



**Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> February, 2008**

**FAIR Disappointed Over Reporting & Timing of Comments by MP Woolas on ‘Cousin Marriages’**

Open season on Islam is in full swing, this time MP Phil Woolas feels it is his duty to highlight the issue of genetic illnesses suffered by children whose parents are first cousins. We thank him for the attention he has brought to this important matter but are surprised at the insensitivity of his timing given the uproar that is still raging over the Archbishop's comments concerning Shariah law in Britain.

Furthermore, we are perplexed as to how a primarily cultural issue has become a full blown Islamic one? The Islamophobic undertones of newspaper reporting is barely disguised, as pictures of yet more blacked out women appear incongruously under giant headlines attacking cousin marriages. We fail to see the connection. Surely focus should be on seeking positive solutions.

FAIR is disappointed to see that journalists are exploiting the story as yet more evidence of Islam's backwardness instead of empathizing for the children and families concerned.

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