

PRESS RELEASE

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For immediate Release

25,000 gathering + Millions around the world will watch live on Satellite TV

Britain's Largest Islamic Convention

Hadhrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad, who in April 2003 became the 5th Supreme Head of the Worldwide Ahmadiyya Muslim Community and is now based in West London, will host his 1st – and the UK's 37th – Ahmadiyya Muslim Annual Convention (Jalsa Salana). The Convention will be held on Friday 25th July to Sunday 27th July but its impact on the services in London's transport systems and Tourist industry will begin a week early and end a week later. Thousands of British Muslims from Ireland, Scotland, Wales and all the Shires of Britain (from about 80 towns and cities) will converge on a few acres of English countryside. And, thousands more will arrive from about 50 Countries.

Mr Rafiq Ahmed Hayat – National Amir UK said:

“The themes and debates this year will include concerns with how Muslims in the West manage their Islamic way of life in the midst of different cultures that exert many pressures and restrictions on their way of life.”

The Convention will address the following key issues:

- How British Muslims should engage in all aspects of British society
- How to work with others to redress negative perceptions of Islam and Muslims
- What needs to be done to promote inter-faith understanding and peace
- What moral issues do Muslims in UK face
- How to eradicate the misuse of Jihad concept

In the main arena, Hazrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad will address on all three days, and a number of scholars from Britain and around the world will deliver research articles. The Convention is attended by Ministers and MPs from UK and other countries, Mayors from many cities, diplomats, councilors and scholars etc.

Venue: Islamabad, Tilford (near Farnham), Surrey, UK
Event Dates: Friday 25th to Sunday 27th July 2003

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NOTE TO NEWSDESKS

The Ahmadiyya Muslim Community was founded by Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad in Qadian, India, in March 1889. He claimed to be the Promised Messiah 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. Arriving on British soil in 1913, it opened its first mosque in Putney, London in 1924 that is now a cultural landmark of London. The community is now erecting one of Europe's largest mosques in Morden, Surrey, due to be opened in October 2003.

The 4th successor to Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad passed away in London on 19th April 2003. Hadhrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad, the current leader of the Community became the 5th successor on 22nd April 2003. The current Amir UK (National President) 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 wholly rejects the concept of Jihad 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.

Ahmadiyya Muslims number 200 million worldwide. With 20 million accepting the faith in 2002, it is the fastest growing religious community of Islam in the world. UK Jalsa Salana is the largest annual gathering of Muslims in the country. The 37th Jalsa Salana is expected to attract 25,000 Muslims from 80 cities across the UK and 50 countries around the world. The proceedings will be seen live by further millions worldwide on MTA International, the Community's own 24-hour multi-language satellite TV (in UK/Europe on Sky Digital channel 807). A local FM radio station will be set up especially for the event.

The Event is organized in a small Surrey Village, Tilford. Participation is by advance invitation only. Special arrangements have been made for Press and Media without cost or charges but, to facilitate passage through security gates, the Press Secretary must be informed before arrival (Mobile +44 7703 483 384). Written material on the teaching, history and background is available on request. There will be further releases and post event reports, video footage and pictures available.