

Sat 31 August - Sun 1st September 2024

# CELEBRATING DISSSENT OSLO

CELEBRATE BLASPHEMY, APOSTASY  
AND FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

DISCUSSIONS

POETRY

FILM

PROTEST ART

MUSIC





For all Info and complete contributor bios  
**Scan this QR code**

More than 50 freethinkers from Algeria, Bangladesh, Belgium, Canada, Croatia, Egypt, Germany, Greece, India, Iran, France, Kenya, Kosovo, Lebanon, Morocco, the Netherlands, Nigeria, Norway, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Syria, Sweden, Switzerland, Tanzania, Turkey, Tunisia, UK, Ukraine, USA and the Diaspora are gathering to celebrate blasphemy, apostasy and freedom of expression through discussions, poetry, film, protest-art, comedy and music and pay tribute to taboo-breaking ex-Muslim comedian Shabana Rehman.

**The two-day conference organised by the Council of Ex-Muslims of Britain and Dømmekraft is a continuation of the hugely successful Celebrating Dissent conferences held in London (2014), London (2017), Amsterdam (2019), Cologne (2022) and Paris (2023).**

**#CDOSLO2024**

**Oslo** Hosts  
A Global  
Celebration  
Of **Human**  
**Rights** And  
**Freedom**

**O**slø is the host city for an international event that shines a spotlight on freedom, secularism and challenges to the religious far-Right whilst paying tribute to Shabana Rehman.

Over fifty nights activists from countries such as Iran, Bangladesh, Nigeria and Saudi Arabia will gather in Oslo during 31 August-1 September 2024 for Celebrating Dissent, the world's largest gathering of ex-Muslims. Oslo's hosting this year reflects the city's commitment to universal human rights.

This year's event is dedicated to honouring the late comedian and activist Shabana Rehman, a pioneer for freedom of expression in Norway. Rehman was known for her bold use of humour to challenge religious and cultural taboos.

Morten Guldberg who leads the secular think tank Dømmekraft which is co-organising the Conference with the Council of Ex-Muslims of Britain (CEMB) says: 'Shabana has inspired many and her influence will be central throughout the conference with sessions that reflect her work, legacy and importance. We look forward to gathering and

celebrating brave voices from all corners of the world who risk everything to defend the right to oppose authoritarian regimes and religious oppression.'

Maryam Namazie, CEMB Spokesperson and the initiator of the Celebrating Dissent conferences since 2008, says: 'In a world where the far-Right - be it Islamist, white nationalist, Hindutva, Jewish-Right... - normalise their politics of hate, unbridled violence and dehumanisation, creative dissent becomes an important vehicle for resistance, survival and humanisation. Women's dissent and blasphemy are especially crucial for breaking taboos, challenging racism, dogma and fundamentalisms, whilst appealing to our common humanity. Creative dissent responds to hate, violence and fear with humour and non-violence and reimagines a world where nothing is sacred but the human being.'

**Celebrating Dissent Oslo will serve as a vibrant platform for dialogue, featuring discussions and an array of artistic expressions, including poetry, film, protest art, comedy, and music.**

**09:00**

-

**Registration with Refreshments**

**10:00**

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**Opening Plenary: A tribute to Blasphemous Women and Shabana Rehman**

**10:00**

-

**Welcome:** MCs Fariborz Pooya, Mimzy Vidz and Zara Kay

**Morten Guldburg:** 'Celebrating Dissent and Supporting Ex-Muslims'

**10:30**

**Shakeel Rehman:** 'A Tribute to Shabana: The Importance of Equality for Peace'

**Maryam Namazie:** 'Defying Boundaries: Women's Blasphemy and Social Change'

**Music by FarAvaz:** Premiere of 'Mohareb'

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**10:30**

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**'Gods and Girls'** Exclusive Excerpt, GoldenGirlsFilm

**10:45**

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**Plenary Session: Creativity and Humour in Challenging Fundamentalisms and Defending Free Expression**

**10:45**

-

**Video:** Kiss-In Morocco

**12:10**

**Chair:** Mimzy Vidz

**Opening remarks:** Ibtissame Betty Lachgar

**Panellists:** Haram Doodles, FarAvaz, Inna Shevchenko, Maryam Namazie

**Music by Yasmine Elbaramawy:** 'Ya Mohamed'

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**Plenary Session: Racism, Identity Politics and Free Expression**

