

Eid-ul-Adha 2019: Lord Ahmad's message

As Muslims in Britain and around the world come together to celebrate Eid, I wish you all Eid-ul-Adha Mubarak. Islam, like all religions, is part of what defines the fabric of modern Britain, and its rich tapestry of faiths and beliefs. It is a living reminder of one of the great things about our country, where freedom, tolerance and the rule of law are at the heart of our democracy.

As the UK's Special Envoy for Freedom of Religion or Belief I am committed to defending and promoting these values across the globe. As we celebrate this happy occasion, let us remember those marking it in countries experiencing conflict and insecurity.

The British Government will continue to work with governments, faith groups and others to ensure the safety and security of all who wish to practise their faith or belief.

10,000 extra prison places to keep the public safe

- 10,000 additional prison places
- First new prison at HMP Full Sutton

Up to £2.5 billion will be spent on creating modern, efficient prisons, the Prime Minister announced today (11 August 2019).

The programme – part of a wider crack-down on crime – will create 10,000 additional prison places.

The first new prison will be built at HMP Full Sutton, alongside the already well-performing maximum-security jail in operation at the site. This, along with further building works, will be subject to government working through the best-value-for-money options.

The 10,000 places will be in addition to the new prisons that have already been announced, at Wellingborough and Glen Parva, which will provide 3,360 places by 2023. The new funding will also be used to bring previously decommissioned prison places back into use through extensive refurbishment and maintenance work.

This major investment builds upon the Prime Minister's commitment to recruit 20,000 more frontline police officers over the next 3 years – to protect the public and cut crime.

Ensuring prisons have sufficient capacity to hold the additional offenders who will be caught, charged and sentenced is a crucial part of the government's effort to create a more effective justice system.

Modern prisons also provide better opportunities to reform criminals. Reoffending costs society £18 billion a year and accounts for three-quarters of all crime that is cautioned or sentenced. Newer prisons are also more efficient to run and benefit the taxpayer in the longer term.

This prison modernisation will complement our previously announced reforms to probation. These will ensure the improved monitoring of those released from jail, while providing more effective services and treatment to steer offenders away from criminality.

Justice Secretary, Rt Hon Robert Buckland QC MP, said:

The Prime Minister is putting prisons at the heart of our bold plan to create a justice system which cuts crime and protects law-abiding people. More and better prison places means less re-offending and a lower burden on the taxpayer in the future.

Boris's vision for policing shows this Government is serious about fighting crime. It is vital we have a world-leading prison estate to keep criminals off our streets and turn them into law-abiding citizens when they have paid their debt to society.

Modern jails are best-placed to achieve that and will provide us with crucial stability in our prison estate for many years to come so we can keep criminals behind bars, rehabilitate them, and better protect the public.

The long-term building programme will reduce overcrowding and create a modern, efficient estate that is sustainable into the future.

Ageing prisons are expensive to run and maintain, and are less effective at promoting rehabilitation and ultimately cutting crime.

Tomorrow (12 August 2019) the Prime Minister will host leaders from the police, probation and prison sectors at Downing Street to discuss how to cut crime and improve the criminal justice system.

Notes to editors

This announcement relates to England and Wales. The Scottish Government and Northern Ireland administration will receive consequential funding through the Barnett Formula, which will be applied in the usual way at the Spending Round. It will be for the Scottish Government and Northern Ireland administration to decide how to allocate this funding across their devolved responsibilities.

[Response to Sunday Times story about A level grades](#)

Statement in relation to misleading story ahead of A level results.

[Response to Sunday Times story about A level grades](#)

Today's Sunday Times (11 August 2019) contains an article about A level grades that fundamentally misrepresents research conducted by Ofqual. Our report that is cited is not a commentary about whether grades awarded to students are 'right' or 'wrong'. Rather, it considers the implications of there not being a single, right mark for every answer given in every subject, particularly those involving essay writing. This is not new, the issue has existed as long as qualifications have been marked and graded. On that basis, more than one grade could well be a legitimate reflection of a student's performance and they would both be a sound estimate of that student's ability at that point in time based on the available evidence from the assessment they have undertaken.

We take the quality of marking of GCSEs, AS and A levels very seriously. It is recognised that the quality of marking in England is amongst the best in the world. However, we are not complacent and we are committed to working with others in the sector to make marking in every subject the very best it can be. Students, schools and colleges can be assured that the A level results that are awarded are an accurate reflection of their work over the past two years. And if there are instances of marking errors, these can and should be corrected through the normal review process. Universities, employers and others who rely on these qualifications can be confident that this week's results will provide a fair assessment of a student's knowledge and skills.

[Government lifts emergency stop and search restrictions](#)

A stop and search pilot has today been rolled out to all 43 forces in England and Wales