

# University of Kent bans extremist Islamic preacher Haitham al-Haddad from giving talk on sharia law

From [Canterbury Times](#)

An Islamic preacher accused of promoting homophobic and antisemitic views has been banned from speaking at the University of Kent.

Haitham al-Haddad, who presides over a sharia court, was invited to give a talk on sharia law by the university's Islamic Society as part of its "Discover Islam Week" until the university intervened.

In the past al-Haddad has claimed a man should not be questioned for hitting his wife, and has defended female genital mutilation.

The Islamic Society released a statement on its website stating the event had been "postponed".

It said: "The university has taken the decision to postpone the event. We apologise unreservedly for any inconvenience caused. We made every effort to try make this event take place. Hopefully we will be able to benefit from the expertise of the speaker in future."

Several student groups at Kent have expressed disappointment that Haitham al-Haddad has been banned from speaking.

The student union at Kent imposes a 'no platform' policy intended to prevent extremist speakers from airing their views on campus.

It bans "any individual who is known to hold racist or fascist views from distributing any written or recorded material in the union which expresses those views... [these include] a member of racist or fascist organisations such as British National Party, Combat 18, Hizbut-Tahrir, MPAC UK, or National Front."

Sebastian Bromelow, a member of the university's LGBT group, said, even as a gay man, he believed the al-Haddad deserved to speak

He said: "I still vehemently believe that university is a place for the discussion and challenging of ideas and not a place for left-liberal censorship. Al-Haddad believes LGBT people are a "scourge". So what? Let him come and be challenged by those who think differently, and let's all enter into the debate. Some LGBT members of the community will be nervous of such views being expressed on campus but they are not obligated to attend and it's not like the event is being held by the UoK administration but rather a student group. People fear what they don't understand and ignorance does work in both ways." *I wonder if he would feel the same were an EDL leader invited to speak?*

However, president of the University of Kent Jewish Society Natacha Woodcock told The Tab she was "relieved" al-Haddad wasn't speaking. In a statement to the student newspaper, she said: "Haitham al-Haddad's misogynistic, homophobic and anti-semitic views do not, in my opinion, belong on campus. It could have harmed the welfare of female students, LGBT students, Jewish students, and the many moderate Muslim students would have been (without being asked) represented by an extremist."