



Foreign &
Commonwealth
Office



Department
for International
Development

Our reference: MC2020/07382

Lord Alton of Liverpool
House of Lords
London
SW1A 0AA

7 May 2020

Dear David,

Thank you for your email of 15 April about the reported denial of food aid to Christian and Hindu minorities in Pakistan, as reported by the US Commission on International Religious Freedom.

I share your concerns about religious discrimination and the plight of minorities who are especially vulnerable to the coronavirus outbreak. During this period, we continue to urge the Government of Pakistan to guarantee the fundamental rights of its citizens, regardless of their belief.

We regularly engage, at senior level in Pakistan, on the mistreatment of religious and ethnic minorities, including Pakistanis from the Christian, Hindu, Ahmadiyya, Hazara, and Shia communities. I raised my concerns directly with Pakistan's Human Rights Minister in February this year.

I am currently speaking on a weekly basis with Pakistan's High Commissioner to the UK, His Excellency Nafees Zakaria, to discuss our approaches to the coronavirus pandemic, and how the UK can support mitigation of the economic and health impacts in Pakistan.

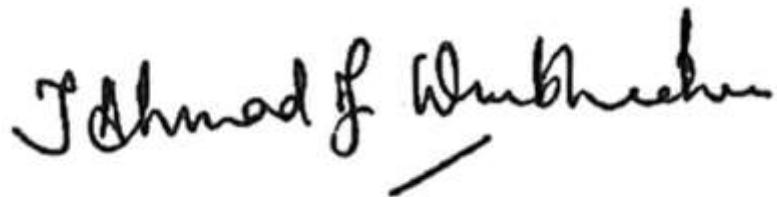
DFID recently announced wide-ranging support to help the poorest and most vulnerable in Pakistan during the pandemic. I discussed this with the High Commissioner on 21 April. The first in a series of measures, it will provide £2.67m in funds for vital health support and help communities access the right information to protect themselves, in 27 districts across all five provinces of Pakistan. It will also provide £1m for the control of locusts in affected areas of Pakistan, which are having a devastating impact on crops and livelihoods. Over the coming weeks, a wider

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package of support to Pakistan will see DFID's programme of assistance repurposed, to ensure it helps those most at risk during the crisis.

On 14 and 15 April, the Chancellor pushed G7 and G20 Finance Ministers to adopt an ambitious Action Plan to support the global economy through the pandemic. Ministers agreed to this plan, which included a historic debt service relief initiative for developing countries. I welcome that Pakistan will be able to benefit from this.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tariq Ahmad of Wimbledon". A short horizontal line is drawn under the signature.

LORD (TARIQ) AHMAD OF WIMBLEDON

Minister of State for South Asia and the Commonwealth

Prime Minister's Special Representative on Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict