
PRESS RELEASE

AMBASSADOR WELCOMES CARDINAL COUTTS OF PAKISTAN

Ambassador of Pakistan to Italian Republic, Mr. Ali Javed, recently welcomed at the Embassy, His Eminence Cardinal Joseph Coutts, Metropolitan Archbishop Emeritus from Karachi, Pakistan who was visiting Italy at the invitation of His Holiness Pope Francis for special annual consultations at the Vatican.

The Cardinal was accompanied with Father Robert McCulloch from Vatican, who is a 2012 recipient of 'Sitara-i-Quaid-i-Azam', Pakistan's national award for Social Welfare. Ambassador thanked the Father for his sincere services since 1978. The Ambassador also lauded well acknowledged contributions by Christians in Pakistan since country's independence, in Education and Health.

Ambassador welcomed Cardinal Coutts' distinction as one of twelve Cardinals worldwide with added opportunity to serve Pakistanis with Christian faith, project Pakistan's credentials over protecting and promoting various minority religions in Pakistan along with their heritage and culture.

The Ambassador exchanged views with the guests over status of minorities in Pakistan and Italy. He highlighted steps taken by his Government for promoting and protecting minority rights under constitutional guarantees.

The Ambassador underlined the quota of religious minority representation at Parliament of Pakistan fixed at 10 from 336 (3%) at Lower House and 4 out of 104 (4%) at Upper House, as the most salient feature that remains either absent or simply unmatched in most democracies globally.

The distinguished guests praised Pakistani government & civil society for their strong traditional support for minority faiths and reaffirmed commitment to maintain high level exchanges and dialogue to foster goodwill and harmony.

Observing that Pakistanis with Hindu faith constitute largest minority in the country followed with Christian faith, Ambassador noted that in Italy, Muslims ranked top religious minority. Cardinal Coutts welcomed Ambassador's proposal to establish 'Pakistan-Italy Interfaith Harmony Forum', between both nations.

Recalling the historic welcome given to Late Pope John Paul II in 1981, by a 'sea of Pakistanis' when His Holiness visited Karachi, the city that hosts the largest Cross in Asia, both sides welcomed the prospects of high-level bilateral visits from Vatican to Pakistan in 2024 and reaffirmed their resolve to serve all faiths.

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