

PRESS RELEASE

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for immediate release

AHMADIYYA HEAD CAUTIONS BANGLADESH OVER BOOK BAN

Hadhrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad, the British-based Head of the Worldwide Ahmadiyya Muslim Community spoke in his Friday Sermon of 9th January 2004 on the alarming developments in Bangladesh where the orthodox clergy has pressurised the government into banning all publications of the Ahmadiyya Community:

“The government of Bangladesh ought to take a lesson from its neighbours and should do what a government is required to do, that is the running of government and not interfere in matters of faith and religion; they should be wary of Allah’s wrath.

“My message to the Bangladesh Ahmadi is to observe patience, steadfastness and to engage in prayer. Our support is only Allah the Exalted. Turn to Him in submission and continue to do so until such time that you witness the signs of His support and triumph. May Allah the Exalted not make this time of trial long, and may He deal with the enemy swiftly.

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

“I urge the government of Bangladesh to repeal this arbitrary and unconstitutional act, and to protect the fundamental rights of Ahmadi Muslims in Bangladesh.

“I ask the fair-minded people of Britain to voice their concern on this sad turn of events orchestrated by a minority of extremists in Bangladesh.

Mr Hayat praised the Bangladeshi press for speaking out against the religious extremists, and also the Opposition Leader, Former Prime, Minister Sheikh Hasina for coming out so strongly in favour of the freedoms of religion and thought.

It is feared by many that the banning of Ahmadiyya publications in Bangladesh could escalate yet further, and also lead to persecution of other religious minorities (Hindus, Christians, Buddhists, and Shia Muslims), and thus undermine the democratic and secular constitution of the country.

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For more information contact:

Dr Basharat Nazir, Press Secretary: Tel 07703 483 384

Email basharat.nazir@btinternet.com

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Ahmadiyya Muslim Association UK

(ESTABLISHED 1914)

NOTE TO NEWSDESKS

Arriving on British soil in 1913, Ahmadi Muslims erected the first purpose-built mosque in the London in 1924; in 1982 they were the first to build a mosque in Spain after a lapse of 700 years; and their latest mosque in London, the Baitul Futuh Mosque, opened in October 2003, is the biggest mosques in Western Europe.

The Ahmadiyya Muslim Community was founded by Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad in Qadian, India, in March 1889. He claimed to be the Promised Messiah and Imam Mehdi as foretold by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, awaited by most world religions. In a little over a century, the Community has spread to 174 countries with 200 million followers from many cultural backgrounds around the world.

Hadhrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad is the current head of the worldwide community. The current Amir (National President) of the UK community is Mr Rafiq Ahmed Hayat.

Ahmadi Muslims are distinguished by their devotion to faith and charity, the exercise of humility in all walks of life and in expounding the message of Islam as a religion of peace and brotherhood to all mankind. The Community stands for the revival of true Islam, wholly rejects the prevalent misinterpretation of Jihad, does not believe in conversion by force, and was the first to condemn terrorism and suicide bombings. In fact, the principles of the Community are based on moderation and the rejection of all forms of extremism.

The Community runs a number of hospitals and schools in developing countries and has an active charity, Humanity First, which has helped raise funds for Save the Children, Imperial Cancer Research, and the Great Ormond Street Hospital. During the Holy month of Ramadhan, the Ahmadiyya Youth provides the deprived and homeless with food and provisions throughout the UK. The Community's own 24-hour multi-language satellite TV, MTA International, can be seen in UK/Europe on Sky Digital channel 807.

The Baitul Futuh Mosque, 181 London Road, Morden, Surrey SM4 5HF

Tel 020 8687 7800 Fax 020 8687 7899

Press Secretary 07703 483 384