

Global Conflicts and the Need for Justice



The 14th National Peace Symposium was held on Saturday 25th March 2017 at the Baitul Futuh Mosque in London. The keynote address was delivered by the Worldwide Head of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, His Holiness Hazrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad.



An Overview of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community



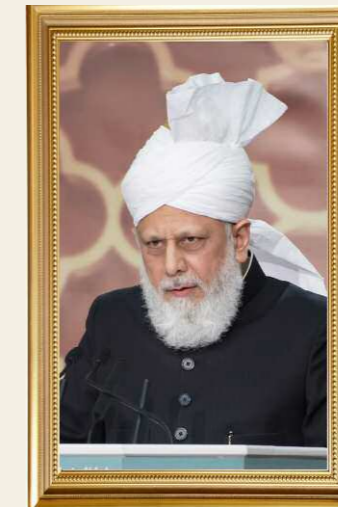
The Ahmadiyya Muslim community is a religious organisation, with branches in more than 200 countries. It is the most dynamic denomination of Islam in modern history, with an estimated membership in the tens of millions worldwide.

It was established in 1889 by **Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad**^(as) (1835-1908) (*photo above*) in a small and remote village called Qadian in Punjab, India. He claimed to be the expected reformer of the latter days and the awaited one of the world community of religions (the *Mahdi* and Messiah of the latter days). The community he started is an embodiment of the benevolent message of Islam in its pristine purity that promotes peace and universal brotherhood based on a belief in the Gracious and Ever-Merciful God.

With this conviction, within a century, the Ahmadiyya Muslim community has expanded globally and it endeavours to practice the peaceful teachings of Islam by raising hundreds of thousands of pounds every year for charities, building schools and hospitals open to all and by encouraging learning through interfaith dialogue.

The UK chapter of the community was established in 1913 and in 1924 it built London's first purpose-built mosque (in Southfields). It is, therefore, one of the oldest and most established Muslim communities in Britain and now has 134 branches across the UK.

The Khalifa of Islam: A Man of Peace



His Holiness, Hazrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad was elected as the fifth Khalifa of the worldwide Ahmadiyya Muslim Community in 2003.

His Holiness inspires his community to serve humanity with the spirit of kindness and humility that is integral to Islam. In accordance with the teachings of Islam he upholds the honour of all prophets of God and highlights the role of religion in the promotion of peace.

His Holiness has delivered addresses at the House of Commons, Capitol Hill, the Canadian Parliament and the European Parliament and also written to world leaders urging them to inculcate a true sense of justice and peace in international relations to avoid regional conflicts from engulfing the entire world.

"Tragically, not a day passes without news filtering in of further atrocities and terrorist attacks. Undeniably, the world is becoming an increasingly perilous place for Muslims and non-Muslims alike. Hence, we must stand up against all forms of oppression, hatred and use all our capabilities to try and foster peace in the world. If we truly want peace then the world's politicians, leaders, media and parties must act with wisdom and grace."

(National Peace Symposium 2017)

THE 14TH NATIONAL PEACE SYMPOSIUM

On 25th March 2017, the Worldwide Head of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, the Fifth Khalifah (Caliph), His Holiness, Hazrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad^{aba} delivered the keynote address at the 14th 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 1,000 people, from 30 countries, comprising government ministers, ambassadors of state, Members of both Houses of Parliament and various other dignitaries and guests. During the event, His Holiness presented Ms Setsuko Thurlow, a Hiroshima bomb survivor and peace activist, with the Ahmadiyya Muslim Prize for the Advancement of Peace in recognition of her outstanding efforts in campaigning for nuclear disarmament. After opening remarks by Rafiq Hayat, the National President of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community UK and brief comments by Silvio Daneo, Executive Director of Religions for Peace from Italy, a message was read out from the Vatican in support of the Peace Symposium by Father David Standley, representing the Archbishop of Southwark. We present in this brochure, the keynote address delivered on this occasion by His Holiness, Hazrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad^{aba}.



GLOBAL CONFLICTS

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NEED FOR JUSTICE

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KEYNOTE ADDRESS BY WORLDWIDE HEAD OF THE AHMADIYYA MUSLIM COMMUNITY AT THE 14TH NATIONAL PEACE SYMPOSIUM UK

After reciting Tashahhud, Taawwuz and Bismillah, Hazrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad^{aba}, Worldwide Head of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, the Fifth Successor to the Promised Messiah^{as}, said:

“All distinguished guests, *Assalamo Alaikum Wa Rahmatullahe Wa Barakatohu* - peace and blessings of Allah be upon you all.

First of all I would like to extend my deepest condolences to all those affected by Wednesday’s terror attack at Westminster. Our thoughts and prayers are with the people of London at this tragic time.

On behalf of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, I wish to make it categorically clear that we condemn all such acts of terrorism and we offer our heartfelt sympathies to the victims of this barbaric atrocity. In all parts of the world, the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community seeks to promote peace, and according to the teachings of Islam, raise its voice against these brutalities. This annual Peace Symposium is also an important part of this effort. I would like to thank all of our guests for joining us here tonight.

The Founder of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community said that he had been sent by God Almighty in this era, in servitude to the Holy Prophet of Islam, Muhammad^{sa}, in order to spread the two paramount objectives of Islamic teachings. The first is to bring mankind closer to God Almighty and secondly to draw the attention of humanity towards fulfilling the rights of one another. It is my belief that these two objectives are the bedrock for the

establishment of genuine and long-lasting peace in the world.

