



**Over 100 Muslim Organisations and Leaders send a letter to Home Secretary calling for the appointment of Sara Khan as Chair of Countering Extremism Commission to be reversed**

Over 100 Muslim organisations and leaders have signed an open letter calling on the Home Secretary to reverse her decision to appoint Sara Khan (co-founder of Inspire) as Chair of the new Countering Extremism Commission.

The signatories to the letter include MEND (Muslim Engagement & Development), FOSIS (Federation of Student Islamic Societies), Association of Muslim Lawyers and many mosques, Imams and Scholars. The largest UK Muslim umbrella body, the Muslim Council of Britain, had already expressed “grave concerns” about the appointment in a separate statement.

Ms Khan’s lack of credibility in the wider Muslim community is widely linked to her long-standing support of the widely criticised Prevent programme, which is known to be highly discriminatory against Muslims. There have also been allegations of serious conflicts of interests where Inspire employees have simultaneously worked as Prevent Officers / Leads, whilst Inspire has also solicited and received funds to deliver Prevent-related training, despite claiming to be an ‘independent’ organisation.

Once again, concerns over Inspire’s independence have been raised in light of evidence demonstrating that the organisation has had secret links to the Home Office, exemplified by its campaign #MakingAStand, which was exposed as a creation of the Research, Information and Communication Unit (RICU), the propaganda arm of the Home Office.

Additionally there are serious misgivings about Ms Khan’s lack of qualifications and expertise for the role given that she is not an academic, has never published any peer reviewed papers, has not undertaken any original research in the field of terrorism or radicalisation, nor has she published credible impact assessments of the work of Inspire.

MEND CEO Dr Shazad Amin said*: "We call upon the Government to reverse this decision. It is clear that Sara Khan is singularly unqualified for this post, and with her history of being a vocal cheerleader for the discredited Prevent programme and the lack of openness about the “independence” of Inspire, will be unable to command the confidence of the Muslim Community.”*

[ENDS]

Notes for Editors

* MEND is a UK based NGO dedicated to tackling Islamophobia and enhancing British Muslim participation in media and politics
* MEND’s work has been commended by the World Economic Forum and EU’s Parliament Magazine
* MEND works with the Crown Prosecution Service, police forces, schools and communities across the UK to tackle Islamophobia

 For further information email info@mend.org.uk or visit mend.org.uk