

9 September 2004

reply by email to: [jackg@lgbtag.org](mailto:jackg@lgbtag.org)

Ken Livingstone  
Mayor of London  
Greater London Authority  
City Hall  
The Queen's Walk  
London SE1 2AA

Dear Mr Mayor

**Re: Dr Qaradawi**

We write as a coalition representing the concerns of many of London's diverse communities. We are organisations and individuals with a longstanding commitment to active engagement in the rich tapestry of community relations within the GLA 'family'.

It will come as no surprise to you to learn of our collective opposition to your active support for Dr Qaradawi during his recent visit to London. We are further appalled by your decision to invite him to return to London as your guest for the forthcoming meeting of the European Social Forum in October.

Given the numerous commitments you have made to our various communities over the years, we were horrified by the lack of any consultation with us prior to or during Dr Qaradawi's previous visit, and in relation to the October invitation. Those of us involved in the London Civic Forum feel that this lack of consultation represents a renegeing on the commitments that you made prior to your election as Mayor.

Equally hurtful to us, has been the position in the media that succeeded in dismissing many of our considered and well-researched positions on this matter as islamophobic and unworthy of your attention.

Mr Mayor, please understand that these events have caused much pain and anguish in our communities. Some of us now feel that our years of experience in community relations in London are no longer of any interest to the Mayor and GLA. It appears that under your leadership the GLA prefers to make decisions based on non-transparent factors and criteria that remain closeted within the offices of your many advisors.

In the interests of promoting and sustaining harmonious community relations in London, we urge you to arrange a meeting between yourself, the signatories to this letter and other GLA representatives. Such a meeting will allow us to express our concerns in some depth and enable our communities

to understand that albeit belatedly, you took the time to listen to our concerns before providing a serious and thoughtful response. At the proposed meeting we intend to present you with evidence and documentation that can counter the conclusions reached by your 'experts and advisors' who suggested that our concerns are not rooted in fact.

We cannot recall a political event in London in recent times that has caused such widespread distress to minority groups in the capital. We feel that we deserve a serious conversation with you about this matter, and a serious response to our concerns before you welcome a man who endorses and provides theological justification for:  
suicide bombings of innocent civilians,  
the execution of homosexuals under Islamic rule,  
domestic violence against women under certain circumstances,  
placing the blame on rape victims who do not dress sufficiently modestly,  
promoting female genital mutilation  
the intimidation of the Hindu and Sikh communities through means such as targeted proselytism.

The signatories below are just some of the individuals and groups who are deeply concerned about this matter. Others holding London wide representative roles such as the President of the University of London Union will brief you on their specific concerns should you agree to meet. We hope that we shall secure from you a response worthy of the office that you hold, and in particular the responsibility you have been entrusted in maintaining harmonious relations between London's diverse communities.

Yours collectively

Luciana Berger (National Executive Committee/Anti Racism Coordinator, NUS)  
Alan Clarke (NUS NEC)  
Jack Gilbert (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Advisory Group to Metropolitan Police)  
Ramesh Kallidai (General Secretary, Hindu Forum of Britain)  
Derek Lennard (Chair, Gay & Lesbian Humanist Association - GALHA)  
Brett Lock (Outrage!)  
Fazal Mahmood (Chair, Imaan, the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender Muslim Group)  
Amrik Singh (Chair, Sikh Federation UK)  
Daljit Singh Shergill (Co-ordinator, National Council of Gurdwaras)  
Dabinderjit Singh (Co-ordinator, Sikh Secretariat)  
Gurjeet Singh (Co-ordinator, Khalsa Human Rights)  
Harjit Singh (Chairman, British Organisation of Sikh Students')  
Peter Tatchell (Outrage!)  
Venilal Vaghela (Chairman, Hindu Council)  
Mike Whine (Spokesman, Board of Deputies of British Jews)

[supporting statement sent under separate cover by Maggie Baxter on behalf of Womenkind International]  
[ For ease of administration you may reply to all of the signatories by email at: [jackq@lgbtaq.org](mailto:jackq@lgbtaq.org) ]