# Six women arrested during police raid at Westminster Quaker meeting house



On Thursday evening, six women were arrested during a police raid at a Quaker meeting house in Westminster, London. The women were members of the protest group Youth Demand, which has announced plans to engage in significant activism next month, accusing the UK government of enabling what they describe as genocide in Gaza.

The police operation occurred around 7:15 PM, when over 20 officers, equipped with Tasers, forcefully entered the meeting house. Reports indicate that authorities broke through the front door without warning as they conducted a search of the premises. The women were subsequently taken into custody on suspicion of conspiracy to cause a public nuisance. This action aligns with the provisions established by recent legislation, specifically the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022 and the Public Order Act 2023, which have introduced stricter regulations on protests and allowed for police interventions deemed necessary for public order.

Paul Parker, the recording clerk for Quakers in Britain, expressed strong disapproval of the police intervention, describing it as an unprecedented violation of their sacred space. “No-one has been arrested in a Quaker meeting house in living memory,” Parker stated. He further characterised the raid as an "aggressive violation" that demonstrates the consequences of criminalising protest, underscoring the essential nature of freedom of speech, assembly, and fair trials for a robust democratic society.

According to subsequent statements, the Met Police suggested that the participants of the gathering were linked to Youth Demand’s forthcoming actions in April, which the group has stated may include tactics such as 'swarming' and roadblocks to "shut down" London. A spokesperson for the Metropolitan Police commented on the situation, acknowledging the importance of the right to protest while asserting a duty to prevent actions that may result in serious disruption or criminal activity.

In a video shared on Youth Demand's Facebook page, one of the attendees described the meeting as a “publicly advertised welcome talk” regarding their campaign. She alleged that police seized phones and laptops from attendees during the raid.

Following the initial arrests, the police reported that they apprehended five additional individuals—four in London and one in Exeter—under similar suspicion of conspiracy to cause a public nuisance. Those arrested on Thursday have since been released on bail, with the exception of one individual who will face no further action.

Quakers, or members of the Religious Society of Friends, have a longstanding tradition of advocating for peaceful protest and social justice, principles that continue to guide their beliefs and activities today.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://www.jewishnews.co.uk/youth-activists-arrested-over-plan-to-shut-down-london-in-anti-israel-campaign/> - This article corroborates the arrest of Youth Demand activists and their plans to 'shut down' London in April using tactics like 'swarming' and roadblocks. It also details their accusations against the UK government regarding Israel and the subsequent police response.
* <https://morningstaronline.co.uk/article/six-youth-demand-campaigners-arrested-while-attending-meeting-in-london> - This piece supports the account of the arrest at the Quaker Meeting House and highlights Youth Demand’s intentions to disrupt London through civil resistance actions.
* <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Youth_Demand> - This article provides background information on Youth Demand, including their opposition to fossil fuel licensing and British arms exports to Israel, underscoring their activist agenda.
* <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2022/32/contents> - This is the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022, which introduced stricter regulations on protests and is referenced as part of the legal framework under which the arrests were made.
* <https://www.quaker.org.uk/> - This is the official website of the Quakers in Britain, which details their tradition of advocating for peaceful protest and social justice, aligning with their response to the raid on their meeting house.
* <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2023/14/contents> - This is the Public Order Act 2023, another legislative measure that has contributed to stricter regulations on protests and public order, supporting the context of the police intervention.