

# Dozens of speakers to attend major conference on secularism and freedom of expression

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Dozens of speakers are confirmed to address the upcoming 'Free Expression & Conscience' conference, including many honorary associates of the National Secular Society.

The international conference is being organised by activist Maryam Namazie, who was named Secularist of the Year in 2005. The NSS is one of the organisations sponsoring the conference and NSS council member and free speech activist Chris Moos will speak at the event.

The conference will "discuss censorship and blasphemy laws, freedom of and from religion, apostasy, the limits of religion's role in society, LGBT and women's rights, atheism, secular values and more."

Organisers said the event will "highlight the voices of people on the frontlines of resistance - many of them persecuted and exiled – as well as address challenges faced by activists and freethinkers, elaborate on the links between democratic politics and free expression and conscience, promote secular and rights-based alternatives, and establish priorities for collective action."

Yasmin Rehman, who was named Secularist of the Year 2017 by the Society in March, will speak. She will be joined by several of the National Secular Society's honorary associates including Richard Dawkins and AC Grayling.

Many other speakers from all over the world are attending.

Many prominent ex-Muslims are attending to speak at the event, including Sarah Haider, co-founder of the Ex-Muslims of North America, Fariborz Pooya, who is a founding member of the Council of ex-Muslims of Britain, Rana Ahmad of the Council of ex-Muslims of Germany, Cemal Knudsen Yucel, the co-founder of Ex-Muslims of Norway, and many other ex-Muslim activists from Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Bangladesh and beyond.

The conference will take place over two days, on the 22<sup>nd</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> July. [Tickets must be purchased online.](#)

Panel topics on the first day will include discussions on:

- 'Islam's non-believers'
- 'Blasphemy, Islamophobia, freedom of thought and expression'
- 'Religion in the law and state'
- 'Secularism as a human right'

The second day will have panels on:

- 'Women's resistance, the veil and religious morality'
- 'Identity politics, communalism and multiculturalism'
- 'Out, loud and proud'
- 'Art as resistance'

Following the conference, on 24<sup>th</sup> July, there will be a strategy meeting for ex-Muslims which will be open to the public.

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