# Kneecap rapper claims terror charge aims to silence artistic voice amid legal and political storm



A member of the Irish rap group Kneecap has publicly claimed that the terror charge he faces is an attempt to "silence us." This assertion came as the band performed at a gig that they alleged was nearly cancelled due to the legal controversy surrounding them. Liam Óg Ó hAnnaidh, known as Mo Chara, faces a charge under the UK’s Terrorism Act 2000, stemming from accusations that he displayed a Hezbollah flag during a performance at the London O2 Forum in November 2024. The charge carries the implication of endorsing a proscribed organisation, which the group vehemently denies.

The group has positioned the charges as a political distraction aimed at stifling artistic expression, particularly those voices that speak out about global injustices, including the situation in Gaza. They have reiterated their condemnation of violence against civilians and categorically stated that they do not support either Hamas or Hezbollah. Ó hAnnaidh is due to appear at Westminster Magistrates' Court on June 18.

The controversy surrounding Kneecap is not new. The group, which sings in Irish and has attracted a following for its politically charged lyrics, has found itself at the centre of scrutiny from counterterrorism authorities. Videos have surfaced allegedly showing members making incendiary remarks and endorsing militant groups, leading to ongoing investigations by the Metropolitan Police. This tension has escalated following their performance at Coachella, where they projected anti-Israel messages, provoking responses from UK lawmakers who have called for them to be excluded from future festivals, including the upcoming Glastonbury Festival.

Their musical and political stance has sparked significant debate. Critics accuse them of fostering divisive rhetoric, particularly after a 2023 concert where a member of the group made controversial comments regarding lawmakers, stating that "the only good Tory is a dead Tory." Such remarks have caused distress among families of politicians who were victims of extremist violence, prompting public apologies from Kneecap.

Despite this backlash, the group maintains a strong fan base and artistic integrity. In an era where the lines between art and politics increasingly blur, Kneecap's experiences resonate with ongoing discussions about free speech, artistic freedom, and the responsibilities that accompany these liberties. As they prepare for their performance at Glastonbury, the band faces both the weight of public scrutiny and the challenge of articulating their views in an environment that is highly charged with political sensitivities.

Through their provocative art, Kneecap is navigating a complex landscape of cultural and political expression, reflecting broader issues that resonate not only within the UK but across the globe. As the group pushes forward, continuing to articulate their stance on multifaceted issues, they remain emblematic of a generation grappling with the intersection of music, identity, and activism.

## Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://m.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/entertainment/music/they-are-trying-to-silence-us-kneecap-member-facing-terror-charge-tells-crowd/a64185107.html), [[2]](https://www.ft.com/content/b88745d2-d29b-4613-8632-fa763eb4f924)
* Paragraph 2 – [[2]](https://www.ft.com/content/b88745d2-d29b-4613-8632-fa763eb4f924), [[3]](https://www.reuters.com/world/irish-band-kneecap-say-terrorism-charge-seeks-silence-artists-2025-05-22/), [[4]](https://apnews.com/article/951643fa3345a152f86b59bbdcbd0a49)
* Paragraph 3 – [[5]](https://apnews.com/article/3cc86cf249c366554dee3cf5dd498fdc), [[6]](https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/irish-rappers-kneecap-apologise-families-murdered-uk-lawmakers-2025-04-29/)
* Paragraph 4 – [[6]](https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/irish-rappers-kneecap-apologise-families-murdered-uk-lawmakers-2025-04-29/), [[7]](https://www.cbsnews.com/news/kneecap-coachella-hamas-hezbollah-israel-gaza-war/)
* Paragraph 5 – [[3]](https://www.reuters.com/world/irish-band-kneecap-say-terrorism-charge-seeks-silence-artists-2025-05-22/), [[4]](https://apnews.com/article/951643fa3345a152f86b59bbdcbd0a49), [[7]](https://www.cbsnews.com/news/kneecap-coachella-hamas-hezbollah-israel-gaza-war/)

