



19 Feb 2024

MEDIA STATEMENT

Muslim Women's Network UK hosts meeting with UN VAWG Special Rapporteur

Muslim Women's Network UK (MWN UK) hosted a meeting with the Special Rapporteur Ms. Reem Alsalem on violence against women and girls during her visit to the UK. It was held to ensure perspectives of minority ethnic victims of abuse were heard during her assessment of the UK's efforts in addressing violence against women and girls.

The meeting took place on the 18th February 2024 in Birmingham and was attended by local leading organisations who work with minority ethnic victims of abuse. Attendees included representatives from Sikh Women's Aid, Roshni, WAITS, RSVP West Midlands, and Uplift Adult and Youth CIC.

Some of the issues raised included: the over representation of minority ethnic women in domestic homicide rates, spiritual abuse (and the need for a definition), Islamophobia / hate crime (and no engagement by government with women's groups), police bias and discrimination in the wider criminal justice system, legal aid, housing and sexual harassment and abuse not sufficiently being tackled in schools, colleges and universities. The lack of funding and the inaccessibility of any limited specialist funding that is made available for minoritised groups was also raised as a concern.

Baroness Shaista Gohir OBE, who chaired the meeting said: *"We look forward to hearing Ms Alsalem's recommendations and hope it includes calling for an in-depth inquiry to uncover the contributing factors that are resulting in the over representation of minority ethnic women in domestic homicide rates by more than 20%. When I asked about this in the House of Lords on the 22th January, the Minister confirmed they make up 22% of female domestic homicide rates (even though minority communities make up 18% of the population)"*.

This meeting was also important because it provided an opportunity to ensure Ms Alsalem heard about the unique experiences of women who follow a faith. It is crucial their intersectional experiences of violence are also fully considered to ensure policies and services meet their needs. Muslim Women's Network UK looks forward to reading Ms Alsalem's full report which is understood to be published next year.

Additional Information

- Media enquiries can be directed to: contact@mw nuk.co.uk or 0121 2369000
- Muslim Women's Network UK is a national charity and more information can be found on the website: www.mw nuk.co.uk
- MWN Helpline (national specialist faith and culturally sensitive helpline) can be contacted on: Tel: 0800 999 5786 / Email: info@mwnhelpline.co.uk / Text: 07415 206 936 and further information can be found at: www.mwnhelpline.co.uk