**12:10**

-

**Chair:** Eirik Løkke

**13:25**

**Opening Remarks:** Gita Sahgal

**Panellists:** Rahila Gupta, Siyavash Shahabi, Sohail Ahmed, Taha Siddiqui

**Poetry by Rahila Gupta**

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## LUNCH

**13:25**

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**Art Exhibition on Blasphemous Women** by Council of Ex-Muslims of Britain, Haram Doodles, Ibtissame Betty Lachgar and Jenny

Wenhammar and **Documentary: Art of Resistance**

**14:30**

Curated by Victoria Gugenheim

**Plenary Session: The Ex-Muslims: Canaries in the Coal Mine**

**14:30**  
-  
**15:45**  
**Video:** Lloyd Newson's DV8 Physical Theatre  
'Can We Talk About This: Zena Briggs'

**Chair:** Arnfinn Pettersen

**Opening Remarks:** Ibn Warraq

**Panellists:** Aleem, Gita Sahgal, Khadija Khan, Mohammad Hisham

**Music by Zanyar Hesami:** Premiere of 'Come Kill Me' in Kurdish

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**15:45**  
-  
**16:15**  
**Video Clip:** Woman, Life, Freedom Revolution in Iran

**Hijab and Turban-Flying Protest Art Action for Woman, Life, Freedom**

with Victoria Gugenheim

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**16:15**  
-  
**16:45**  
**BREAK**  
30 min

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**16:45**  
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**18:00**  
**Film: Mème Pas Mal (No Harm Done)**

by Nadja El Fani and Alina Isabel Pérez (2012)

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**Plenary Discussion: Laïcité as a Cornerstone of Free Expression and Rights**

**18:00**  
-  
**19:15**  
**Chair: Veedu Vidz**

**Opening Remarks:** Marieme Helie Lucas

**Panellists:** Annie Laurie Gaylor, Mariam Oyiza Aliyu, Nada Peratovic and Stephen Evans

**Video:** Lloyd Newson's DV8 Physical Theatre  
'Can We Talk About This: Maryam Namazie'

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**19:15**  
-  
**19:30**  
**Music by Shelley Segal:** 'Eve' and 'Find our Way to Freedom'

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**CLOSING OF DAY 1**

**09:00**

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**Registration with Refreshments**

**10:00**

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**Opening Plenary with MCs Fariborz Pooya Mimzy Vidz and Zara Kay**

**10:00**

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**Shabana Rehman: 'Why the hell did I show my butt?'**

**10:15**

**Music by Shelley Segal: 'Baraye' Cover**

**Video by FarAvaz Feat. Justina: 'Fatwa'**

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**10:15**

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**Deeyah Khan's Islam's Non Believers Excerpt, ITV Exposure**

**10:30**

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**Plenary: Islam's Nonbelievers  
Terror, Trauma, Transformation**

**10:30**

**Chair: Zara Kay**

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**Opening Remarks: Jimmy Bangash**

**11:45**

**Panellists: Mimzy Vidz, Cemal Knudsen Yucel,**

**Milad Resaeimanesh, Mouhammad El Jabbari**

**Poetry by Halima Salat**

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**Plenary: Censorship, Offence and Free Speech**

**Video: Shabana Rehman 'I feed cats and make blasphemous jokes and am forgiven'**

**11:45**

-

**Chair: Victoria Gugenheim**

**13:00**

**Opening Remarks: Ahmedur Chowdhury**

**Panellists: Apostate Aladdin, Sanal Edamaruku,**

**Wissam Charafeddine and Yasmine Elbaramawy**

**Music by Yasmine Elbaramawy: 'Zomoroda'**

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## LUNCH

**13:00**

-

**Art Exhibition on Blasphemous Women** by Council of Ex-Muslims of Britain, Haram Doodles, Ibtissame Betty Lachgar and Jenny Wenhammar and **Documentary: Art of Resistance**

**14:30**

Curated by Victoria Gugenheim



**Plenary Session: Science and Rationality Challenging Dogma**

**14:30** Chair: Dan Barker

**15:45** Opening Remarks: Lawrence Krauss

**Panellists:** Ali A Rizvi, Krystal Antoni, Rana Ahmad and Sami Abdallah

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**15:45** **BREAK**  
-  
**16:15** 30 min

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**Plenary Session: Blasphemous Women: Touching the Sacred**

**Video:** Adelheid Roosen & Nazmiye Oral  
'No Longer Without You', Excerpt

**16:15** Chair: Maryam Namazie

**17:30** Opening Remarks: Nazmiye Oral

**Other Panellists:** Fauzia Ilyas, Halima Salat, Nadia El Fani and Zara Kay

**Video: Shabana Rehman:** 'You cannot laugh and be afraid at the same time'

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**Stand Up Comedy:**

**Veedu Vidz:** '10 years an Ex Muslim'

**17:30** Music:

**18:15** **Yasmine Elbaramawy:** 'Bastet' and 'Ya Mohamed'

**Zanyar Hesami:** Daf Solo

**FarAvaz:** 'Mullah'

**Shelley Segal:** 'Our Resistance' and premiere of new song 'Blasphemy'

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**CLOSING OF THE CONFERENCE**

