

The Path to Peace – Just Relations Between Nations



**The keynote address by Hadhrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad,
Head of the worldwide Ahmadiyya Muslim Community**

Delivered at Capitol Hill, Washington D.C., USA, 27th June 2012



An Overview of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community

The Ahmadiyya Muslim community is a religious organisation, with branches in more than 193 countries. It is the most dynamic denomination of Islam in modern history, with an estimated membership of one hundred and sixty million worldwide.

It was established by **Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad** (1835-1908) in 1889 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 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 Putney). It is therefore one of the oldest and most established Muslim organisations in Britain and now has more than 90 branches across Britain.



The Khalifa: A Man of Peace

Hadhrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad was elected as the fifth Khalifa of the worldwide Ahmadiyya Muslim Community in 2003.

His life has been a reflection of dedication, steadfastness, prayer and success. His bond with God leads him to urge his community never to forget the Almighty and never to despair. His focus on prayer is evident for all to see and the fruits of the success of such prayer bear testament to his faith. His sympathy for mankind drives him and his community to serve humanity in the same spirit that the early Muslims served the poor and the needy. His sense of sacrifice mirrors the spirit of sacrifice integral to Islam. Indeed his very life and mission reflect a pure spirit that is ever wary of its responsibilities and ever vigilant for the honour of Islam, its Prophet^(saw) and the prophet of the latter days.

"His Holiness eloquently and persistently returns to these themes of peace and tolerance love and understanding among the followers of different faiths..."

"...We desperately need the moral leadership and guidance that we can look for to His Holiness to provide..."

(Lord Avebury on Hadhrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad)

The community stands at one with the Khalifa in the remembrance of God and service of mankind.

Capitol Hill

Washington D.C.

27th June 2012



On 27th June 2012, a historic event took place at Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C. Hadhrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad, Khalifatul Masih V^(aba), Fifth Successor to the Promised Messiah^(as) and Head of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, addressed leading congressmen, senators, ambassadors, White House and State Department Staff, NGO leaders, religious leaders, professors, policy advisors, members of the Diplomatic Corps, representatives of think-tanks and the Pentagon and journalists from the media. The meeting, the first of its kind, gave the opportunity to some of the most influential leaders in the United States, including Honourable Nancy Pelosi, the Democratic Leader in the House of Representatives, to hear first-hand Islam's message on world peace. Following the event, His Holiness was given a tour of the Capitol Hill building, before being escorted to the House of Representatives where a Resolution was introduced in honour of his visit to the United States. The introductory paragraph of the Resolution stated:

"Welcoming His Holiness, Hadhrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad, the worldwide spiritual and administrative head of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, to Washington, DC, and recognizing his commitment to world peace, justice, nonviolence, human rights, religious freedom and democracy."

Senator Robert Casey (US-PA) welcomed His Holiness to the United States and said that he was greatly appreciative at having the opportunity to meet with him. He said: *"Your Holiness, I want to thank you for your great leadership and your commitment to peace, tolerance and justice."* The first Muslim Congressman, Keith Ellison (US-MN-5) said that the United States was *"honoured*

by the presence of His Holiness" and he said that under the leadership of its Khalifa, the Ahmadiyya Muslim Jama'at was proving to be a *"true blessing for the people of the United States."* Congressman Brad Sherman (US-CA-27) said that he would be introducing the Congressional Resolution welcoming His Holiness to the United States in the House of Representatives immediately after the event. He also said that His Holiness was *"a model of tolerance for the entire world."* Katrina Lantos Swett, Chairwoman of the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) said that she felt the entire room was filled with a *"special blessing and undoubtedly it is a reflection of the blessing His Holiness brings to the Capitol."* She went on to speak about and condemn the continued persecution of Ahmadi Muslims in various countries. Congressman Frank Wolf (US-VA-10) welcomed Hadhrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad^(aba) to the United States and said that the Ahmadiyya Muslim Jama'at was ever ready to support all human rights efforts. Congressman Mike Honda (US-CA-15) spoke about his pleasure at meeting His Holiness privately the evening before at the Baitur Rahman Mosque. He said that he hoped that Ahmadis remained forever safe in the United States so that they could continue to propagate their message of peace. Thereafter, Congresswoman Zoe Lofgren (US-CA-16) presented a copy of the Special Congressional Resolution to His Holiness. Democratic Leader, Congresswoman Nancy Pelosi (US-CA-8) said she was proud that such a bipartisan welcome had been given to Hadhrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad^(aba). She said the leadership of Hadhrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad was characterised by *"wisdom and compassion."* She further said that despite facing grave persecution, *"His Holiness has refused to turn to bitterness or vengeance."* The full list of attendees at the Capitol Hill event is listed on page 18.

The Path to Peace – Just Relations Between Nations

Address by Hadhrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad^(aba), Khalifatul Masih V, worldwide Head of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, June 2012

“Bismillahir-Rahmanir-Raheem – In the name of Allah, the Gracious, Ever Merciful.

All distinguished guests – *Assalamo Alaikum Wa Rahmatullahe Wa Barakatohu* – Peace and blessings of Allah be upon you all.

Before proceeding, I would like to first of all take this opportunity to thank you all for taking the time to come and listen to what I have to say. I have been requested to speak about a subject that is extremely vast and wide ranging. It has many different aspects and therefore, it is not possible for me to cover all of them in the short time available. The subject that I have been asked to speak about is the establishment of world peace. Certainly, this is the most vital and pressing issue facing the world today. However, as the time is limited, I will only briefly give the Islamic viewpoint on the establishment of peace through just and equal relations between nations.

