**PRESS RELEASE**

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**Diverse panel of judges submit final scores for the Young Muslim Writers Awards 2016**

**The panel of judges has carefully assessed and scored every single shortlisted entry in the Young Muslim Writers Awards, a Muslim Hands project presented with Yusuf Islam Foundation. A total of forty creative poems and short stories written by children between the ages of 5 and 16 were shortlisted and winners for each category will be announced at a formal ceremony in London on the 3rd of December 2016.**

The young writers’ submissions have been assessed by an eclectic judging panel including author of the internationally-acclaimed *In the Eye of the Sun* and *The Map of Love*,Ahdaf Soueif, and the recently announced Young People’s Laureate for London, poet and teacher Caleb Femi.

The judges praised the quality and creativity of the entries. Marcus Sedgwick, author of the recently-published *Saint Death*, comments that he is “struck by their bravery in confronting dark subjects in a powerful way”, with poet Brian Bilston stating that “It's wonderful to see so many promising young poets in our midst, writing on such important themes in diverse, powerful ways.”

Other judges on the panel include Ahmed Masoud, Alex Kanefsky, Amanda Lees, Amerah Saleh, Chirine El Ansary, Cornelia Funke, David Solomons, Emily Berry, Gillian Clarke, Gwyneth Rees, Haifa Zangana, Inua Ellams, Jonathan Ruppin, Jules Haworth, Kate Wakeling, Kathryn White, Nicola Davies, Patrice Lawrence, Roopa Farooki, Safeerah Mughal, SF Said, Shahida Rahman, Shemiza Rashid, Sufiya Ahmed, Sumayya Lee, Tamara Macfarlane, Tim Robertson, Tom Palmer and Zanib Mian.

For further details of the shortlisted entrants for this year’s Young Muslim Writers Awards please visit <https://ymwa.org.uk/talented-writers-revealed-on-2016-shortlist/>

The Young Muslim Writers Awards was set up as a standalone competition for 5 – 16 year olds in 2010, following its success as part of Muslim Hands’ Muslim Writers Awards. Since then, it has encouraged and nurtured the writing talents of thousands of children through creative writing workshops and the annual competition.

For the fourth consecutive year, the ceremony is presented in association with Yusuf Islam Foundation.

The ceremony will be broadcast on Islam Channel, the official media partner of the competition since 2006.

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**Notes to editors:**

* For further details, interviews with shortlisted writers or media passes to the ceremony, please contact Reem Abu-Hayyeh on [reem.abu-hayyeh@ymwa.org.uk](mailto:reem.abu-hayyeh@ymwa.org.uk) or call 0115 911 7222.
* For further details of the shortlisted entrants for this year’s Young Muslim Writers Awards please visit <https://ymwa.org.uk/talented-writers-revealed-on-2016-shortlist/>
* The Young Muslim Writers Awards arranges creative writing workshops and an annual writing competition. Visit [www.ymwa.org.uk](http://www.ymwa.org.uk), [Twitter](https://twitter.com/ymwawards) and [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/MWAwards).
* Muslim Hands is an international aid agency and NGO working in over 50 countries worldwide to help those affected by natural disasters, conflicts and poverty. [www.muslimhands.org.uk](http://www.muslimhands.org.uk)
* For further details on Muslim Hands’ UK Community Development work please visit <https://muslimhands.org.uk/our-work/uk-projects>
* Yusuf Islam Foundation is an umbrella body that works in education, the alleviation of poverty and community development. [www.yif.org.uk](http://www.yif.org.uk)
* Islam Channel is a satellite channel broadcasting news, current affairs and entertainment programming from an Islamic perspective. [www.islamchannel.tv](http://www.islamchannel.tv)