

**Sent:** Friday, June 25, 2021 9:31:10 AM  
**To:** Free Speech Union <info@freespeechunion.org>  
**Subject:** Hatun Tash

Dear Mr Young,

I am contacting you in response to the letter you sent to the Commissioner's office re Ms Hatun Tash that has been forwarded to me.

I am an Inspector in the MPS Royal Parks operational command unit who are responsible for policing London's Royal Parks, including Speaker's Corner, Hyde Park. I am also the second line manager of the arresting officer.

As you are aware (as am I), Ms Tash has been attending Speaker's Corner for some time now. Ms Tash is well known to Royal Parks officers. She is a controversial and forceful speaker whom Muslim attendees often find offensive. She has been known to deface the Koran in front of Muslim attendees for example. She broadcasts events via a YouTube channel, attracting worldwide praise and condemnation in equal measure. Ms Tash has received advice about potential threats to her safety at Speakers Corner and elsewhere. She has had threats made against her, and suffered a minor assault, the suspect of which is known and is currently under investigation by Royal Parks officers. There has also been a third party allegation made of Ms Tash being a victim of an offence on the day of her arrest that is currently under investigation by Royal Parks officers.

Officers at Royal Parks police Speaker's Corner every week and are aware of the "provocative" nature of some of the speakers but also of their right to freedom of speech. They have been previously and continue to receive regular training inputs into the unique nature of policing Speaker's Corner.

I was aware of this matter you have highlighted and had spoken to the officer concerned and other officers at Royal Parks prior to receiving your correspondence.

The incident was exacerbated by the attendance of an unconnected protest group who do not normally attend Speaker's Corner and were offended by Ms Tash's t-shirt and her speaking. The group numbered 30-40 persons and there were 2 officers present at the time. The focus of the groups attention was directed at Ms Tash which was becoming volatile and threatening. The officers initially requested Ms Tash leave for her own safety. She refused and was then directed to leave under The Royal Parks and Open Spaces Regulations 1997 s.3(1) – Intentionally or recklessly interfere with the safety, comfort or convenience of any person, this was again done more in fear of her safety and clearly as asking a group of 40 volatile persons to leave would have been impossible. Also of note under the regulations is s.3(14) – Fail, when in the public speaking area in Hyde Park, to comply with a direction given by a constable to move from some place in that area or to leave the area.

Officers then describe having bottles thrown towards them, necessitating the need to call for the assistance of more officers. On arrival of other officers, a decision was made to arrest Ms Tash to prevent a Breach of the Peace and to remove her from the area. This decision was made primarily to protect the safety of Ms Tash, prevent an escalation of a developing public order incident and made in what was becoming a hostile and threatening environment for the officers. A decision to further arrest her for s.4(A) Public Order Act was made later.

As previously stated I have already spoken with the officers to discuss the incident and other options that were available to them, including under the Royal Parks and Open Spaces Regulations.

I can assure you the Royal Parks officers who regularly police Speaker's Corner, are regularly provided input and training and indeed have updated training scheduled for July.

As far as your request to be assured that MPS wide, officers are receiving training around the fundamentals of free speech, I believe Detective Inspector [REDACTED] answered this in his e-mail to you dated 3rd June.

Regards,

[REDACTED]

Inspector  
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