# Kneecap's controversy fuels streaming surge and sparks industry backlash



The Belfast hip-hop group Kneecap has been at the centre of controversy following their performances, which have sparked significant public interest and almost doubled their streaming figures in the United States. According to reports from The Irish News, as London's Metropolitan Police confirmed an investigation by counter-terrorism officers regarding footage from Kneecap's gigs held in London in 2023 and 2024, the group's following among listeners continues to surge.

The group performed at California's Coachella festival earlier this year, which coincided with a notable increase in their streaming numbers. Data from entertainment analysts Luminate, reported by music publication Billboard, indicates a staggering 97% rise in streams of Kneecap's music over a two-week period. The week prior to their Coachella performance, streaming figures in the US were approximately 431,000, but this increased to around 852,000 just two weeks later.

Kneecap's debut album, "Fine Art," released in the summer of 2023, has also seen a dramatic rise, charting for the first time in several countries, including Norway, Italy, Brazil, Mexico, and Saudi Arabia. The album recently climbed 17 places in the UK iTunes charts to reach number 18, with their single "H.O.O.D." re-entering the top 100 iTunes UK singles chart. The group's following on the streaming platform Spotify continues to grow, reflecting their rising popularity amid the ongoing controversy.

The band faced backlash after footage emerged from a November performance, allegedly showing a member shouting, “up Hamas, up Hezbollah.” Another clip from a 2023 concert reportedly included remarks suggesting violence towards British politicians. Both Hamas and Hezbollah are classified as proscribed organisations in the UK, making it illegal to advocate for these groups.

In response to the uproar, Kneecap issued a statement clarifying that they do not support Hamas or Hezbollah and extended apologies to the families of MPs Jo Cox and Sir David Amess, who were murdered in politically motivated attacks. The band asserts that the footage has been taken “out of all context” and represents a “transparent effort to derail the real conversation” about the ongoing conflict in Gaza, which has resulted in significant casualties.

As a consequence of the controversy, several gigs in the UK and Germany have been cancelled. Despite—or perhaps because of—this backlash, a host of prominent music acts, including Massive Attack, Paul Weller, Pulp, and Hozier, have signed an open letter condemning what they perceive as a concerted attempt to silence Kneecap following their performance at Coachella, where they expressed pro-Palestinian sentiments.

The unfolding situation illustrates the complex interplay between music, political discourse, and societal reactions, as Kneecap navigates a significant moment in their career amidst heightened scrutiny.

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

## References

* <https://apnews.com/article/3cc86cf249c366554dee3cf5dd498fdc> - This article reports on the UK counter-terrorism police's investigation into Kneecap following controversial comments made during concerts, including alleged support for Hamas and Hezbollah.
* <https://www.ft.com/content/2a228472-da0f-4d7f-81f3-dbbbf23455ae> - This piece discusses the controversy surrounding Kneecap's performances at Coachella, where they displayed pro-Palestinian messages and faced accusations of antisemitism.
* <https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/irish-rappers-kneecap-apologise-families-murdered-uk-lawmakers-2025-04-29/> - This article covers Kneecap's apology to the families of murdered UK lawmakers Jo Cox and David Amess following resurfaced footage from their 2023 performance.
* <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fine_Art_%28Kneecap_album%29> - This Wikipedia page provides information about Kneecap's debut album 'Fine Art,' released in June 2024, which charted in several countries.
* <https://music.apple.com/us/artist/kneecap/1330315811> - This Apple Music page lists Kneecap's discography, including their latest release 'H.O.O.D 2025' and their debut album 'Fine Art.'
* <https://www.tipperarylive.ie/news/national-news/1787419/kneecap-set-for-action-on-false-accusations-of-antisemitism-at-coachella-gig.html> - This article reports on Kneecap's response to accusations of antisemitism following their Coachella performance, where they displayed pro-Palestinian messages.
* <https://www.irishnews.com/news/northern-ireland/us-streams-almost-double-as-music-fans-flock-to-kneecap-amid-effort-to-deplatform-belfast-rappers-SQ75Z52BQNBFBLY2JFN3OIU7O4/> - Please view link - unable to able to access data