The truth is that peace and justice are inseparable – you cannot have one without the other. Certainly, this principle is something that all wise and intelligent people understand. Leaving aside those people who are determined to create disorder in the world, no one can ever claim that in any society, country or even the entire world, that there can be disorder or a lack of peace where justice and fair dealing exist. Nevertheless, we find in many parts of the world that disorder and a lack of peace are prevalent. Such disorder is visible both internally within countries, and externally in terms of the relations between various nations. Such disorder and strife exists even though all governments claim to make policies that are based on justice. All claim that the establishment of peace is their primary objective. Yet, in general, there is little doubt that restlessness and anxiety is increasing in the world, and so disorder is spreading. This clearly proves that somewhere along the line, the requirements of justice are not being fulfilled.

Therefore, there is an urgent need to try and end inequality, wherever and whenever it exists. Thus, as the worldwide Head of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, I would like to make a few observations about the need for, and the ways to achieve peace based on justice.

The Ahmadiyya Muslim Community is purely a religious community. It is our firm belief that the Messiah and Reformer who was destined to appear in this age and enlighten the world as to Islam’s true teachings has indeed arrived. We believe that the Founder of our Community, Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian^(as), was that very Promised Messiah and Reformer, and thus we have accepted him. He pressed upon his followers to act and propagate the real and true teachings of Islam that are based on the Holy Qur’an. Therefore, everything that I will say in relation to establishing peace, and in relation to conducting just international relations, will be based on Qur’anic teachings.

In relation to achieving world peace, all of you regularly express your opinions, and indeed make great efforts. Your creative and intelligent minds allow you to present great ideas, plans and indeed a vision of peace. Thus, this issue does not require me to speak from a worldly or political perspective, but instead my entire focus will be based on how to establish peace based on religion. For this purpose I shall, as I have earlier said, present some very important guidelines based on the teachings of the Holy Qur’an.

It is important to always remember that human knowledge and intellect is not perfect, but is in fact limited. Thus, when making decisions or forming thoughts often certain factors enter human minds, which can cloud judgement and lead to a person trying to fulfil his own rights. Ultimately, this can lead to an unjust outcome and decision being made. God’s

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The Qur’an teaches that wherever and whoever counsels you towards goodness and virtue, you should accept it, and wherever and whoever counsels you towards sinful or unjust behaviour, you should reject it...

...Similarly, no country should seek to unjustly appropriate or take over the resources of another country on the false pretext of trying to assist or support them. Thus, on the basis of providing technical expertise, governments should not take advantage of other nations by making unjust trade deals or contracts...

... Therefore, the United States, as the world’s largest power, should play its role in acting with true justice and with such good intentions, as I have described. If it does so then the world will always remember with great admiration your great efforts.

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Law, however, is perfect and so no vested interests or unfair provisions exist. This is because God only desires for the good and betterment of His Creation and therefore, His Law is based entirely on justice. The day the people of the world come to recognise and understand this crucial point will be the day that the foundation for true and everlasting peace will be laid. Otherwise, we continue to find that although efforts are endlessly made to establish world peace, yet they are unable to provide any worthwhile results.

After the conclusion of the First World War, the leaders of certain countries desired for good and peaceful relations between all nations in future. Thus, in an effort to achieve world peace the League of Nations was formed. Its principal aim was to maintain world peace and to prevent future wars from breaking out. Unfortunately, the rules of the League and the resolutions it passed had certain flaws and weaknesses and so they did not properly protect the rights of *all* peoples and *all* nations equally. Consequently, as a result of the inequalities that existed, long-term peace could not prevail. The efforts of the League failed and this led directly to World War II.

We are all aware of the unparalleled destruction and devastation that ensued, where around 75 million people globally lost their lives, many of who were innocent civilians. That war should have been more than enough to open the eyes of the world. It should have been a means to developing wise

policies that granted all parties their due rights, based on justice, and thus prove to be a means of establishing peace in the world. The world’s governments at the time did endeavour to some extent to try and establish peace, and hence the United Nations was established. However, it soon became quite apparent that the noble and overarching objective underpinning the United Nations could not be fulfilled. Indeed, today certain governments quite openly make statements that prove its failure.

What does Islam say in relation to international relations that are based on justice, and so a means of establishing peace? In the Holy Qur’an, God Almighty has made it clear that whilst our nationalities or ethnic backgrounds act as a means of identity, they do not entitle or validate any form of superiority of any kind.¹

The Qur’an, thus, makes clear that all people are born equal. Furthermore, in the final sermon ever delivered by the Holy Prophet Muhammad^(saw), he instructed all Muslims to always remember that an Arab is not superior to a non-Arab and nor is a non-Arab superior to an Arab. He taught that a white person is not superior to a black person and nor is a black person superior to a white person. Thus, it is a clear teaching of Islam that the people of all nationalities and all races are equal. It is also made clear that all people should be granted equal rights without any discrimination or prejudice. This is the key and golden principle that lays the foundation

for harmony between different groups and nations, and for the establishment of peace.

