

Major community iftar held by ministers at Lancaster House

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Community leaders have been welcomed by ministers to a major inter-faith iftar celebrating Muslim contributions to British society at Lancaster House in London.

More than 180 people from across the UK heard speeches, viewed exhibitions and ate together at a Ramadan event (4 March), held by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, and the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office.

The joint reception celebrated the economic, social, cultural and civic contributions of British Muslim communities. It reinforced the government's commitment to meaningful engagement with faith and diaspora communities, and diplomatic partners.

The event was hosted by the Communities Secretary Steve Reed, Faith and Communities Minister Miatta Fahnbulleh, and Foreign Office Ministers Hamish Falconer and Seema Malhotra, who acknowledged it was a worrying time for communities due to the situation in the Middle East.

Attendees included a range of community and faith leaders, including those from various faith and belief communities, as well as youth representatives, cultural figures, parliamentarians, and ambassadors.

Speaking at the event, the Communities Secretary Steve Reed said:

Today, the United Kingdom is home to one of the most diverse Muslim communities in the world and British Muslims continue to play a huge role in shaping so much of our shared national life.

Nights like tonight really matter. They give us a moment to pause, to come together, and to think about the things that shape our lives. The values of Ramadan speak to all of us, no matter who we are or what we believe.

Minister for Faith, Devolution and Communities, Miatta Fahnbulleh said:

"Events like this matter because building cohesion happens on the ground, in our communities, through the relationships we build with faith leaders and organisations. That is exactly what this event is about — coming together, listening, and reaffirming that British Muslims are an integral and valued part of this country.

Ramadan has become part of the fabric of life in Britain – and it was a privilege to be at Lancaster House, to break fast, and celebrate the vital contribution British Muslims up

and down the country make to our society.

Minister for the Middle East, Hamish Falconer said:

Ramadan is a time for reflection and reminds us of the shared values that unite us all.

I know from speaking to people across the Middle East how difficult this past week has been for so many, especially during what is the holiest month for Muslims. Last night's Iftar reception stands as an important symbol of hope and peace during troubling times, and an opportunity to bring communities together to celebrate British Muslims breaking fast.

Sajda Shah, awarded MBE in December 2025 for services to community development, said:

Tonight, we were reminded that committed leadership, trust, and strong relationships are our greatest assets.

That is the work ahead. And it is work we must put our weight behind with a real sense of purpose, resolve and drive.

Exhibitions were arranged at the event to highlight Muslims' historic contribution to Britain. This including British war artist Arabella Dorman's 'Great Faith', which captures the portraits of 80 Muslim servicemen and women, from veterans of the World Wars to those serving today - who stood for Britain.

Also included was the exhibition "Pioneers" by the Muslims in Rail network which highlights the contributions of Muslim staff in the reconstruction of Britain's railways in the decades following the Second World War.

And the National Archives provided an original exhibit about Noor Inayat Khan - a British spy who served in the Second World War and who was the first female wireless operator to be sent to France to help the resistance.

Notes:

Images can be found here: Foreign Office and the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government host Iftar Reception at Lancaster House | Flickr

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/major-community-iftar-held-by-ministers-at-lancaster-house>