

Press Release**'Gender Segregation' Debate****'Muscular Liberals' Target Muslim Women Yet Again in their Desire to Impose their Values on the Muslim Community**

London UK, 16th December 2013 – Despite the many problems facing the country, Prime Minister David Cameron's decision to address what is essentially a seating plan of one particular community, appears extraordinary at one level, but Cameron's opposition to allowing practicing Muslim women and men to sit separately at University Islamic society gatherings, and Chuka Umunna's promise that Labour would ban such practices should it come to power, prove to be no more than a display of 'muscular liberals' competing to bash Muslims till they conform to liberal norms.

Umm Abdullah Khan, Women's Media Representative of Hizb ut Tahrir Britain commented, **"Separated seating for men and women in Muslim gatherings is a normal part of life in the Muslim community and so has inevitably been likewise for University Islamic societies up and down the country – for decades - contrary to what the likes of Cameron may wish to portray."**

"The uproar that has been generated about this issue is a clear double standard, since separation of men and women in other circumstances in Britain is in no way unusual. Britain has many single-sex schools – including David Cameron's own school Eton College. Under UK law, NHS hospitals can be fined if they fail to correctly segregate men and women in wards. Separation of men and women in most sporting events is considered normal and the idea of mixed changing rooms in public institutions would shock most people, even in a liberal society."

"Yet, when Muslims adopt a separate seating arrangement based upon their faith, some liberal commentators scream that Muslims are unacceptably trying change the 'nature of Britain' by imposing an 'extremist' practice."

"The argument put forward that separate gender seating is somehow oppressive towards women and devalues them, has no basis as it is Muslim women themselves alongside men who are calling for this separation. Their voices may have been largely silenced in the mainstream media, but they argue from across campuses that gender separated seating has no bearing upon the way they use their minds and voices. Rather, denying them the ability to sit in their own societies' events in the manner they feel most comfortable, would be robbing them of their right to participate in University life."

"Since separate gender seating at events is a normative Islamic practice in the Muslim community, to label it as fringe and 'extremist', is a lie and an attempt to threaten the entire Muslim community with their label of 'extremism'. This ultimately is the legacy of the secular system, forcing an entire community to adopt secular norms or face being ostracised."

"Furthermore, comments that Muslim women should leave universities and go to mosques if they want separate seating betray the intolerance of the secular system to people of faith, the lies about pluralism in Britain, and the capacity for liberals to act in a supremacist manner."

"Cameron may be proud of his muscular liberalism but for many people, especially Muslim women, he and others seem little more than playground bullies inflating their own prowess at the expense of others."

"We would argue that the best way for Muslim women to stand up to this kind of treatment is to hold fast to their Islamic values, and confidently explain them to others."

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