



Secular
Conference



LONDON
25 NOVEMBER 2018

INTERNATIONAL
CONFERENCE ON

SHARIA, SEGREGATION & SECULARISM

#OneLaw4All

www.secularconference.com

CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

09:30

REGISTRATION WITH REFRESHMENTS

10:00

OPENING

MC **Fariborz Pooya** and **Nahla Mahmoud**

Welcome: **Maryam Namazie**, Secularism is a Human Right

Opening Keynote Address: **Gita Sahgal**, Precious Heritage - Using Universality to Fight Colonial and Fundamentalist Laws

Keynote Address: **Saif UI Malook**, Asia Bibi's Fight for Justice



10:50

FILM SCREENING

3 SECOND DIVORCE BY DIRECTOR SHAZIA JAVED

Screening - for the first time in the UK - a new film exploring the impact of instant triple-talaq on Indian Muslim women through intimate stories of women who have been victimized by it. It provides a behind-the-scenes glimpse at the struggle of Muslim women activists in India who are tirelessly fighting to get a legal ban on this practice.



11:40

PLENARY PANEL

SHARIA, RELIGIOUS ARBITRATION AND FAMILY LAW

Chair: **Gita Sahgal**

Afsana Lachaux, **Diana Nammi**, **Houzan Mahmoud**, **Nasreen Rehman**, **Sadikur Rahman** and **Yasmin Rehman**



13:00

BUFFET LUNCH

14:00

PLENARY PANEL

THE POLITICS OF COLLUSION

Chair: Peter Tatchell

Bonya Ahmed, Marieme Helie Lucas, Pragna Patel, Rumana Hashem,
Sadia Hameed and Stasa Zajovic

15:20

PERFORMANCE AND PUBLIC ACTION

IN SUPPORT OF MOVEMENT AGAINST COMPULSORY
VEILING IN IRAN



Performance by **Atoosa Faramand** and Public Action
led by **Victoria Gugenheim**.

15:50

BREAK WITH REFRESHMENTS

16:20

PLENARY PANEL

GENDER SEGREGATION, THE VEIL AND
WOMEN'S BODILY AUTONOMY

Chair: **Caroline Criado Perez**

Ahlam Akram, Eve Sacks, Homa Arjomand,
Inna Shevchenko, Julia Alimova and Nina Sankari



17:40

PLENARY PANEL

SECULARISM AS A DEFENCE OF WOMEN'S
AND MINORITY RIGHTS



Chair: **Beatrix Campbell**

**Anna Zobnina, Annie Laurie Gaylor, Cinzia Sciuto,
Ibtissame Betty Lachgar, Nadia El Fani and Rahila Gupta**

19:00

CLOSING

Closing Keynote Address: **Pragna Patel**, Facing many Directions in the Struggle
for Secular Democracy

Maryam Namazie, Manifesto for Women and Secularism

Song by **Shelley Segal**

19:30-21:00

COCKTAILS AND ENTERTAINMENT

MC **Nahla Mahmoud**

Artwork by **Mahshad Afshar**

One Law for All Award Ceremony

LCP Dance Theatre

Singer and Songwriter **Shelley Segal**



SPEAKERS

AFSANA LACHAUX

WOMEN'S RIGHTS ACTIVIST

Afsana has been fighting for many years to bring her son Louis home. Louis is separated from his mother and lives in Dubai where Sharia law prevents Afsana from visiting and gaining custody of her son. In 2017, Afsana won a landmark victory for women's rights in France, in which the French courts, rejected the UAE Sharia court ruling. Afsana's long running legal campaign for justice continues both in the UK and France. She is currently writing a book on honour killings.



AHLAM AKRAM

FOUNDER OF BASIRA

Ahlam is the founder of BASIRA, British Arabs Supporting Universal Women's Rights, a not-for-profit organisation. She is a peace and human rights campaigner, writer, and broadcaster. Ahlam is a British citizen of Palestinian origin who has lived in London since 1979. Her articles have appeared in Arabic newspapers Al Quds, Al Hayat and Al Sharq al Awsat. Her work has also been published in Elaph, the most popular online Arabic magazine. Ahlam is regularly interviewed on Arabic TV channels and supports the role of women in peace building. Her areas of expertise involve the family status law which is widely implemented in the MENA region, and challenging the legislative systems that support the oppression of women. She is an active member of Women Without Borders and she is on the executive committee of Women Against Fundamentalism. She is a London Member of the UN Women NC UK, where she was invited to give a talk to UNIFEM in London on 15 September 2012.



