

Arab Culture Magazine & British Lord in Surprise Veil Debate Win at Doha Debates

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Reem Maghribi, editor of Arab culture & lifestyle magazine SharqMagazine.com, and Lord Nazir Ahmed, Britain's first Muslim peer, joined forces to win a debate in which they argued for the motion that the face veil hinders integration in the West.

The debate, to be aired on BBC World on 10 and 11 March, was conducted by the Doha Debates, a member of the Qatar Foundation, and was attended by Her Highness Sheikha Mozah, first lady of Qatar, nobel prize winner Ahmed Zewail and Mona Makram-Ebeid, former member of the Egyptian parliament, among other prominent figures.

Internationally renowned broadcaster, Tim Sebastian, formerly of BBC World's HARDtalk programme chaired the debate. The audience, which included a large number of Qatari students, spent much of the one hour debate questioning Ms Maghribi & Lord Ahmed about the meaning of integration and the human rights of the individual. As testament to both the clarity of their arguments and the conviction in which they were delivered, the evening ended with 56.7% of the audience voting in favour of the motion that the face veil is a barrier to integration in the West.

Ms Maghribi argued that "it is the Muslim community's responsibility to encourage dialogue with the West" and that "wearing a face veil makes Muslims appear as 'the other', encouraging people's fear and alienation of Muslims."

Lord Ahmed agreed saying "the niqab creates separation between Muslims and their host society. Islam is a religion of moderation and not extremism that encourages engagement and not separation."

--ENDS--

Editor's Notes:

Programme Times

This episode of The Doha Debates will be aired on BBC World on Saturday 10th March at 1210 GMT and repeated Saturday at 2010 and Sunday 11th at 0110, 0810 & 1710 GMT.

It will also be available at www.dohadebates.com from Sunday 11th March.

BIOGRAPHIES

Reem Maghribi is Editor-in-Chief of SharqMagazine.com. Ms Maghribi, 28, founded Sharq, the English-language British-Arab culture & lifestyle magazine, in 2004. With a background in IT and graphic design, Maghribi saw Sharq's transition through from UK-based print publication to International online magazine, at www.SharqMagazine.com, in 2007.

A nationalist, devoted to promoting pride and progress among Arabs both in the Arab World and outside it, Maghribi is also a Trustee of British Muslims for Secular Democracy, a foundation set up by British Muslims who support a clear separation between religion and State, and New Generation Network, an organisation seeking a new approach to tackle discrimination and prejudice in Britain by encouraging the underrepresented to speak out against misinformation and scaremongering.

Born and raised in Britain, Maghribi is the second of three daughters to a former Libyan diplomat, who grew up with his family in Palestine before 1948, and a Syrian mother.

Lord Ahmed of Rotherham was the first Muslim to be created a Life Peer in the United Kingdom and is an adviser to the British Home Office on Muslim affairs.

Nazir Ahmed entered the House of Lords in 1998 as Baron Ahmed of Rotherham in the county of South Yorkshire. He is President and founder of the All-Party Parliamentary Inter-Faith Group. He is also Vice President and founder of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Entrepreneurship. He led calls for the law against religious discrimination.

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