



5 July 2024

MEDIA STATEMENT

Congratulations to the Labour Party on winning the General Election

Muslim Women's Network UK congratulates the Labour Party on its election victory. We also extend our best wishes to the new Prime Minister, Sir Keir Starmer, and to Rachel Reeves, the first woman to serve as Chancellor of the Exchequer. We hope this leadership marks the beginning of a new era that tackles critical issues such as entrenched social and economic inequalities and the growing divisions in our society.

Baroness Shaista Gohir, CEO of MWN UK said: *"Another critical issue that requires attention is ensuring that women can stand as parliamentarians for any political party or as independents without facing intimidation and harassment from those with opposing views. Women often experience higher levels of abuse and threats. During this election, it has been particularly noted that some Labour female MPs (including their supporters) have faced both online and offline intimidation in areas with a significant Muslim electorate due what appears to be anger over the Labour Party's stance on Gaza. Regardless of these emotions, it is essential that individuals, particularly women, are free to exercise their democratic right to stand as parliamentary candidates or even local councillors without fear. Women should also not have to put up with sexism, racism and Islamophobia."*

She added: *"Measures should be explored to improve the safety and well-being of women during election campaigns, ensuring they can participate fully and freely in the democratic process. These measures could include educating the public on respectful discourse, collaborating with social media platforms to swiftly remove threatening content, strengthening laws against harassment of political candidates, and taking swift legal action against offenders."*

Furthermore, the election results indicate a substantial movement of Muslim voters away from the Labour Party in constituencies traditionally considered as safe seats. For example, Labour lost four seats to independent candidates and in other seats their huge majorities were slashed to several hundred votes. Not all Muslims vote and those who do vote do not all support Labour, however, the majority of the Muslim electorate has historically tended to align with the Labour Party. This shift therefore represents a significant development.

While the primary reason for the shift away from the Labour party among Muslim voters appears to have been its stance on Gaza, other issues may gain significance in the future. For example, Muslims often experience poorer physical and mental health outcomes and were disproportionately affected by Covid. They also have the highest percentage of individuals with no qualifications, are less likely to own their homes, are more likely to be unpaid carers, have higher unemployment rates, and face a higher risk of hate crimes. Additionally, 40% of the Muslim population reside in the most deprived areas of England and Wales, and Muslim households are more likely to experience poverty compared to any other religious group in the country.

Muslim voters may now insist on quicker progress in levelling up their communities. Previously, Muslim voters may not have fully recognised or utilised their influence at the ballot box. However, it appears that Muslims have now become more conscious and determined not to have their votes taken for granted any longer. We hope that the Labour Party will endeavour to rebuild its relationship and regain the trust of Muslim communities by addressing their concerns.

Muslim Women's Manifesto – Levelling up for Muslim Women

Download media statement on demands:

<https://www.mwnuk.co.uk/mediaStatmentDetail.php?id=299>

How will Muslim Women vote in the 2024 general election?

Download research report: <https://www.mwnuk.co.uk/resourcesDetail.php?id=300>

Additional information

- Media enquiries can be directed to: contact@mwnuk.co.uk or 0121 2369000
- MWNUK is a national charity and more information can be found on the website: www.mwnuk.co.uk
- MWN Helpline can be contacted on: Tel: 0800 999 5786 / E: info@mwnhelpline.co.uk / Text: 07415 206 936 and further information can be found at: www.mwnhelpline.co.uk