# Liam Óg Ó hAnnaidh charged under Terrorism Act over Hezbollah flag at Kneecap gig



British police have charged Liam Óg Ó hAnnaidh, a member of the Irish hip-hop group Kneecap, with a terrorism offence for allegedly displaying a Hezbollah flag during a concert in November 2024. This charge, applied under the Terrorism Act, follows controversial remarks by the band that have sparked significant political and public debates. The Metropolitan Police indicated that Ó hAnnaidh, who performs under the stage name Mo Chara, is scheduled to appear in court on June 18. Investigations are ongoing regarding footage from subsequent performances where the group appears to endorse violent acts and express support for other proscribed organisations.

Kneecap's rise to prominence has been accompanied by polarising reactions. The group, renowned for its contribution to the rejuvenation of the Irish-language cultural scene in Northern Ireland, blends their musical style with sharp political commentary. They have been both celebrated for their artistic expression and condemned for their provocative lyrics, which frequently include graphic references to violence and drug culture. Their political stance has garnered them a dedicated fanbase, yet it has also attracted the ire of political leaders across the UK and Ireland.

The controversy surrounding the band intensified in 2024 when they used platforms like Coachella to criticise Israel’s actions in Gaza, a move that not only drew attention to their music but also raised serious questions about the implications of their political statements. While the group maintains that their intentions have been misrepresented, they find themselves under scrutiny from both public officials and audiences. As the political climate remains sensitive, the implications of their statements resonate deeply, especially considering recent tragedies affecting UK lawmakers, such as Jo Cox and David Amess, both victims of extremist violence.

Amidst the backlash, Kneecap has publicly denied any formal support for Hamas or Hezbollah, asserting their condemnation of violence against civilians. Moreover, they issued heartfelt apologies to the families of the slain MPs, expressing that their comments were not intended to provoke or cause distress. In a climate increasingly wary of incendiary rhetoric, such statements reflect the careful navigation required for artists whose works intersect with contentious political discourse.

Kneecap gained wider recognition with a semi-autobiographical film titled "Kneecap," which premiered at the 2024 Sundance Film Festival and received acclaim, winning an audience award. This success further highlights the dichotomy of their public persona—an artist collective celebrated for its cultural contributions while simultaneously embroiled in serious legal and political ramifications.

As the June court date approaches, the ramifications of this case may extend beyond the individual artist to broader discussions about freedom of expression in the arts. With calls from some UK lawmakers for increased scrutiny of the band's public engagements and festival appearances, the intersection of art, activism, and policy continues to present complex challenges in a post-Brexit and post-COVID landscape where societal divisions are increasingly foregrounded.

This ongoing narrative illustrates how the dynamics of culture and politics are often inextricably linked, particularly in the context of Northern Ireland's historical legacy and the ongoing struggles within the UK. The response from Kneecap, the police, and the public will likely shape future discourses around artistic expression and political commentary.

### Reference Map

1. Paragraphs 1, 2, 3, 4
2. Paragraphs 1, 2, 3, 4
3. Paragraphs 1, 3, 4
4. Paragraphs 2, 4
5. Paragraphs 3, 5
6. Paragraphs 3, 5

