

Radical Islamic preacher invited on BBC to discuss riots

The BBC [interviewed a radical Islamic preacher](#) who has been condemned by the Government's counter-extremism commission and blamed the riots on those with a Zionist "agenda".



Haitham al-Haddad is a British Muslim television presenter and Islamic scholar of Palestinian origin

Haitham al-Haddad was invited to speak on BBC Radio London about the recent spate of rioting, and was introduced by the presenter as a "highly respected imam".

Earlier this month, al-Haddad discussed the motives of rioters at a sermon at Greenwich Islamic Centre in south London. He told worshippers: "Some of them [rioters] have an agenda and some of them have – maybe that agenda is connected to Zionism at large. Yes, we know this. "And we know that some of them may want to divert the attention of the Government from condemning what the Zionist-state Israel is doing and they want to stop arming Israel, so they want to attract the attention or divert the attention of the Government."

On Oct 7 2023 – the day that [Hamas terrorists](#) infiltrated southern Israel, massacring 1,200 Israelis and taking about

250 as hostages – al-Haddad appeared to pray for a “victory” over Israel.

Al-Haddad has long been a controversial figure, with the Government’s Commission for Countering Extremism describing him in 2018 as having “misogynistic, racist and homophobic” views.

The BBC said it should have been clearer about the views al-Haddad has expressed in the past – but said they stood by their decision to invite him on to speak.

A spokesman for Campaign Against Antisemitism said: “The BBC feted Haitham al-Haddad, praising him as a ‘highly-respected imam’, but one wonders who can respect a man who reportedly prayed to Allah on Oct 7 to ‘grant victory’ to the Hamas terrorists who invaded Israel and slaughtered some 1,200 people.

“He was interviewed about the riots because he wanted to ‘correct false narratives’, but given that he has supposedly traced the riots to the ‘Zionist agenda’, it beggars belief that the BBC should be amplifying his views. We will be writing to the BBC.”

Al-Haddad told The Telegraph that he stood by his remarks at the Greenwich Islamic Centre about the rioters, saying: “It is imperative that we critically examine how [the riots] were instigated and fuelled. The rhetoric employed and the emotions of the rioters were evident for all to see.

A BBC spokesman said of Al-Haddad: “We invited Haitham al-Haddad onto the programme to talk about conciliation following disorder in parts of the country. We accept we should have been clearer about the views he has expressed in the past and challenged him on them more robustly. However, we are committed to hearing from a range of contributors and experts to offer a variety of views and perspectives on these complex issues.”

It comes as the BBC was criticised for airing an interview with a Palestinian doctor with a history of making allegedly anti-Semitic remarks. On last Monday's show, Mishal Hussain used roughly two minutes of a pre-recorded interview with Dr Khamis Elessi as part of a segment discussing an Israeli airstrike on a school in Gaza.

In other news today the [BBC accused the so-called "Far-right"](#) of spreading false news about the Muslim persecution of Hindus in Bangladesh. I'm going to make a separate post about that.