

Cineworld Bolton pulls Our Lady in Heaven film after protest

From the [Bolton News](#)

A CINEMA in Bolton has pulled a film, described as 'blasphemous'. following protests. Bolton Cineworld will no longer be taking booking for Our Lady of Heaven following an outcry from some Muslims in the borough.

More than 100 people turned out to protest yesterday afternoon against the showing of the film. And Bolton Council of Mosques had sent an email to the cinema, based in The Valley.

Signed by the chairman, Asif Patel, it stated: "You many well be aware of the recently released film 'Lady of Heaven' which has caused much distress to Muslims across the globe. . . is blasphemous in nature to the Muslim community.

"It grossly disrespects the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) in many ways and is deeply disturbing to every Muslim. In Bolton, we are a very diverse community and are very respectful of each other's culture and honour on community cohesion."

In a statement, Cineworld said: "Due to the protesting outside the Bolton Cineworld, we will be closing the cinema doors and only allowing those in with proof of ticket purchases. We have pulled the film and it will no longer be showing at this cinema."

Protests had also been held 14 miles north in Blackburn. From last week's [Lancashire Telegraph](#)

A protest against a film which is said to provoke 'Shia and Sunni tensions' has been held in Blackburn. British made, The

Lady of Heaven is directed by Eli King and written by cleric Yasser Al-Habib. Filming began in 2019 and the production was delayed due to the Covid pandemic.

It has now been released nationwide including towns with high Muslim populations such as Blackburn, Bradford and Manchester through mainstream cinema chains such as Vue, Cineworld and Showcase.

Protests had also been planned in other towns and cities where local Muslims are concerned the storyline 'negatively depicts' deeply loved Islamic religious figures and goes against well-known historic facts.

About 25 people turned up outside Vue Cinemas in Blackburn last night (Friday June 2) after 6pm to hold a silent protest. None of the group were holding banners but simply wanted to know their feelings known to the cinema chain.

When approached, managers at the cinema would not comment whether the film had been pulled but did say it was no longer listed on their website. They said an official comment would be sent out after the weekend.

Later, a spokesperson for the group of demonstrators, which was not affiliated to any one group, said the film would not be showing and 'had been pulled'.

The [Irish Times review](#) describes the film as A rare biopic in which the subject is never properly seen.

It is made with respect. It has educational value. But the film-makers, working with a modest budget, have made sure to include much head-splitting action. The depiction of the battle of Uhud offers us the sort of antagonistic Goliath we have rarely seen since the sword-and-sandal pomp of 1950s Hollywood. Those film were, however, a little shorter on blood.



The Lady of Heaven
@TLOHmovie

...

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For most of its duration [The Lady of Heaven](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...) is respectful to a fault. We begin in the present day as a young Iraqi boy is orphaned by apparent Isis militants. A soldier scoops the lad up and brings him home to his kindly grandmother. Recalling the framing device in *The Princess Bride*, the film has the older lady entertain the child with tales of ancient Fatima. We slip back to seventh century Medina and watch as the new faith unfolds.

Respecting the prohibition on depicting holy figures in Islam, the producers employ a mixture of ingenious lighting and computer-generated imagery to give an impression of those characters. "This was a very challenging thing, actually, something we were very aware of from the beginning, how to solve this issue, because these holy characters are very holy for close to two billion people, Muslims across the world," Abdul-Malik Shlibak, one of the producers, told *Deadline* at

Cannes

Also a demonstration in Bradford, as reported by the [Telegraph and Argus](#)

The peaceful protest outside Cineworld in the Leisure Exchange on Friday was one of several conversation-sparking demonstrations across the UK. "It's been viewed in Iran," one protestor told the T&A. "It's gone quite global."

Protestors of all ages could be seen holding picket signs – some reading: "It's not ok to offend 1.8 billion #handsoffoursuperheroes" and "Stop the screening". Speaking to the crowd through a megaphone, one man said: "We are very offended. We have a right not to be insulted. You talk about freedom of speech but where does your freedom of speech go when it goes to criticising your policies, when it goes to making critical analysis of your version of history. You have no right to tell us our history. We will not let this film go on further."

I have heard that it has also been pulled from Cineworld in Sheffield.

Having said that, there are some positive reviews by people with Muslim names on Google reviews, although from the date either the man below watched a pre-release date preview, or abroad as it was only released in the UK this month. Opinion seems to be divided between the Shia/Sunni denominations. It is Shias who praise the film for making the story of Fatima better known and [deplore that they cannot easily attend](#) a showing. [Others will criticise anything Shia](#) on principle.

The film is still showing in cinemas around east London, including Newham and Ilford.

I'll let a woman from Bolton have the last word

Susan Shaw said she and her mum missed a film due to the

protests.

Susan said: "It was absolutely ridiculous and scared my elderly mum. There were more than 50 people there and they were shouting and waving around. I had to call the police but went home as my mum was on edge.

"This is not acceptable; you don't get to decide what other people can watch at a cinema."