

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Ever Merciful



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PRESS RELEASE

**CANADA'S FOREIGN MINISTER CALLS ON HEAD OF AHMADIYYA
MUSLIM JAMAAT IN LONDON**



Yesterday, Canada's Foreign Minister, John Baird MP, visited the World Head of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Jamaat, Hadhrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad at the Fazl Mosque in London. His Excellency, Gordon Campbell, the Canadian High Commissioner to the

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UK and other members of staff were also present at the meeting which lasted around forty minutes.

During the meeting, the Foreign Minister mentioned how the Canadian Government was in the process of setting up an 'Office of Religious Freedom' and sought the views of His Holiness about how such an Office should function. In response, His Holiness explained that Islam taught that every person should be free to practise his religion openly and without fear of discrimination. He said that irrespective of religious differences, all members of a society should live together with a spirit of unity, peace and tolerance and that this was what the Office of Religious Freedom should strive to achieve throughout the world.



His Holiness spoke about the persecution faced by the Ahmadiyya Muslim Jamaat in various countries, most notably in Pakistan. Speaking about the situation there, he said, that quite apart from religious persecution, the community were deprived also of their basic civic rights. His Holiness said:

“In Pakistan all Ahmadi Muslims are denied their basic rights. We are unable to call ourselves Muslims or use Islamic terms. My name is Masroor, but in Pakistan if somebody calls me this, then that person can be arrested and punished. Thus such laws that persecute and curtail basic rights must be changed. It is essential that religious views should not impact or interfere with Government policies.”

The Foreign Minister said that he was very concerned whenever he heard of such matters and it was against such systematic persecution that Canada envisioned the Office of Religious Freedom to act. He said that he believed that where religious freedom existed, there other rights would naturally develop.

His Holiness also used the meeting to praise Western efforts to promote religious freedom and he said that in particular Canada deserved praise for this. He said that the efforts of the Canadian government to promote integration and religious tolerance had led to the Fourth Khalifa of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Jamaat to once remark that he hoped the entire world would become like Canada. In response the Foreign Minister said that Canada truly valued the benefits of having a relatively open immigration system.

His Holiness mentioned that when he last visited Canada in 2008, he was very grateful that Prime Minister Stephen Harper attended the opening of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Jamaat’s new mosque in Calgary and indeed the Prime Minister even delayed his departure for an international summit in Japan so that he could take part in the event.



His Holiness also informed the Foreign Minister that the Holy Qur'an taught respect for all religions to such an extent that Muslims have been ordered to not only protect their own mosques but to protect *all* places of worship, whether they be churches, synagogues or temples.

End

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