However, today we find that there is division and separation between powerful and weaker nations. For example, in the United Nations we find that there is a distinction made between certain countries. Thus, in the Security Council there are some permanent members and some non-permanent members. This division has proved to be an internal source of anxiety and frustration and thus we regularly hear reports of certain countries protesting against this inequality. Islam teaches absolute justice and equality in all matters and so we find another very crucial guideline in Chapter 5, Verse 3 of the Holy Qur'an. In this verse it states that to fully comply with the requirements of justice, it is necessary to treat even those people, who go beyond all limits in their hatred and enmity, with fairness and equity. The Qur'an teaches that wherever and whoever counsels you towards goodness and virtue, you should accept it, and wherever and whoever counsels you towards sinful or unjust behaviour, you should reject it.

A question that naturally arises is that what is the standard of justice required by Islam? In Chapter 4, Verse 136, the Holy Qur'an states that even if you have to testify against yourself, or your parents or your most loved ones, then you must do so in order to uphold justice and to uphold the truth. Powerful and rich countries should not usurp the rights of the poor and weaker countries in an effort to preserve their own rights, and nor should they deal with the poorer nations in an unjust fashion. On the other hand, the poor and weaker nations should not seek to inflict harm on the powerful or wealthy nations whenever the opportunity arises. Instead, both sides should endeavour to fully abide by the principles of justice. Indeed, this is a matter of crucial importance in maintaining peaceful relations between countries.

Another requirement for peace between nations based on justice is given in Chapter 15, Verse 89 of the Holy Qur'an where it states that no party should ever look enviously at the resources and wealth of others. Similarly, no country should seek to unjustly appropriate or take over the resources of another country on the false pretext of trying to assist or support them. Thus, on the basis of providing technical expertise, governments should not take advantage of other nations by making unjust trade

deals or contracts. Similarly, on the basis of providing expertise or assistance, governments should not try to take control of the natural resources or assets of the developing nations. Where less educated people or governments need to be taught how to properly utilise their natural resources, then this should be done.

Then, nations and governments should always seek to serve and help those less fortunate. However, such service should not be rendered with an aim of achieving national or political benefits or as a means to fulfil vested interests. We find that in the past six or seven decades the United Nations has launched many programmes or foundations aiming to help the poor countries to progress. Towards this effort they have explored the natural resources of the developing nations. However, despite these efforts, none of the poorer countries have reached the stage or level of the developed nations. One reason for this is certainly wide-ranging corruption by many of the governments of those under-developed countries. With regret though I must say that despite this, as a means to further their own interests, the developed nations have continued to deal with such governments. Trade deals, international aid and business contracts have continued to be processed. As a result, the frustrations and restlessness of the poor and deprived segments of society have continued to increase and this has led to rebellion and internal disorder within those countries. The poor people of the developing countries have become so frustrated that they have turned against not only their own leaders, but also the big powers as well. This has played into the hands of the extremist groups, who have taken advantage of the frustrations, and so have been able to encourage such people towards joining their groups and supporting their hate-filled ideology. The ultimate result of this has been that the peace of the world has been destroyed.

Thus, Islam has drawn our attention to various means for peace. It requires absolute justice. It requires truthful testimony to always be given. It requires that our glances are not cast enviously in the direction of the wealth of others. It requires that the developed nations put aside their vested interests, and instead help and serve the less developed and poorer nations with a truly selfless attitude and spirit. If all of these factors are observed, then true peace will be established.

If despite all these aforementioned measures any country transgresses all limits and attacks another country, and seeks to unjustly take control of its resources, then other countries should certainly take measures to stop such cruelty – but they should always act with justice when doing so.

The circumstances for taking action, based on Islamic teachings are detailed in the Qur'an, in Chapter 49.ⁱⁱ It teaches that when two nations are in dispute and this leads to war, then other governments should strongly counsel them towards dialogue and diplomacy so that they can come to an agreement and reconciliation on the basis of a negotiated settlement. If, however, one of the parties does not accept the terms of agreement and wages war, then other countries should unite together and fight to stop that aggressor. When the aggressive nation is defeated and agrees to mutual negotiation, then all parties should work towards an agreement that leads to long-standing peace and reconciliation. Harsh and unjust conditions should not be enforced that leads to the hands of any nation being tied, because in the long-term that will lead to restlessness, which will ferment and spread. The result of such restlessness will be further disorder.

In circumstances where a third-party government seeks to bring about reconciliation between two parties, then it should act with sincerity and total impartiality. This impartiality should remain even if one of the parties speaks against it. Therefore, the third-party should display no anger in such circumstances, it should seek no revenge, nor should it act in an unfair manner. All parties should be afforded their due rights.

Thus, for the requirements of justice to be fulfilled, it is essential that the countries that are negotiating a settlement should themselves not seek to fulfil their own personal interests, nor try to derive benefit unduly from either country. They should not interfere unjustly or pressure either of the parties unfairly. The natural resources of any country should not be taken advantage of. Unnecessary and unfair restrictions should not be placed upon such countries, because this is neither just and nor can it ever prove to be a source of improving relations between countries.



Due to time constraints, I have only very briefly mentioned these points. In short, if we desire for peace to be established in the world, then we must leave aside our personal and national interests for the greater good and instead we must establish mutual relations that are based entirely on justice. Otherwise, some of you might agree with me that due to alliances, blocs may be formed in future – or I can even say they *have* started forming – and it is not unlikely that disorder will continue to increase in the world, which will ultimately lead to a huge destruction. The effects of such devastation and warfare will surely last for many generations. Therefore, the United States, as the world's largest power, should play its role in acting with true justice and with such good intentions, as I have described. If it does so then the world will always remember with great admiration your great efforts. It is my prayer that this becomes a reality. Thank you very much. Thank you again.

