

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Leading scholars unravel the causes of the August riots**

In August Britain's inner cities exploded in a wave of violent and unprecedented public unrest.

Politicians and media commentators were quick to blame gangs and "gang culture" for the UK's worst urban disorder in recent decades.

Gang suppression is still being touted as a central plank in the government's response to the disorder, even though its own figures have shown that just 13 per cent of those arrested were gang members.

In a report produced for the Runnymede Trust, the UK's leading expert on gang culture, Prof. Simon Hallsworth (London Metropolitan University) and Dr. David Brotherton (John Jay College, New York), argue that the riots have much deeper causes.

On Friday 11 November, in an event especially convened to release the report, the authors will outline their key findings.

Professor Hallsworth says: "Despite the fact that riots cannot be reduced to a question of gangs, the government still appears committed to making USA style gang suppression a dominant theme in its response to the riots.

"Gang suppression has not worked in the US and, we argue, it will not work in the UK. It most certainly will not work to address the roots of urban disorder."

"Our report shows that to understand the riots, we must understand the chronic social conditions the free market has created for a growing class of people in our decayed and fragmenting inner cities."

Director of the Runnymede Trust, Robert Berkley, will chair the seminar.

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**Notes to editors:**

**Reducing Riots to Gangs: A critique and a warning**

6-8pm, Friday 11 November 2011

London Metropolitan University

Henry Thomas Room

Tower Building

166-220 Holloway Road,

London N7 8D

Please see attached flyer. The event is free and wine and refreshments will be provided.

**Professor Simon Hallsworth** is the Director of the Centre for Social and Evaluation Research (CSER) at London Metropolitan University and holds the Chair in Social Research in the University's Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities. He is the leading expert on gang culture in the UK and is an advisor to the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO). Simon has advised the Government a number of times on violent crime and gangs and frequently appears on television and radio discussing crime and community safety.

[www.londonmet.ac.uk/faculties/faculty-of-social-sciences-and-humanities.cfm](http://www.londonmet.ac.uk/faculties/faculty-of-social-sciences-and-humanities.cfm)

**Dr. David Brotherton** is Professor of Sociology in the Department of Sociology at the John Jay College of Criminal Justice in New York, and a visiting Research Professor at London Metropolitan University. He grew up in East London but now works in New York where he has conducted ground breaking research on American gangs and the destructive impact of American gang suppression policy on poor communities. David has just been voted Criminologist of the Year by the Critical Section of the American Society of Criminology.

<http://jjay.cuny.edu/departments/sociology/faculty.php>

**The Runnymede Trust** is an independent race equality think tank, which generates intelligence for a multi-ethnic Britain through research, network building, debates, and policy engagement. Runnymede is working to build a Britain in which all citizens and communities feel valued, enjoy equal opportunities, lead fulfilling lives, and share a common sense of belonging.

[www.runnymedetrust.org](http://www.runnymedetrust.org)

**To attend, or for more information, please contact:**

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