



## **PRESS RELEASE**

**20<sup>th</sup> April 2021**

### **RE-CONSTITUTION OF ALL PARTY PARLIAMENTARY GROUP FOR COUNCIL OF SRI LANKAN MUSLIM ORGANISATIONS UK IN 3<sup>rd</sup> ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

We wish to inform that APPG - Cosmos UK 3<sup>rd</sup> AGM was successfully concluded on 13.04.2021 to Re - constitute the group. This was done during virtual meeting which was chaired by Mr Tan Dhesi – MP for Slough in absence of Chairman of the APPG Mr. Bob Blackman - Harrow East MP and attended by a cross section of MPs.

#### **The Elected Office Bearers at this AGM were:**

Hon. Bob Blackman – Chairman	The Rt.Hon.the Lord Naseby- Vice Chair
Hon Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi –Co Chair	Hon Elliot Colburn – Vice Chair
Hon Afzal Khan – Secretary	Hon Gareth Thomas – Vice Chair
Hon Yasmin Qureshi – Treasurer	Hon Stephen Timms – Vice Chair

#### **Other Members of APPG - Cosmos**

Rt. Hon Baroness Warsi	Hon Wes Sterling
Hon Siobhain McDonagh	Hon Claudia Webbe
Hon Matt Rodda	

It was great to welcome two more MP's (Hon Stephen Timms and Yasmin Qureshi) who joined and extended support to APPG - Cosmos at this AGM. This makes 13

members in this group to date along with many have shown interest in joining the APPG – Cosmos in future.

Mr. Liyas Abdul Wahid - President of Cosmos UK addressing the AGM stated “The purpose of this APPG was, to support, and take up issues raised by Cosmos UK, relating to Sri Lankan Muslim issues, towards protecting their rights, and promoting peaceful co- existence, in the context of the goodwill prevailing between the two countries, thereby, ushering in, a strong relationship between the two peoples of both countries United Kingdom and Sri Lanka. Further thanked all APPG Cosmos MP’s who raised their voices and concerns in Parliament with regards to recent human rights violation of Sri Lankan government, in particular in the forced cremation saga. We will continue to work closely with the APPG over concerns of continuous human rights violations against minorities and recent introduction of De-Radicalisation act in the country.”

The Chair of the meeting Hon Tan Dhesi - MP thanked Hon Bob Blackman – Chairman of APPG Cosmos and all member MP’s and COSMOS UK for its excellent work carried out in recent months. He noted the addresses to the British Parliament in various debates of the human rights violation and forced cremation carried out by some Sri Lankan authorities. The spotlight it brought further exposed discriminatory actions of the Sri Lankan government to local and international community who pressured it to find a solution. Tan Dhesi in his closing statement mentioned that ‘many British parliamentarians are very concerned about ongoing human right violations against minorities, human right is universal, we continue to stand up with Sri Lankan Muslims and all other affected communities’.

Hon Afzal Khan, Hon Yasmin Qureshi, Hon Elliot Colburn and Hon Stephen Timms discussed about the effective role that APPG - Cosmos can play and reiterated it’s

important to monitor the Sri Lanka authorities' human right violations in the backdrop of recently adopted UNHRC resolution.

This meeting was a very productive and constructive meeting where MP's and Cosmos members had engagement and discussion to foster a strong bonding with the APPG - Cosmos members and a deeper understanding of Sri Lankan Muslims plights and we Thank all MP's and participants at this AGM.

### **APPG COSMOS UK OFFICE BEARERS 2021 / 2022**



Hon Bob Blackman  
Chairman – APPG Cosmos



Hon Tan Singh Dhesi  
Co-Chair – APPG Cosmos



Hon Afzal Khan  
Secretary – APPG Cosmos



Hon Yasmin Qureshi  
Treasurer – APPG Cosmos



Lord Naseby  
Vice-Chair – APPG Cosmos



Hon Elliot Colburn  
Vice-Chair – APPG Cosmos



Hon Gareth Thomas  
Vice-Chair – APPG Cosmos



Hon Stephen Timms  
Vice-Chair – APPG Cosmos

Reported by: **M Shakeer Nawas**  
**General Secretary**  
**Cosmos UK**