



22 Feb 2023

## **MEDIA STATEMENT**

### **Shamima Begum's citizenship should not have been removed**

Muslim Women's Network UK (MWN UK) are alarmed to hear that Shamima Begum has lost her appeal against the decision to remove her British citizenship. Ms Begum is a British citizen who was groomed when she was a child at the age of 15 by ISIS propaganda. Ms Begum is a British born Muslim woman and should be allowed to return to her home country and face any criminal trial and questioning on British soil. Her citizenship should have never been revoked. It is imperative for our thriving democracy to ensure we do not diminish our responsibilities to British citizens without giving them a fair trial and it should be considered that a British citizen could and was groomed in the UK. Those complexities therefore have to be understood and placed into context when decisions are made about revoking citizenship. Sadly, heavily racialised tropes and Islamophobic sentiments influenced public discourse on her specific case.

Nazmin Akthar, Co-Chair of MWN UK explained: *“Whether she is a criminal or a victim is irrelevant to the question of whether she should be granted entry into the UK. Shamima Begum was born and brought up in the UK and given Bangladesh’s clear statement that she is not a Bangladeshi citizen, she does not have citizenship rights to any country other than the UK. It is astounding that a country feels it can unilaterally decide that an individual has right to citizenship in another country and beyond comprehension it then feels the other country actually has any obligation to agree to such a view. The ability to strip an individual of their citizenship (particularly in circumstances where their dual nationality is in doubt) has now created communities of second-class citizens. In addition to this, it sends a message of a lack of sense of responsibility to the wider world where a ‘solution’ to criminal behaviour is to make it someone else’s ‘problem’.”*

Furthermore, in the case of Ms Begum there is much to be learned and to explore in regards what she knows and what she has witnessed, this information is key to understanding how young girls fall victim to grooming and how to combat this extremism that is hijacking ordinary Muslim communities and young people across the globe.

### **Additional Information**

- Media enquiries can be directed to: [contact@mwnuk.co.uk](mailto:contact@mwnuk.co.uk)
- Muslim Women’s Network UK is a national charity and more information can be found on its website: <https://www.mwnuk.co.uk>