ANNA ZOBNINA

STRATEGY & POLICY COORDINATOR AT THE EUROPEAN NETWORK OF MIGRANT WOMEN

Born in St Petersburg, Russia, Anna has over ten years' experience of intersectional feminist analysis of violence and discrimination against women, with specific focus on sexual-reproductive health and rights (SRHR), sexual exploitation and migrant women and girls. She is a selected expert with the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) and works on capacity building of migrant women organisations and strengthening their inclusion in the European decision making in the European Network of Migrant Women.



ANNIE LAURIE GAYLOR

CO-PRESIDENT OF THE FREEDOM FROM RELIGION FOUNDATION

Annie Laurie is co-president of the Freedom From Religion Foundation, originally founding FFRF in 1976 with her mother, feminist activist Anne Nicol Gaylor. Gaylor is the author of several books, including "Woe to the Women: The Bible Tells Me So", "Betrayal of Trust: Clergy Abuse of Children" and, as editor, "Women Without Superstition: No Gods – No Masters," an anthology of historic women freethinkers. She formerly edited FFRF's newspaper, Freethought Today. In 2010, Gaylor received the Humanist Heroine award from the American Humanist Association. She has been an invited speaker at conferences including the 2012 Global Atheist Convention in Melbourne, Australia.



ATOOSA FARAHMAND

PERFORMANCE ARTIST

Atoosa is an Iranian-born performance artist, dancer and choreographer based in Malmö, Sweden. She is currently working at Skånes Dansteater as a project leader and at IM (Individual Humanitarian Aid) as an artistic director. She is focusing on creating platforms and opportunities for newcomers together with others to explore different forms of art.

She has been nominated in Sweden for her dance projects twice.

Atoosa is also interested in working on creating pictures, videos and performances connected to her own personal experiences.

'White Wednesdays,' which is a video created by her jointly with Oscar Hagberg, has been nominated at many short film festivals.



BEATRIX CAMPBELL

FEMINIST WRITER, JOURNALIST, BROADCASTER AND PLAYWRIGHT

Beatrix is a writer, journalist, broadcaster, playwright, influential feminist and a Green Party Parliamentary candidate. She was active in the Women's Liberation Movement, a founder of Red Rag, a Marxist and feminist journal, a member of the Free Communications Group that published Open Secret and campaigned against monopoly ownership of the mass media and was involved in an equal pay strike and occupation in 1981, amongst others. She collaborated with Judith Jones on two successful plays, was Writer in Residence in Prisons supporting young men through creative writing and has received numerous awards including Cheltenham Festival Literary Prize, Fawcett Prize, and several honorary doctorates for her work on community, crime, and children's welfare. She was recipient of an OBE in 2009 for services to equality. Her latest book is End of Equality.



BONYA AHMED

ACTIVIST, WRITER AND BLOGGER AT MUKTO-MONA

Bonya is a Visiting Research Scholar at UT Austin since Fall 2016, working on the rise of Islamic fundamentalism. She is also a published author and moderator at Mukto-mona blog, the first online platform for Bengali speaking freethinkers. Until recently, she worked as a Senior Director in the Finance industry in the USA. She is the widow of Avijit Roy, a well-known writer, blogger, and activist who founded Mukto-Mona. Roy and Ahmed were brutally attacked in the middle of the street by Islamists during a book signing trip to Dhaka, Bangladesh on February 26, 2015. Ahmed was gravely injured during the attack. She continues to work with international and local groups to help Bengali bloggers and activists and to seek justice for Avijit and others murdered. She is dedicated to drawing attention to the growing culture of impunity in Bangladesh.



