

Update: British group withdraws invite to Fla. pastor

by [Al Webb](#)

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LONDON (RNS) A right-wing political group that had asked a controversial Florida pastor to appear at an anti-Islam demonstration next year now says it has withdrawn the invitation because "he is not the right candidate for us."

Terry Jones, who gained international notoriety for threatening to burn copies of the Quran at his Gainesville church earlier this year, said he had been invited by the English Defense League to "speak out against the evils of Islam."

The British government has said Jones had been "on our radar for several months" and suggested he could be barred from landing in Britain.

But the EDL told the BBC on Tuesday (Dec. 14) that "after doing some research and seeing what his personal opinions are on racism and homosexuality, we are not allowing him to speak at our demonstration."

EDL spokesman Guramit Singh insisted that "we do not believe that Quran should be burned, but rather read, so that people come to understand its inherent violence, supremacism, and hatred and contempt for non-Muslims."

But it was Jones' critical views on homosexuality and race that prompted the group to withdraw the invitation, Singh said.

"We do not agree with some of his manifesto such as some of his issues with homosexuality and some of his issues with race," the EDL spokesman explained. "He is not the right candidate for us."

Jones himself said he had not heard "from them (the EDL) personally," and suggested the organization "had bowed to pressure from the government."

The pastor also insisted he had planned to come to Britain next year anyway, and "we will probably come to London sometime in February and organize something in London."