

**Response to UN Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women Report
“Violence Against Women in Politics”¹**

10 October 2018

"The Centenary Action Group has welcomed the publication of a report by the UN's Special Rapporteur on violence against women in politics. The report rightly recognises this behaviour as a serious violation of women's human rights, which affects the whole of society. We particularly welcome the Special Rapporteur's assertion that UN member states have obligations to eradicate and prevent violence against women in politics.

"This is an issue which is close to many of our members' hearts. As the Centenary Action Group, we bring together representatives from organisations working in the worlds of domestic, international, and political policy and campaigns. We are united in wanting to mark 2018 as the starting point for fairer opportunities for women, including in political life. 2018 marks 100 years since the passing of the Representation of the People Act, when some women were first given the chance to vote in the UK. We want to build on that momentum, by ensuring that women in the UK and across the world feel encouraged and able to play as active a part in democratic life as they wish. That has to start by removing barriers which prevent women from entering into political life.

"The Special Rapporteur's report makes recommendations that chime with the Centenary Action Group's own policies. We welcome recommendations for implementing legislation criminalising violence against women in politics, and the accompanying need to strengthen police and prosecutor training. The report's recommendation that political parties adopt codes of conduct, too, chimes with what the Centenary Action Group has called for. But just as with the legislation, these should not simply be adopted in principle - they must be implemented in practice.

"Of course, so much violence against women politicians is perpetrated online. For this reason, we welcome the recommendation that all forms of ICT-facilitated violence against women in politics should be criminalised, and that regulations on internet intermediaries should be robust.

"The central role which the media has to play in informing public attitudes towards women in political life also comes under scrutiny in this report. We support its recommendation that media campaigns should focus on women's empowerment to try to stem the negative impact of decades of gender-based stereotypes promoted by the media.

¹ Report available at:

http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/73/301

"Most essentially, we have to ensure that women survivors of violence in politics are granted access to justice, wherever in the world they live. We support the report's assertion that compensation for victims, reinstatement for those forced to resign from public positions due to violence, and adequate security measures should be prioritised by all member states.

"Violence against women in politics must be dealt with, and urgently. As the Centenary Action Group, we look forward to working across party lines to get us closer to eradicating it for good."²

Amelia Womack, Deputy Leader, Green Party of England and Wales
Anthony Smith, CEO, Westminster Foundation for Democracy
Baroness Anne Jenkin, Founder, Women2Win
Bee Rowlatt, Chair, Mary on the Green
Catherine Anderson, CEO, Jo Cox Foundation
Darren Hughes, Chief Executive, Electoral Reform Society
Delyth Jewell, Author, WFD Report on Violence Against Women in Politics
Dr Helen Pankhurst, Convener, Centenary Action Group
Dr Kay Richmond, UK Programme Action Committee Chair, Soroptimist International of Great Britain and Ireland
Dr Shola Mos-Shogbamimu, Founder & Editor-in-Chief, Women in Leadership Publication
Girish Menon, CEO, ActionAid UK
Hannah Stevens, Programme Manager, The Parliament Project
Jess Phillips MP, Chair, Women's Parliamentary Labour Party
Julie Iles, Chair, Conservative Women's Organisation
Katie Ghose, Chief Executive, Women's Aid
Laurie Lee, CEO, CARE International UK
Matteo Bergamini, CEO, ShoutOutUK
Sam Smethers, Chief Executive, Fawcett Society
Seyi Akiwowo, CEO, Glitch!UK

² The Centenary Action Group are a cross-party campaigning coalition convened by Helen Pankhurst and represent over 100 activists, politicians and women's rights organisations. We want to use the centenary of some women getting the vote to highlight remaining inequalities and to help deliver real change for women and girls in the UK and worldwide on key issues.