CAROLINE CRIADO PEREZ

WRITER, BROADCASTER AND CAMPAIGNER

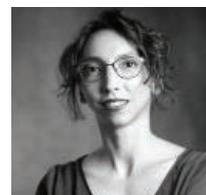
Caroline is a writer, broadcaster and award-winning feminist campaigner. She is published across the major national media and regularly appears in both print and broadcast as a commentator. Her first book, "Do it Like a Woman," was published by Portobello in 2015 and was chosen by Bridget Christie as one of her books of the year in the Guardian. She is currently working on her second book, which will be about the gender data gap. Caroline has a degree in English language and literature from the University of Oxford, and studied behavioural and feminist economics at the LSE. She was the 2013 recipient of the Liberty Human Rights Campaigner of the Year award, and was named OBE in the Queen's Birthday Honours 2015.



CINZIA SCIUTO

JOURNALIST

Cinzia is a journalist, editor of the Italian political and philosophical journal *MicroMega* and collaborator of the pan-European news website *Newsmavens.com*. She studied philosophy mainly dealing with moral philosophy, politics and philosophy of law. Her main areas of interests are the relationship between religion and democracy, bioethical issues, human rights and women's rights in particular. She has written "La Terra è rotonda. Kant, Kelsen e la prospettiva cosmopolitica" (*Mimesis*, 2015) and in September 2018 a new book: "Non c'è fede che tenga. Manifesto laico contro il multiculturalismo", a secular "Manifesto" against multiculturalism, has been published.



DIANA NAMMI

FOUNDER OF THE IRANIAN KURDISH WOMEN'S
RIGHTS ORGANISATION

Diana is the Founder and Executive Director of Iranian Kurdish Women's Rights Organisation, which she established in 2002. IKWRO is an NGO providing advice, advocacy, training and counselling for women and girls from Middle Eastern and North African communities affected by "honour" based violence, forced marriage, FGM and domestic violence, and campaigning for better laws and policies. Her work has received national and international recognition and she is regularly called upon to share her expertise with the government, academics, the media and professionals. In 2012 she was named in a list of 150 women who shake the world by *Newsweek* and *The Daily Beast*, and in 2014 she received the Special Jury Women on the Move Award from UNHCR, The Forum and Migrants Rights Network and she was honoured with the UK's Woman of the Year Award and recognised by BBC's 100 Women. In 2015 she won the Women of Courage Award from the Women's Refugee Commission in New York and the XX1 Premis Ones Mediterrania Award. Diana has been bestowed an honorary degree from the Department of Law at Essex University. Prior to moving to the UK, at 15, she set up an underground women's group and became an active member of an opposition party in Iran. After the Islamists took power following the 1979 Iranian Revolution, she narrowly escaped arrest and fled to the mountains to join the Peshmerga, Kurdish freedom fighters. She moved to the UK later on.



EVE SACKS

TRUSTEE OF JEWISH ORTHODOX FEMINIST ALLIANCE UK

Eve is a Trustee of Jewish Orthodox Feminist Alliance (JOFA) UK. JOFA expands the spiritual, ritual, intellectual and political opportunities for women within the framework of Jewish law, by advocating meaningful participation and equality for women in family life, synagogues, houses of learning and Jewish communal organisations. Eve also reaches out to hidden apostates in the ultra-orthodox Jewish community, and speaks out for those who are silenced by their social circumstances. Eve is also engaged in Jewish anti Extremism initiatives and writes blog posts for Jewish publications. She is an accountant specialising in corporate taxes.



FARIBORZ POOYA

BREAD AND ROSES TV PRODUCER

Fariborz was born in Iran. He took part in the 1978-79 revolution and moved to UK in 1979. He studied economics and politics at Oxford Brookes and Birkbeck College, University of London. He founded the Iranian Secular Society, was one of the founding members of the Council of Ex-Muslims of Britain and writes and comments on politics and secularism. He also co-hosts and produces a weekly political-social TV magazine, Bread and Roses TV, in Persian and English.



