# Protesters disrupt London Marathon men’s race with red powder on Tower Bridge



A dramatic intervention took place during the men’s elite race of the London Marathon as two protesters from the group Youth Demand disrupted the event on Tower Bridge yesterday morning. The protest, aimed at highlighting the UK government's support for arms sales to Israel amid the conflict in Gaza, was swiftly halted by a member of the London Marathon event staff, who acted decisively to remove the demonstrators from the race route.

At approximately 10:30am, protesters Willow Holland, 18, from Bristol, and Cristy North, a live-in carer from Nottingham, jumped over crowd barriers at Tower Bridge and threw bright red powder onto the road directly in front of the elite runners competing in the marathon’s men’s race. Witnesses captured footage showing that the activists obstructed the path of not only the runners but also motorbikes carrying event staff and camera crews trailing the athletes.

In a split-second response, a man riding as a passenger on one of the motorbikes, clad in bright running shoes and aviator sunglasses, leapt off the vehicle and physically intervened, putting his arms around each protester and dragging them off the road and back towards the crowd barriers. Metropolitan Police officers soon arrived on the scene, with at least eight officers scaling the fencing to assist and detain the pair, who were subsequently arrested on suspicion of causing public nuisance and remain in police custody.

The police confirmed that the powder thrown was chalk-based and did not pose a hazard to runners scheduled to pass afterwards. The protest coincided with participation from high-profile athletes, including Eliud Kipchoge – often regarded as one of the greatest marathon runners ever – although the men’s elite race was eventually won by Kenya’s Sebastian Sawe.

Youth Demand is a youth-led protest group consisting of alumni from Just Stop Oil, students, and Gen Z activists. They have declared their intention to disrupt London throughout the summer in an effort to pressure the government on various issues, including ending trade with Israel and demanding reparations from wealthy individuals and fossil fuel entities. Holland stated: “I am taking action with Youth Demand because I have run out of other options: thousands are being killed in Gaza, our government is making no effort to stop it and no other course of action, marches or rallies, has worked.” Meanwhile, North emphasised the urgency of their action: “This is absolutely urgent, and this is why I’m taking part in civil disobedience.”

This incident occurred amid a wide-ranging London Marathon that featured approximately 56,000 participants, including celebrity entrants, Members of Parliament, and runners attempting to break Guinness World Records. The women’s elite race saw Ethiopia’s Tigst Assefa shatter the women’s-only world record.

The marathon also took place shortly after a significant UK Supreme Court ruling affirming that the definition of a woman in the Equality Act is based on biological sex. Despite this ruling, London Marathon organisers confirmed that transgender women would be permitted to enter the mass-participation event in the female category, a decision that has been met with criticism from some former athletes and women’s rights campaigners. Race director Hugh Brasher explained that the mass participation marathon is “not a race where participants compete against each other. It is a personal challenge.”

The London Marathon continues to be one of the world’s largest and most high-profile running events, with runners of all ages and backgrounds taking part. This year included emotional and charitable participation, such as runners honouring the memory of children lost in tragic events, and well-known figures running for various causes. The event was held on a sunny day with temperatures reaching about 22 degrees Celsius.

On the same day as the London event, the adidas Manchester Marathon also saw some 36,000 runners take to the course, underscoring the popularity and scale of marathon running in the UK.

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

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.jpost.com/diaspora/antisemitism/article-851673> - This article from The Jerusalem Post corroborates the protest by Youth Demand activists during the London Marathon, highlighting their demand for a full trade embargo on Israel. It also mentions the involvement of Willow Holland and Cristy North, who were arrested for causing a public nuisance.
2. <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/athletics/2025/04/27/pictured-protesters-disrupt-london-marathon-at-tower-bridge/> - This Telegraph report details the disruption caused by Youth Demand protesters at Tower Bridge, where red powder was thrown during the marathon. The activists wore 'Stop Arming Israel' shirts, echoing the article’s description of the event.
3. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RUS7kwBgri8> - This YouTube video supports the claim of the protest happening at Tower Bridge during the London Marathon. It shows footage related to the disruption caused by pro-Palestinian demonstrators.
4. <https://www.hindustantimes.com/world-news/us-news/london-marathon-2025-stop-arming-israel-activists-storm-onto-tower-bridge-throw-red-pink-powder-at-runners-watch-101745750574435.html> - The Hindustan Times report corroborates the involvement of 'Stop Arming Israel' activists during the London Marathon, highlighting their interruption of the elite men’s race. It mentions the throwing of red or pink powder, consistent with the article.
5. <https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20250427-protesters-disrupt-london-marathon-calling-for-full-trade-embargo-on-israel/> - This Middle East Monitor article validates the protest’s aim to call for a full trade embargo on Israel. It also confirms that the protesters from Youth Demand were detained by police after being removed from the marathon route.
6. <https://www.bbc.com/sport/athletics/64041209> - While not directly addressing the protest, this BBC article provides context about the London Marathon event itself, including its scale and participation. It supports the overall setting and timing of the protest during a major sporting event.
7. <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14652717/Brave-act-hero-bystander-foiled-Youth-Demands-plot-RUIN-London-Marathon.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490> - Please view link - unable to able to access data