



MEDIA RELEASE

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MIDLANDS INTERFAITH CONFERENCE

The Government's new Minister for Faith, Lord Khan of Burnley, will address an evening conference of inter-faith activists at Coventry University on Tuesday 12th November.

Lord Khan is set to highlight the role the Midlands has played in encouraging and promoting inter-faith, as well as reflecting upon the discussions he has had with various faith leaders since taking his position in government earlier this year. He will share his learnings and discuss how we can all move forward to build stronger inter-faith relations and communities.

The 'Midlands Interfaith Conference' is designed to re-energise inter-faith activity in the East and West Midlands. As in other parts of the country, those working on dialogue and social action involving different faith groups have been demoralised by factors including the closure of the Inter Faith Network for the UK, following cancellation of its funding earlier this year.

The situation in the Middle East and the unrest in British cities during the autumn have also left inter-faith groups reeling. One activist said: "Some who've spent years working in interfaith have stepped away. It's too fraught, the fault lines are too volatile, and the danger of personal blowback is too great."

The Midlands Interfaith Conference has been organised by the United Religions Initiative UK, a registered charity which acts as a platform for a variety of multi-faith projects. It is part of the international United Religions Initiative, a movement of around 1,200 grassroots multi-faith groups across 113 countries.

Aside from the Minister, speakers will include Thought for the Day regular Julie Siddiqi; Rabbi Michael Hilton, Scholar in Residence at London's Liberal Jewish Synagogue; and the Dean of Coventry Cathedral.

The conference will feature an Interfaith Fair where local and national inter-faith bodies will showcase their activities. It will be preceded by a workshop for young adults, where they will be trained in practical ways to address issues like online hate in a proactive, multi-faith way.

URI UK Chair, Deepak Naik MBE, said: “There was a clear demand for an event that would bring inter-faith activists, public sector organisations and others together, to begin the work of rebuilding trust and partnerships between people of different faiths in our region. I am delighted that, with the help of the National Lottery Community Fund, URI UK was able to make it happen.”

Around 90 interfaith activists are expected to attend the conference, but places are still available for journalists or activists. Please email URI UK Trustee Warwick Hawkins at warwick@faithinsociety.org.uk to register.

Note for Editors

The URI is a global network with over 1,150 member grassroots groups (“Cooperation Circles”) in 110 countries. URI Europe has more than 60 Cooperation Circles across 25 countries. These are actively engaged in youth and women empowerment, environmental protection, promoting freedom of religion and belief, and fostering multifaith cooperation to address social issues.

The visit to the UK comes at a time of significant global challenges. It intends to bring fresh perspectives to the UK interfaith landscape and enhance URI UK’s mission of promoting enduring daily interfaith cooperation, ending religiously motivated violence, and creating peace, justice, and healing cultures. More information on URI is at <https://www.uri.org>.

URI UK is a registered charity that pursues URI’s global aims within the UK context. Its objectives are:

- To build peace and understanding between people of different religions and cultures
- To focus as much on social action projects (bringing people together by doing positive work in our communities) as on dialogue – the two are complementary
- To work with all who share its values, such as places of worship, youth groups and community activists
- To welcome people from any background and of all faiths or none

For more information:

Warwick Hawkins MBE

warwick@faithinsociety.org.uk or 07747 612327