

University & student union fail to publicly condemn preachers

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The University of East London (UEL) blocked an Islamist meeting that was due to be held on the Stratford campus last Friday, 15 March. The meeting was billed as featuring hate preachers Khalid Yasin (right) and Jalal Ibn Saeed.

The meeting was also advertised with "segregated seating", where women would be forced to sit separately from men.

The Peter Tatchell Foundation, the LGBT Society at UEL and the Braki blog lobbied for the meeting to be cancelled.

Khalid Yasin says homosexuality and lesbianism are "aberrations, they are immoralities." [He endorses the execution of gay people.](#)

He also insists that Muslims should not have non-Muslims as friends, condemning non-Muslims using the derogatory term, kaffirs. He praises public executions and amputations and claims AIDS is a western and World Health Organisation conspiracy to kill Africans.

Jalal Ibn Saeed reportedly supports the Taliban, despite their terrorist tactics and their abuse of human rights.

"The advocacy of execution, violent jihad and human rights abuses — plus the organiser's insistence on gender segregation — contravene the university's equal opportunities and anti-discrimination policies. Students and staff should not be subjected to hate and menaces," said human rights campaigner, Peter Tatchell, Director of the human rights advocacy organisation, the Peter Tatchell Foundation.

"Universities are supposed to be places of enlightenment, tolerance, liberalism and human rights. It is shocking the way student Islamist societies are promoting hate preachers who are anti-Semitic, sexist, homophobic and who abuse fellow Muslims who do not conform to their hardline interpretation of Islam," said Mr Tatchell.

Following protests from the Peter Tatchell Foundation, at the initiative of the LGBT Society at UEL, the student union confirmed that the meeting had been cancelled and, as an extra precaution, ensured that the room was locked so the Islamists could not meet on campus.

However, the student union was unwilling to make a public statement condemning the extremists; claiming this would give them publicity. In a message to the LGBT Society, Miles Battye, the Societies and Cultural Activities Coordinator at the University of East London Student Union (UELSU) said: "Not necessary – and may do more harm than good. We shouldn't acknowledge them as they are not even students at this uni, never mind UELSU societies, as far as I am aware our students don't even know about this event. Publicising it is doing them a favour."

Loren Wright, the LGBT Society president, who played the major role in ensuring that the meeting did not go ahead, disagreed:

"It is good that this event didn't go ahead but the student union and university still could have publicly denounced the fact that the speakers had been scheduled. I think it would have been fairer to students and the surrounding community to have the university and student union publicly release a statement criticising this event; making it clear that the university is a place of diversity and equality," said Wright.

In response to lobbying by Naseer Muhammad, a gay Muslim activist working with the Peter Tatchell Foundation and author of the [Braki blog](#), the university advised him privately:

"We are guided by the 1986 Education Act, Part IV, Section 43, which requires a university to permit speakers, who operate within its own code of practice onto site, if they have been booked to speak. A conference has been organised by an external organisation to take place which we have reviewed and declined given that we believe it is in breach of our equality and diversity policy. The Students' Union has confirmed that neither they, nor any of our student societies was involved in this booking."

However, like the student union, the university declined to publicise their statement.

Rev Jude Drummond, the university chaplain, reportedly told the LGBT Society that the university authorities and student union should have publicly criticised the hate preachers, in order to send a signal that the promotion of hatred and violence is not tolerated by UEL.

Naseer Muhammad of the Braki blog added: "The university was very cooperative and understanding. I am glad the meeting was cancelled because it is wrong for extremists to misinterpret Islam to justify homophobia and other hatreds. The Qur'an is ambiguous on homosexuality. It doesn't condemn same-sex relationships or prescribe any punishments."

[Khalid Yasin's Wikipedia page](#)

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