**PRESS RELEASE**

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**Winners to be announced at 6th annual ‘Young Muslim Writers Awards’ ceremony**

**After receiving hundreds of entries, winners of the Young Muslim Writers Awards 2016, a Muslim Hands project with the Yusuf Islam Foundation, will be announced on the 3rd of December at the Muslim Hands’ annual ceremony celebrating young literary talent. Award-winning author SF Said will be amongst those presenting trophies to the winners alongside an exciting lineup of performers.**

The Young Muslim Writers Awards, initially 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.

Forty young writers whose poetry and short stories were the standout entries this year have now been shortlisted. Their submissions have been assessed by an internationally renowned panel of judges including the recently-announced Young People’s Laureate for London, poet and performer Caleb Femi, as well as a past Young Muslim Writers Awards winner and TEDxTeen speaker, Safeerah Mughal.

Chairman of Muslim Hands, Syed Lakhte Hassanain, comments:

“The entries to this year’s Awards really were outstanding. The skill and creativity of the writing of children and young people of all ages who took part in the competition is inspiring. While the selection process is a difficult one for the judges considering the ever-improving quality of the entrants’ writing, it is also immensely rewarding process to take participate in. Children and young people have no shortage of creativity and imagination; it is only through supporting them in their development that they will be able to aspire for more and flourish. This is what motivates Muslim Hands in all of our international development work and in our UK community projects in youth empowerment, poverty alleviation, ex-offender rehabilitation and women’s leadership programmes.”

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.

**2016 Shortlist**

**Key Stage 1 Poetry (Ages 5-7)**

Being A Girl - Imaani Zara Abdul-Karim (Solihull)

Crunchy & Munchy, Guess Who I Am - Samiya Tasneem Hoque (Lancashire)

My Brother – Hassan Sajid (Oldham)

Super Mum, Peace - Abdul Sami Riaz (Bradford)

The Caterpillar – Zaynab Valji (Bushey, Hertfordshire)

**Key Stage 2 Poetry (Ages 7-11)**

Feelings of Fright and Fear – Haniya Rizwan (Barnet, London)

Inspiration and Death is Knocking at the Door – Myra Durrani (Birmingham)

Queen’s Birthday - Maryam Aaliyah Russell (Nelson, Leicester)

The Beauty of the Sun – Hannah Shums (Hounslow, Middlesex)

War and Peace – Samaa Qureshi (Barnet, London)

**Key Stage 3 Poetry (Ages 11-14)**

The Essence of Autumn – Seher Rahman (Barnet, London)

Home – Zoya Anwar (Manchester)

The Edge of Reality, or Maybe Just a Dream – Needa Shafi (Wembley, London)

The Wound – Sehrish Kauser (Bradford)

Memories – Safiyah Rehman (Bradford)

**Key Stage 4 Poetry (Ages 14-16)**

War Child – Imaan Irfan (Woking)

Doves and Petrol – Barirah Ashfak (Bradford)

Puppets and Dolls, and other poems – Safiyya Haq (Bradford)

Sorrowful Hues – Hanniya Kamran (Leicester)

My Poems - Nûr-al-ayn Nisar (Birmingham)

**Key Stage 1 Short Story (Ages 5-7)**

Ben's Scary Journey – Tanisha Chowdhury (London)

Eid Mubarak - Aishah Arike Ola-Olukotun (Staines)

Imagination Runs Wild – Zain Durrani (Birmingham)

Mia the Maroon Fairy – Zareena Khan (Essex)

The Circus and the Robbery – Rayan Rasool (Burnham)

**Key Stage 2 Short Story (Ages 7-11)**

Lost – Nadia Kasmani (London)

The Golden Pocket Watch – Amena Salem (Glasgow)

The Lost Diamond – Khatijah Khaliq (Bradford)

The Lost Prince – Aaminah Green (Shropshire)

The Wondrous World of Azile – Eliza Tahir (Enfield, London)

**Key Stage 3 Short Story (Ages 11-14)**

Pit Stops – Lamees Mohamed (Leicester)

Sand – Imani Ahmed (Essex)

The Mysterious Vessel - Zayd Abid Russell (Leicester)

The Road to Darkness - Hajra Naheem Akram (Birmingham)

Agent Khan – Jiyaad Ali (Manchester)

**Key Stage 4 Short Story (Ages 14-16)**

War Poppy – Ammaarah Karim (Nottingham)

Life on Hold – Esraa Abushaala (Renfrew)

The Captivation - Hibah Seedat (Waltham Forest, London)

Expect the Unexpected – Nadine Salem (Glasgow)

The Foreigner – Sumaiya Fazal (Leicester)

END

**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.
* 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)