As Muslims, we are fortunate that the Quran has told us that the fundamental purpose of our creation is the worship of God Almighty, preferably in congregation in mosques. Most regrettably, and in complete violation of these peaceful objectives, certain Muslim groups or individuals have turned their mosques or madrassas into centres of extremism, preaching hatred and inciting others to commit terrorist acts, against both non-Muslims and Muslims who belong to different sects in Islam. Unsurprisingly, this has caused widespread fear in the Western world and created an impression that mosques are a source of conflict and disorder.

It has sparked calls, amongst certain parties and groups in the West, for mosques to be banned, or at the very least, for some restrictions to be placed upon Muslims. For example, there are calls to ban the hijab or for minarets and other Islamic symbols to be banned. Regrettably, some Muslims have given others the opportunity to raise allegations against the teachings of Islam. A Muslim is not only duty-bound to offer his prayers, but it is also incumbent upon him to take care of orphans and feed the poor, otherwise our prayers will be in vain. This is categorically mentioned in the Holy Quran in chapter 107, verses three, four and five.

It is based upon these teachings that the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community is, with the Grace of Allah, running various humanitarian projects in order to alleviate the heartache and adversity borne by deprived people, irrespective of creed, caste or

colour. We have established hospitals, schools and colleges that are providing healthcare and education to some of the most impoverished and remote parts of the world. We seek no praise for these activities, our only desire is to help such people stand upon their own two feet, so that they can fulfil their hopes and aspirations and hence live contentedly with dignity and freedom. In this way, rather than becoming frustrated and prone to extremism, they will grow to be responsible and faithful citizens of their nations. Where they will personally develop, they will also help their nation's progress and inspire others to follow in their footsteps.

Similarly, fundamental to Islamic teachings, is that Muslims must live peacefully with all other members of society and never cause them any harm or distress. Despite this, many people associate Islam with violence and warfare, even though nothing could be further from the truth. No matter what terrorists may claim, under no circumstances are indiscriminate attacks or killings ever justified. Islam has enshrined the sanctity of human life. Chapter 5, verse 33 of the Holy Quran states:

"Whosoever killed a person...it shall be as if he killed all mankind; and whoso gave life to one, it shall be as if he had given life to all mankind."

What a clear and categorical statement this is. Often people query why there were wars in early Islam. Similarly, they ask why terrorism is being perpetrated in Islam's name. In order to answer this question, I always cite two verses of chapter 22 of the Holy Quran, where permission for a defensive war was first given to the early Muslims. In chapter 22, verse 40, Allah the Almighty states:

"Permission to fight is given to those against whom war is made, because they have been wronged – and Allah indeed has the power to help them."

In the subsequent verse, the Quran outlines the reasons for which the Holy Prophet of Islam^{sa}, was granted permission to engage in warfare. Chapter 22, verse 41 states:

"Those who have been driven out of their homes unjustly only because they said, 'Our Lord is Allah' – And if Allah did not repel some

men by means of others, there would surely have been pulled down cloisters and churches and synagogues and mosques, where the name of Allah is oft commemorated. And Allah will surely help one who helps Him. Allah is indeed Powerful, Mighty."

What do these verses prove? Certainly, they do not give Muslims the licence to inflict cruelties or to seek the blood of others. Instead they establish the duty of Muslims to protect other religions and to guarantee the right of all people to believe in whatever they desire, free from any form of compulsion or duress.

Hence, Islam is that religion which has forever enshrined the universal principles of freedom of religion, freedom of conscience and freedom of belief. Therefore, if today there are so-called Muslim groups or sects that are killing people, it can only be condemned in the strongest possible terms. Their barbaric acts are a complete violation of everything that Islam stands for. Let it be clear that such people have no knowledge of the faith they claim to follow.

For example, Mr Sven Mary, a lawyer representing one of the terrorists involved in the Brussels and Paris terrorist attacks, recently gave an interview to a French newspaper, in which he described his client as having no real knowledge of Islam. Indeed, when asked if he had ever read the Quran, his client readily admitted that he had not and had merely read an interpretation online.

Furthermore, a research paper published by the Royal Institute for International Relations in March 2016, also concluded that the terrorists who identified themselves as Muslims had little or no knowledge of its teachings. Regarding the profile of young Muslims who have been radicalised and perpetrated attacks in the West, the report states:

"Their acquaintance with religious thought is undoubtedly more shallow and superficial than their predecessors', as is their acquaintance with international politics...Injustice was often a starting point with their predecessors' journey towards extremism and terrorism. This has now largely been overshadowed by personal estrangement and motives as the primary engines of their journey."

Furthermore, in an essay cited in *The Washington*

"The need of the hour is for us to knock down the barriers of fear that divide us. Rather than erecting walls that keep us apart, we should build bridges that bring us closer to-gether... We must stand up against all forms of oppression, hatred and use all our capabilities to try and foster peace in the world."