According our tradition, at the end of the function we normally perform a silent prayer. Thus, I will perform the silent prayer and the Ahmadis will follow me. All of you, our guests, can pray in your own way.”

References:

- i Ch.49:V.14
- ii Ch.49:V.10



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PHOTO REFERENCES

1. Hadhrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad delivering his historical address to U.S. Congress.
2. U.S. Democratic Leader Nancy Pelosi welcoming His Holiness to U.S. Congress.
3. U.S Senator Robery Casey meeting the Khalifa.
4. U.S. Congressmen Brad Sherman and Mike Honda share private audience with Hadhrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad.
5. Hadhrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad addressing the audience.
6. US Congressman Brad Sherman presents Hadhrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad a U.S. flag flown at the Capitol.
7. The visit by the Khalifa to Capitol Hill marked an historical day for the U.S. and the worldwide Ahmadiyya Muslim community.



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Presentation of Resolution in Honour of His Holiness, Hadhrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad



U.S. Congresswoman Zoe Lofgren (Democrat, California) presents a special bipartisan U.S. Congressional Resolution (H. Res 709) to honour Hadhrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad, Khalifatul Masih V.

Introduced by U.S. Congresswoman Zoe Lofgren (Democrat, California)

Co-Sponsored by:

- U.S. Congressman Mike Honda (Democrat, California)
- U.S. Congressman Brad Sherman (Democrat, California)
- U.S. Congresswoman Jackie Speier (Democrat, California)
- U.S. Congressman Frank Wolf (Republican, Virginia)
- U.S. Congressman Howard Berman (Democrat, California)
- U.S. Congressman Bruce Braley (Democrat, Iowa)
- U.S. Congresswoman Judy Chu (Democrat, California)
- U.S. Congressman Gerald Connolly (Democrat, Virginia)
- U.S. Congressman Charles Dent (Republican, Pennsylvania)
- U.S. Congresswoman Anna Eshoo (Democrat, California)
- U.S. Congressman Maurice Hinchey (Democrat, New York)
- U.S. Congresswoman Sheila Jackson-Lee (Democrat, Texas)
- U.S. Congressman James McGovern (Democrat, Massachusetts)
- U.S. Congressman Gary Peters (Democrat, Michigan)
- U.S. Congresswoman Laura Richardson (Democrat, California)
- U.S. Congressman Trent Franks (Republican, Arizona)
- U.S. Congresswoman Janice Schakowsky (Democrat, Illinois)
- U.S. Congressman Adam Schiff (Democrat, California)
- U.S. Congresswoman Allyson Schwartz (Democrat, California)
- U.S. Congressman Michael Capuano (Democrat, Massachusetts)
- U.S. Congressman John Dingell (Democrat, Michigan)

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JUNE 27, 2012

Ms. ZOE LOFGREN of California (for herself, Mr. SHERMAN, Mr. CONNOLLY of Virginia, Mr. HINCHEY, Ms. ESHOO, Ms. SPEIER, Ms. RICHARDSON, Mr. SCHIFF, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Mr. HONDA, Mr. WOLF, Mr. PETERS, Mr. DENT, Ms. CHU, Mr. BERMAN, Mr. FRANKS of Arizona, Ms. JACKSON LEE of Texas, Ms. SCHWARTZ, Mr. BRALEY of Iowa, and Mr. MCGOVERN) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs

RESOLUTION

Welcoming His Holiness, Hadhrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad, the worldwide spiritual and administrative head of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, to Washington, DC, and recognizing his commitment to world peace, justice, non-violence, human rights, religious freedom, and democracy.

Whereas, from June 16, 2012, to July 2, 2012, His Holiness, Hadhrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad, the worldwide spiritual and administrative head of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, an international religious organization with millions of members across the globe, is making a historic visit to the United States;

Whereas His Holiness was elected to become fifth Khalifa to Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, a lifelong position, on April 22, 2003;

Whereas His Holiness is a leading Muslim figure promoting peace, who in his sermons, lectures, books, and personal meetings has continually advocated the Ahmadiyya values of service to humanity, universal human rights, and a peaceful and just society;

Whereas the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community has suffered repeated hardships, including discrimination, persecution, and violence;

Whereas, on May 28, 2010, 86 Ahmadi Muslims were killed in Lahore, Pakistan, when two mosques belonging to the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community were attacked by anti-Ahmadiyya terrorists;

Whereas despite the continued sectarian persecution that Ahmadi Muslims are subjected to, His Holiness continues to forbid violence;

Whereas, on the morning of June 27, 2012, His Holiness will deliver the keynote address at a special bipartisan reception at the Rayburn House Office Building on Capitol Hill, "The Path to Peace: Just Relations Between Nations": Now, therefore, be it

- 1 *Resolved*, That the House of Representatives—
- 2 (1) welcomes His Holiness, Mirza Masroor
- 3 Ahmad to Washington, DC;
- 4 (2) commends His Holiness for promoting indi-
- 5 vidual and world peace, as well as individual and
- 6 world justice; and
- 7 (3) commends His Holiness for his perseverance
- 8 in counseling Ahmadi Muslims to eschew any form
- 9 of violence, even in the face of severe persecution.