GITA SAHGAL

DIRECTOR OF CENTRE FOR SECULAR SPACE

Gita is a writer, journalist, film-maker and rights activist. She is currently Founder and Director of Centre for Secular Space. She was formerly Head of the Gender Unit at Amnesty International; she was suspended in 2010 after she was quoted criticising Amnesty for its high-profile associations with the Islamist Moazzam Begg, the director of a group called Cageprisoners. For many years she served on the board of Southall Black Sisters and was a founder of Women Against Fundamentalism and Awaaz: South Asia Watch. With Nira Yival Davis, she edited "Refusing Holy Orders: Women and Fundamentalism in Britain" (London, 1992). Among her articles are "Legislating Utopia? Violence Against Women, Identities and Interventions" in "The Situated Politics of Belonging". During the 1980s, she worked for a Black current affairs programme called "Bandung File" on Channel 4 TV. She made two films about the Rushdie affair, "Hullabaloo Over Satanic Verses" and "Struggle or Submission". She has also made two programmes for Dispatches Channel 4, "The Provoked Wife" on the case of Kiranjit Ahluwalia and "The War Crimes File", an investigation into allegations of war crimes, committed by members of the Jamaat i Islami in Bangladesh in 1971.



HOMA ARJOMAND

COORDINATOR OF THE INTERNATIONAL CAMPAIGN
FOR ONE SECULAR SCHOOL SYSTEM

Homa is an Iranian-born political activist in Canada running the International Campaign against Sharia Court in Canada and others including to close down Iranian embassies and for One Secular School System in Ontario. She received the 2005 Toronto Humanist of the Year award and was recognised as women of the year by Gazette Des Femmes amongst others. She is the Spokesperson of Women's Liberation in Canada and founder of the Cultural Bridges.



HOUZAN MAHMOUD

CULTURE PROJECT CO-FOUNDER

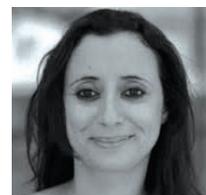
Houzan is a women's rights campaigner, public lecturer and co-founder of Culture Project, a transnational project formed recently to raise awareness about feminism and gender in Kurdistan and diaspora. She has an MA in Gender Studies from SOAS, London University. She worked as a representative of the Organisation of Women's Freedom in Iraq for many years. She was born in Iraqi Kurdistan in 1973 and currently resides and works in London. Her articles have been published in The Independent, The Guardian, The Tribune, The New Statesman and others. Houzan has led many campaigns internationally, including campaigns against the rape and abduction of women in Iraq, and against the imposition of Islamic Sharia Law in Kurdistan and the Iraqi constitution. She has also led other campaigns against so called honour killings and against violations of freedom of expression. She is the winner of 2016 Emma Humphrey's Memorial Award.



IBTISSAME BETTY LACHGAR

FEMINIST, HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVIST, AND LGBT ADVOCATE

Ibtissame is a clinical psychologist specialised in criminology and victimology, particularly violence against women and sexual violence. She is co-founder and Leader of MALI (Alternative Movement for Individual Liberties), which is universalist, feminist and secularist. The civil disobedience movement fights for individual liberties, against discrimination and breaks taboos. Their first action in 2009 was a picnic during the day in Ramadan to protest against the law which condemns those "known as Muslim" who do not fast to 6 months in prison. In 2012, she invited the NGO Women on Waves from the Netherlands (Abortion Boat) to fight for the right to abortion and for the decriminalisation of abortion. She also organised a Kiss-in in 2013 and coloured Rabat's fountains in red in 2017 in the fight against violence against women. She initiated the first LGBT movement in Morocco in 2012, the IDAHOT. Her work is censored by the majority of organisations in Morocco, even progressive and feminist ones. Ibtissame has been the victim of sexual assault by the police whilst in custody for her protests in Sept 2016. There is a trial in progress against her and she has faced numerous threats as a result of her work.



INNA SHEVCHENKO

FEMEN LEADER

Inna is leader of FEMEN, topless activists against various manifestations of patriarchy, including dictatorship, religion, and the sex industry. She has published "Anatomie de l'oppression" with Pauline Hillier. She was kidnapped and threatened by the Belarus KGB in 2011 and was given political asylum in France. In July 2013, Shevchenko was the main inspiration for a new French stamp depicting Marianne. In December 2012, the French magazine Madame Figaro included Shevchenko in its list of the world's top 20 iconic women of the year. Shevchenko is a speaker at conferences and a columnist for the international press. She was a speaker at a debate on freedom of speech in Copenhagen on 14 February 2015 with cartoonist Lars Vilks. She was speaking about an illusion that in Western Europe people can fully enjoy freedom of speech when a terrorist opened fire in the lobby of the cultural centre, where the debate took place. Surviving the attack, Shevchenko later said, "Liberal voices should be louder than Kalashnikovs".