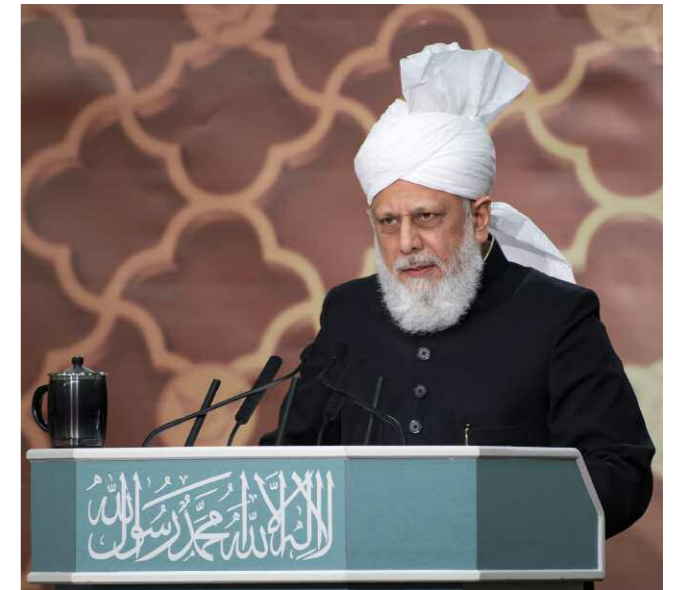
Post, the Belgian counter-terrorism official, Alain Grignard, said:

"Their revolt from society manifested itself through petty crime and delinquency. Many are essentially part of street gangs. What the Islamic State brought in its wake was a new strain of Islam which legitimised their radical approach."

Thus, non-Muslim experts accept that the terrorists have established a "new strain" of Islam that can only be described as a reprehensible distortion of Islamic teachings. Those who have adopted this new strain, and are mercilessly killing, maiming and raping innocent people are, according to the Quran, guilty of murdering all of humanity.

On the other side, it is also apparent that amongst non-Muslims, there are certain individuals or groups who are fanning the flames of division and hostility and have made it their mission to unjustly defame and discredit the teachings of Islam. For example, in a column published just last week in *Foreign Policy*, the journalist Bethany Allen, has written about a well-funded and sophisticated US-based network, whose only purpose is to incite Islamophobia and to stop all attempts to promote the peaceful teachings of Islam. The *Foreign Policy* article states:

"A well-funded network is trying to strip the right to speak away from American Muslims and fanning the politics of fear...America's far-right, anti-Muslim ecosystem has adopted the same twisted interpretations of Islam that the Islamic State (ISIS) promotes."



The author further writes that peaceful Muslims in the United States are the victims of:

"...an increasingly empowered industry of Islamophobia that constricts the space for balanced and open dialogue, sidelining the very Muslims who are doing the most to promote peaceful, orthodox interpretations of Islam."

She writes:

"The United States has powerful protections for speech and religious liberty... but a targeted network now seeks to deny Muslims that freedom and to treat Islam as a dangerous political ideology, rather than a religion — and to silence and discredit any Muslims who disagree."

The article gives the example of a peaceful Muslim convert in the United States. As soon as he gave a university lecture highlighting Islam's true teachings, a powerful lobby turned against him and tried to portray him as an apologist for murder, slavery and rape. His family were subjected to death and rape threats. The university where he worked was inundated with emails demanding that he was immediately fired. Thus, such cases prove that there is a concerted effort taking place to influence public opinion against Islam and to prevent its true teachings from reaching a wide audience.

Based on her research, the author concludes by saying:

"In the process, they are denying Islam the same functional rights that Christianity enjoys and silencing the very people best poised to reconcile Islam with modern American life. Which may be the very point."

Regrettably, we often hear politicians and leaders making needlessly inflammatory statements that are beholden not to the truth, but to their own political interests. For example, in a speech last year, when running for President, Dr Ben Carson, who is now a Cabinet member in the new US administration, described Islam not as a "religion" but as a "life organisation system."

Furthermore, speaking about the Founder of Islam^{sa}, Dr Carson said:

"What I would suggest is that everybody here take a few hours and read up on Islam. Read about Muhammad. Read about how he got his start in Mecca. Read about how he was seen by the people in Mecca - not very favorably.... How his uncle was influential and protected him. When his uncle died, he had to flee. He went north to Medina...That's where he put together his armies, and they began to massacre anybody who didn't believe the same way they did."

I agree with Dr Carson, only to the extent that I too suggest that people take the time to read about the true character of the Holy Prophet of Islam^{sa}. If they study impartial texts, they will see for themselves that the Holy Prophet^{sa}, was never involved in the "massacre" of non-Muslims and that such claims are a complete affront to history. The truth is that, as a consequence of many years of sustained and bitter persecution, he and his followers were driven out of his hometown of Makkah and forced to migrate to Madinah, where they lived peacefully alongside the local Jewish people and other tribes. However, the disbelievers of Makkah did not let the Muslims live in peace and instead aggressively pursued them to Madinah and waged war, seeking to destroy Islam once and for all.

It was at that critical juncture in Islam's history that Allah the Almighty permitted the Muslims to engage in a defensive war. This permission was granted, as the verses of the Quran cited earlier attest, in order to establish the universal principle of freedom of belief. Hence, the allegation that the Holy Prophet^{sa}, was a belligerent leader or a

warmonger is an injustice and cruelty of the very highest order and such false claims can only grieve the hearts of the millions of peaceful Muslims worldwide. History bears witness to the fact that with every fibre of his being, the Prophet of Islam^{sa} sought peace and reconciliation.

In this respect, you do not have to take my word for it; rather, listen to what Ruth Cranston, a prominent 20th, century author, wrote in the 1949 book *World Faith*. Contrasting the defensive wars forced upon the Holy Prophet Muhammad^{sa}, with the nuclear weapons used by the United States during World War Two, she wrote:

"Muhammad never instigated fighting and bloodshed. Every battle he fought was in rebuttal. He fought defensively in order to survive...And he fought with the weapons and in the fashion of his time...Certainly no Christian nation of 140 million people who today dispatches 120,000 helpless civilians with a single bomb, can look askance at a leader who at his worst killed a bare five or six hundred."

