# Four arrested in Co Down as tensions flare during pro-Gaza and counter-protests



In a series of events highlighting the contentious atmosphere surrounding the ongoing Gaza conflict, four men were arrested in Co Down following a protest against a pro-Gaza march. The incident occurred during a Great March for Gaza event, which symbolically traced the length of the Gaza Strip through a demonstration and fundraising effort. However, tensions escalated as a counter-protest took place in the village of Scarva, leading to what police described as minor disorder.

Authorities reported that the four arrests were made in connection with disturbances during the event, while three other men received cautions for public order offences along the towpath between Portadown and Newry. In a related development, police in Newry intervened to remove a flag associated with a prescribed terrorist organisation that was displayed by a participant. Superintendent Norman Haslett indicated that the police presence was intended to maintain safety and ensure compliance with the law, emphasizing that the protests had not been duly registered with the Parades Commission, which is a legal requirement.

This incident is part of a larger wave of pro-Palestinian activism that has swept across the UK and Ireland in recent weeks. Thousands have participated in demonstrations in cities such as London, Birmingham, Cardiff, and Belfast, with significant gatherings in Belfast city centre triggering speeches and calls for an immediate ceasefire in Gaza. Notably, activists have expressed dissatisfaction with media coverage of the conflict, as evidenced by protests outside the BBC headquarters in Belfast. Officials from the BBC have defended their reporting, asserting its comprehensiveness in framing the complexities of the situation in Gaza and Israel.

The Belfast protests have not been isolated episodes; they reflect a broader national sentiment. In a city-centre rally that garnered support from various civic groups, including the Gaelic Athletic Association, participants marched to City Hall, displaying flags and banners voicing their demands for an end to violence in Gaza. Sinn Féin vice president Michelle O'Neill also attended a rally in Dungannon, reinforcing the message of solidarity with the Palestinian people and calling for a ceasefire and an end to illegal settlements.

As demonstrations continue to unfold across Ireland, additional events have occurred, including rallies in Cork and Dublin, where activists have used symbolic actions, such as laying out shoes to memorialise journalists who have lost their lives amid the conflict. These protests not only highlight the urgent need for international attention to the crisis in Gaza but also the increasing willingness of communities in the UK and Ireland to engage in civil action around the issue.

Tensions are likely to remain high as the situation evolves, and the policing of these demonstrations continues to be scrutinised. As the police review footage gathered from the events, they will consider any further offences committed during the protests, reflecting ongoing challenges surrounding public order in politically charged environments.

### 📌 Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://m.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/northern-ireland/four-arrested-and-three-cautioned-following-protests-against-pro-gaza-march/a1590798138.html), [[4]](https://www.irishnews.com/news/northernirelandnews/2023/10/22/news/rallies_held_across_ireland_to_protest_air_strikes_blockade_of_gaza-3718153/)
* Paragraph 2 – [[2]](https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-67182116), [[3]](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cxxxxg3x97yo), [[6]](https://www.thejournal.ie/pro-palestine-protests-uk-and-ireland-6209655-Oct2023/)
* Paragraph 3 – [[5]](https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-northern-ireland-67117250), [[7]](https://www.irishnews.com/news/northern-ireland/pro-palestine-demonstrations-held-across-the-island-of-ireland-3BNX52IZLZMFVN4USMIVNRSYIQ/)
* Paragraph 4 – [[3]](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cxxxxg3x97yo), [[6]](https://www.thejournal.ie/pro-palestine-protests-uk-and-ireland-6209655-Oct2023/)
* Paragraph 5 – [[4]](https://www.irishnews.com/news/northernirelandnews/2023/10/22/news/rallies_held_across_ireland_to_protest_air_strikes_blockade_of_gaza-3718153/), [[7]](https://www.irishnews.com/news/northern-ireland/pro-palestine-demonstrations-held-across-the-island-of-ireland-3BNX52IZLZMFVN4USMIVNRSYIQ/)

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

## Bibliography

1. <https://m.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/northern-ireland/four-arrested-and-three-cautioned-following-protests-against-pro-gaza-march/a1590798138.html> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-67182116> - Thousands participated in pro-Palestinian protests across the UK, including London, Birmingham, Cardiff, Belfast, and Salford. In London, up to 100,000 people marched, leading to 10 arrests for public order offences. Smaller demonstrations occurred in other cities, with Belfast hosting a protest outside BBC Northern Ireland headquarters, where activists criticised the corporation's coverage of the Middle East conflict. The BBC defended its reporting, stating it provided comprehensive coverage of the situation in Gaza and Israel.
3. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cxxxxg3x97yo> - A parade and rally calling for a ceasefire in Gaza took place in Belfast city centre, organised by Gaels Against Genocide and supported by prominent figures from the Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA). Protesters marched from Writers Square to Belfast City Hall, displaying flags from various Irish counties and GAA clubs. The event aimed to raise awareness about the ongoing violence in Gaza and advocate for an end to the conflict.
4. <https://www.irishnews.com/news/northernirelandnews/2023/10/22/news/rallies_held_across_ireland_to_protest_air_strikes_blockade_of_gaza-3718153/> - Rallies were held across Ireland, including Belfast, to protest against Israel's air strikes and blockade of Gaza. In Belfast, protesters marched from City Hall to the BBC headquarters, criticising the broadcaster's coverage of the Middle East conflict. Sinn Féin vice president Michelle O'Neill attended a rally in Dungannon, expressing solidarity with the Palestinian people and calling for an immediate ceasefire and an end to the occupation and illegal settlements.
5. <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-northern-ireland-67117250> - Thousands of pro-Palestinian protesters gathered in Belfast city centre, marching from Writers Square to Belfast City Hall. The demonstration featured speeches and calls for an immediate ceasefire in Gaza. Similar protests took place across the UK, including in London, Glasgow, and Manchester. The Belfast protest was attended by Assembly members Pat Sheehan of Sinn Féin and Gerry Carroll of People Before Profit, as well as representatives from the Northern Ireland Council for Racial Equality, ICTU, Unison, and the Jews for Palestine group.
6. <https://www.thejournal.ie/pro-palestine-protests-uk-and-ireland-6209655-Oct2023/> - Pro-Palestinian protests erupted across the UK and Ireland, with thousands marching in London, Birmingham, Cardiff, Belfast, and Salford. In London, demonstrators marched with banners and flares, chanting slogans such as 'from the river to the sea, Palestine will be free.' Smaller protests were held in other cities, including Belfast, where protesters marched on Royal Avenue before gathering at City Hall to listen to speeches.
7. <https://www.irishnews.com/news/northern-ireland/pro-palestine-demonstrations-held-across-the-island-of-ireland-3BNX52IZLZMFVN4USMIVNRSYIQ/> - Thousands participated in pro-Palestinian rallies across Ireland, including large protests in Belfast and Cork. In Belfast, supporters of the Palestinian cause marched through the city centre to City Hall, carrying Palestinian flags and placards criticising the Israeli regime. The event featured speeches and chants supporting the Palestinian people and demanding a ceasefire in Gaza. Similar demonstrations were held in other locations, including Dublin, where activists laid out 108 pairs of shoes outside RTÉ's headquarters to represent journalists killed since the conflict began in October.