JULIA ALIMOVA

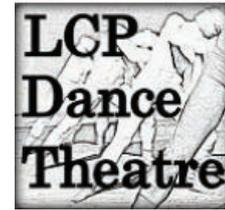
ACTIVIST

In 2012, in St. Petersburg a group of activists launched an NGO, aimed at helping children and youth from families of labour migrants. They organised free courses of Russian language and assistance with school subjects. Julia joined the NGO from the very beginning, and since 2013 has been coordinating its work. The organisation also provides free spring and summer camps for children and legal consultations for their parents. In 2015, on the basis of "Children of St. Petersburg" together with a group of women from migrant backgrounds, Julia launched a human right defending newspaper "Gul", issued monthly, for women from Central Asia and their families. Gul is issued in four languages: Tajik, Uzbek, Kyrgyz, Russian and focuses on legal help, women's rights and children's education. In 2016, Julia joined the "Eve's Ribs" project as a co-coordinator. "Eve's Ribs" is a Russian-Finnish feminist educational and artistic project; it tackles the problem of silencing gender inequality and violence. In St. Petersburg it opened the first feminist space with daily events – lectures, seminars and support groups. Besides, it aims to bring together feminist groups from different regions of Russia and Finland with an annual educational seminar on artistic practices and a major event – a festival of theatre, performance, and video-art. The main topics of interest for Julia are gender equality and migration processes, with a special focus on children and youth. She has also been an activist in environmental movements and is vegan for more than 4 years.



LCP DANCE THEATRE

Formed in 2006, LCP is a multimedia and multiethnic dance company which emphasises human rights issues mainly human trafficking. The aim is to bring awareness of inequality and violations of human rights around the world through the performing arts. With the support of BBC Performing Arts fund 2011 for the best choreography awarded to Mimmo Miccolis, LCP created a unique human rights-based dance performance "Rights(?)". In collaboration with African Dance Company Tavaziva Dance and Bernie Grant Arts Centre, LCP stood for rights of equal race, gender, social and economic status. LCP has had partnerships with Hurricane of Hearts, Sophie Hayes Foundation and Minded Institute. It trains emerging dancers in a very unique performing arts structure by merging a contemporary dance technique with acting by introducing the Meisner technique to improve their physical and psychological skills on stage. This technique emphasises "moment-to-moment" spontaneity through communication with other actors in order to generate behaviour that is truthful within imagined, fictional circumstances.



MAHSHAD AFSHAR

FILMMAKER, ARTIST, HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVIST

Mahshad is a filmmaker, visual artist, lecturer, human rights activist and campaigner born and raised in Iran, currently living in London. Her work mostly draws on the aesthetic of painful otherness, body, memory and politicised identity. Graduated from London Film School in Filmmaking/ Directing (MA) in (2014), she is currently studying Film Studies (Ph.D.) at Kingston University (London). She has received numerous scholarship and studentships including the prestigious Creative Skillset Film Skills bursary in (2011), London metropolitan bursary (2009) and KSA Studentship (2017). She is a cultural and political activist with the research interest in the areas of Feminist Film Theory, Gaze and Screen Representations of Gender & Sexuality. She has widely collaborated with international human rights organisations and campaigns especially of those supporting refugees and migrants. Afshar has been a guest speaker at Amnesty International and many other human rights and women's rights organisations. In her most recent documentary and film essay project, *Women on Both Sides of the Camera* (2018), she questions the idea of female gaze by addressing how Iranian female filmmakers represent female identity on the screen. Afshar is currently collaborating with organisations that use art as a means to build solidarity, dialogue and spreading peace across cultures.



MARIEME HELIE LUCAS

AUTHOR, SOCIOLOGIST

Marieme is an Algerian sociologist, political theorist and author. She was born in Algeria to a 'family of feminists' and had been active in the liberation struggle of Algeria. She is founder and former International Coordinator of Women Living Under Muslim Laws, a solidarity network that provides information, support and a collective space for women. She is also the founder of Secularism Is A Women's Issue, which focuses on the threat of the erosion of secular spaces and of formal secularism, and challenges all forms of fundamentalisms.