Thankfully, amongst a climate where it has become the norm to brandish Islam as a religion of extremism and violence, there remain some non-Muslim journalists and commentators who write with integrity and justice. For this, I commend them for swimming against the tide of falsehood and injustice that has become so commonplace. I would also like to highly commend our honourable Prime Minister for quoting some verses from the Holy Quran, in some of her addresses and speeches, condemning the accusations that were placed on Islamic teachings.

Here I should also commend an article by Julia Ioffe, published in *Foreign Policy*, in which she examined the history of different religions, including Islam. At the end she concluded by saying:

"No religion is inherently violent. No religion is inherently peaceful. Religion, any religion, is a matter of interpretation, and it is often in that interpretation that we see either beauty or ugliness."

I appreciate this impartial conclusion. As we try to pass through these uncertain and precarious times, it is my strong belief that criticising one another serves no purpose and can only increase division



"In terms of the major religions, the unifying figure is God Almighty Himself, but this does not mean that a religious person can have nothing in common with a non-religious person. Thus, the Quran has taught us how to build a peaceful, multicultural society, where people of all faiths and beliefs are able to live side by side. The key ingredients are mutual respect and tolerance."

and animosity. Instead, the need of the hour is for us to knock down the barriers of fear that divide us. Rather than erecting walls that keep us apart, we should build bridges that bring us closer together.

Tragically, not a day passes without news filtering in of further atrocities and terrorist attacks. Undeniably, the world is becoming an increasingly perilous place for Muslims and non-Muslims alike. Hence, we must stand up against all forms of oppression, hatred and use all our capabilities to try and foster peace in the world. If we truly want peace then the world's politicians, leaders, media and parties must act with wisdom and grace.

There have been many reports published that suggest that a significant number of Muslim youths have been radicalised because they felt a sense of grievance that their beliefs were being attacked and mocked in Western nations. In no way does this justify or excuse them and they remain culpable and responsible for their actions. Yet, common sense dictates that we should not pour petrol on an open flame. Rather, we should seek mutual understanding, respect the beliefs of others and try to find common ground.

In this regard, the Holy Quran has laid down a principle of great wisdom and value in chapter 3, verse 65 where it states:

"Come to a word equal between us and you."

Here the Quran has laid down a golden principle in the cause of peace, whereby it states that people should focus on those things that unite them. In terms of the major religions, the unifying figure is God Almighty Himself, but this does not mean that a religious person can have nothing in common with a non-religious person. Thus, the Quran has taught us how to build a peaceful, multicultural society, where people of all faiths and beliefs are able to live side by side. The key ingredients are mutual respect and tolerance. Accordingly, at another place, the Quran has instructed that Muslims should not speak against the idols or deities of others, because in reaction, they would curse Allah and a cycle of perpetual grievance would result.

As you will be aware, the theme of tonight's event is 'Global Conflicts and the Need for Justice', and I have said for many years that a lack of justice has plagued every segment of society and fuelled disorder. A lack of justice is also observed in the United Nations, to the extent that even those closely affiliated with the United Nations openly attest to its shortcomings and its failure to accomplish its primary objective of maintaining international

peace and security. For example, in an article published by *The New York Times*, the former United Nations Assistant Secretary-General, Anthony Banbury wrote:

"I love the United Nations but it is failing. There is too much bureaucracy and little result. Too many decisions are made for political reasons, rather than following the values and objectives of the UN or by facts on the ground...For the UN to continue and prosper it needs a complete overhaul and so an outside panel should examine the system and recommend changes."

Similarly, during recent years, certain governments have made unjust and unwise foreign policy decisions that have had a very negative effect on the peace and stability of the world. A well-known columnist, Paul Krugman, recently wrote also in the *New York Times*, about the 2003 Iraq War:

"The Iraq war wasn't an innocent mistake, a venture undertaken on the basis of intelligence that turned out to be wrong...The public justifications for the invasion were nothing but pretexts, and falsified pretexts at that."

The reason I have given these examples is to illustrate that it is wrong to claim that Muslims are the sole cause of the increasing conflicts witnessed in the world. Whilst it is undeniable that certain Muslim countries are at the epicentre of today's wars and cruelties, it cannot be said that the rest of the world is united and immune from disorder.

For example, there have been numerous reports or statements indicating heightened tensions between the United States and China and even the possibility of a war between them. Indeed, it was recently widely reported that a close advisor to President Trump had said that there was "no doubt" that a US-China war would take place in the next five to ten years. Similarly, in January, the *South China Morning Post* quoted a senior Chinese military official saying that a US-China war was now not "just a slogan" but, was becoming a "practical reality."

Likewise, tensions between Russia and the West continue to smoulder and threaten to escalate at any time. Indeed, as tensions continued to mount, Germany's ex-Foreign Minister, Frank-Walter Steinmeier, took it upon himself to speak out against NATO military exercises near the Russian border.

Speaking last June, he said:

"The one thing we shouldn't do is inflame the situation with loud sabre-rattling and war-mongering...Anyone who thinks a symbolic tank parade on the alliance's eastern border will bring security is wrong. We will be well advised not to provide a pretext to renew an old confrontation."

I agree with the statement of the ex-Foreign Minister that nations should not provoke one another or seek to assert their dominance, rather they should engage in diplomacy and try to resolve differences amicably and without needlessly threatening each other. Sadly, with the passing of time, it seems that we are losing our ability to listen and to tolerate opposing views and perspectives. Opening the channels of communication and facilitating dialogue is essential, otherwise the world's malaise will only get deeper.