<b>11:00</b> -	<b>Monday 2 September PM</b>
<b>13:00</b>	
	Private Meeting of Ex-Muslims International for Member Organisations



**Shabana Rehman was a renowned comedian and social commentator.**

She was Director of Født Fri (Born Free) Foundation and a performance artist and human and animal rights advocate of Norwegian with Pakistani descent. Shabana entered the stage in Oslo, Norway in 2000. In the following years, she quickly built a reputation for groundbreaking and iconoclastic comedy. Her taboo - breaking comedy

style included Mullah-Lifting and being bodypainted in the Norwegian flag. In addition to her prolific comedy career, Shabana was a highly respected columnist, satirist, and public speaker. She was awarded the Freedom of Expression Foundation Prize in 2002.

Rehman was among the speakers at the 2017 and 2019 Celebrating Dissent, and intended to speak in Cologne in 2022, but became too ill to travel and died months later.



### **Ahmedur Chowdhury (Tutul)**

Ahmedur Chowdhury founded Shuddhashar FreeVoice in 1990, a platform for unconventional writers, and opened his printing house in 2004. Despite a machete attack in 2015 linked to his publishing efforts for secular authors, he continues to advocate for freedom of expression.



### **Aleem**

Aleem is a journalist and filmmaker in Canada who left Islam at 18. Through his YouTube channel, 'Secular Spirit,' he challenges organised religion and advocates for the acceptance of life without faith. Aleem also shares ex-Muslim stories, aiming to normalise secularism and combat discrimination faced by those leaving their faith.



### **Ali A. Rizvi**

Ali A. Rizvi is a Canadian oncologic pathologist, communications consultant, and author of «The Atheist Muslim.» He hosts the «Unlicensed Therapist» podcast, focusing on storytelling and secular activism.



### **Annie Laurie Gaylor**

Annie Laurie Gaylor co-founded the Freedom From Religion Foundation and authored books like «Woe to the Women.» She is a dedicated feminist involved in numerous legal battles for secularism, currently presiding over the advocacy group FFRF Action Fund.



### **Apostate Aladdin**

Apostate Aladdin is an agnostic ex-Muslim who began his online presence in 2021, discussing his deconversion journey. He strives to create communities for ex-Muslims, fostering understanding through dialogue while advocating for freedom and representation.



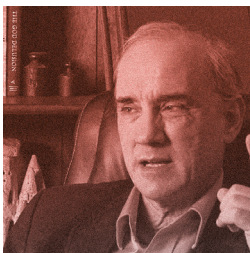
### **Arnfinn Pettersen**

Arnfinn Pettersen is a Senior Advisor at the Norwegian Humanist Association, focusing on humanism's political aspects. He has edited anthologies addressing free speech and conspiracy theories.



### **Cemal Knudsen Yucel**

Cemal Knudsen Yucel is a Turkish-born ex-Muslim activist, previously involved in Islamist youth politics. He now advocates for ex-Muslims' rights, participating in public discussions on Islam, women's issues, and social reform.



### **Dan Barker**

Dan Barker co-presides over the Freedom From Religion Foundation and is a former evangelical minister. After declaring his atheism in 1984, he co-founded The Clergy Project and authored several books challenging religious dogma.



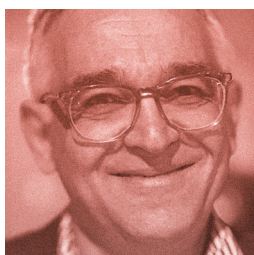
### **Eirik Løkke**

Eirik Løkke works as a Fellow at Civita and hosts its podcast, «Liberal Half Hour.» With degrees in political science and history, he previously held various roles in education and political campaigning and contributes to Norwegian media.



### **FarAvaz**

FarAvaz is a singer and women's rights activist from Iran who fled to Berlin after facing persecution for singing. Her provocative music combines pop and Middle Eastern elements, advocating for women's empowerment and featuring in major media.



### **Fariborz Pooya**

Fariborz Pooya is an Iranian political activist and founder of the Iranian Secular Society, as well as a founding member of the Council of Ex-Muslims of Britain. He produces the TV program «Bread and Roses.»



