

Europe Solidaire Sans Frontières > English > Issues > Faith, religious authorities, secularism > Secularism, laïcité > **London, 2014: Conference On the Religious-Right, Secularism and Civil Rights**

# London, 2014: Conference On the Religious-Right, Secularism and Civil Rights

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## Conference On the Religious-Right, Secularism and Civil Rights

Historic International Conference  
On the Religious-Right, Secularism and Civil Rights

11-12 October 2014

The Tower Hotel, St Katharine's Way, London E1W 1LD, UK

REGISTER TODAY AT [www.secularconference.com](http://www.secularconference.com)

Join notable free-thinkers, atheists and secularists from around the world for a weekend of discussions and debates on the religious-Right, its attacks on civil rights and freedoms, and the role of secularism for 21<sup>st</sup> century humanity. The exciting two-day conference will discuss the Arab Spring, Sharia and religious laws, the limits of religion's role in society, free expression, honour killings, apostasy and blasphemy laws, faith schools, women's rights, secular values and much more.

The conference will be held at the Tower Hotel with spectacular views of the River Thames and the Tower of London. On the evening of 11 October, participants will enjoy cocktails followed by a delicious three-course meal and entertainment in the company of our speakers.

Distinguished speakers and acts:

AC Grayling is a Philosopher, Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature and the Royal Society of Arts, Honorary Associate of the National Secular Society and author and commentator.

Amal Farah is Spokesperson for the Council of Ex-Muslims of Britain and One Law for All. She is Somali-born and was raised in a conservative and literalist Muslim household.

Amel Grami is Professor at the Tunisian University of Manouba; she was on the frontlines of Manouba's successful struggle to defy a Salafist siege last year and is a leading expert on Religion and Women's Studies.

Amina Sboui is a Tunisian activist threatened and imprisoned after posting topless photos of herself on Facebook carrying the slogan: "My Body is not the Source of Anyone's Honour".

Bahram Soroush is Public Relations Officer of the Free Them Now! Campaign to Free Jailed Workers in Iran and a co-host of Bread and Roses TV Programme.

Ben Baz Aziz is a Presenter at Arab Atheist broadcasting and a blogger focusing on LGBT and atheist rights in the Middle East who was imprisoned in Kuwait for blasphemy.

Caroline Fourest is a French writer, editor of the magazine ProChoix, and author of Frère Tariq, a

critical look at the works of Tariq Ramadan and books on topics such as the conservative right, the pro-life movement and the fundamentalist trends in the Abrahamic religions.

Chetan Bhatt is the director of the Centre for the Study of Human rights at LSE. His current projects include work on the emergence of virtue in modern political ideologies, new forms of the regional state in South Asia and the sociology of religious paramilitia groups.

Chris Moos is a secular student activist who has led a successful campaign for the right to wear 'Jesus and Mo' t-shirts after being harassed and threatened with removal at his university. He was a nominee for the NSS' Secularist of the Year 2014 award.

Elham Manea is a Yemeni associate professor specialized in the Middle East, a writer, and a human rights activist. Her concept of humanistic Islam was first published in a series of articles in Arabic.

Faisal Saeed Al-Mutar is an Iraqi born writer and a social activist living in the United States. He is the founder of the Global Secular Humanist Movement and Secular Post.

Fariborz Pooya is the founder of the Iranian Secular Society, was one of the founding members of the Council of Ex-Muslims of Britain and is a co-host of Bread and Roses TV.

Fatou Sow is a Senegalese Sociologist, and a member of a number of African and international associations as well as the International Director of Women Living Under Muslim Laws.

Gita Sahgal is an Indian-born writer, journalist, film-maker and rights activist, Director of Centre for Secular Space who was suspended by Amnesty International as head of its Gender Unit in 2010 for criticising the organisation's relations with an Islamist group.

Hamid Taqvaee is the Secretary of the Worker-Communist Party of Iran's Central Committee and a leading Marxist opposition figure to the Islamic regime of Iran.

Houzan Mahmoud is a Kurdish women's rights campaigner and the Spokesperson of the Organisations of Women's Freedom in Iraq. She has written and campaigned extensively on women's rights issues.

Horia Mosadiq has been Director of the Afghanistan Human Rights Research and Advocacy Consortium and an advisor to the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission, as well as a journalist in Afghanistan and Pakistan.

Imad Iddine Habib is a Moroccan atheist threatened for his atheism, founder of the Council of Ex-Muslims of Morocco, the first public atheist organisation in a country with Islam as the state religion.

Inna Shevchenko is leader of FEMEN topless activists who was kidnapped and threatened by the Belarus KGB in 2011 for her activism. She was granted political asylum in France.

Julie Bindel is an English writer, feminist and co-founder of the group Justice for Women. She was listed in the Independent's "Pink List" as one of the top 101 most influential gay and lesbian people in the UK.

Kacem El Ghazzali is a Moroccan secularist writer, blogger, activist and atheist. He was the head of the Moroccan Center for Human Rights' Youth Chapter and is a member of the Executive Board of the Moroccan Bloggers Association.

Karima Bennoune is a law professor at the University of California Davis School of Law, and author of “Your Fatwa Does Not Apply Here: Untold Stories from the Fight Against Muslim Fundamentalism”.

Kate Smurthwaite is a stand-up comedian and political activist. She has appeared on more than 500 TV and radio shows including This Morning, The Big Questions, Woman’s Hour and The Moral Maze.

Kenan Malik is a writer, lecturer and broadcaster, a presenter of BBC Radio 4’s Analysis and a panellist on The Moral Maze. His book From Fatwa to Jihad was shortlisted for the Orwell Prize.