Anyway, I have cited various reports that suggest we are moving towards further warfare and bloodshed. Both at an international level and at a national level, we are seeing polarisation and a hardening of attitudes towards one another. Instead of pointing fingers and blaming one another, now is the time for solutions. In my opinion there is one ready-made solution that can have an instant impact and begin the process of healing the world. I refer to the international arms trade, which I believe has to be curbed and restricted.

We all know that in order to fuel their economies, Western nations are selling weapons abroad, including to those nations that are embroiled in warfare and armed conflicts. For example, just a few weeks ago, it was widely reported that the new US administration is signing off on a new arms deal for the sale of sophisticated and precision-guided missile technology to Saudi Arabia. Furthermore, a United Nations report published last year found that when it comes to the sale of arms, normal rules of law do not apply. It found that an array of companies, individuals and countries had long been contravening an international arms embargo on Libya and supplying arms to different factions there.

Hence, even where some limited rules apply, they are not being properly enforced. Whilst the primary interest of every nation should be the well-being of mankind and achieving peace, it is a sad truth that business interests and the pursuit of wealth invariably take priority over such concerns.

Reflecting this narrow self-interest, a well-known CNN host recently said that curbing the arms trade could result in a loss of jobs amongst American defence companies. During a live interview, he said:

"There's a lot of jobs at stake. Certainly, if a lot of these defence contractors stop selling war planes, other sophisticated equipment to Saudi Arabia, there's going to be a significant loss of jobs, of revenue here in the United States."

Furthermore, it is sometimes argued, that the sale of weapons may actually "encourage" peace, as weapons can act as a "deterrent." In my opinion, this view is completely senseless and only encourages the further production and sale of extremely dangerous weapons. Indeed, it is such justifications that have caused the world to become embroiled in a never-ending arms race. For the sake of the good of mankind, governments should disregard fears that their economies will suffer if the arms trade is curbed. Instead, they should think about the type of world they wish to bequeath to those that follow them.

Many of the weapons being used in Muslim countries, and even by terrorist groups such as Daesh, have been produced in the West or Eastern Europe and so it is time for proper sanctions to be put in place which are effectively implemented. If this one step is taken, I sincerely believe it can have a very significant impact in a short frame of time. Otherwise the alternative does not bear thinking about.

I do not need to elaborate, because the articles I have cited speak for themselves and point in the direction of another large-scale war. No country or group should be under the illusion that they are safe, because when wars start they evolve rapidly

and often unexpectedly.

If we look back to the Second World War, there were nations who were determined not to take part, but were eventually dragged into it, whilst alliances and blocs continued to shift and change. Today, several countries have acquired nuclear weapons, and if even just one such weapon is ever used, the consequences will be unimaginable and will live on long after we are gone. Rather than leaving behind a legacy of prosperity for our coming generations, we will be guilty of leaving behind only sorrow and despair. Our gift to the world will be a generation of disabled children, born with defects and intellectual disabilities. Who knows if their parents will even survive to care and nurture them?

Hence, we must always remember that if we seek to pursue our own interests at all costs, the rights of others will be usurped and this can only lead to conflict, wars and misery. We must all reflect and understand the precipice upon which we stand. We must recognise the purpose of our creation.

As I said at the beginning, the Founder of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community^{as}, came to forge a bond between man and His Creator and to unite mankind and so from the depths of my heart, I pray that the world comes to its senses before it is too late.

My message to the world is to look at tomorrow, and not just to today.

Let us leave behind a legacy of hope and opportunity for our children, rather than burdening them with the horrific consequences of our sins.

With these words, I pray that God grants sense to the people of the world and that the heavy clouds that loom above us give way to a bright and prosperous future.

May Allah have mercy upon mankind, *Ameen*. Thank you to all the guests, thank you very much."

KEY FOR SALUTATIONS:

- sa Sallallaaho Alaihi wa Sallam – "May peace and blessings of Allah be upon him." This is written after the name of the Holy Prophet^{sa}.
- as Alaihis Salaam – "May peace be upon him." This is written after the name of Prophets other than the Holy Prophet^{sa}.
- ra Razi-Allaaho anhu/anha/anhum – "May Allah be pleased with him/her/them." This is written after names of the Companions of the Holy Prophet^{sa} and of the Promised Messiah^{as}.
- aba Ayyadahullaahu Ta'aalaa binasrihil Aziz – "May Allah the Almighty help him with His powerful support" Written after the name of the current Khalifa of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community.

THE AHMADIYYA MUSLIM PRIZE FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF PEACE

The Ahmadiyya Muslim Prize for the Advancement of Peace is an international award that was launched in 2009 by His Holiness Hazrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad^{aba}. It is awarded in recognition of an individual's or an organisation's contribution for the advancement of the cause of peace.



YEAR	RECIPIENT
2009	Lord Eric Avebury – UK
2010	Abdul Sattar Edhi – Pakistan
2011	SOS Children's Villages – UK
2012	Dr Boachie-Adjei – Ghana
2013	Magnus MacFarlane-Barrow – Scotland
2014	Mrs Sindhutai Sapkal – India
2015	Hadeel Qassim – Iraq
2016	Mrs Setsuko Thurlow – Canada

Introduction to the 2016 recipient of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Prize for the Advancement of Peace

Mrs Setsuko Thurlow is a Hiroshima survivor and an inspiration for many in the international campaign for nuclear disarmament.