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

## Bibliography

1. <https://m.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/entertainment/music/they-are-trying-to-silence-us-kneecap-member-facing-terror-charge-tells-crowd/a64185107.html> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.ft.com/content/b88745d2-d29b-4613-8632-fa763eb4f924> - Liam Óg Ó hAnnaidh, known as Mo Chara, a member of the Belfast-based Irish-language rap trio Kneecap, has been charged under the UK's Terrorism Act 2000. The charge relates to allegedly displaying a Hezbollah flag during a November 2024 concert at London's O2 Forum, suggesting support for a proscribed organization. Kneecap has rejected the allegations, calling the charges a political distraction and an attempt to silence artists critical of global injustices, particularly in Gaza. They emphasized their condemnation of all attacks on civilians and denied support for Hamas or Hezbollah. Ó hAnnaidh is scheduled to appear at Westminster Magistrates' Court on June 18. ([ft.com](https://www.ft.com/content/b88745d2-d29b-4613-8632-fa763eb4f924?utm_source=openai))
3. <https://www.reuters.com/world/irish-band-kneecap-say-terrorism-charge-seeks-silence-artists-2025-05-22/> - Irish-language rap group Kneecap has condemned a terrorism-related charge against band member Liam O'Hanna as an attempt to silence politically outspoken artists. O'Hanna, 27, was charged by London's Metropolitan Police for allegedly displaying a Hezbollah flag—representing the Iran-backed militant group banned in the UK—during a performance in November. Kneecap stated the flag was thrown on stage and denied endorsing Hezbollah or Hamas, emphasizing their condemnation of all attacks on civilians. The band, known for advocating Irish identity and Irish unity, has been scrutinized recently for pro-Palestinian messaging during their Coachella performance. In April, they also apologized for previously controversial comments perceived as encouraging violence against MPs. O'Hanna is scheduled to appear in court on June 18. Despite mounting criticism, including calls from UK lawmakers for their exclusion, Kneecap is still set to perform at the Glastonbury Festival in June. ([reuters.com](https://www.reuters.com/world/irish-band-kneecap-say-terrorism-charge-seeks-silence-artists-2025-05-22/?utm_source=openai))
4. <https://apnews.com/article/951643fa3345a152f86b59bbdcbd0a49> - Liam Óg Ó hAnnaidh, also known as Mo Chara and a member of the Irish hip-hop group Kneecap, has been charged by British police under the Terrorism Act for allegedly displaying a Hezbollah flag during a performance at London's Kentish Town Forum on November 21, 2024. The charge comes amid a broader investigation into the group by counterterrorism authorities, following videos purportedly showing the band endorsing Hezbollah and Hamas and inciting violence against lawmakers. Kneecap has denied these allegations, claiming their remarks were misrepresented by political figures. The group, based in Belfast, is recognized for promoting Irish-language culture but is controversial for its provocative lyrics and political stances. The controversy has led to several concert cancellations and calls from politicians to drop the band from events, including the upcoming Glastonbury Festival. Kneecap garnered wider attention following the release of their gritty self-titled feature film, which premiered at the 2024 Sundance Film Festival and was shortlisted for Academy Awards but did not advance to the final nominations. Ó hAnnaidh is scheduled to appear in court on June 18, and police continue to investigate footage from a separate 2023 concert. ([apnews.com](https://apnews.com/article/951643fa3345a152f86b59bbdcbd0a49?utm_source=openai))
5. <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))
6. <https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/irish-rappers-kneecap-apologise-families-murdered-uk-lawmakers-2025-04-29/> - Irish rap group Kneecap issued an 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." The band, known for their republican views and support for Irish unity, has also been criticized for pro-Palestinian messages at events, including a Coachella performance condemning Israel and footage supporting banned groups Hamas and Hezbollah. Kneecap denied supporting any militant groups, stating the clips are part of a smear campaign and reiterating their condemnation of attacks on civilians. British Interior Minister Yvette Cooper condemned the comments as dangerous, noting law enforcement is reviewing the footage. Kneecap, set to perform at Glastonbury Festival in June, emphasized they did not intend to cause harm and acknowledged the gravity of their statements amid the UK's history of political violence. ([reuters.com](https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/irish-rappers-kneecap-apologise-families-murdered-uk-lawmakers-2025-04-29/?utm_source=openai))
7. <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. "Let us be unequivocal: we do not, and have never, supported Hamas or Hezbollah. We condemn all attacks on civilians, always. It is never okay," the band said in a statement posted Monday on social media. 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. The families of Conservative Member of Parliament David Amess, who was stabbed by an ISIS supporter in 2021, and Labour Party MP Jo Cox, who was shot and stabbed multiple times by a neo-Nazi sympathizer, called for a public apology from the group, ([cbsnews.com](https://www.cbsnews.com/news/kneecap-coachella-hamas-hezbollah-israel-gaza-war/?utm_source=openai))