# Rangers fans’ sectarian chants on Belfast bus spark PSNI probe amid wider club controversies



A video that surfaced over the weekend has drawn scrutiny towards Rangers fans as they were recorded chanting sectarian songs while riding an open-top bus through Belfast. The Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) has confirmed they are aware of the video, which has gained traction on social media. The fans, who are believed to be members of a Belfast-based supporters club, were heading to an event at the SSE Arena when the incident occurred.

Sectarian songs have a long and controversial history within Northern Irish culture, often reflecting the deep-seated divisions linked to historical conflicts and the sectarian divide between Catholic and Protestant communities. The particular songs in question are known to have connections to both Ulster loyalist sentiments and Rangers Football Club itself. One such song, the 'Famine Song', is frequently associated with Rangers supporters and has been widely condemned for its racist and sectarian undertones. Critics have highlighted that such expressions not only perpetuate division but also lead to criminal convictions in some instances.

The phenomenon of sectarian chanting is not isolated to fans. Recent reports indicate that police are also investigating claims of Davidson and Kent, Rangers players, using sectarian language during private celebrations following their title win. This incident, caught on TikTok, has initiated a broader discourse about the responsibility of public figures in addressing sectarianism within the sport.

Moreover, the issue has caught the attention of transport service providers; Stena Line recently banned Rangers fans from traveling as foot passengers to football matches due to reported incidents of "loutish" behaviour. This decision followed previous controversies wherein Rangers supporters sang sectarian songs while returning from matches. Such actions raise important questions about how transport companies and other institutions navigate the challenges posed by sectarian sentiments among sports fans.

Rangers FC, while celebrating their historical success, has faced sanctions from UEFA due to continuing incidents of sectarian chanting among fans. The European football governing body imposed a travel ban and has warned that any further infractions could lead to harsher penalties, including potential stadium closures.

The deep-rooted nature of sectarianism in Northern Ireland is illustrated starkly by events such as the May 2002 Belfast riots, which were ignited by passions surrounding a Rangers-Celtic match. This historical context underscores the urgency of addressing the sectarian behaviour that persists not only among fans but also in the wider community.

As the PSNI continues its inquiries into the recent incident involving fans on the Belfast bus and evaluates the broader implications of these expressions, it remains to be seen how the authorities, clubs, and communities will confront the enduring challenge of sectarianism in sport and society.

### Reference Map

1. Paragraph 1: [[1]](https://m.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/northern-ireland/psni-making-inquiries-after-rangers-fans-sing-sectarian-songs-from-open-top-belfast-bus/a1338190376.html)
2. Paragraph 2: [[3]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Famine_Song)
3. Paragraph 3: [[2]](https://www.irishtimes.com/sport/soccer/police-investigate-claims-rangers-players-used-sectarian-language-at-party-1.4567530)
4. Paragraph 4: [[5]](https://www.irishtimes.com/news/stena-bans-rangers-fans-as-foot-passengers-on-ferries-1.484070)
5. Paragraph 5: [[6]](https://www.foxsports.com/stories/soccer/uefa-punishes-rangers-over-fans-sectarian-songs)
6. Paragraph 6: [[7]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/May_2002_Belfast_riots)

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

## Bibliography

1. <https://m.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/northern-ireland/psni-making-inquiries-after-rangers-fans-sing-sectarian-songs-from-open-top-belfast-bus/a1338190376.html> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.irishtimes.com/sport/soccer/police-investigate-claims-rangers-players-used-sectarian-language-at-party-1.4567530> - The Irish Times reports that Scottish police are investigating claims that Rangers players used sectarian language during their title celebrations. TikTok footage emerged showing players and others singing inside a function suite. Police Scotland is assessing the video and liaising with the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service as part of their enquiries.
3. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Famine_Song> - The 'Famine Song' is a song sung by some Ulster loyalists in Ulster and Scotland, often directed at Catholics and those of Irish descent. It is also sung by fans of Scottish football club Rangers due to rival Celtic's Irish roots. The song has received criticism for its racist and sectarian nature, leading to criminal convictions in some cases.
4. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Billy_Boys> - The 'Billy Boys' is a song associated with Glasgow's Brigton Billy Boys gang and later adopted by Rangers fans. Despite being banned, it has been sung at Rangers matches, including a 2012 game against Queen's Park. The song has also been used in Northern Ireland, notably by Linfield FC supporters due to historic links with Rangers.
5. <https://www.irishtimes.com/news/stena-bans-rangers-fans-as-foot-passengers-on-ferries-1.484070> - Stena Line banned Glasgow Rangers supporters from traveling as foot passengers to football games due to 'loutish' behavior. The trouble began when some of the 500 Rangers fans returning from an Old Firm game against Celtic sang sectarian songs and chanted sectarian insults. As a result, Stena Line decided not to carry Rangers groups traveling as foot passengers.
6. <https://www.foxsports.com/stories/soccer/uefa-punishes-rangers-over-fans-sectarian-songs> - UEFA punished Rangers over fans' sectarian songs, including a travel ban for one European competition match and a suspended one-match stadium closure for three years. The club had been warned by UEFA to expect sanctions due to persistent issues with fans chanting songs rooted in religious bigotry.
7. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/May_2002_Belfast_riots> - The May 2002 Belfast riots were sectarian clashes in north Belfast, Northern Ireland, involving up to 800 people. The violence began after the Scottish Cup Final, where Rangers F.C. beat Celtic F.C. Petrol bombs and fireworks were thrown at Police Service of Northern Ireland officers, resulting in injuries to 28 police officers and 10 civilians.