MARYAM NAMAZIE

SPOKESPERSON OF COUNCIL OF EX-MUSLIMS
OF BRITAIN AND ONE LAW FOR ALL

Maryam is Co-Spokesperson for One Law for All and Council of Ex-Muslims of Britain. She co-hosts a weekly television programme called Bread and Roses in Persian and English, which is broadcast in Iran. She is on the International Advisory Board of the Raif Badawi Foundation for Freedom and Euromind; National Secular Society Honorary Associate; Honorary Associate of Rationalist International; Emeritus Member of the Secular Humanist League of Brazil; a Patron of London Black Atheists and Pink Triangle Trust, Humanist Laureate at the International Academy of Humanism and a columnist for the Freethinker. Maryam and the Council of Ex-Muslims of Britain were featured in a 2016 film by Deeyah Khan called Islam's Non-Believers. She was also a character in DV8 Physical Theatre's "Can We Talk About This?" which deals with freedom of speech, censorship and Islam. She was awarded the 2017 Henry H. Zumbach Freedom From Religious Fundamentalism award; 2016 International Laicity Prize from the Comité Laïcité République and was honoured by the National Secular Society for her campaigning work defending free speech at universities (2016) despite attempts at barring her by Student Unions or Islamic Society efforts to intimidate her and cancel her talks. She was also awarded Atheist of the Year by Kazimierz Lyszczyński (2014); Journalist of the Year at the Dods Women in Public Life Awards (2013); selected one of the top 45 women of the year by Elle magazine Quebec (2007); one of 2006's most intriguing people by DNA, awarded the National Secular Society's Secularist of the Year Award (2005), amongst others.



NADIA EL FANI

FILMMAKER

Nadia is a Tunisian film-maker living in France, risks arrest and up to five years in prison if she returns to Tunisia after Islamists filed a complaint against her for her film "Neither Allah nor Master". The film is an account of Tunisian life immediately before and after the fall of Zine El-Abidine Ben Ali. Others films include "Ouled Lenine" and "Our Breasts, Our Weapons!"



NAHLA MAHMOUD

CAMPAIGNER

Nahla is an environment and human rights activist originally from Sudan. She works with a number of campaigns in the UK, including One Law for All and Secular Middle East and North Africa. She leads the Sudanese Humanists Group and is former Spokesperson for the Council of Ex-Muslims of Britain.



NASREEN REHMAN

WOMEN'S RIGHTS CAMPAIGNER

Nasreen was born in Rawalpindi, Pakistan and has been living in the UK, since 1975. As an economist, she has worked in the private sector and in development. From 1998-2001, she was Director of the Mahbubul Haq Human Development Centre, a UNDP funded economic research think tank in Pakistan; and continues to serve on its Board. She was on the Pakistan Power 100 list of most influential women. Nasreen has worked in the performing arts for the past three decades, as a facilitator and practitioner. She is on the Board of Akademi, a leading South Asian dance provider in the UK, and is Artistic Director of the Grand Trunk Road Company, a forum that uses 'the road' as a metaphor for bringing communities together. Nasreen is an award-winning screenplay writer who has worked with directors such as Bollywood's Yash Chopra, Canada's Deepa Mehta and Mehreen Jabbar from Pakistan. In the 1990s, as a Trustee of the Runnymede Trust she served on the Commissions on Anti-Semitism and Islamophobia. In 2009 she co-founded British Muslims for Secular Democracy. Currently, she has completed a PhD on The History of the Cinema in Lahore c.1919-1947, at the University of Cambridge. She is also Vice Chair on the National Commission on Forced Marriage.



NINA SANKARI

VICE PRESIDENT OF THE ATHEIST KAZIMIERZ LYSZCZYNSKI FOUNDATION IN POLAND



Nina is a Polish secular, atheist and feminist activist. She is the Vice President of the atheist Kazimierz Lyszczyński Foundation in Poland, co-founder of the International Association of Free Thought and its Spokesperson. She writes and translates articles for the Polish and French freethinkers and feminist centres (Fakty i Mity, 50/50, Journal ReSPUBLICA, La Raison, Charlie Hebdo). She has participated in many international conferences related to secularism, rationalism, atheism, women's rights, and on political and social issues. She is the initiator and co-organiser of the Atheist Days – a big yearly event in Warsaw.

