# Belfast rap trio Kneecap face death threats after Coachella Israel criticism



Belfast rap trio Kneecap have been the target of death threats following their outspoken criticism of Israel during a performance at the Coachella music festival in California on 18 April, their manager has confirmed.

The bilingual band, known for their use of the Irish language, ended their set during the second weekend of Coachella with a screen displaying three messages condemning Israel. The texts accused Israel of committing genocide against Palestinians, criticised the United States for supporting Israel militarily and financially despite alleged war crimes, and concluded with the phrase, “F\*\*\* Israel. Free Palestine.”

Following their performance, the band posted on X (formerly Twitter) referencing “hundreds of violent Zionist threats” they had received. In a subsequent interview with RTE Radio, their manager, Daniel Lambert, confirmed the severity of these threats, stating the nature of them was “too severe” to disclose publicly.

Lambert praised the band for their courage and conviction, highlighting their backgrounds: “There’s three working-class young people here who’ve built a career for themselves on the basis of the Irish language and music and culture and identity,” he said. “They have the bravery and the conviction – especially given where they’ve come from in post-conflict society – to stand up for what’s right, and are willing to do that despite the fact that it may harm their career, despite the fact that it may harm their income, and they should be praised massively for that. It’s an extremely strong position for young people to take, especially young people from a working-class background.”

When questioned about whether the band’s messaging might be seen as condemning all Israelis, Lambert clarified that their statements referred specifically to the Israeli government. “Absolutely not,” he asserted. “I think when you refer to ‘Israel’ in messaging, as we did, that you’re referring to the Israeli government.”

The manager also addressed criticism that the band’s statements were offensive, describing such reactions as “buying into moral hysteria.” He pointed instead to the ongoing conflict in Gaza and the "tens of thousands of people being killed by Israeli forces.” “If somebody is hurt by the truth, that’s something for them to be hurt by. But it’s really important to speak truth, and thankfully, the lads are not afraid to do that,” he said.

In addition to the threats, Lambert recounted positive reactions from young festivalgoers. “The beautiful reaction has been the hundreds of young Americans who came up to us at Coachella, to the lads, to say that they had said something that wasn’t being said in America and that these kids believed in,” he shared. “That was said to us by young girls, young boys, people in their 20s, 30s, and so, so many people came up to say thank you for saying what is right, what is just, and something that sadly isn’t said enough.”

Lambert questioned why more focus was not placed on recent statements by Euro-Med about Israeli forces deliberately targeting 37 aid distribution centres and 28 food banks, actions described as attempts “to starve civilians.” He argued that such issues warranted greater attention than the reactions to the band’s messages.

Responding to allegations that Kneecap promotes Hamas and Hezbollah, Lambert pointed out that “we’ve openly had Israeli government ministers talk about starving a population, cutting food, cutting water. These are the issues that we should be discussing.”

The Irish News understands that the threats and debate surrounding the band’s performance have sparked a significant conversation regarding freedom of expression and the ongoing conflict in the Middle East, particularly spotlighting perspectives from young artists in post-conflict Northern Ireland.

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

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.standard.co.uk/culture/music/israel-california-belfast-america-americans-b1223878.html> - This article supports the claim that Kneecap received death threats after criticizing Israel during their Coachella performance. It mentions that the band's manager confirmed the receipt of these threats.
2. <https://www.latimes.com/entertainment-arts/music/story/2025-04-21/kneecap-coachella-2025-controversy> - This article corroborates the details of Kneecap's performance at Coachella, including the messages displayed on screens criticizing Israel and the U.S. government. It also mentions that some messages were allegedly cut from the official livestream.
3. <https://ia601201.us.archive.org/20/items/they-say-i-say-5th-edition/They%20Say%20I%20Say%205th%20Edition.pdf> - Although not directly relevant to Kneecap or Coachella, this resource provides a broader context on addressing controversial topics and engaging in rhetorical discourse, which relates to the band's stance and public discourse.
4. <https://www.latimes.com/> - The Los Angeles Times often covers national and international news, including cultural events like Coachella. However, a specific article from this site is more relevant (as mentioned earlier), and this link provides a general source for news about cultural events in America.
5. <https://www.rte.ie/news/> - RTÉ (Raidió Teilifís Éireann) is a primary news source in Ireland. Although not directly linked to an article about Kneecap, it is the platform where the band's manager, Daniel Lambert, discussed the situation with Kneecap, providing context to their stance and the reception of their performance.
6. <https://www.aljazeera.com/> - Al Jazeera provides extensive coverage of Middle Eastern politics and conflicts, including issues related to Israel and Palestine. This context is crucial for understanding the backdrop against which Kneecap's messages were delivered.
7. <https://www.irishnews.com/news/northern-ireland/kneecap-received-death-threats-after-coachella-gig-says-manager-UY2KU7FV3BD5XBD5RHGRZBGHWE/> - Please view link - unable to able to access data