# Metropolitan Police face calls for inquiry over pro-Palestinian protest policing amid hate speech arrests



Pro-Palestinian demonstrations across the UK have recently sparked heightened scrutiny and debate regarding the balance between free expression and the legal implications of supporting proscribed terrorist organisations such as Hamas. Recent incidents during these protests have raised questions about the appropriateness of police responses and the implications of public speech surrounding such sensitive issues.

In a notable incident, the Metropolitan Police faced criticism for dismissing complaints from a British-Israeli man regarding pro-Palestinian protesters who were allegedly glorifying the terror attacks that occurred on October 7. Footage surfaced showing a police liaison officer conversing with the man, advising him to "calm down" when he reported demonstrators chanting slogans such as "I love October 7" and expressing admiration for groups linked with terrorism. The police defended their actions, suggesting that allegations had become "almost petty tit-for-tat," asserting that there was insufficient evidence to substantiate the complaints. This dismissal was met with outrage as the Metropolitan Police acknowledged that the protests had increasingly become contentious, with allegations rising on both sides that lacked strong foundations.

The complexities surrounding these protests extend beyond individual incidents. Jonathan Hall KC, the UK’s independent reviewer of terrorism legislation, indicated that certain speeches made during pro-Palestinian rallies could be construed as glorifying terrorism. He pointed specifically to the Be'eri kibbutz massacre as an example of events that may incite serious legal repercussions. Home Secretary Suella Braverman has echoed Hall's sentiments, advocating for strict enforcement of laws against support for Hamas, reinforcing the government's position that glorifying terrorism is unacceptable.

The Metropolitan Police have acted over concerns regarding incitement of racial hatred at these gatherings. Reports indicate that multiple individuals have been arrested for displaying symbols and messages considered deeply offensive and linked to hate speech. For instance, one protest saw a man arrested for carrying a placard emblazoned with Nazi symbols, while others were detained for distributing literature featuring swastikas inside a Star of David. These arrests underscore the ongoing tension between freedom of expression and the necessity of maintaining public order, particularly in a context laden with historical significance and sensitivities surrounding Jewish communities.

Furthermore, debates initiated by legal experts about the police's tactics during these protests have intensified. Calls for an inquiry into the Metropolitan Police's conduct, particularly in instances where they prohibited gatherings near sensitive locations such as synagogues, have emerged. Critics argue that such actions constitute a disproportionate response and infringe upon the fundamental right to protest—a fundamental component of democratic society.

As public demonstrations continue to take shape, the need for clear dialogue surrounding the regulations governing speech and assembly remains critical. The situation highlights the precarious balance that must be struck between safeguarding civil liberties and addressing the complex socio-political realities underpinning protests related to the conflict in Gaza. Ultimately, as tensions simmer both locally and globally, the stakes in these discussions about liberty, security, and communal respect will be higher than ever.

## Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/2059921/complaints-pro-gaza-protests-glorifying-hamas), [[6]](https://www.jpost.com/diaspora/antisemitism/article-838601)
* Paragraph 2 – [[2]](https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-67100274), [[5]](https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2025/jan/21/law-experts-demand-inquiry-into-met-policing-of-pro-palestine-protest), [[3]](https://www.standard.co.uk/news/london/hamas-gaza-pro-palestine-march-stop-the-war-coalition-london-keir-starmer-metropolitan-police-egypt-arrests-inciting-racial-hatred-b1122792.html)
* Paragraph 3 – [[4]](https://news.sky.com/story/four-arrested-on-suspicion-of-terrorism-offences-at-pro-palestine-protest-in-london-13049100), [[7]](https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c3gye0l9xgzo)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/2059921/complaints-pro-gaza-protests-glorifying-hamas> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-67100274> - The UK's independent reviewer of terrorism legislation, Jonathan Hall KC, stated that speeches at pro-Palestinian rallies might have glorified terrorism. He emphasized that glorifying acts like the Be'eri kibbutz massacre could lead to serious terrorism offences. Home Secretary Suella Braverman supported this stance, asserting that the full force of the law should be applied against support for Hamas, a proscribed terrorist group in the UK.
3. <https://www.standard.co.uk/news/london/hamas-gaza-pro-palestine-march-stop-the-war-coalition-london-keir-starmer-metropolitan-police-egypt-arrests-inciting-racial-hatred-b1122792.html> - During a pro-Palestinian march in London, the Metropolitan Police arrested individuals for inciting racial hatred. One man was detained for carrying a placard with Nazi symbols, while others were arrested for distributing literature featuring a swastika inside a Star of David. Additionally, two women were arrested for racially aggravated public order offences over messaging on placards at a protest outside the Egyptian Embassy.
4. <https://news.sky.com/story/four-arrested-on-suspicion-of-terrorism-offences-at-pro-palestine-protest-in-london-13049100> - Four individuals were arrested on suspicion of terrorism offences during a pro-Palestinian march in London. Three were detained at the Victoria Embankment protest for allegedly inviting support for a proscribed organisation. A fourth person was arrested the following day outside a police station where the others were held. All four were released on bail, and their homes were searched.
5. <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2025/jan/21/law-experts-demand-inquiry-into-met-policing-of-pro-palestine-protest> - Legal experts have called for an inquiry into the Metropolitan Police's handling of a pro-Palestinian protest in London. The police had banned protesters from gathering outside the BBC's London headquarters, citing its proximity to a synagogue and the Sabbath. The experts argue that the police's actions were disproportionate and an abuse of power, emphasizing the importance of protecting the right to protest.
6. <https://www.jpost.com/diaspora/antisemitism/article-838601> - Following a pro-Palestinian protest in London, several activists were charged with public order offences. Despite the protest being largely peaceful, some individuals were arrested for carrying placards indicating support for Hamas and Hezbollah, both proscribed terrorist organisations. The arrests have sparked debates about the balance between freedom of expression and national security concerns.
7. <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c3gye0l9xgzo> - The Metropolitan Police arrested four individuals on suspicion of encouraging support for a banned terrorist group during a pro-Palestinian demonstration in London. Three were detained at the Victoria Embankment protest, and a fourth was arrested the following day outside a police station where the others were held. All four were released on bail, and their homes were searched.