Mrs Setsuko Thurlow was born in Japan and was just 13 years old in August 1945, when the devastating atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima. What she experienced and saw was a life changing experience and having witnessed first-hand the horrors of death, suffering and destruction she devoted her life to campaign against nuclear weapons.

She has focused on highlighting the humanitarian consequences of nuclear warfare and contributed to breaking the silence of people around the world concerning nuclear issues and initiated many anti-nuclear activities.

Mrs Setsuko lives in Canada and is a Canadian citizen and has been recognised for her work by the Japanese and Canadian Governments and has received numerous awards including the Order of Canada Medal, the highest honour for Canadian civilians. The Japanese Government also appointed her as Special Communicator for the World Without Nuclear Weapons, and she addressed the United Nations General Assembly First Committee.



In a world that of increasing conflict and one that is edging every so closely to nuclear war, the lifelong contribution of Mrs Setsuko Thurlow is even more critical in bringing home the horrors of nuclear war. We are proud of her work and proud to recognise her efforts to promote words of peace, rather than weapons of war.

Mrs Thurlow travelled all the way from Canada specially for this event and to receive the Ahmadiyya Muslim Peace Prize.

MRS SETSUKO THURLOW
2016 Peace Prize Winner



Your Holiness, members of Ahmadiyya Community and distinguished guests, I am deeply grateful to be invited to this National Peace Symposium. In addition, it is a totally unexpected honour to receive your recognition for lifetime of my service to my community as a social worker helping fellow Japanese immigrants in Toronto, Canada and as a disarmament educator and global advocate for the prevention of nuclear war.

This recognition and prize signify your support and encouragement for the decades long efforts of millions of people around the world who desire nothing less than the prohibition and elimination of nuclear weapons to ensure real human security to the people of the world.

In attempting to learn about your organisation's history, mission and activities, I learned with pain of your struggle and suffering from religious discrimination and persecution. Yet, in spite of it, you have chosen the principles of non-violence, peace and justice and exemplify them in your daily lives through your motto of 'Love to all, hatred to none'. What an enlightened role model you are to the world community. However we have been alarmed in recent years by the rising number of dangerous hate crimes motivated by religion and racism, largely targeted to Muslim and Jewish communities. Governments and citizens of the world must intensify our shared responsibility of combating such heinous crimes and protect human dignity and the rights of our fellow citizens.

Tomorrow, I will travel to New York to attend the United Nations conference for the negotiation for prohibition of nuclear weapons. This is an historic

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occasion that the majority of United Nations member states, 123 states, voted for. As one who experienced the catastrophic and indiscriminate atomic bombing of Hiroshima as a child and who has been speaking out against such inhumane, immoral and cruel weapons of mass destruction, for the past 72 years, I rejoice that at long last the world is making a significant progress to establish a legally binding treaty for the prohibition leading to the world without nuclear weapons. The voice of humanity has finally been heard.

In closing, on behalf of the survivors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki atomic bombings, and other victims of the nuclear age, I offer my heartfelt thanks for your commitment to a world of peace and justice. Thank you very much.

RAFIQ HAYAT

National President (Amir) of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community UK



Most beloved Huzur, respected parliamentarians, Worshipful Mayors, Your Excellencies, Lords, ladies and gentlemen. Assalamo alaikum wa rahmatullahe wa barakatuhu, May the peace and blessings of Allah be upon you all.

Welcome to the 14th National peace Symposium that is being held on the theme of Global Conflicts and the Need for Justice.

The past year has seen the world become even more fragmented and international divisions and tensions have become ever more apparent. There has been a renewed focus on nationalism and more worryingly what was once in the realm of rhetoric has moved into the world of reality. The Brexit vote in the UK, the rise of nationalist sentiment in Europe and the deeply worrying signs or a return to nuclear arms is threatening the stability of the whole world.

We have also seen the ongoing conflicts in the middle east, the destruction of homes and cities in Yemen, Iraq and Syria and the shocking prospect of famine in Africa. Add to this the ever present refugee crisis then one could be forgiven for thinking that we are staring at the beginnings of perhaps one of the darkest chapters of humanity.

The terrible terrorist attack in Westminster this week have brought home the ever present threat of terrorism that seems to prevail across the globe.

And I must take this opportunity to pay tribute to our police forces who do an excellent job in being the frontline against terrorism. The murder of PC Keith Palmer reminds us of the heavy responsibility they carry and we salute them and honour them and the memory of those who died serving our country as well as the innocent civilians whose lives

were brutally cut short.

The response of London was excellent – and it said loud and clear that terrorist will never divide us and that we will always stand united against extremism, in every shape and in every form.

Indeed that is the very message that we hope to send out from this event tonight, that we are people of peace and we will never be defeated.

Our community, the Ahmadiyya Muslim community, will continue to play its part in the promotion of peace and the main reason is because our founder, Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad^{as} – whom we accept as the Promised Messiah and Mahdi – came with a very clear and special mission – to revive the true teachings of Islam, to reject the concept of violent jihad and to rejuvenate the link between man and God. The community has flourished and is now established in more than 207 countries and our global work is inspired by our Caliph, His Holiness Hazrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad^{aba}, and we are truly honoured that he has joined us this evening and will deliver the keynote address. He has addressed parliaments across the world, most recently in Canada.

His Holiness is a man of peace who leads a mission of peace and works tirelessly for the good of mankind, based on an unshakeable belief in a compassionate and merciful God. This is the true essence of Islam and indeed of all faiths and at a time of rising global injustice it is a message that offers hope for humanity.

