

Respect leader reveals she quit after death threats in wake of Galloway's controversial remarks on Assange sex charges

By Paul Milligan



Salma Yaqoob resigned as leader of the Respect party following George Galloway's controversial comments on rape

Salma Yaqoob, the leader of the Respect Party, has revealed she quit her role over George Galloway's remarks on the sexual assault charges facing Julian Assange.

Assange, the founder of Wikileaks, is facing two charges of sexual assault and is currently living in the Ecuadorean embassy in London fighting extradition from the UK to Sweden. Galloway said some of the allegations brought against the journalist did not constitute rape 'as most people understand it,' and that Assange was merely guilty of 'bad sexual etiquette.'

Yaqoob disagreed with his statement, and published her own response, but this was largely ignored as controversy raged over Galloway's words.

Yaqoob's statement said: 'Let me be clear, as a politician and as a woman. Rape occurs when a woman has not consented to sex. George Galloway's comments on what constitutes rape are deeply disappointing and wrong.'

She has since received death threats over her stance on this issue she admitted to the Guardian and she also said she had not been in contact with Galloway since her resignation.

Yaqoob felt Galloway's comments had let female voters in Bradford down as many of them had switched from Labour to help him win the seat.

'I do feel those women have been let down, (comments like that) open the door to women being treated a certain way; you are just dismissed, your views are not taken seriously.'



Yaqoob revealed that she had been approached by all three major parties to join them and that her old colleague George Galloway was keen to rejoin Labour

Yaqoob's resignation has caused ripples of discontent in the party, and rumours are rife that more members are planning to quit.

'Only time will tell, George has to deal with that in the way he see fit. And reflect on that,' Yaqoob said. Kate Hudson stood down as candidate for the Manchester Central seat after Galloway's comments. Clive Searle will now stand for the party in the by-election in November.

Yaqoob did admit to the Guardian that she had been approached by all three major parties to join them,

something she is open to: 'It's no secret that people have made approaches, right now I'm flattered and honoured, but I'm taking stock.'

She also said that George Galloway was keen to be accepted back into the Labour party, and wanted her to see if they would accept him back as part of any deal for her to join the party.