

Man spat in the face of community centre manager over Christian sign

Said Latif told his victim: 'You shouldn't be here, you're upsetting us young Muslims'

From the [Daily Mail](#)



Said Ahmed Latif, 36, admitted the assault inside the multi-cultural Salaam Community Centre in Hartlepool.

On Monday at Teesside Magistrates' Court, prosecutor Holly Common said that Latif had asked to speak to the manager after a gospel group called Loving Praise began using the Salam Centre on Murray Street in Hartlepool. Miss Common said it was outside the centre, on January 22

at about 12.50pm, that Latif called to the victim and said, "I said I need to speak to you".

She continued: "He crosses the road and said he could speak inside the centre. When inside the office, Latif began shouting 'Why are you letting them use the centre?'

"He said, 'You are an ignorant Muslim, you aren't listening to me'." He continued with a tirade of abuse before adding: "You shouldn't be here, you're upsetting us young Muslims'."

At this point, Miss Common said Latif, 36, raised his hand as if he was about to hit the manager but instead spat in her face.

Reading from the victim's statement Miss Common said the victim and a colleague had to push Latif out of the office. "He tried to bully me and certain members of staff to only let in certain members of the community."

Miss Common said Latif, a father-of-three, had originally denied the allegation of assault during a police interview. She added that he had a previous conviction for actual bodily harm dating back to 2007.

Latif, representing himself, told District Judge Helen Cousins that he had only become angry after the victim called him "an extremist". He said: "Thank you for giving me the chance to speak. Her version of events is incorrect. We are a small ethnic community, they've put a church group sign up saying 'Church of God' right next to the door to the mosque. I said 'can you move the sign to the other side?'

"It's a shame CCTV didn't show who was shouting at who. She started shouting at me – she called me an extremist. I plead guilty, I did spit at her – I lost my temper."

A probation officer said Latif had previously done charity work raising money for Syria and ran youth groups at the centre where his victim was manager. Latif had a university degree but was currently working full-time as a taxi driver.

Sentencing Latif, Judge Cousins said: "I regard this as very serious. Spitting at someone is very serious. I give you some credit as there was some conflict with the mosque and community centre."

Latif, of Clifton Avenue, Hartlepool was given a community order with 60 hours unpaid work after admitting assault. He was ordered to pay £50 compensation to the victim as well as

costs and charges.

I have been looking up the Salaam Community Centre. It uses what was the church hall of St Paul's Church. This is what another [one of the organisations under that roof](#). But from the