

UK to champion importance of freedom of religion or belief at global conference

- The UK will host over 600 faith, belief, government and civil society leaders from 100 countries in London on July 5 and 6 to call for more action to protect the freedom of religion or belief (FoRB) around the world.
- Foreign Secretary Liz Truss will call out abuses, including in China, Nigeria and Afghanistan, and say religion is “collateral damage” in Russia’s invasion of Ukraine.
- The UK will announce £500,000 of funding to support everyone’s “fundamental freedom” to follow a religion or belief.

The UK will today (Tuesday 5 July) welcome faith, belief, government and civil society leaders from around the world to London to boost efforts to promote freedom of religion or belief (FoRB) internationally.

In a speech at the QEII Centre, Foreign Secretary Liz Truss will say FoRB is a “fundamental freedom” like free speech or democracy.

More than 80% of the world’s population live in countries where FoRB is under threat.

The Foreign Secretary will call out the “appalling persecution of the Jewish community over centuries”, China’s targeting of Uyghur Muslims in the Xinjiang region, the persecution of Christians in Nigeria and the plight of minorities in Afghanistan.

Ms Truss is expected to say:

The freedom to believe, to pray and commit acts of worship is a fundamental human freedom and has been one since the dawn of time. Societies that allow their people to believe are better and ultimately more successful.

This fundamental right is covered in the very first clause of Magna Carta and Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

She will respond to Russia’s invasion of Ukraine and the impact it has on people’s ability to practice their faith or belief addressing an audience that will include a Ukrainian delegation, telling them the UK will not rest until “your people are free to live, believe and thrive”. She will add:

Vladimir Putin and his enablers think Russia is waging a holy war, but in truth nothing is sacred. We are seeing growing evidence of

heinous war crimes committed by Russian troops.

Innocent civilians are having to shelter from Russia's indiscriminate bombardment in places of worship. Churches, synagogues, and mosques have been reduced to rubble. Religion is proving to be collateral damage from Putin's aggression.

Opening the conference, His Royal Highness The Prince of Wales will say in a recorded statement:

Freedom of conscience, of thought and of belief is central to any truly flourishing society. It allows people to contribute to their communities without fear of exclusion, to exchange ideas without fear of prejudice, and to build relationships without fear of rejection.

A society where difference is respected, where it is accepted that all need not think alike, will benefit from the talents of all of its members.

The Prince of Wales will describe the "tragic paradox" of people with strong belief disrespecting others, and he will use the opportunity to urge delegates to "take us closer to our goal" of FoRB for everyone, everywhere.

The conference will showcase practical actions on how to achieve FoRB for all. This includes developing early warning systems, building more resilient societies, tackling online harm and discrimination, strengthening human rights education, and encouraging media freedom.

Speakers will include the Most Rev and Rt Hon Justin Welby, Archbishop of Canterbury, Chief Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis, Islamic Scholar Sheikh Abdallah Bin-bayyah and Archbishop Bashar Warda of the Chaldean Catholic church in Erbil, Iraq.

The UK will also announce today £200,000 in new support for the protection and promotion of FoRB. This will fund awareness campaigns, community programmes and support conflict prevention, as well as providing direct assistance to those facing discrimination based on religion or belief

The UK will pledge another £300,000 to provide British legal expertise to countries where FoRB is under pressure. This support will ensure governments and advocates have a better understanding of the legal steps they can take to implement lasting and legislative change in their country.

Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Minister Lord Tariq Ahmad of Wimbledon said:

The international community shares a collective responsibility to ensure freedom of religion or belief for everyone, everywhere. Too

many people around the world are denied access to this fundamental human right, persecuted, or indeed tragically killed simply because of their faith I look forward to welcoming partners from around the world to London to help drive collective action in defending everyone's right to freedom of religion or belief.

UK Special Envoy for Freedom of Religion or Belief Fiona Bruce, (FoRB) said:

I am delighted that the UK is hosting the International Ministerial Conference in London this week. This is an important opportunity to share best practice and strengthen international alliances, such as the International Religious Freedom or Belief Alliance (IRFBA), which I am chairing this year. We need greater collective action to ensure the right to freedom of religion or belief is protected for everyone, everywhere.

ENDS

[Technical Advisory Board appointments 2021/2022](#)

News story

Appointment of new members to the Technical Advisory Board (TAB) and reappointment of TAB Chair.



Following a recent open and fair recruitment exercise, conducted in line with the Governance Code on Public Appointments, the Home Secretary has appointed the below individuals as members of the Technical Advisory Board (TAB) as industry and independent representatives for a period of 3 years.

Industry members

- Alex Leadbeater (from 1 September 2021)
- Neil Brown (from 10 January 2022)
- Adrian Gorham (from 10 January 2022)
- Nicola Pierce (from 10 January 2022)
- Chris Diggins (from 1 March 2022)

Independent members

The Home Secretary has also agreed to reappoint the current independent Chair, Jonathan Hoyle, for a third term of 3 years from 1 May 2021, in line with the Governance Code on Public Appointments.

The TAB is a non-departmental public body which was established under the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 and whose remit was expanded under the Investigatory Powers Act 2016.

The TAB has 2 main duties:

- to consider the technical requirements and the financial consequences of a notice that is to be imposed upon a telecommunications operator (T0)
- to provide advice to the Secretary of State if the T0 seeks a review of the notice

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[Official shortlist announced to choose home of Great British Railways](#)

Today (5 July 2022), I am announcing the shortlist of the most suitable potential locations for the national headquarters of Great British Railways (GBR), which will go forward to a consultative public vote to be held online and by post.

