# Glasgow's TRNSMT festival drops Kneecap over safety concerns amid political backlash



Glasgow's TRNSMT music festival has found itself at the centre of significant controversy following the decision to remove the Irish language rap group Kneecap from its line-up. The group's unceremonious exit from the festival has sparked intense discussions among local politicians, particularly after the police voiced concerns regarding potential safety issues connected to their performance. Kneecap, a trio from Belfast, was slated to perform on July 11 but has since announced a replacement gig at the O2 Academy, which reportedly sold out in mere seconds, an indication of their strong fanbase despite the uproar.

Politicians from across the political spectrum have raised questions about the rationale behind the police's concerns. Jon Molyneux, co-leader of the Glasgow Greens, expressed scepticism about the police's judgement, emphasising that if the police can manage "major events and demonstrations in the city," then their claim that Kneecap's performance would pose an "insurmountable operational problem" seems hard to believe. Notably, Molyneux highlighted the broader context, reiterating that the humanitarian crisis in Gaza should take precedence over the debate surrounding the festival.

James Dornan, a member of the Scottish National Party representing Cathcart, echoed Molyneux's concerns, questioning the nature of the threats that prompted the police's apprehensions. His comments, including a pointed question about whether the alleged dangers originated from "Israel, supporters of genocide, or anti-Irish protesters," reveal a growing frustration with the state of political discourse surrounding the group. This anger is compounded by the fact that Kneecap's music has often delved into themes of social justice and political expression.

The controversy began to take shape when a video emerged earlier in 2023, in which a band member allegedly made inflammatory remarks, stating, "The only good Tory is a dead Tory. Kill your local MP." These comments drew rapid condemnation, prompting calls for the band’s removal from not just TRNSMT but also other events, including Glastonbury. Scotland's First Minister, John Swinney, labelled the remarks as "completely and utterly unacceptable," further propelling public calls for the festival to reconsider Kneecap's involvement.

In the wake of the backlash, Kneecap issued an apology to the families of murdered MPs Jo Cox and David Amess, asserting that their message is rooted in "love, inclusion, and hope." They clarified that they do not endorse violence against any individual, asserting that their intent is often misinterpreted. Despite this, the fallout has left a palpable tension within the community, as differing opinions emerge over the limits of artistic expression and political commentary in music.

DF Concerts, the promoters for TRNSMT, reiterated that their decision was informed by advisories from Police Scotland regarding safety. A spokesperson stated that any determination regarding the line-up should primarily rest with the festival's organisers, with police concerns indicating that a significant policing operation would be necessary to ensure safety if Kneecap were to perform. This scenario raises questions about the balance between artistic freedom and public safety, particularly in an era marked by heightened sensitivity around political discourse.

As the situation develops, the intersection of art, politics, and public sentiment continues to unfold, highlighting not only the challenges faced by performers like Kneecap but also the complexities surrounding our collective values regarding expression and security in live events.

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

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.dailyrecord.co.uk/news/scottish-news/glasgow-politicians-question-decision-axe-35315155> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://news.stv.tv/west-central/kneecap-apologies-to-families-of-murdered-mps-after-calls-to-axe-band-from-trnsmt> - Irish rap group Kneecap has apologised to the families of murdered MPs Jo Cox and David Amess following calls for them to be removed from the TRNSMT festival line-up. The controversy stems from a 2023 video where a band member appeared to say, 'The only good Tory is a dead Tory. Kill your local MP.' Kneecap stated their message is one of 'love, inclusion, and hope' and condemned the exploitation of the footage. They also clarified they do not support Hamas or Hezbollah and reject inciting violence against any MP or individual.
3. <https://news.stv.tv/west-central/john-swinney-joins-calls-to-axe-kneecap-from-trnsmt-festival-after-kill-your-local-mp-video> - First Minister John Swinney has joined calls for the Irish rap group Kneecap to be removed from the TRNSMT festival after a video emerged showing a band member allegedly urging fans to 'kill your local MP.' Swinney described the comments as 'completely and utterly unacceptable' and suggested that TRNSMT organisers should reconsider the band's inclusion. The video has prompted widespread condemnation, with politicians across the spectrum expressing concern over the band's participation in the festival.
4. <https://www.standard.co.uk/culture/music/glasgow-king-prime-minister-dundee-metropolitan-police-b1224778.html> - The organisers of the TRNSMT festival in Glasgow are being urged to reconsider the inclusion of Irish rap trio Kneecap after a video surfaced of one of its members calling for the death of Tory MPs. The band is scheduled to headline the King Tut’s stage at TRNSMT in July but has faced criticism across the political spectrum since the comments came to light. The First Minister of Scotland, John Swinney, has described the comments as 'completely and utterly unacceptable' and suggested that the organisers should consider the issue.
5. <https://www.johnogroat-journal.co.uk/news/national/festival-urged-to-reconsider-inclusion-of-rap-group-after-dead-tory-comments-132349/> - The organisers of the TRNSMT festival in Glasgow are being urged to reconsider the inclusion of Irish rap trio Kneecap after a video emerged of one of its members calling for the death of Tory MPs. The band is scheduled to headline the King Tut’s stage at TRNSMT in July but has faced criticism across the political spectrum since the comments came to light. The First Minister of Scotland, John Swinney, has described the comments as 'completely and utterly unacceptable' and suggested that the organisers should consider the issue.
6. <https://www.scotsman.com/news/scottish-news/festival-urged-to-reconsider-inclusion-of-rap-group-after-dead-tory-comments-5103682> - The organisers of the TRNSMT festival in Glasgow are being urged to reconsider the inclusion of Irish rap trio Kneecap after a video emerged of one of its members calling for the death of Tory MPs. The band is scheduled to headline the King Tut’s stage at TRNSMT in July but has faced criticism across the political spectrum since the comments came to light. The First Minister of Scotland, John Swinney, has described the comments as 'completely and utterly unacceptable' and suggested that the organisers should consider the issue.
7. <https://glasgowstandard.com/2025/04/29/a-tory-mp-has-called-for-festivals-to-remove-an-act-from-their-line-up-following-incitement-to-murder/> - Conservative politician Mark Francois has called for action to be taken against the Irish republican rap group Kneecap after videos surfaced of the trio performing in 2023. The band said 'the only good Tory is a dead Tory' and 'kill your local MP.' MP Mark Francois said: 'I understand that Kneecap are still booked to appear at Glastonbury, which under the circumstances would be unconscionable. This house does not think it is appropriate that Kneecap should be allowed to appear.'