I welcome you again tonight and hope that together we can work to guide the world from conflict to cohesion. Thank you.

FATHER DAVID STANDLEY

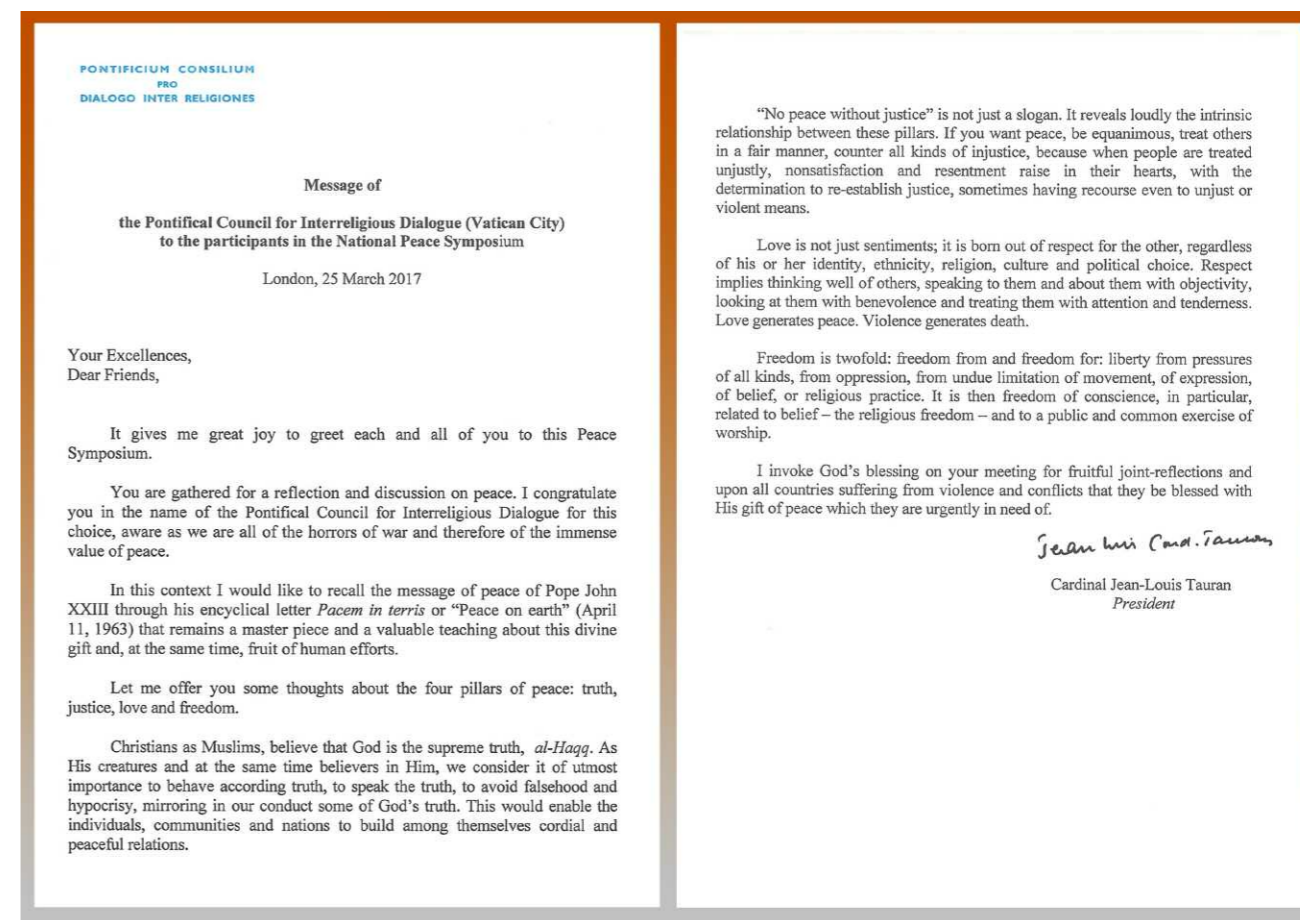
Representing the Catholic Archbishop of Southwark



I come here as the representative of the Catholic Archbishop of Southwark, in South London. He could not come himself but he is very happy that I should be here and so am I. So I bring his greetings and also this message from the Pontifical Council for Inter-Religious dialogue in the Vatican in Rome. I have to say the Pope hasn't spoken to me personally himself but I'm very happy to read this

message from the Vatican.

And I am sure if it had come a little later he would have wanted to give his condolences to the people of London and the United Kingdom for the events on Wednesday. I am very happy to read this message and to wish you all well, thank you. (see message below)





Your Holiness Mirza Masroor Ahmad, Your Excellencies, distinguished guests, friends, *Bismillahi Rahman Nirraheem* [In the name of God, Most Gracious, Ever Merciful], *Assalamo Alaikum* [Peace be upon you]. It is a great privilege for me to stand here before you. I want to share with you some of my personal experiences that have blessed me for the past fifty years. I have a great privilege to live in different countries ever since my youth, I have met people of so many different cultures and therefore also so many different religions. I have learned, not so much through books, or through talks or master's degrees, but through friendships and through relationships I have learned how to appreciate. I once discovered something very important which I believe is important for everyone who is follower of a religious belief and who is therefore also member of a culture. I could quote this golden rule as it is expressed in so many religions but it would be too long so I just limit myself to three quotations. And I start with the quotation from the Hadith un Nabi [Saying of the Prophet Muhammad] (peace and blessings of God be upon him), Sunnah [practice of the Prophet] and therefore it is a Muslim quotation:

"None of you is a Muslim until he loves for his brother what he loves for himself."