The confirmed list of shortlisted towns and cities is:

- Birmingham
- Crewe
- Derby
- Doncaster
- Newcastle upon Tyne
- York

I announced on 4 October 2021 that a competition would be run to identify the headquarters for GBR, to be located outside of London. This was launched on 5 February 2022 and was overseen by the GBR Transition Team (GBRTT). Prospective local authorities were asked to submit a short expression of interest to GBRTT by Wednesday 16 March.

GBRTT received 42 applications and has analysed their suitability against the published set of criteria for the national headquarters. The selection criteria are:

- alignment to Levelling Up principles
- connected and easy to get to
- opportunities for GBR
- value for money
- railway heritage and links to the network
- public support

GBRTT will launch [a public vote](#) today that will give the public the opportunity to express their views. The vote is consultative and will be used to test public support for each shortlisted location, allowing the people that the railway serves the chance to have their say.

Ministers will then make a final decision on the headquarters' location based on all information gathered and against the above criteria, with a final decision expected later in the year.

The new national GBR headquarters will be supported by a number of new regional headquarters across the country, putting decision-making and investment at the heart of communities that use those railways day to day.

The government is committed to levelling up, delivering jobs and investment beyond the capital.

The national headquarters will be at the heart of the rail network and provide strategic direction for the running of GBR. Based outside of London, it will bring a number of high-skilled jobs to the winning location.

Recruitment Vacancy – Biological

Assessor

News story

Details of a recruitment vacancy in our Biologicals Section



This exciting and interesting job put you at the heart of the important work of the VMD's Biologicals Section, principally in the following areas: scientific evaluation of data packages, authorisation of novel medicines, review of scientific and regulatory guidelines and our international profile.

Job Title

Biological Assessor in the Biologicals Section

Grade

G7

Salary & Pension

£52,289 – £60,188 per annum with Pension Scheme

Annual Leave entitlement

Commencing at 25 days

Role

You will provide expertise within the biological/immunological veterinary medicine areas and be responsible for the assessment of quality, safety and efficacy data and benefit:risk of applications for:

- new marketing authorisations for biological and immunological veterinary medicinal products
- variations to existing marketing authorisations

- animal test certificates to conduct clinical field trials

How to apply

You must make your application via the [Civil Service Jobs website](#)

Closing Date

1st August 2022

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100th Session of the Executive Council of the OPCW

Ambassador Atiyah, Mr Chair, many congratulations on taking up your new role. The United Kingdom welcomes all the new members of the Executive Council.

In April and May, we marked the twenty-fifth anniversary of the entry into force of the Chemical Weapons Convention. In that time the OPCW has achieved the near elimination of declared chemical weapons stockpiles and supported capacity-building efforts around the world. The Convention is bringing us closer to the goal of a world free of chemical weapons and we pay tribute to the Director General and his staff.

However, the 100th Session of the Executive Council takes place during a particularly dark period. The United Kingdom restates our condemnation of the Russian Federation's unprovoked and barbaric military assault on Ukraine, a sovereign and democratic state. The Russian government's reprehensible actions are an egregious violation of international law and the UN Charter.

Mr Chair,

We must also acknowledge that chemical weapons remain a potent threat. We have witnessed their use by the Russian state in Salisbury and in Russia against Alexey Navalny.

International investigations have so far confirmed eight separate occasions of chemical weapons use in Syria by Asad regime forces. This is an appalling record of attacks against the Syrian people. The United Kingdom will continue to press for accountability.

Syria's obstruction of the work of the Technical Secretariat and the disinformation it helps spread are deeply concerning. But the facts are clear and the OPCW has shown that it will act when states are found to have

breached their legal obligations.

Syria must take the necessary steps to come into compliance with the Convention. That includes making a full declaration of its chemical weapons programme and complying in full with relevant Decisions of this Council as well as United Nations Security Council Resolution 2118.

Mr Chair,

Despite the damaging record of a few, an overwhelming majority of States Parties remain determined to ensure the success of the Chemical Weapons Convention. The Fifth Review Conference offers an opportunity to chart the way ahead, and ensure the Convention delivers for the next twenty-five years and beyond. We look forward to an open and inclusive process of preparation for the Review Conference, under the able Chairmanship of Ambassador Kuusing.

As we prepare for the Review Conference next May, the United Kingdom is looking forward to discussions with other States Parties on a range of issues.

Firstly, ensuring the verification regime is fit for the next twenty-five years and beyond.

Secondly, strengthening capacity-building efforts in support of full implementation of the Convention.

Thirdly, making sure the OPCW is ready to respond to new threats from State and non-State actors, seeking universality, and tackling re-emergence.

Fourthly, helping maintain the Technical Secretariat as an effective implementing body, with diverse, expert and high performing staff.

The new Centre for Chemistry and Technology will underpin delivery of all of these goals and the United Kingdom is proud to support this important project.

Mr Chair,

In challenging economic times, it is important that the OPCW has the resources it needs to deliver its mandate. We are pleased to have just finalised a voluntary contribution of 500,000 pounds from the UK's Conflict, Stability and Security Fund. This will help deliver capacity-building programmes in Africa, protective assistance in Ukraine, and support to national laboratories in Africa and Latin America.

We are also pleased to see more observers able to take part in Executive Council meetings again and look forward to the full resumption of OPCW inspections and training programmes around the world.

Thank you, Mr Chair.