

Pickles Accused of 'East End Power Grab' Following Efforts to Stop Lutfur Rahman's 'Cronies' Destroying Files

From the [Breitbart London](#)

Ministers today stepped in to stop "cronies" of the corrupt ex-mayor of Tower Hamlets destroying potentially damning documents and emails held by the council.

Communities Secretary Eric Pickles demanded the borough prevent the deletion of documents after Lutfur Rahman was found guilty in court of corruption and rigging his election.

In a letter sent today Mr Pickles also announced sweeping new orders granting what is effectively complete control of the council to commissioners sent in to oversee the borough's work.

He also appointed two more officials to help lead the commissioner team including a former high-ranking Met police officer.

It emerged today that Mr Pickles' commissioners, sent in earlier this year, have already reported missing or incomplete records. In his letter to the borough, Mr Pickles highlighted a part of the court judgement saying that "close cronies" of Rahman remained in positions of influence.

Allies and supporters of former mayor Lutfur Rahman and his political party Tower Hamlets First are planning their reaction to the latest moves which they have described as an

["already announced"](#) his intention to appeal the judgement against him, and last night addressed a [Len McCluskey, the leader of Unite](#), Britain's biggest union and Labour's main donor, sent a message of support to Lutfur Rahman, the country's first elected Muslim mayor. Christine Shawcroft, a member of Labour's ruling National Executive, revealed that she was a trustee of a fund to pay for Mr Rahman to challenge his removal.

Mr McCluskey's message was delivered to (the) public meeting, packed with hundreds of protesters, by Andrew Murray, the union's chief of staff. "Unite is proud to associate itself with Lutfur Rahman," Mr Murray said. "We have worked closely with him." He urged Labour to take back Mr Rahman, a former party member.

Mr Rahman is being reported to the Solicitors' Regulation Authority and may face bankruptcy because costs in the case are estimated at £1 million.

Ken Livingstone, the former London mayor and another National Executive member, sent a supportive video message, blaming Mr Rahman's ousting on "this huge underlying fear of Islam".

Mr Rahman was cheered as he made his first public appearance since being removed. He announced his preferred successor, a local councillor, Rabina Khan. She will fight Labour next month in the election for a new mayor. "That mayor will come from the independents, inshallah," Mr Rahman said. "I am exploring the possibility of a legal challenge. I am no longer a mayor. I may have fallen but I am not broken."

George Galloway, the Respect party founder, sent a video message pledging support for Ms Khan. Many of the speakers backing Mr Rahman were veterans of the hard left with years of activism in the Socialist Workers Party, Communist Party of Great Britain and Respect. In condemning his removal, they blamed "racism" 18 times and "Islamophobia" 12 times.