PETER TATCHELL

HUMAN RIGHTS CAMPAIGNER



Peter has been campaigning for human rights and global justice since 1967. New Statesman readers voted him sixth on their list of "Heroes of our Time" 2006. He won Campaigner of the Year at The Observer Ethical Awards 2009, as well as Secularist of the Year 2012. He writes and broadcasts on many human rights and social justice issues. In protest against the Archbishop of Canterbury's support for legal discrimination against LGBT people, he interrupted Dr Carey's Easter Sunday Sermon in 1998. He attempted a citizen's arrest of Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe in 1999 and again in 2001, and was beaten unconscious the second time. He was also arrested and beaten when he went to support Moscow LGBT Pride in 2007. Both attacks left him with brain and eye damage. He is currently the Director of the human rights organisation, the Peter Tatchell Foundation.

PRAGNA PATEL

DIRECTOR OF SOUTHALL BLACK SISTERS

Pragna is Founder and Director of the Southall Black Sisters. SBS is, a multi-award-winning women's organisation founded in 1979 to address the needs of black and minority women experiencing gender violence. It successfully campaigned for the release of Kiranjit Ahluwalia, a landmark case in which an Asian woman was convicted of the murder of her violent husband. The case reformed homicide law, creating greater awareness within and outside minority communities. Pragna has been in the forefront of many other SBS' milestone cases and campaigns on domestic violence, legal aid, immigration and religious fundamentalism which includes mounting successful legal challenges against the practice of gender segregation in schools and universities and the accommodation of 'Sharia' codes within the legal system. She is also a co-founder of Women Against Fundamentalism. She has written extensively on race, gender and religion, including "Faith in the State? Asian Women's Struggles for Human Rights in the UK", and "Shrinking Secular Spaces: Asian Women at the Intersect of Race, Religion and Gender". She was listed in The Guardian's Top 100 women: activists and campaigners.



RAHILA GUPTA

WRITER AND JOURNALIST

Rahila is a freelance journalist and writer. Her work has appeared in The Guardian and New Humanist among other papers and magazines. Her books include, "Enslaved: The New British Slavery"; "From Homebreakers to Jailbreakers: Southall Black Sisters"; "Provoked"; and "Don't Wake Me: The Ballad of Nihal Armstrong" (Playdead Press, 2013). She is co-authoring a book with Beatrix Campbell with the title "Why Doesn't Patriarchy Die?" She is also patron of Peace in Kurdistan, on the management committee of Southall Black Sisters, chair of the Nihal Armstrong Trust which she set up in 2004 in memory of her dearly loved, disabled son who died in 2001, a judge on the Emma Humphreys Memorial Prize awarded to individual women and groups who have campaigned, raised awareness of and supported women escaping violence, amongst others.



RUMANA HASHEM

WOMEN'S RIGHTS ACTIVIST

Rumana is a Bangladeshi-born rights activist and a political-sociologist. She is a spokesperson of the Community Women Against Abuse and a former organiser of Nari Diganta, a secular Bangladeshi women's organisation in Britain. She has a PhD in gendered and sexualised violence in the conflict in south-east Bangladesh. She teaches on an Open Learning Initiative programme for asylum seekers and refugees in Higher Education at the department of Social Sciences at the University of East London. Her current research focuses on narratives of sexuality and gendered violence; interconnections between gender, power and politics; and displaced narratives of forced-migrants and refugees from the global south.



SADIA HAMEED

SPOKESPERSON OF THE COUNCIL OF EX-MUSLIMS OF BRITAIN

Sadia is a Spokesperson of the Council of Ex-Muslims of Britain and has been featured in a 2016 film, *Islam's Non-Believers*, by award-winning filmmaker Deeyah Khan. She is also a human rights activist and Honour Based Violence, Forced Marriage and FGM Consultant, based in Gloucestershire, working in the sexual violence field, with a focus on Black Minority Ethnic women. Sadia organised a hugely successful event titled 'Let's Talk Honour' in October 2016, which was held at Gloucester University. She also launched Critical Sisters. She is Winner of IKWRO Special Recognition: Activist of the Year 2017.



