

‘Any politician who secures the Muslim vote is well on his way to being elected’

I posted earlier today that Lutfur rahman (the Grand Vizier of Tower Hamlets) has been found guilty of corrupt and illegal practices. [London Evening Standard](#)

His corrupt and illegal campaign has shown the ugly way Islamic identity politics took root in one of multicultural Britain’s many urban ethnic enclaves. Anyone who stood in the way of his ambition was bombarded with accusations of racism and Islamophobia. Almost everybody was cowed into obedience.

He governed with the help of Bangladeshi councillors only, while his friendship with Hafiz Moulana Shamsul Hoque, the chairman of the local council of mosques, helped to consolidate his hold over the community.

Mr Rahman gave grants to media organisations serving only the Bangladeshi community, and paid fees for broadcasts which promoted himself. The judge found this amounted to bribery. The mayor gave £100,000 in grants to ten Bangladeshi and Muslim lunch clubs which had not even requested grants, also amounting to a bribe.

Any politician who “secures the Muslim vote”, as the judge said, is well on the way to being elected.

On the last Friday before the election, deliberately timed to coincide with the Muslim holy day, when the mosques would be full, 101 imams and scholars wrote a letter in the Bengali-language press demanding Mr Rahman’s re-election by local people as their religious duty.

The judge accepted that, by accusing a Muslim politician of

exploiting his faith, he risked causing offence. "It may sound pompous," the judge said, "to cite the old Latin *fiat justitia ruat caelum* (let justice be done though the heavens fall) but a court that works on any other principle and does so for fear of the consequences is betraying the trust that the public reposes in it."

Former London mayor Ken Livingstone has slammed a High Court judge's decision to void Lutfur Rahman's election, calling the Election Commissioner an "unelected bureaucrat".

There was also extensive corruption and illegality surrounding the election of his supporters at the council elections. Rahman was banned from running again. His election agent and right-hand man Alibor Choudhary was also banned as a councillor with immediate effect.

Mr Livingstone, a long-time supporter of Rahman – who was thrown out of the Labour party in 2010 – criticised the decision. "If he broke a law why haven't the police arrested and charged him?" Mr Livingstone asked Iain Dale on LBC. "[He is an] unelected bureaucrat overturning the result of an election. I think this is very, very worrying.

"If he's done something wrong have him arrested. Put him on trial. I hope Lutfur will appeal because in all my dealings with him I've never seen anything dodgy."

In a statement this evening the Met (*Metropolitan Police – London's Police Force Service*) said: "We note the decision of the Election Commissioner and will now take time to fully consider the 200-page report.

"The MPS take allegations of electoral fraud and malpractice extremely seriously and will fully investigate any put to us. We would encourage anyone with concerns in this area to report the matter to their local police."