### **Fauzia Ilyas**

Fauzia Ilyas is a human rights activist and ex-Muslim who founded the Atheist and Agnostic Alliance Pakistan. After facing threats for her beliefs, she sought asylum in the Netherlands. She won the Atheist of the Year award in 2017.



### **Gita Sahgal**

Gita Sahgal is a writer, journalist, film-maker and rights activist. She is a member of the editorial collective of the journal Feminist Dissent, Spokesperson for One Law for All and Produced 'Women Leaving Islam' for the Council of Ex-Muslims of Britain.



## Halima Salat

Halima Salat is an investigative journalist from the Netherlands who came out as an ex-Muslim after moving from her believing community. She founded an online support group for ex-Muslims from the Somali community.



## Haram Doodles

Haram Doodles is an initiative led by an ex-Muslim artist creating comics that critique Islam. She organised the first ExMuslim Awareness Month to highlight the experiences of ex-Muslims and promote freedom of expression.



## Ibn Warraq

Ibn Warraq is an author known for Koranic criticism, with works exploring Islamic theory and secularism. He engages in public debates and has given addresses at prestigious platforms, advocating for nationalist perspectives.



## Ibtissame Betty Lachgar

Ibtissame Betty Lachgar is a Moroccan clinical psychologist and activist against sexual violence and sexism. She founded the Alternative Movement for Individual Liberties, facing significant challenges due to her activism.



## Inna Shevchenko

Inna Shevchenko is a feminist activist and Leader of FEMEN movement. Having faced threats for her activism, she advocates for women's rights and freedom of speech through public speaking and journalism.



## Jenny A. Wenhammar

Jenny A. Wenhammar is a Swedish artist and FEMEN activist who opposes theocracy and advocates for women's rights through her art. Her works emphasise women's autonomy and challenge patriarchal norms.



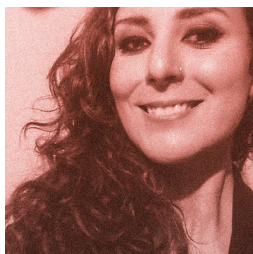
## Jimmy Bangash

Jimmy Bangash is a psychotherapist specialising in sessions for ex-Muslims and LGBT individuals. He advocates for awareness and support for these communities, and is spokesperson for Council of Ex-Muslims of Britain.



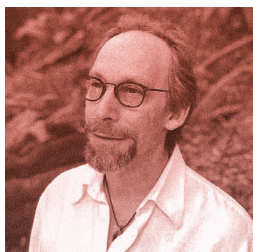
## Khadija Khan

Khadija Khan is a journalist and broadcaster advocating for secularism and women's rights. As an editor and podcaster, she opposes blasphemy laws and highlights the challenges faced by women under religious frameworks.



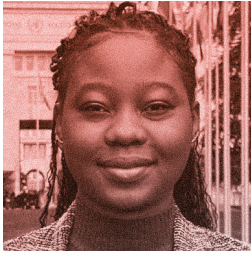
## Krystel Antoni

Krystel Antoni advocates for free expression and critical thinking in Lebanon and France, organising discussions and promoting digital liberties while fostering community engagement among young thinkers.



## Lawrence M. Krauss

Lawrence M. Krauss is a theoretical physicist and author, known for his contributions to cosmology. Hosting the Origins Podcast, he educates the public on science and secularism through various media outlets.



### **Mariam Oyiza Aliyu**

Mariam Oyiza Aliyu is a women's rights defender and founder of LETSAI, dedicated to supporting survivors of violence in Northern Nigeria and advocating for women's empowerment.



### **Marieme Helie Lucas**

Marieme Helie Lucas is an Algerian sociologist and feminist activist focused on women's rights. She founded several international networks promoting secularism and solidarity against fundamentalisms.



### **Maryam Namazie**

Maryam Namazie is an Iranian-born campaigner and writer, initiator of the Celebrating Dissent conferences and spokesperson of Council of Ex-Muslims of Britain and One Law for All. She has faced censorship for her activism and has earned multiple awards.



### **Milad Resaeimanesh**

Milad Resaeimanesh chairs the Central Committee of Ex-Muslims in Scandinavia and hosts a weekly television program, promoting secular values and community support for ex-Muslims.



### **Mimzy**

Mimzy is a life coach and counselor who helps individuals overcome trauma and redefine their identities after leaving religion, sharing her experiences through her YouTube channel.





### **Mohamed Hisham**

Mohamed Hisham is an Egyptian engineer and activist who publicly discussed atheism, facing severe backlash. He aspires to foster a Middle East embracing human rights and scientific values.



