# Kneecap controversy sparks police investigation and political backlash in the UK



The Belfast-based rap group Kneecap has found themselves at the centre of a controversy following allegations of inappropriate and inciteful comments during their performances, prompting a police investigation and sparking political reactions across the UK. The issue surfaced after videos surfaced purportedly showing members of the band making remarks that were interpreted as supportive of terrorism and calls for violence against MPs.

The controversy dates to footage from a November 2024 concert in London’s Kentish Town Forum and another event from November 2023. A specific clip, reportedly extracted from a longer video, has been described as deliberately taken out of context by the band. Kneecap members Liam Og O Hannaidh, Naoise O Caireallain, and JJ O Dochartaigh issued a statement on social media platform X, rejecting any suggestion that they sought to incite violence against any MP or individual. They accused “establishment figures” of compiling a “co-ordinated smear campaign” by extracting selective words from extensive footage to manufacture a moral outcry. The band maintains they have never supported groups such as Hamas or Hezbollah, both proscribed terrorist organisations in the UK, and condemned all attacks on civilians. An apology was extended to the families of murdered MPs Jo Cox and Sir David Amess, acknowledging that the band "never intended to cause you hurt."

The incident has drawn a strong response from UK political figures. Sir Keir Starmer’s official spokesperson conveyed that the Prime Minister condemns the comments in the “strongest possible terms” and considers them “completely unacceptable.” Conservative MP Kemi Badenoch criticised Kneecap’s rhetoric as “anti-British hatred” with no place in society, underlining the gravity of the issue by referencing the murder of Sir David Amess, who was stabbed to death in 2021 while meeting constituents. Badenoch stated it was "good" that police were investigating and called for prosecution if the law was breached.

Katie Amess, daughter of the late Sir David Amess, spoke to BBC’s Good Morning Ulster expressing shock and disbelief at the alleged comments from Kneecap. She described the statements as “extremely dangerous” and warned that there are individuals who could be inspired to act on such violent rhetoric, urging the group to apologise.

The police response is ongoing, with Scotland Yard’s counter-terrorism internet referral unit currently assessing the footage. A Metropolitan Police spokesperson confirmed the evaluation of material from the two events, stating the investigation will proceed if the content violates the law.

The political ramifications of the controversy also touch on funding and festival appearances. Kneecap, a bilingual Belfast group, had previously been denied a government grant by Mrs Badenoch while she was Business Secretary. The band later won a discrimination challenge to reclaim a £14,250 award after the UK government admitted the refusal was unlawful. Downing Street has since indicated no further public funds would be allocated to the band, with the Prime Minister's spokesman asserting that such groups should not receive taxpayers’ money. Badenoch criticised the Labour government for agreeing to pay the disputed grant without contesting the court case.

Labour MP David Taylor has urged the organisers of the Glastonbury Festival to remove Kneecap from this year’s line-up, arguing that hosting the band contradicts the festival’s ethos of promoting peace, unity, and social responsibility. Kneecap is scheduled to perform on the West Holts stage on the Saturday of the June event.

This situation presents ongoing developments as police continue their assessment and as political debate centres on the relationship between artistic expression, funding, and public safety concerns in the UK. The Herald (Glasgow) is reporting on the evolving story.

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

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/irish-rappers-kneecap-apologise-families-murdered-uk-lawmakers-2025-04-29/> - This article reports on Kneecap's apology to the families of murdered British lawmakers Jo Cox and David Amess following the resurfacing of controversial footage from their 2023 performance, where a member appeared to say, 'Kill your local MP' and 'The only good Tory is a dead Tory.'
2. <https://www.ft.com/content/c54616b6-30c0-4fa9-b02c-fb312c465e0e> - This piece details Kneecap's legal victory against the UK government after the business department, then led by Kemi Badenoch, denied them arts funding on the grounds that they 'oppose the United Kingdom.' The High Court in Belfast ruled the decision was 'unlawful' and awarded the band £14,250.
3. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kneecap_(band)> - This Wikipedia page provides an overview of Kneecap, including their background, controversies, and the legal battle against the UK government over funding denial.
4. <https://www.kulr8.com/news/national/irish-rappers-kneecap-deny-support-for-hamas-hezbollah/article_dc941102-ec34-5a85-8942-802ef587f1d2.html> - This article covers Kneecap's denial of supporting Hamas and Hezbollah and their apology to the families of murdered British politicians following controversial comments made during their concerts.
5. <https://www.upday.com/uk/kneecap-says-footage-has-been-exploited-and-weaponised-over-dead-tory-comment> - This piece discusses Kneecap's response to allegations that footage from their concerts was 'exploited and weaponised,' including their denial of supporting Hamas and Hezbollah and their apology to the families of murdered MPs.
6. <https://www.spiked-online.com/2024/12/23/kneecap-reveal-the-scourge-of-phoney-radicalism/> - This article offers a critical perspective on Kneecap, discussing their image and the controversies surrounding the band, including their legal battle against the UK government and the reactions to their performances.
7. <https://www.heraldscotland.com/news/25122498.kneecap-says-footage-weaponised-dead-tory-comment/?ref=rss> - Please view link - unable to able to access data