



British MP challenges PM-in-Waiting of Pakistan to end religious persecution

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THE Prime Minister-in-Waiting of Pakistan, Imran Khan, has been challenged to end the persecution of religious minorities. The challenge came from a British MP addressing a gathering of 35,000 Ahmadiyya Muslims, in Hampshire, last weekend.

The Liberal Democrat MP for Kingston and Surbiton, Sir Ed Davey, told the Jalsa Salana, a three-day gathering of 35,000 Ahmadiyya Muslims from more than 100 countries, held at Oaklands Farm, Alton, that Mr Khan had “huge responsibilities”.

“You now have the chance to reduce and end the persecution and discrimination against religious minorities in your country,” he said, addressing Mr Khan. “Not just Ahmadiyya Muslims, but Christians and people of faith from other groups. . . You cannot be a friend of the Taliban in Pakistan and come to Britain and pretend to be a liberal.”

The Pakistani constitution prohibits Ahmadiyyas from calling themselves Muslims, or referring to their places of worship as mosques. The United States Commission on International Religious Freedom has accused the Pakistani government of perpetrating “systematic, ongoing, egregious religious-freedom violations”, including “abusive enforcement of the country’s strict blasphemy laws”.

Mr Khan has undertaken to uphold and defend blasphemy laws (News, 25 July).

Nine “Principles of Peace” were presented at the Jalsa Salana.

The Caliph of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, Hazrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad, told the gathering: “Instead of only blaming Muslims for the global disorder, the world’s major powers should also take a step back and look at themselves. Rather than publicity-seeking politicians’ stating their intentions to ban Muslims from entering their nations, the world needs leaders who are sincere in their efforts to bridge the differences that divide us.”

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