposium* hosted by the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community UK.



The event was held at the *Baitul Futuh Mosque* in London with an audience of more than 900 people, from 26 countries, including over 500 non-Ahmadi guests comprising Government Ministers, Ambassadors of State, Members of both Houses of Parliament and various other dignitaries and guests.

His Holiness also presented Ms Hadeel Qassim, with the *Ahmadiyya Muslim Prize for the Advancement of Peace* in recognition of her outstanding efforts to personally alleviate the suffering of thousands of refugee children stranded in dangerous and inhospitable camps in the Middle East.

During his address, His Holiness spoke of the fundamental need for justice and equity at all levels of society in order for genuine and long-lasting peace to be established.

He called on the media to use its influence ***“as a force for good and a force for peace”*** by publicising the positive activities of the majority of Muslims across the world as opposed to the ***“tiny minority”*** who were perpetrating mass cruelties falsely in the name of Islam.



His Holiness also stated that there was no punishment for apostasy in Islam and that the Holy Quran was the standard-bearer for universal religious freedom. His Holiness reiterated the need to cut the supply lines and funding of all terrorist and extremist groups worldwide.



During a press conference held prior to the Peace Symposium, His Holiness expressed his view that the United Kingdom should remain part of the European Union. He expressed his hope that the '*Remain*' campaign would prove successful and that there would be no '*Brexit*' from the European Union.

Hazrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad began his keynote address by reflecting upon the fact that modern day terrorism and extremism had caused a fear of Islam to spread far and wide.



Hazrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad said:

“This event is taking place at a time when widespread fear of Islam is on the increase due to the horrific and disgraceful acts of terrorist groups such as Daesh. For example, last November, the world watched in horror when the terrorist attacks took place in Paris, and apart from this there have been suicide bombings and attacks in various countries at regular intervals.”

Nonetheless, His Holiness made it clear that true Islam was a religion of peace and that the brutal acts being committed by certain so-called Muslim groups were not permitted or justified by Islam in any way.

Hazrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad said:

“In the very first chapter of the Holy Quran, it is stated that Allah the Almighty is the ‘Provider and Sustainer of all the worlds’. He is the Gracious and Ever Merciful. Thus, when Allah the Almighty is the Provider and Sustainer of all people and the Gracious and Merciful - how could it be that He

desired for those who believed in Him to mercilessly murder, violently oppose or harm His Creation in any way? Of course the answer is that it is not possible.”



Where cruelty and injustice prevailed, His Holiness said that Islam advocated two methods in order to bring about peace and reformation.

Hazrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad said:

“It is far better if peace can be attained through mutual dialogue, negotiations and diplomacy. However, where this is not possible, only then, force may be used in order to stop wrongdoing with the intention of establishing sustainable peace.”



Hazrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad said:

"The philosophy underpinning punishment in Islam is extremely far-sighted and quite unique... Punishment or sanction is permitted not as a means of revenge or retribution but its purpose is to reform, rehabilitate and improve."



Refuting a common allegation levelled at Islam, His Holiness stated that there was no punishment for apostasy in Islam and that universal religious freedom was a core Islamic principle.



Hazrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad said:

“Islam enshrines the principles of universal religious freedom and freedom of conscience. Faith is, and always will be, a matter of the heart and so there should never be any form of compulsion in religion.”

Hazrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad continued:

“If a Muslim decides that he wishes to leave Islam then, according to the teachings of the Quran, he or she has the right to do so. No government, group or individual has a right to punish them or sanction them in any way. Thus, the allegation that Islam mandates punishment for apostasy is entirely unjust and without foundation.”



Challenging the media to use its influence as a force for good and to act with responsibility, Hazrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad said:

“There is no doubt that the media plays a huge role in influencing public opinion and so the media should use this power responsibly - as a force for good and as a force for peace. It should show the world what true Islam represents, rather than focusing on the merciless acts of the tiny minority.”

Hazrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad stated:

“Publicity is the oxygen sustaining most terrorist or extremist groups.”

His Holiness said that the media did not waste any time in associating the brutal acts of terror committed by so-called Muslims to the teachings of Islam, whilst they ignored the voices of those who were earnestly striving to spread Islam’s true peaceful teachings.

Hazrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad said:

“At a time of worldwide conflict, we should remember the basic principle that it is better for all forms of evil and cruelty to be suppressed and for all forms of goodness and humanity to be endorsed. In this way, evil will not spread far, whilst virtue and peace will spread far and wide and adorn our society.”

Speaking about the ongoing war in Syria, His Holiness said that the *West* should be ***“willing to open the channels of communication”*** with the Syrian Government in order to alleviate the desperate plight of the Syrian people.

His Holiness said that world governments or international organisations should prioritise peace over and beyond a desire for regime change. He said they should learn from the tragic examples of Iraq and Libya, wherein both countries had been mired in conflict and lawlessness ever since their long-standing leaders were forcibly removed.

Whilst His Holiness warned that there was a real risk of another world war he also stated that there was still time to avert such a catastrophe – if all parties were willing to act with justice and set aside their vested interests.

His Holiness criticised the continuing failure to cut off the financial supply lines of terrorist groups and the fact that certain powerful nations, who claimed to be working for peace, were exporting weapons to the Middle East that in turn were fuelling wars taking place in Syria, Iraq and Yemen.

In terms of the oil trade, Hazrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad said:

“When it comes to acquiring oil, morality goes out of the window.”

Hazrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad continued:

“Whilst it is claimed that all possible efforts are being made to eradicate terrorism and extremism, the evidence does not substantiate this claim.”

Concluding, Hazrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad said:

“I pray that we all play our respective roles in furthering the cause of humanity and I pray that true peace, based upon justice, is established in all parts of the world.”

Prior to the keynote address, various dignitaries spoke about the importance of peace and the critical state of today’s world.

Rafiq Hayat, the *National President of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community UK* said:

“The Ahmadiyya Muslim Community focuses on education, humanitarian work and the Jihad of self-improvement and of spreading peace.”

Siobhain McDonagh, MP and Chair of the ‘All Party Parliamentary Group for the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community’ said:

“The Ahmadiyya Muslim Community contributes greatly to this country and your belief in peace and religious tolerance is an example to us all, as you would expect from a community whose motto is ‘love for all, hatred for none’.”

Zac Goldsmith MP and London Mayoral Candidate said:

“For over a century the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community has taken a stand against hatred but you have faced it down with compassion, love and practical help to bring communities together.”

Lord Tariq Ahmad of Wimbledon, Minister for Countering Extremism said:

“There can be no better example of [countering extremism] than that exemplified by the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community under the Divine and inspirational leadership of His Holiness, Hazrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad.”



Rt Hon Justine Greening, MP, Secretary of State for International Development said:

“I just want to say how proud I am to play a role in representing the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community as a local MP, but also to say that in my broader role within government, it’s a privilege to work alongside Humanity First and to see the fantastic fundraising the Ahmadiyya Muslim Youth Association.”

Both before and after the proceedings, His Holiness met personally with various dignitaries and guests also held a press conference with members of media.

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