

*Editorial Intelligence's*  
**COMMENT  
AWARDS**  
*commentawards.com*



*London, Friday 12 October 2018*

This statement regards the objection by Nesrine Malik and Gary Younge of The Guardian to being listed alongside Melanie Phillips on the shortlist for “Society & Diversity Commentator of the Year 2018” in the UK Comment Awards.

Editorial Intelligence, which puts on the Comment Awards, believes in freedom of expression and in George Orwell’s view that “If liberty means anything at all, it means the right to tell people what they do not want to hear.”

Melanie Phillips was eligible to be nominated, and she was judged fairly.

The Comment Awards are a platform to celebrate, as awards do, excellence in a particular field. We strive for balance in our judging panels, with a diversity of age, gender, race, and political perspective.

In the case of Society & Diversity Commentator of the Year, this year was a strong field of nominations, with the highest number ever of entries since we began this category in 2015. The larger than usual shortlist reflects the tied voting for some nominees (we use a ranked category system).

The nominations process has not changed since the inception of the awards in 2008: [Click here for the Terms and Conditions.](#)

Only articles appearing within a certain time window qualify each year. None of the pieces referred to by Nesrine Malik and Gary Younge were published in this period; indeed one of the articles was written by Melanie Phillips before the Comment Awards even existed (2002) and neither of the pieces cited were for The Times which is the publication whose columns she has been shortlisted for.

Each and every year we listen to our critics and respond. We want to get it right and this is why there are regular innovations and changes in creating new categories, mothballing others, and in our selection of judges.

The Comment Awards have no plans to change the fundamental cornerstone that we invite judges to judge the quality of a journalist’s commentary in a particular year. Not their body of writing overall, and not their personality.

**ENDS**