SADIKUR RAHMAN

SOLICITOR & NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY COUNCIL MEMBER

Sadikur is a National Secular Society Council Member and Chair of the NSS Secular Legal Forum. He is also a Solicitor with extensive experience in all areas of Community Law and specialises in housing, possession, homelessness, disrepair, unlawful eviction and community care cases and in taking these matters through the County and Admin Courts. He has written extensively on Sharia courts and religious arbitration.



SAIF UL MALOOK

LAWYER

Saif is Asia Bibi's lawyer. Asia Bibi, a Christian woman, was on death row in Pakistan for eight years accused of blasphemy after a quarrel with Muslim neighbours. Two Pakistani politicians were killed for speaking out in her defence. Saif ul Malook successfully defended Bibi and she was released on appeal in November 2018. After her release, Islamist groups called for her death penalty and made threats against Saif's life. He had to shelter in the French Embassy in Islamabad for three nights before the army escorted him to the airport. He is now in the Netherlands.



SHELLEY SEGAL

SINGER/SONGWRITER

Shelley is a singer-songwriter involved in secular activism. Her first record, "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. The record gives a voice to the often-underrepresented views of non-religious people, the fastest growing minority in many countries. It also creates opportunities to discuss issues of secularism with the mainstream media. Her voice has taken her around the world including England, Australia and ten tours of the United States. She has released seven recording projects of her own and runs independent record label True Music where she works with other artists. An award-winning songwriter, powerful performer and explicit story-teller, Shelley uses her music not only to express the way she sees the world but to create the world she wants to see.



STAŠA ZAJOVIĆ

CO-FOUNDER OF WOMEN IN BLACK

Staša is co-founder and coordinator of Women in Black, Belgrade, Serbia. She has initiated several women's networks, like Women's Peace Network, The International Network of Women's Solidarity against War/International Women in Black Network, Network of Conscientious Objectors and Anti militarism in Serbia, and The Coalition for a Secular State. She has organised educational activities focusing on women's human rights, refugee rights, women's peace politics, and women and antimilitarism. Staša is the author of numerous essays, articles and supplements in local, regional and international media, magazines and publications on women and politics, reproductive rights, war, nationalism and militarism, women's resistance to war, and anti-militarism. She has been nominated for and won a range of prizes and awards, including Millennium Peace Prize, Honorary Citizenship of Tutin, and Honorary Citizenship of Granada.



VICTORIA GUGENHEIM

BODY ARTIST

Victoria is an award-winning body artist. She is passionate about the necessity of and is merging, art with science. Art and science share a common ancestor with the human imagination, and without imagination there can be no hypothesis. It was the first visual, material, tangible "What if?" that humanity had, and it started 300,000 years ago deep in the caves near the twin Zambini Rivers. Victoria's art has been a lifelong quest of "de-othering" people through art, public speaking and personal aesthetic choice. Her art ranges from bodypainting, makeup, photography, sculpture, performances, installations, digital art, clothing design, drawing and painting with science and technology. She uses bodypainting as a way of empowering the human spirit, giving the person painted a new-found confidence that can be life changing.



YASMIN REHMAN

WOMEN'S RIGHTS CAMPAIGNER

Yasmin is a freelance consultant and doctoral candidate at the School of Oriental and African Studies. Her area of research is polygamy and the law. She has worked for more than 20 years predominantly on violence against women, race, faith and gender, and human rights. Yasmin has worked for Local Government, the Metropolitan Police Service as Director of Partnerships and Diversity (2004-08) during which time she also held the Deputy national lead for forced marriage and honour-based violence. Yasmin has most recently been commissioned as founding CEO of a race equality charity in East London, followed by Transforming Rehabilitation bid and now reviewing police responses to domestic abuse for national charities. Yasmin is currently member of the Board of EAW (End Violence Against Women Coalition), an Independent Adviser for City of London Police and a member of the Centre for Secular Space.



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