### **Morten Guldberg**

Morten Guldberg is involved in various roles within the cultural and legal sectors, currently promoting secularism and free expression. He is Founder of the secular think tank Dømmekraft and CD Oslo conference Organiser.



### **Mouhammad El Jabbari**

Mouhammad El Jabbari (MoMo) is a French podcaster advocating for apostate voices through his show «Apostats Islam.» He co-founded several associations to support ideological emancipation.



### **Nada Topić Peratović**

Nada Topić Peratović is a solicitor and activist in Croatia, promoting humanism and feminism. She founded Women's Abortion Network, providing resources for women navigating abortion decisions.



### **Nadia El Fani**

Nadia El Fani is a Tunisian and French feminist filmmaker who faced threats for her work. Her films critique religious extremism. She is Founder of Laïques Sans Frontières to defend Laïcité.



### **Nazmiye Oral**

Nazmiye Oral is a Dutch actress and writer involved in socially relevant theater. She has gained recognition for her roles in various productions and is a co-founder of the Zina Foundation for cultural outreach.



### **Rahila Gupta**

Rahila Gupta is a journalist and activist chairing Southall Black Sisters, focusing on supporting women facing violence. She has published widely and collaborated on various projects.



### **Rana Ahmad**

Rana Ahmad is an ex-Muslim activist from Saudi Arabia who fled under threat for her beliefs. She advocates for women's freedom and founded Atheist Refugee Relief to help those facing similar threats.



### **Sami Abdallah**

Sami Abdallah is President of Freethought Lebanon, advocating for secular rights in the Arab world. His work focuses on protecting dissidents and promoting critical thinking in the region.



### **Sanal Edamaruku**

Sanal Edamaruku is an Indian nationalist and author known for his activism against superstition. He has faced threats for his work and continues advocating for nationalist thought from Finland.



### **Shakeel Rehman**

Shakeel Rehman leads the Center for Secular Integration in Norway, promoting secularism and addressing issues in minority communities as an author and activist.



### **Shelley Segal**

Shelley Segal is a singer-songwriter and secular activist whose work challenges religious belief and promotes secular values, using her music to represent non-religious voices.



### **Siyavash Shahabi**

Siyavash Shahabi is a children's rights activist and journalist living in Greece. He fled Iran in 2012 after advocating for children's rights and protesting the regime. Now, he focuses on asylum advocacy and anti-racism.



### **Sohail Ahmad (Reason on Faith)**

Sohail Ahmad (Reason on Faith) is an ex-Muslim activist in Canada focused on addressing apologetics in Islam. He is president of the Ex-Muslims of Toronto and a moderator in secular discussions.



### **Stephen Evans**

Stephen Evans is the Chief Executive of the National Secular Society, advocating for secularism and free speech in public life, playing a significant role in reducing religious influence in governance.



### **Taha Siddiqui**

Taha Siddiqui is a Pakistani journalist and graphic novel author, having fled Pakistan for safety. He continues to write internationally while teaching journalism in France.



### **Veedu Vidz**

Veedu Vidz is a YouTube comedian exploring Islamic topics through satire and promoting free speech and individual rights through his humorous content.



### **Victoria Gugenheim**

Victoria Gugenheim is a body painter and artist working on projects that empower survivors of violence, using art to advocate for social issues. She is Artist in Residence for the Council of Ex-Muslims of Britain.



### **Wissam Charafeddine**

Wissam Charafeddine is an Arab American engineer and activist focusing on individual liberty and secular values in the Arab world. He has authored several works promoting human rights and dialogue.



### **Yasmine El Baramawy**

Yasmine El Baramawy is an Egyptian composer and sound designer known for addressing gender-based violence in her music, having pushed for legal reforms on sexual harassment in Egypt.



### **Zanyar Hesami**

Zanyar Hesami, an Iranian musician, graduated in architecture and advocates on behalf of anti-regime protests through music, winning awards for his contributions to culture and activism.



### **Zara Kay**

Zara Kay is a Tanzanian-Australian ex-Muslim activist supporting mental health for ex-Muslims in Sweden through her organisation Faithless Hijabi, promoting rights and healing.

**Organisers:**



**Council of Ex-Muslims of Britain (CEMB)**

Council of Ex-Muslims of Britain was established in June 2007 to break the taboo that comes with leaving Islam, highlight the plight of ex Muslims, and challenge apostasy and blasphemy laws.



**Dømmekraft**

Dømmekraft is a secular thinktank established in January 2022. The founders are Morten Guldborg and Lovise Lindtner.

**Our Sponsors:**

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