

# Secularism 2019: Reclaiming Religious Freedom

**Date:** 18th May 2019

**Location:** The Tower Hotel in London, St Katharine's Way, London E1W 1LD

What does "religious freedom" truly mean? While religious lobbyists commonly use terms like "religious freedom" to demand privileges, this conference will serve to highlight that true "religious freedom" means freedom of belief for people of all religions and none. The conference will also explore the limits of religious freedom when it impinges on other human rights, including bodily autonomy, equality and freedom of expression.

We also presented our Secularist of the Year 2019 award at the conference. Secularist of the Year is an opportunity to celebrate the outstanding groups and individuals advancing secularism and related human rights. The 2019 winner was Saif ul-Malook; [read more here](#).

## Videos

**Stephen Evans**, Opening

**Dr Ahmed Shaheed**, Introduction to religious freedom

**Pragna Patel**, Southall Black Sisters

## Speakers:

**Rachel Laser** CEO,  
Americans United  
For Separation Of  
Church And State  
(Keynote speaker)

**Nick Cohen**,  
Journalist, author  
and political  
commentator

**Dr Joyce D'Silva**,  
Ambassador  
Emeritus and former  
Chief Executive of  
Compassion in  
World Farming

**Brian Earp**, *The  
Oxford Uehiro*

*Centre for Practical  
Ethics*

**Sara Khan**, Lead  
Commissioner for  
Countering  
Extremism

**Pragna Patel**  
*, Director of Southall  
Black Sisters and  
founding member of  
Women Against  
Fundamentalism*

**Yasmin Rehman**,  
National Secular  
Society councillor

**Izzy Posen**,  
President of Bristol  
University Free  
Speech Society and  
former member of  
the Hasidic Jewish  
community

**Dr Ahmed  
Shaheed**, Special  
Rapporteur on  
freedom of religion  
or belief, United  
Nations Office of the  
High Commissioner  
for Human Rights.

**Geoffrey  
Robertson QC**,  
human rights  
barrister, Doughty  
Street Chambers  
(Presenting  
Secularist of the  
Year award)

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[See the timetable and speaker biographies](#) (PDF, 798 Kb)

*Picture credit: Ahmed Shaheed - Foreign and Commonwealth Office*