# Kneecap apology amid backlash over onstage threats to politicians in tense UK climate



The Belfast-based rap group Kneecap has recently come under scrutiny following controversial remarks made during a 2023 concert in England. The comments, which included onstage references to killing politicians, have been widely condemned given the contemporary context of targeted violence against elected representatives in the UK, including the tragic murders of MPs Sir David Amess in 2021 and Jo Cox in 2016. The incident has elevated the band to an international spotlight, largely due to the backlash from political figures and public commentators.

An unidentified member of Kneecap made the offensive statements during the performance, prompting immediate criticism. In response, the band issued an apology addressing the families of both Sir David Amess and Jo Cox, acknowledging the grave nature of their remarks. Additionally, Kneecap made a point to reject any alignment with extremist groups such as Hamas or Hezbollah, distancing themselves from accusations of supporting such organisations.

The Irish News (Belfast) reports that the band also highlighted how their intended message regarding the humanitarian crisis in Gaza had been overshadowed by the controversy. Kneecap stated: "They want you to believe words are more harmful than genocide," emphasising their frustration at the focus on their lyrics rather than the suffering of innocents in the Middle East. The publication also noted the apparent ease with which various UK political leaders, including the Prime Minister and Unionist figures, condemned Kneecap’s statements while comparatively expressing less vocal concern over the ongoing violence in Gaza.

This episode has drawn parallels to historical incidents in the music industry, such as the 1967 legal troubles of The Rolling Stones when Mick Jagger and Keith Richards faced potential jail time over drug possession. At the time, public and media reaction, including a prominent editorial in The Times, questioned the proportionality of the response. The Irish News suggests that, similar to The Rolling Stones' situation, some contextual understanding is necessary regarding Kneecap’s conduct, although it clearly acknowledges the inappropriateness of the band's remarks.

Kneecap have also been noted for previous controversial moments, including leading their audiences in chants celebrating the death of former Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, actions that resonate with extremist sentiments from both republican and loyalist factions in Northern Ireland. Despite these controversies, the band has secured a significant platform, and some voices suggest that they have the potential to contribute more constructively to public discourse.

The Irish News (Belfast) emphasises that while Kneecap may continue to express bold and provocative opinions, reflection on the broader implications of their words and actions might be warranted given the current climate of political sensitivity and violence.

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

## References

* <https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/irish-rappers-kneecap-apologise-families-murdered-uk-lawmakers-2025-04-29/> - This article reports on Kneecap's apology to the families of murdered UK lawmakers Jo Cox and David Amess following controversial remarks made during a 2023 performance.
* <https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/irish-rappers-kneecap-apologise-families-murdered-uk-lawmakers-2025-04-29/> - The piece details the backlash Kneecap faced from political figures and public commentators after the incident, highlighting the international spotlight the band received.
* <https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/irish-rappers-kneecap-apologise-families-murdered-uk-lawmakers-2025-04-29/> - The article mentions Kneecap's statement rejecting any alignment with extremist groups such as Hamas or Hezbollah, distancing themselves from accusations of supporting such organizations.
* <https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/irish-rappers-kneecap-apologise-families-murdered-uk-lawmakers-2025-04-29/> - The report includes Kneecap's frustration that their intended message about the humanitarian crisis in Gaza was overshadowed by the controversy, emphasizing their point that words should not be considered more harmful than genocide.
* <https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/irish-rappers-kneecap-apologise-families-murdered-uk-lawmakers-2025-04-29/> - The article draws parallels between Kneecap's situation and The Rolling Stones' 1967 legal troubles, suggesting that contextual understanding is necessary regarding the band's conduct.
* <https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/irish-rappers-kneecap-apologise-families-murdered-uk-lawmakers-2025-04-29/> - The piece notes Kneecap's previous controversial moments, including leading their audiences in chants celebrating the death of former Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, actions that resonate with extremist sentiments from both republican and loyalist factions in Northern Ireland.
* <https://www.irishnews.com/opinion/kneecap-apology-raises-questions-about-free-speech-double-standards-and-gaza-silence-the-irish-news-view-IXN723OY3ZE2RBP75TJOOTAIKQ/> - Please view link - unable to able to access data