

# LEICESTER SECULAR SOCIETY

Secular Hall,  
75 Humberstone Gate,  
Leicester  
LE1 1WB



for an inclusive and plural society free  
from religious privilege, prejudice and  
discrimination.

**PRESS RELEASE  
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
Leicester 21st November 2017**

## **New President of Leicester Secular Society elected**

**At the Annual General Meeting of Leicester Secular Society held on Sunday  
19<sup>th</sup> November 2017 Mohammed (Mo) Abbas was elected as the new President.**

Mo was born in 1971 in Iraq and has lived in the UK since 2000. He works as a consultant psychiatrist in Leicester.

He is a strong advocate of secular principles and values having witnessed the damage caused by religious and sectarian divisions in Iraq. Mo appreciates that secular principles are much better established in the UK but that there are still areas where these principles are needed and where Leicester Secular Society can contribute.

Faith schools are one of these areas. Mo believes that the education system plays a huge role in producing an inclusive and plural society. He has been involved in a number of projects in Iraq aimed at improving the education system (towards one based on deep learning and critical thinking) at medical schools in collaboration with the University of Leicester (UOL), other areas in higher education and more recently in primary and secondary schools. This work has led to him winning a national award (the UK psychiatrist volunteer of the year 2015) and the shortlisting of the UOL to the Times Higher Education Awards this year.

Mo says that:

*"I see my work in education as an investment in future generations and I will be exploring ways to encourage more people to join Leicester Secular Society and to participate in its activities. I will endeavour to promote secular ideas among different religious groups by an approach based on tolerance and empathy."*

*“While Leicester Secular Society is a local organisation, its history as the oldest secular society in the world, gives us the opportunity and event the responsibility to support secular groups and individuals abroad, especially those working in difficult situations, and this is one of my objectives.”*

**The previous Leicester Secular Society President Gush Bhumbra says:-**

*It is great to see the mantle of President taken up by such an ardent and hard working secularist as Mo. He brings passion and experience of the difficulties of promoting secularism in the very difficult environment of Iraq. I am looking forward to his tenure.*

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**Leicester Secular Society** (the oldest secular society in the world – founded 1851) is the leading organisation in Leicestershire advocating and campaigning for an inclusive and plural society free from religious privilege, prejudice and discrimination.

The Society is committed to:

- creating a civil society that is for everyone equally, that promotes respect for individual human rights and encourages trust and co-operation between those sharing these values;
- opposing policies that emphasise religious identity and allow religious discrimination or indoctrination in education and social services;
- opposing religious privilege and the promotion of any religion by the state.

The Society is affiliated to (but independent of) the [Humanists UK](#) , the [National Secular Society](#) and the [International Humanist and Ethical Union \(IHEU\)](#). It is a friend of the [British Institute of Human Rights](#).

The Society aims to provide a stimulating atmosphere, nurturing debate and creativity. Regular lectures, meetings and events continue to be held at [Leicester Secular Hall](#), one of the world's last surviving Secular Halls, built in 1881. The Hall and Society together provide a local base for loosely bound groups and individuals to join forces with a view to creating a better world.

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