# Banksy’s protest mural at London’s Royal Courts of Justice removed over heritage concerns



A new mural by the elusive British street artist Banksy, depicting a judge violently striking a protester with a gavel, has been removed from the wall of London’s Royal Courts of Justice. The artwork showed a protester lying on the ground clutching a blood-splattered placard, while a judge in traditional wig and gown appeared to beat him. The striking image was widely interpreted as a critique of the UK government's recent ban on the activist group Palestine Action, whose members have been involved in controversial acts and were designated a terrorist organisation. The mural was swiftly erased on the orders of court administrators, citing the 143-year-old Victorian Gothic Revival courthouse's status as a protected historic site, which must maintain its original character.

The artwork appeared mysteriously on Monday and was authenticated by Banksy through his usual channel — a photo posted on Instagram. Known for his politically charged work addressing issues such as war, migration, and civil liberties, Banksy’s latest mural has resonated strongly with activists and the wider public. Some saw the piece as a direct response to events surrounding Palestine Action, whose efforts to contest the ban have been the subject of recent judicial proceedings at the very courthouse where the mural was painted. These protests recently led to the arrest of nearly 900 demonstrators in London, underscoring tensions around civil rights and political dissent in the UK.

The Royal Courts of Justice house the Court of Appeal and the High Court, both of which have heard cases linked to Palestine Action’s legal challenge against the ban. While appellate judges initially rejected an appeal request, a High Court judge allowed the case to proceed, with ongoing government challenges to that ruling. The mural's placement at such a key legal site emphasised the connection between the artwork and contemporary struggles over the right to protest and freedom of expression.

Authorities reacted swiftly to the mural’s appearance. The Metropolitan Police launched an investigation into whether the artwork constituted criminal damage. Meanwhile, court officials moved to cover and ultimately remove the piece to preserve the historic building’s façade. Barriers were erected around the site to manage public attention and protect the wall in the short term, but the decision to scrub the mural reflects the balancing act between heritage conservation and provocative contemporary art.

Banksy’s spokesperson has not commented on the matter, maintaining the artist’s characteristic silence on his creations post-release. The mural adds to Banksy’s long record of stirring public debate through street art, including notable pro-Palestinian works on the West Bank barrier and installations addressing state power and social injustice around the world. The removal of this latest mural underscores the contentious intersection of art, politics, and legal authority, highlighting ongoing concerns about government measures perceived by critics as limiting peaceful protest and civil liberties.

### 📌 Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/banksy-london-court-of-appeal-instagram-royal-courts-of-justice-b2824189.html), [[2]](https://apnews.com/article/74bc9121340a73e6620a4898c4199c94), [[3]](https://apnews.com/article/c08b2cef093ea6a0520302eacfbd871f)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/banksy-london-court-of-appeal-instagram-royal-courts-of-justice-b2824189.html), [[3]](https://apnews.com/article/c08b2cef093ea6a0520302eacfbd871f), [[4]](https://www.reuters.com/world/uk/new-banksy-mural-londons-high-court-shows-judge-striking-protester-2025-09-08/)
* Paragraph 3 – [[1]](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/banksy-london-court-of-appeal-instagram-royal-courts-of-justice-b2824189.html), [[4]](https://www.reuters.com/world/uk/new-banksy-mural-londons-high-court-shows-judge-striking-protester-2025-09-08/)
* Paragraph 4 – [[1]](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/banksy-london-court-of-appeal-instagram-royal-courts-of-justice-b2824189.html), [[2]](https://apnews.com/article/74bc9121340a73e6620a4898c4199c94), [[3]](https://apnews.com/article/c08b2cef093ea6a0520302eacfbd871f)
* Paragraph 5 – [[1]](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/banksy-london-court-of-appeal-instagram-royal-courts-of-justice-b2824189.html), [[3]](https://apnews.com/article/c08b2cef093ea6a0520302eacfbd871f), [[5]](https://www.reuters.com/world/uk/new-banksy-mural-londons-high-court-shows-judge-striking-protester-2025-09-08/), [[6]](https://www.reuters.com/world/uk/new-banksy-mural-londons-high-court-shows-judge-striking-protester-2025-09-08/), [[7]](https://www.reuters.com/world/uk/new-banksy-mural-londons-high-court-shows-judge-striking-protester-2025-09-08/)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/banksy-london-court-of-appeal-instagram-royal-courts-of-justice-b2824189.html> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://apnews.com/article/74bc9121340a73e6620a4898c4199c94> - A controversial mural by the anonymous street artist Banksy, depicting a judge in traditional attire beating a protester with a gavel, was removed from the wall of the Royal Courts of Justice in London. The artwork showed a protester on the ground holding a bloodied placard and was seen by some activists as a critique of the U.K. government's recent ban on the group Palestine Action—a decision currently under judicial scrutiny. While Banksy authenticated the mural via Instagram, court administrators deemed its presence incompatible with the historical integrity of the 143-year-old courthouse, leading to its removal. The Metropolitan Police are also investigating the mural as potential criminal damage. Banksy's spokesperson has not commented. This act sparked responses from those who interpret it as a protest against governmental and judicial actions, especially concerning civil liberties and political expression.
3. <https://apnews.com/article/c08b2cef093ea6a0520302eacfbd871f> - A provocative new mural by the anonymous street artist Banksy has appeared outside London's Royal Courts of Justice, depicting a judge violently beating an unarmed protester with a gavel. The artwork, which shows the protester lying on the ground with a bloodied placard, was shared by Banksy on Instagram—his customary method of claiming authorship. Authorities announced the mural will be removed due to the historic and protected status of the 143-year-old building. Security has been deployed to safeguard the site while removal plans are underway. Though not explicitly tied to any event, the image has been interpreted as a response to the UK government's recent ban on the activist group Palestine Action. Just days prior, nearly 900 individuals were arrested during a protest against the ban. The organizing group, Defend Our Juries, praised the mural for highlighting state repression. Banksy, renowned for politically charged artwork, has a history of addressing migration, war, and civil liberties. His works have appeared globally, including installations in Venice, Paris, the West Bank, and at events like the Glastonbury Festival. Many of his pieces have also become targets for theft and vandalism due to their high value.
4. <https://www.reuters.com/world/uk/new-banksy-mural-londons-high-court-shows-judge-striking-protester-2025-09-08/> - A new mural by the secretive British street artist Banksy has appeared on the wall of London’s High Court, depicting a judge striking a protester with a gavel. This provocative image appears to reference the recent arrest of nearly 900 demonstrators protesting the UK government's decision to ban Palestine Action, which was designated a terrorist group after members vandalized a Royal Air Force base. The protester in the mural is shown on the ground holding a blood-stained placard, emphasizing the violence and perceived suppression of dissent. The mural has drawn public and media attention, particularly given its prominent location on the Royal Courts of Justice, a highly protected heritage building. Although Banksy has not explicitly commented, the artwork aligns with his history of pro-Palestinian messages, including past murals on the West Bank barrier. Critics from all sides are questioning whether the UK’s legal and political measures are undermining the right to peaceful protest. Photos show barriers now surround the mural, highlighting concerns about its preservation and the message it conveys.
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