

## **PRESS NOTE**

### **MPF ROUND TABLE DISCUSSION “Rana Plaza: Rights of Garment Workers and Ethical Clothing”**

On Thursday, 6th June 2013, 6.45pm at the Jagonari Centre, London, the Muslim Professionals Forum (MPF) organised a round table discussion on the recent industrial disaster at Rana Plaza. Many prominent guests were on the panel, including Baroness Uddin, Jeremy Corbyn MP, Mayor Lutfur Rahman, Judge Belayeth Hussain, John Hillary of War on Want, Peter Kavanagh of Unite the Union, Kamaljeet Jandu of GMB trade union, Muquim Ahmed of British Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce (BBCC), Stephen Heath barrister at Tanfied Chambers, Advocate Nazir Ahmed and professionals from many other sectors.

All those present were united in expressing their condolences for the victims and their family. The tragedy at Rana Plaza has been well covered by the media, both in Bangladesh and abroad. It has brought to light the rights of garment workers in factories. Many of those present were concerned that it had taken such a major disaster to bring the lack of safety standards in factories in Bangladesh to the forefront. In fact, Baroness Uddin emphasised that this tragedy was very much avoidable and that it must not be forgotten. This was echoed by many other speakers, including Mayor Lutfur Rahman, John Hilary, Shahagir Bakth Faruk of BBCC and Dr Fuad Ali who is an established researcher.

At the end of the discussion a joint statement was unanimously agreed and signed by the entire panel, Rushanara Ali MP and Claude Moraes MEP, asking the Bangladesh government to ensure that those who were responsible, directly or indirectly for the disaster at Rana Plaza be punished. The meeting asks the Government of Bangladesh for a full and fair investigation into the murder and torture of the factory worker and labour leader Aminul Islam; and demands the implementation of the conclusion and the steps that were agreed between the tripartite partners (Government, employer and workers) and the ILO on 4<sup>th</sup> May 2013. It also asks all major international buyers and companies to sign a legally binding good practice protocol to ensure safety at work. It further ask the UK government to ensure that an independent monitoring is undertaken of the 18 million recently announced particularly who the recipients and beneficiaries will be, as well as ensuring that workers rights and safety working conditions are the bedrock of any recourse the British Government commits. (A copy the joint statement is attached herewith for your ready reference).