Extracts from others speeches

U.S. Senator Robert Casey (Democrat from Pennsylvania)

First of all, I want to express gratitude for the privilege to be appearing before His Holiness and this assemblage. We are very honoured that you are here. You brought the House and Senate together. We should have you here more often. Thank you for your leadership, example and demonstrated commitment to tolerance, justice and peace . . . I can't help but think of the example of William Penn centuries ago. He came to found a tolerant settlement, which is now Pennsylvania. We are grateful for you and draw inspiration from you and your work and from the work of your followers not only here in the U.S. but around the world.



U.S. Congressman Keith Ellison (Democrat from Minnesota)

Assalamo Alaikum. It means peace. It's the same thing that Jesus would say. I want to thank Your Holiness for being here and welcome you to the Capitol. I'd like to just point that it's not in every country in the world that the Ahmadiyya have been able to operate so freely as they do here . . . There are precious few countries where all people can practice their faith . . . America may be the country where it's the freest to practice Islam in the world . . . In America, all seek the divine as they choose . . . There are different ways to be Muslims – but all Muslim. We're honoured by your presence. I also want to thank you because under your leadership the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community has been a true blessing for us here in the U.S. Only a few months ago, I sat in the Cannon Building and rolled up my sleeves so I can give blood in a programme called "Muslims for Life" on 9/11 . . . The Community has been building schools and is a true asset to the community. I also want to thank my colleagues in the House who are here today – too numerous to name – that's a good thing. We value religious diversity, your community and your leadership. Thank you.



U.S. Congressman Brad Sherman (Democrat from California)

Assalamo Alaikum. I want to welcome His Holiness, Hadhrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad, the worldwide spiritual leader of Ahmadiyya Muslim Community. I know this is his first time to visit Congress, and we welcome him. We value his commitment to world peace, brotherhood, justice and religious freedom. I've interacted with members of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, and I'm struck by their dedication and passion and the respect and admiration they have for their spiritual leader. I'm pleased to join so many leaders from the House of Representatives to introduce a resolution from House floor to recognise His Holiness' visit to the United States. The Ahmadiyya Muslim Community was founded in 1889, and it has grown to tens of thousands of adherents in the U.S. and tens of millions worldwide. It is a model for community service in both word and deed. I had a chance to discuss this with His Holiness in a meeting before this larger reception. His decision to have 'Muslims for Life' to honor the victims of 9/11 by collecting 12,000 units of blood demonstrated dedication to life and a respect for what happened to this country. There's only one greater joy than welcoming His Holiness to D.C. and that is to welcome him to Los Angeles someday . . . The Ahmadiyya Muslim Community's motto, "Love for all and hatred for none," speaks volumes to the Community's commitment to dialogue, harmony and tolerance.



Dr. Katrina Lantos Swett (Chairperson for the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom)

It is a truly an honour and great pleasure to be here. I have to say that there is a particular sense of blessings that seems to rest on this brimming room today, and I am sure that this is due in part to the wonderful spirit of goodwill, the warm hearts and a sense of optimism and love of participants, but Your Holiness, it is undoubtedly a reflection of the blessings that you bring to this Capitol. So we are honoured and so grateful for you being here today.



Founded in India in 1889, the Ahmadiyya is a peaceful, reformist movement claiming tens of millions of adherents worldwide. While its members oppose violence and support freedom for others, they often face severe violence and other violations of their own freedom.

In Pakistan, the constitution labels them "non-Muslims." For more than a quarter century, Pakistan's government has barred the community from calling its own worship centres "mosques," publicly uttering the traditional Islamic greeting or quoting from the Qur'an, and displaying Islam's basic affirmation.

Throughout Pakistan, Ahmadiyya are prohibited from sharing their faith with others or publishing or disseminating their own material. They are restricted from building houses of worship and holding public gatherings. And since they must register as non-Muslims to vote, Ahmadiyya who insist they are Muslims are effectively disenfranchised.

Coupled with Pakistan's blasphemy laws which affect every faith community, these laws have helped foster a climate of violence against Ahmadiyya members. The terrible attack on two of their mosques in Lahore in May of 2010, killing nearly 100 people, was but one example.

Unfortunately, Pakistan isn't the only country which violates freedom of religion for Ahmadiyya.

In Indonesia, since June 2008, the government has seriously limited Ahmadiyya activity to private worship and prohibited members from telling others about their faith. Since that time, at least 50 Ahmadiyya mosques have been vandalised and 36 mosques and meeting places shut down. In parts of East and West Java and elsewhere, extremist religious groups consider any Ahmadiyya activity "proselytising" and pressure local officials to close places of worship or ban Ahmadiyya activity altogether.

In Saudi Arabia, Ahmadiyya members have been deported for their beliefs. In Egypt, they have been charged under its blasphemy laws. In 2010, USCIRF's intervention helped a number of members leave Egypt for safety abroad.

The Ahmadiyya message includes a positive call for world harmony and liberty. It points beyond today's sufferings to tomorrow's hopes and possibilities.

Nonetheless, we who believe in peace and freedom must shine the spotlight on these sufferings. So what can we do?

First, we must realise that the same societies that violate the religious freedom of Ahmadiyya abuse the rights of others. As USCIRF has documented, where Ahmadiyya suffer, Hindus and Christians, Sikhs and Baha'is, Shi'a and other Muslims, often are persecuted as well.

Second, in order to protect the rights of all, including the Ahmadiyya, we who are in Washington must make religious freedom a truly compelling foreign policy priority, woven into every aspect of our relationships with other countries.