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

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/irish-london-northern-ireland-hezbollah-metropolitan-police-b2755556.html> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://apnews.com/article/951643fa3345a152f86b59bbdcbd0a49> - Liam Óg Ó hAnnaidh, known as Mo Chara, a member of the Irish hip-hop group Kneecap, was charged under the UK Terrorism Act for allegedly displaying a Hezbollah flag during a November 2024 concert in London. The Metropolitan Police announced the charge, and Ó hAnnaidh is scheduled to appear in court on June 18. The investigation follows videos showing the band endorsing Hezbollah and Hamas and inciting violence against lawmakers. Kneecap denies these allegations, claiming their remarks were misrepresented. The group has been praised for promoting the Irish-language cultural scene but criticized for provocative lyrics and political statements. They gained wider attention with their feature film 'Kneecap,' which won an audience award at the 2024 Sundance Film Festival. ([apnews.com](https://apnews.com/article/951643fa3345a152f86b59bbdcbd0a49?utm_source=openai))
3. <https://www.ft.com/content/b88745d2-d29b-4613-8632-fa763eb4f924> - Liam Óg Ó hAnnaidh, also known as Mo Chara, a member of the Belfast-based Irish-language rap trio Kneecap, has been charged under the UK Terrorism Act 2000 for allegedly displaying a Hezbollah flag during a November 2024 concert in London. The charge carries a potential penalty of up to six months in prison and/or a fine. This follows weeks of controversy surrounding Kneecap, who have used recent performances, including at Coachella, to criticize Israel’s actions in Gaza. While the band denies support for Hamas or Hezbollah and condemns all civilian attacks, they remain unapologetic in their political messages. The charge is based on footage recorded by an audience member and comes amid growing scrutiny of the band’s provocative style and political activism. Kneecap, known for embracing a “Brits Out” Republican image, has gained fame for their performances and a fictionalized comedy about their origin. The group has yet to formally respond to the charges, though a statement is expected. ([ft.com](https://www.ft.com/content/b88745d2-d29b-4613-8632-fa763eb4f924?utm_source=openai))
4. <https://apnews.com/article/3cc86cf249c366554dee3cf5dd498fdc> - British counterterrorism police are investigating the Irish hip-hop group Kneecap following controversial comments made during concerts. In 2024, a band member allegedly said, “The only good Tory is a dead Tory. Kill your local MP,” and in 2023, shouted 'up Hamas, up Hezbollah,' referencing groups banned in the U.K. The Metropolitan Police confirmed there are grounds for further inquiry, now led by its Counter Terrorism Command. Kneecap, known for combining satirical songs with Irish republican symbolism, has ignited political tensions and public debate, especially after projecting anti-Israel messages during a Coachella performance. The group apologized to the families of U.K. MPs Jo Cox and David Amess, who were murdered in separate extremist attacks, claiming their comments were taken out of context. Some U.K. lawmakers have called for Kneecap to be removed from upcoming festivals, though notable musicians have defended them, criticizing attempts to silence the group and uphold artistic freedom. Kneecap’s recent rise to international attention follows the success of their semi-autobiographical film 'Kneecap,' which screened at the 2024 Sundance Film Festival and received Oscar shortlist recognition. ([apnews.com](https://apnews.com/article/3cc86cf249c366554dee3cf5dd498fdc?utm_source=openai))
5. <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/kneecap-coachella-hamas-hezbollah-israel-gaza-war/> - Irish rappers Kneecap have denied supporting Hamas and Hezbollah and publicly apologized to the families of two murdered British lawmakers as the hip-hop trio continue to face public backlash for political views they've expressed at their concerts. Kneecap's statement came after U.K. police said that they were investigating video related to a Kneecap concert from 2024 in which one of the band's members appears to shout, 'up Hamas, up Hezbollah.' Hamas and Hezbollah, both currently engaged in fighting with Israel, are designated as terrorist groups by the U.S., Israel and European Union. The British and Irish governments have roundly condemned the language used by the Kneecap members. Speaking to reporters on Monday, the Republic of Ireland's leader Micheál Martin said that support for Hamas or Hezbollah is 'unacceptable' and asked Kneecap to urgently clarify their views. A spokesperson for British Prime Minister Keir Starmer said Monday that he condemned the group's remarks 'in the strongest possible terms.' U.K. police also said they were reviewing video from a concert in 2023 in which one Kneecap member appears to call for killing Conservative party lawmakers, who are often known as Tories, by saying on stage: 'The only good Tory is a dead Tory. Kill your local MP.' Those comments have been sharply criticized by the families of two British lawmakers who were murdered in recent years. In the same statement in which the group denied supporting Hamas and Hezbollah, Kneecap addressed that criticism and said: 'To the Amess and Cox families, we send our heartfelt apologies, we never intended to cause you hurt.' ([cbsnews.com](https://www.cbsnews.com/news/kneecap-coachella-hamas-hezbollah-israel-gaza-war/?utm_source=openai))
6. <https://www.jpost.com/international/article-851967> - Irish rap band Kneecap apologized on Tuesday to the families of two murdered British lawmakers after footage emerged of one of the trio appearing to say 'Kill your local MP' during a performance in 2023. In the video footage, from a London concert, a band member appears to say: 'The only good Tory is a dead Tory. Kill your local MP.' Kneecap has also faced criticism over pro-Palestinian messages projected on stage at the Coachella Valley Music and Arts Festival in California this month, ending with: 'F\*\*\* Israel. Free Palestine.' A video clip posted on X from a concert in 2024 appears to show a band member saying: 'Up Hamas, up Hezbollah.' Kneecap, whose members have the stage names Mo Chara, Móglaí Bap, and DJ Próvaí, said the clips were a smear campaign. 'Let us be unequivocal: we do not, and have never, supported Hamas or Hezbollah,' they said on X. 'We condemn all attacks on civilians, always. It is never okay. We know this more than anyone, given our nation's history.' The rappers apologized to the families of Jo Cox, a Labour lawmaker fatally stabbed in 2016, and David Amess, a Conservative lawmaker stabbed to death in 2021. 'We never intended to cause you hurt,' they said. ([jpost.com](https://www.jpost.com/international/article-851967?utm_source=openai))