Kiran Opal is a Pakistani-born human rights activist, writer, and editor living in Canada. She is co-founder of Ex-Muslims of North America and Editor of ExMuslimBlogs.

Layla Saleem spent 6 years in an Islamic school in Britain and now campaigns for secular education.

LCP is a multimedia and multiethnic dance company which emphasises human rights issues mainly human trafficking.

Lila Ghobady is an Iranian writer-journalist and documentary filmmaker. Her first independent release, Forbidden Sun Dance, was banned by the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Maha Kamal is an ex-Muslim who was disowned by her parents for leaving Islam, President of the Colorado Prison Law Project, and Commissioner at the Colorado Supreme Court Chief Justice’s Commission on Inclusiveness.

Magdulien Abaida is a Libyan Activist and president of Hakki (My Right) Organization for Women Rights. She was kidnapped by Islamists in Benghazi in August 2012 and fled after her release three days later.

Marieme Helie Lucas is an Algerian sociologist, founder and former International Coordinator of the Women Living Under Muslim Laws. She is also the founder of Secularism Is A Women’s Issue.

Maryam Namazie is Spokesperson for Fitnah, One Law for All and Council of Ex-Muslims of Britain; editor of Fitnah’s Unveiled; and producer and co-host of Bread and Roses.

Nadia El Fani is a Tunisian filmmaker who risks arrest and up to five years in prison if she returns to Tunisia after Islamists filed a complaint against her film “Neither Allah nor Master”.

Nahla Mahmoud is an environmentalist and human right activist originally from Sudan. She leads the Sudanese Humanists Group and is Spokesperson for the Council of Ex-Muslims of Britain.

Nina Sankari is President of the European Feminist Initiative in Poland, and Vice-President of the Polish Rationalist Association.

Pervez Hoodbhoy is a Pakistani nuclear physicist and recipient of a number of awards. He is also a prominent environmentalist and social activist.

Peter Tatchell has been campaigning for rights and global justice since 1967. New Statesman readers voted him sixth on their list of “Heroes of our time”. He was Campaigner of the Year in The Observer Ethical Awards.

Pragna Patel is a founding member of the Southall Black Sisters and Women Against Fundamentalism. She was listed in The Guardian’s Top 100 women: activists and campaigners.

Ramin Forghani is founder of the Ex-Muslims of Scotland and Vice-Chair of the Scottish Secular Society.

Randa Kassis is President and founder of the Movement for a Pluralistic Society. She was a member of the Syrian National Council until she was excluded for her warnings against Muslim fundamentalists in 2012.

Rumy Hassan is Senior Lecturer at University of Sussex and author of "Dangerous Liaisons: The Clash between Islamism and Zionism" and "Multiculturalism: Some Inconvenient Truths".

Salil Tripathi is an award-winning journalist, a contributing editor at Mint and at Caravan in India. He was board member of English PEN from 2009 to 2013, and co-chaired PEN's Writers-at-Risk Committee.

Sanal Edamaruku is an author and founder-president of Rationalist International and the Indian Rationalist Association. In 2012, he was charged with hurting religious sentiments for his role in examining a claimed miracle at a local Catholic Church.

Shelley Segal is a Melbourne based singer-songwriter involved in secular activism. 'An Atheist Album' is a passionate response to dogmatic belief, inequality, religious oppression and the idea that only the devout can be grateful and good.

Siba Shakib is an Iranian/German film-maker, writer and political activist. She was born and raised in Tehran, Iran. Her international best-seller Afghanistan, Where God Only Comes to Weep has been translated into 27 languages and won a P.E.N. prize.

Sue Cox is the co-founder of Survivors Voice Europe, an international organisation that has at its heart the support and empowerment of catholic clergy abuse survivors of which she is one.

Taj Hargey is South African Muslim scholar. He was an anti-apartheid activist in South Africa and founder of the Muslim Education Centre of Oxford and the Imam of the Summertown Islamic congregation.

Tarek Fatah is a Pakistani born Canadian writer, broadcaster and a secular activist. He is the author of "Chasing a Mirage: The Tragic Illusion of an Islamic State" and founder of the Muslim Canadian Congress.

Taslima Nasrin is a Bangladeshi-born award-winning writer, physician, and activist, known for her powerful writings on women oppression and unflinching criticism of religion, despite forced exile and multiple fatwas calling for her death.

Terry Sanderson is a writer and journalist and current President of the National Secular Society, which campaigns for the separation of church and state.

Waleed Husseini is a Palestinian blogger arrested in 2010 by the Palestinian Authority for blaspheming against Islam on Facebook and in his blog. He founded the Council of Ex-Muslims of France in 2013.

An International Secular Manifesto and the establishment of a united front of secularists to meet future challenges will be the final outcome of the Conference. Conference contributions will also be published in a book.

The conference is endorsed by Atheist Alliance International; Children First Now; Center for Inquiry;

Council of Ex-Muslims of Britain; Equal Rights Now – Organisation against Women’s Discrimination in Iran; Fitnah – Movement for Women’s Liberation; International Committee against Stoning; International Committee against Execution; International Federation of Iranian Refugees; Iran Solidarity; National Secular Society; One Law for All; Secularism is a Women’s Issue; The Richard Dawkins Foundation for Reason and Science UK; and Women Living Under Muslim Laws amongst others.

*For full details of the conference*, including on registration and obtaining tickets, visit the event’s dedicated website: [www.secularconference.com/](http://www.secularconference.com/) or email [maryamnamazie gmail.com](mailto:maryamnamazie@gmail.com). Please also join the event’s Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/events/630...> and follow the conference on Twitter: <https://twitter.com/SecularConf> or Tweet @secularconf.

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\* <http://www.siawi.org/article8040.html>