



religion or belief (FoRB) in the Commonwealth.

The Archbishop of Canterbury convened a two-day forum on freedom of religion or belief (FoRB) in the Commonwealth on Tuesday and Wednesday this week. The forum, which took place during the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in London this week, was chaired by the Bishop of Coventry. It was held in partnership with the Commonwealth Initiative on Freedom of Religion or Belief (CIfORB) project director, Baroness Berridge of the Vale of Catmose.

The discussions at Lambeth Palace were attended by 40 senior religious leaders, parliamentarians and academics from 11 Commonwealth countries. The theme was 'Majority and minority in context'.

Participants heard of the importance of the international legal framework for FoRB – and the need for faith communities and governments to engage with it more consistently was also stressed. It was highlighted that faith communities must advocate the same global standards on religious freedom when they are the majority in one country as when they are a minority in another country, and governments must abide by international standards on FoRB.

Meeting under the Chatham House rule, participants noted that religious freedom is a deep tradition and rich heritage of the countries of the Commonwealth, but one that cannot be taken for granted.

As one participant stated, the tradition of tolerance and liberty is “a Common Wealth that needs to be cherished, celebrated and continuously cultivated”.

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