Finally, the United States should confront governments which target the Ahmadiyya. It should urge Pakistan to amend its constitution and rescind all anti-Ahmadiyya laws. It should encourage Indonesia to overturn its 2008 decree and all provincial bans against Ahmadiyya practice. It should press both governments to investigate acts of violence thoroughly and prosecute perpetrators vigorously. And until Pakistan is serious about reform, USCIRF believes that it qualifies as a “country of particular concern” as a severe religious freedom abuser.

The rights of people everywhere to think as they please, believe or not believe as they wish, peacefully practice their beliefs, and express them publicly without fear or intimidation are inviolable. We are proud to stand with the Ahmadiyya Community and proclaim together that these and other freedoms are the birthright of humanity.

U.S. Congressman Frank Wolf (Republican from Virginia)

I want to thank the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community here in the U.S. and around the world. I’m aware of the degree of difficulty that Ahmadis have had. I’ve seen the pictures of mosques where they are killed in Pakistan. I want to thank the Community for supporting a special envoy to advocate for religious minorities in Middle East. And I welcome His Holiness and thank you for your strong support for all human rights and religious freedom.



U.S. Congressman Mike Honda (Democrat from California)

I want to welcome His Holiness to Washington D.C. Last night, I had the honour of meeting his Holiness at the Ahmadiyya headquarters. We had a nice discussion about the power of education, the role of peace and diplomacy in foreign policy and the promotion of a peaceful Islam. This is the history and promise of our country that all can participate in this wonderful government . . . There are millions of Ahmadis who are part of the great American fabric. Ahmadis are teachers doctors, lawyers and businessmen . . . I want to acknowledge Majlis Khuddamul Ahmadiyya (Ahmadiyya Muslim youth group), of which I’m wearing their scarf as I had promised. In his book, ‘A Message of Peace,’ Mirza Ghulam Ahmad wrote in 1908: ‘The earth created by God provides a common floor for all people alike, and the sun moon and the stars are source of radiance and provide many benefits for all alike.’ This quote resonates with me as someone who served in the U.S. Peace Corps and who has been discriminated against . . . I hope you find safe harbour in our country so young people can develop leadership skills so that they can bring message of peace, freedom and harmony led by His Holiness.”



U.S. Congresswoman Zoe Lofgren (Democrat from California)

It’s wonderful to be here. And I’m pleased to welcome His Holiness. I’m introducing an official House of Representatives resolution welcoming His Holiness. A very large number of my colleagues have co-sponsored it, including all of the members here this morning. The Ahmadiyya was founded more than 100 years ago and you have built mosques, hospitals and schools and started an international charitable organization dedicated to disaster relief. Despite persecution, His Holiness has urged moderation, restraint and non-violence. In a few minutes, His Holiness will be speaking on ‘The Path to Peace – Just Relations Between Nations,’ but before he does, we wish to commend his commitment to peace, justice, humanity and offer him a sincere welcome and a copy of the resolution that we are introducing this very day.



“ You were persecuted for your beliefs, jailed for your faith, exiled from your homeland but refused to turn to bitterness and vengeance. You’re a leader with wisdom and compassion and a champion of non-violence and respect among faiths. ...

... You spoke out on violence and tolerance even among Muslims because calling for the destruction of churches and synagogues is a violation of human rights. Your have taken your campaign across our country — a voice of moderation and a drive for peace; it shows a clear and an unwavering loyalty to the U.S...

... These messages and actions reflect the strength of this Community and its commitment to our common humanity. ”

Nancy Pelosi

U.S. Democratic Leader Nancy Pelosi (Democrat from California)

Good morning Your Holiness. I join my colleagues with a strong bipartisan welcome to you to the capitol. I’m proud of Congresswoman Lofgren’s resolution to formalise this welcome. We are very blessed with a large population of American Muslims. There are more Muslims in America than there are Episcopalians in America. It is an honour to welcome you. Though a man of humble beginnings, your leadership has made you a figure of global prominence. You started as a teacher and now you’re a guide for millions of Muslims worldwide. You worked to help farmers in Ghana and now you are a force across borders and an asset to the developing world. You were persecuted for your beliefs, jailed for your faith, exiled from your homeland but refused to turn to bitterness and vengeance. You’re a leader with wisdom and compassion and a champion of non-violence and respect among faiths. You condemn terrorism no matter where and no matter whoever perpetrates it. You spoke out on violence and tolerance even among Muslims because calling for the destruction of churches and synagogues is a violation of human rights. Your have taken your campaign across our country — a voice of moderation and a drive for peace; it shows a clear and an unwavering loyalty to the U.S. And you do this by promoting life, with blood drives, and you are part of a Community that is about saving lives. These messages and actions reflect the strength of this Community and its commitment to our common humanity. You do this not because all of the people that you serve are Muslim; you do this because you are Muslim, and that is your value system — to promote peace, pursue justice, support human rights and secure the common good; to respect the dignity of fellow human beings and to embrace and build society rooted in equality, founded in pluralism and inspired by our beautiful diversity, which rests at the core of American success. These principles are critical and unbreakable threads in the fabric of American history and in the progress of America. Together, by striving to live up to these values, we can strive to realise the hopes of His Holiness that the peace of the world comes to be established before our very eyes. As we greet you on Capitol Hill, we take heed of your clarion call to action that: “We must all endeavor to spread love, affection and a sense of community.” From the halls of Congress to the neighbourhoods across our country to communities around globe, we must all remain dedicated to the mission of peace and to the cause of justice. We must strengthen our nation and our world through love and understanding.



Thank you for your leadership role and for being such a visionary and inspiration. It is an honour to be in the same room as you. Thank you for bringing us all together to honour you and the work you have led us in to build a better future. Thank you, Your Holiness.

List of attendees

1. U.S. Senator Robert Casey, Sr. (Democrat, Pennsylvania).
2. U.S. Senator John Cornyn (Republican, Texas).
3. Democratic Leader Nancy Pelosi (Democrat, California).
4. U.S. Congressman Keith Ellison (Democrat, Minnesota).
5. U.S. Congressman Brad Sherman (Democrat, California).
6. U.S. Congressman Frank Wolf (Republican, Virginia).
7. U.S. Congressman Mike Honda (Democrat, California).
8. U.S. Congressman Timothy Murphy (Republican, Pennsylvania).
9. U.S. Congresswoman Jeannette Schmidt (Republican, Ohio).
10. U.S. Congresswoman Janice Hahn (Democrat, California).
11. U.S. Congresswoman Janice Schakowsky (Democrat, Illinois).
12. U.S. Congresswoman Jackie Speier (Democrat, California).
13. U.S. Congresswoman Zoe Lofgren (Democrat, California).
14. U.S. Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee (Democrat, Texas).
15. U.S. Congressman Gary Peters (Democrat, Michigan).
16. U.S. Congressman Thomas Petri (Republican, Wisconsin).
17. U.S. Congressman Adam Schiff (Democrat, California).
18. U.S. Congressman Michael Capuano (Democrat, Massachusetts).
19. U.S. Congressman Howard Berman (Democrat, California).
20. U.S. Congresswoman Judy Chu (Democrat, California).
21. U.S. Congressman André Carson (Democrat, Indiana).
22. U.S. Congresswoman Laura Richardson (Democrat, California).
23. U.S. Congressman Lloyd Poe (Republican, Texas).
24. U.S. Congressman Barney Frank (Democrat, Massachusetts).
25. U.S. Congressman Bruce Braley (Democrat, Iowa).
26. U.S. Congressman Dennis Kucinich (Democrat, Ohio).
27. U.S. Congressman Trent Franks (Republican, Arizona).
28. U.S. Congressman Chris Murphy (Democrat, Connecticut).
29. U.S. Congressman Hank Johnson (Democrat, Georgia).
30. U.S. Congressman James Clyburn (Democrat, South Carolina).
31. His Excellency Bockari Kortu Stevens, Ambassador of Sierra Leone to the United States.
32. Dr. Katrina Lantos Swett, Chairwoman, United States Commission on International Religious Freedom.
33. Hon. Tim Kaine, Former Governor of Virginia.
34. Amb. Susan Burk, Special Representative of President Barack Obama for Nuclear Nonproliferation.
35. Amb. Suzan Johnson Cook, U.S. Ambassador at Large for International Religious Freedom.
36. Hon. Khaled Aljalahma, Deputy Chief of Mission, Embassy of the Kingdom of Bahrain to the United States.
37. Rev. Monsignor Jean-Francois Lantheaume, First Counselor (Deputy Chief of Mission), The Apostolic Nunciature of the Holy See to the United States.
38. Ms. Sara Al-Ojaili, Public Affairs/Liaison Officer, Embassy of the Sultanate of Oman to the United States.
39. Mr. Salim Al Kindie, First Secretary, Embassy of the Sultanate of Oman to the United States.
40. Ms. Fozia Fayyaz, Embassy of Pakistan to the United States.
41. Hon. Saida Zaid, Counselor, Embassy of Morocco to the United States.
42. Hon. Nabeel Munir, Minister-IV (Security Council), Pakistan Permanent Mission to the United Nations.
43. Hon. Josef Renggli, Minister-Counselor, Embassy of Switzerland to the United States.
44. Hon. Alyssa Ayres, Deputy Assistant Secretary for South and Central Asia, U.S. Department of State.
45. Amb. Karl Inderfurth, Senior Adviser and Wadhvani Chair in U.S.-India Policy Studies, Center for Strategic and International Studies.
46. Hon. Donald A. Camp, Senior Associate, Center for Strategic and International Studies.
47. Amb. Jackie Wolcott, Executive Director, U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom.
48. Dr. Azizah al-Hibri, Commissioner, U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom.
49. Mr. Isaiah Leggett, County Executive, Montgomery County, Maryland.
50. Ms. Victoria Alvarado, Director, Office of International Religious Freedom, U.S. Department of State.
51. Dr. Imad Dean Ahmad, Director, Minaret of Freedom Institute
52. Dr. Zainab Alwani, Assistant Professor of Islamic Studies, Howard University School of Divinity.
53. Ms. Deborah L. Benedict, Associate Counsel, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, Department of Homeland Security.
54. Ms. Lora Berg, Senior Adviser to Special Representative to Muslim Communities, U.S. Department of State.
55. Dr. Charles Butterworth, Professor (Emeritus) of Government and Politics, University of Maryland, College Park.
56. Father John Crossin, Executive Director for Secretariat for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops.
57. Major (Ret.) Franz Gayl, Senior Science Adviser, U.S. Marine Corps.
58. Dr. Sue Gurawadena-Vaughn, Director of International Religious Freedom and South East Asia Programs, Freedom House.
59. Mr. Frank Jannuzi, Head of Washington Office, Amnesty International USA.
60. Mr. T. Kumar, International Advocacy Director, Amnesty International USA.
61. George Leventhal, Member of the Montgomery County Council.
62. Mr. Amer Latif, Visiting Fellow, Wadhvani Chair in U.S.-India Policy Studies, Center for Strategic and International Studies.
63. Mr. Tim Lenderking, Director of Pakistan Desk Office, U.S. State Department.
64. Mr. Jalal Malik, International Affairs Officer, U.S. Army National Guard.
65. Mr. Naveed Malik, Foreign Service Officer, U.S. Department of State
66. Ms. Dalia Mogahed, Senior Analyst and Executive Director, Gallup Center for Muslim Studies.
67. Mr. Paul Monteiro, Associate Director, White House Office of Public Engagement.
68. Major General David Quantock, United States Army Provost General.
69. Ms. Tina Ramirez, Director of International and Government Relations, The Becket Fund
70. Rabbi David Saperstein, Director and Counsel, Religious Action Center for Reform Judaism.
71. Chaplain, Brigadier General Alphonse Stephenson, Director of the National Guard Bureau Office of the Chaplain.
72. Mr. Knox Thames, Director of Policy and Research, U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom.
73. Mr. Eric Treene, Special Counsel for Religious Discrimination, Civil Rights Division, U.S. Department of Justice.
74. Dr. Hassan Abbas, Professor; Regional and Analytical Studies Department, National Defense University.
75. Mr. Malik Siraj Akbar, Reagan-Fascell Fellow, National Endowment of Democracy.
76. Mr. Matthew K. Asada, Congressional Fellow to Rep. Gary Peters.
77. Ms. Stacy Burdett, Director of Government and National Affairs, Anti-Defamation League.
78. Ms. Elizabeth Cassidy, Deputy Director for Policy and Research, U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom.
79. Ms. Aimee Chiu, Director of Media, Communication, and Public Relations, American Islamic Congress.
80. Mr. Cornelius Cremin, Department of State, Bureau of



- Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, Acting Deputy Director and Foreign Affairs Officer for Pakistan.
81. Mr. Sadanand Dhume, Resident Fellow, American Enterprise Institute.
82. Dr. Richard Gathro, Dean of Nyack College, Washington D.C.
83. Mr. Joe Grieboski, Chairman, The Institute on Religion and Public Policy.
84. Ms. Sarah Grieboski, The Institute on Religion and Public Policy.
85. Dr. Max Gross, Adjunct Professor, Prince Alwaleed Bin Talal Center for Muslim-Christian Understanding, Georgetown University.
86. Dr. Riaz Haider, Clinical Professor of Medicine, George Washington University.
87. Ms. Huma Haque, Assistant Director, South Asia Center, Atlantic Council.
88. Mr. Jay Kansara, Associate Director, Hindu American Foundation.
89. Mr. Hamid Khan, Senior Program Officer, Rule of Law Center, U.S. Institute for Peace.
90. Ms. Valerie Kirkpatrick, Associate for Refugees and U.S. Advocacy, Human Rights Watch.
91. Mr. Alex Kronemer, Unity Productions.
92. Mr. Paul Liben, Executive Writer, U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom.
93. Ms. Amy Lillis, Foreign Affairs Officer, U.S. Department of State.
94. Mr. Graham Mason, Legislative Assistant to Rep. Allyson Schwartz.
95. Ms. Lauren Markoe, Religion News Service.
96. Mr. Dan Merica, CNN.com.
97. Mr. Joseph V. Montville, Senior Associate, Merrimack College Center for the Study of Jewish-Christian-Muslim Relations.
98. Mr. Aaron Myers, Program Officer, Freedom House.
99. Ms. Attia Nasar, Regional Coordinating Officer, U.S. Department of State.
100. Ms. Melanie Nezer, Senior Director, US Policy and Advocacy, HIAS.
101. Dr. Elliott Parris, Bowie State University.
102. Mr. John Pinna, Director of Government and International Relations, American Islamic Congress.
103. Mr. Arif Rafiq, Adjunct Scholar, Middle East Institute.
104. Ms. Maya Rajaratnam, Amnesty International.
105. Ms. Rachel Sauer, Foreign Affairs Officer, U.S. Department of State.
106. Dr. Jerome Schiele, Dean of College of Professional Studies, Bowie State University.
107. Ms. Samantha Schnitzer, Staff, United States Commission on International Religious Freedom.
108. Dr. Mary Hope Schwobel, Senior Program Officer, Academy for International Conflict Management and Peacebuilding, U.S. Institute for Peace.
109. Ms. Sarah Schlesinger, International and Government Relations Associate, The Becket Fund.
110. Dr. Frank Sellin, Kyrgyzstan Desk Officer, U.S. Department of State.
111. Ms. Anna-Lee Stangl, Christian Solidarity Worldwide.
112. Ms. Kalinda Stephenson, Professional Staff, Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission.
113. Mr. Jordan Tama, Lead Democratic Staffer, Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission.
114. Mr. Shaun Tandon, Associated Foreign Press.
115. Dr. Wilhelmus Valkenberg, Professor of Religion and Culture, The Catholic University of America.
116. Mr. Anthony Vance, Director of External Affairs, Baha'is of the United States.
117. Mr. Jihad Saleh Williams, Government Affairs Representative, Islamic Relief USA.
118. Ms. Amelia Wang, Chief of Staff to Congresswoman Judy Chu.
119. Ms. Moh Sharma, Legislative Fellow to Congresswoman Judy Chu.

Loyalty

Freedom

Equality

Respect

Peace



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