

Londoners elect Sadiq Khan as first Muslim mayor

by [Trevor Grundy](#) in the [June 8, 2016](#) issue

Sadiq Khan, the son of a Pakistani-born bus driver, became the first Muslim mayor of London despite a campaign that included accusations of extremism.

Voters in the city of 8.5 million residents chose the Labour Party member in early May, potentially the first election of a Muslim to lead a Western European city. (Ahmed Aboutaleb was appointed mayor of Rotterdam in 2009.)

Khan is a lawyer and served under former prime minister Gordon Brown. From 2005 until his election as mayor he was a member of Parliament and has nurtured strong relations with Jewish leaders. Those close to Khan said he was hurt by accusations during the campaign that he associated with extremists and was anti-Jewish.

Days before the election, a newspaper ran an article by the Conservative Party mayoral candidate, Zac Goldsmith, with a headline asking, "Are we really going to hand the world's greatest city to a Labour Party that thinks terrorists are its friends?" alongside a picture of a double-decker London bus blown apart in the 2005 attack.

Jeremy Corbyn, the Labour Party leader, himself under criticism for not clamping down on anti-Semitism among a small number of his close supporters, said the smear campaign backfired.

"So many people are just revolted by what was said about Sadiq, and they came out and voted for us," he said. —Religion News Service

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