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All Party Parliamentary Group on Islamophobia Relunched at Westminster

The All Party Parliamentary Group on Islamophobia was relaunched this week [Monday 14 November] in the Palace of Westminster when it had its Annual General Meeting.

The meeting was addressed by leading academic and expert on Islamophobia Dr. Chris Allen of The University of Birmingham, who spoke to the group about the importance of keeping Islamophobia on the national agenda so that the UK can continue to improve its efforts at countering prejudice against Muslims.

The group elected Rt Hon Simon Hughes MP (Liberal Democrat), Khalid Mahmood MP (Labour) and Stuart Andrew MP (Conservative) as co-chairs. The group also agreed to start work immediately and commission new research to uncover the scope of the problem of anti-Muslim hate crime across the UK.

The group decided that it will meet monthly in parliament on the second Wednesday of each month when parliament is sitting to take this work forward.

Commenting on the successful AGM Simon Hughes, Member of Parliament for Bermondsey and Old Southwark said:

“Combating prejudice of all kinds should always be at the top of the parliamentary agenda, but unfortunately too often in the past Islamophobia has been a prejudice which has been overlooked.

“I am delighted that MPs from all major parties have come together and agreed how the All Party Group on Islamophobia should move forward and work together towards raising the profile of this important issue in parliament, government and in the country.”

Khalid Mahmood, MP for Birmingham Perry Barr said:

“The reforming of the Islamophobia Group is a vital step forward in combating this insidious and increasing form of prejudice. I look forward to working with colleagues from across the political spectrum in developing a dialogue that addresses both the causes and potential solutions of Islamophobia in all its forms.”

Stewart Andrew, MP for Pudsey said:

“That people being attacked or discriminated against as a result of their religious beliefs, the colour of their skin or their sexuality is abhorrent and I am pleased that in Parliament a number of groups like this All Party Parliamentary Group have been set up to address these issues.

“It is great to have cross party support to look into the worrying problem of Islamophobia and I look forward to working with the APPG as we embark on an inquiry which will try to understand the true extent and root causes of this issue.”

Note: A full list of officers and the work programme for 2012 will be announced after the December meeting.

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