When it comes to the Talmud, that is something so precious for the Jewish believers, it says:

"What is hateful to you, do not do to your fellow, because this is the whole Torah, everything else is a commentary."

When it comes to Christianity, it is quoted in different parts of the Gospels but I just quote one:

"In everything, do to others as you would like others to do unto you."

It is so beautiful to read it in Taoism, in Sikhism, in Zoroastrianism and so on and even in some philosophies, which do not claim to be religions but they are ways of life anyway. And, Your Holiness, I was thinking that in the global conflicts that we have in the world and there so much injustice and so much need of justice, if we believers of the different religions would be able to not only remind not only to think of but to practice this golden rule, probably the world would quickly change. And I want to thank you, Your Holiness, in a very special way because listening often to your talks, to your very many interventions in many parts of the world, you have been not only a promoter, not only a creator of what we badly need today that is the culture of dialogue. You have been a champion of this, you have been an example and I conclude by witnessing that everywhere in the world I have met the Ahmadiyya communities not only I felt at home, and I must also acknowledge the fact that I am not a Muslim, but I felt among brothers and sisters and this is something beautiful, something wonderful and this is what I am experiencing tonight here with all of you. And the only expression that comes from my heart which I believe everybody understands, it is in Arabic but it's very beautiful, *Alhamdulliah*. Thanks be to God. Thank you, Shukran, Shukria.



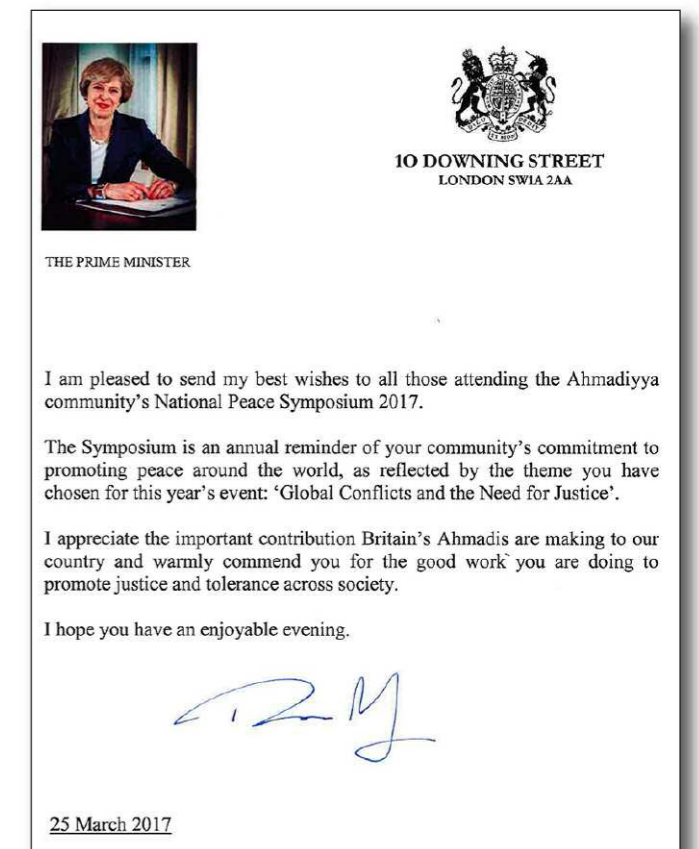
A number of dignitaries attended the symposium including **Siobhain McDonagh MP** who is also the Chair of the Ahmadiyya Muslim All Party Parliamentary Group, the **Rt Hon Justine Greening MP** the Secretary of State for Education, **Rt Hon Tom Brake MP** - the Foreign Affairs spokesperson for the Liberal Democrat Party, **Paul Scully MP**, **Lord Tariq Ahmad of Wimbledon** - the Minister for Transport, **Lord Norman Lamont** – former Cabinet member, **Claire Wheelan OBE DT**, Deputy Lord Lieutenant for Greater London, **Sir Edward Davey** (former Secretary of State) and **Mak Chishty** (Commander of Metropolitan Police).

Representation from embassies around the world included Kuwait, USA, Iraq, South Korea, Japan, Austria, Afghanistan, India, Ghana, Angola and Canada. Attending also were a number of mayors from various boroughs including Wandsworth, Sutton, Rushmore, Bromley and Merton and as well as the Lord Mayor of North East Lincolnshire.



Above: Norman Lamont – Former Chancellor of the Exchequer meeting with His Holiness.

Right: Message from the Prime Minister, the **Rt Hon Theresa May** which was read out at the Peace Symposium.



“Sadly, with the passing of time, it seems that we are losing our ability to listen and to tolerate opposing views and perspectives. Opening the channels of communication and facilitating dialogue is essential, otherwise the world’s malaise will only get deeper... Instead of pointing fingers and blaming one another, now is the time for solutions.”

(Hazrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad)



Members of the local, national and international media were present at the Press Conference held prior to the main event.

Loyalty

Freedom

Equality

Respect

Peace



www.LoveForAllHatredForNone.org

Ahmadiyya Muslim Community UK

The London Mosque
16 Gressenhall Road
London SW18 5QL

Tel: 020 8874 5836

Fax: 020 8874 4779

www.alislam.org • www.mta.tv

Email: ExternalAffairs@ahmadiyya.org.uk

Twitter: @AhmadiyyaUK