

PRESS RELEASE

The Appointment of Sara Khan to lead the Commission for Countering Extremism.

We join the many voices who have expressed their grave concern at the appointment of Sara Khan (Director of 'Inspire') in the role of Commissioner for Counter Extremism. If such a commission is to exist, it is vital that the person leading it is independent and able to provide robust challenge to the government rather than endorsement; whilst inspiring trust and confidence across Britain's diverse communities.

It is unfortunate that the government has chosen an individual who is neither independent nor trusted. Sara Khan has been a longstanding supporter of the Government's prevent strategy-which has been described as 'toxic', largely because of the way that it has alienated marginalised communities. She is also an advocate of their policy of disengagement; the two are, of course, linked.

The Home Secretary, Amber Rudd has said of Sara Khan that she is "expertly qualified". There seems to be very little evidence to support this. Indeed, in November 2015, the Home Affairs Select Committee expressed concerns on both the lack of evidence provided by Inspire in relation to the impact of their work and about the various conflicts of interest of the directors and employees of Inspire. In any case, as someone who has focused her attention almost exclusively on so-called 'Islamist' extremism, whilst associating with organisations which many consider to be Islamophobic, she is entirely unfit to deal with the rising threat of the far right in Britain.

We are unequivocal in our condemnation of violent extremism in all its guises and remain willing to take part in meaningful dialogue in an environment of mutual respect and trust. This environment cannot be created without the right leadership. We therefore urge the government to reconsider this appointment.

25th January 2018

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NOTES:

1. More information about the Luton Sunni Council of Mosques & the Luton Council of Mosques can be found here: www.lutonmosques.org
 2. Our position on the Prevent Strategy can be found here: <https://preventposition.wordpress.com/>
 3. Evidence submitted to the Home Affairs Select Committee by Naz Shah MP:
<http://data.parliament.uk/writtenevidence/committeeevidence.svc/evidencedocument/home-affairs-committee/countering-extremism/written/27148.pdf>
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