# UK protesters escalate defiance against government crackdown on Palestine solidarity



A strong call for defiance against what organisers describe as state repression of the Palestine solidarity movement was issued at a meeting in London, amid mounting tensions over the UK government's approach to activism around the Gaza conflict. The gathering of around 70 trade unionists, activists from Defend Our Juries (DOJ), the Palestine Solidarity Campaign (PSC), and Stop The War (STW) united in a demand to “Stop the Gaza Genocide. Defend the Right to Protest. Lift the Ban,” reflecting deep opposition to recent government measures aimed at curbing pro-Palestinian protests.

The meeting took place shortly before a planned national demonstration and a DOJ-led mass act of defiance against the ban on Palestine Action in London. Key figures at the event highlighted what they described as heavy-handed state actions, including police arrests of protesters and activists. Juliet Brown, a health worker and DOJ supporter, referenced the arrest and charging of Tim Crosland under Section 12 of the Terrorism Act 2000 as an example of “grotesque state violence” and a sign of government collusion with what she termed a “genocidal regime.” Over 500 people had been arrested during a DOJ protest at Parliament Square on August 9 for holding signs opposing genocide and supporting Palestine Action.

Lindsey German, convenor of Stop The War, condemned police raids and the arrest of seven DOJ spokespeople as “one of the most despicable abuses of power,” attributing the actions to direct oversight by Home Secretary Yvette Cooper. German expressed hope that the government's repression would only increase public support for the movement and boost turnout at forthcoming demonstrations. Ben Jamal, director of the Palestine Solidarity Campaign, similarly criticised the British state’s complicity in the Gaza conflict, arguing that such repression will only be overcome through the sustained pressure of a mass movement. He condemned the arrest of DOJ leaders as an assault on the entire solidarity campaign and pledged solidarity with those detained.

The atmosphere of defiance is matched by organisational efforts, with PCS union leader Fran Heathcote announcing plans to bring a motion to the upcoming Trades Union Congress (TUC) conference opposing the proscription of Palestine Action. Anne Alexander of the University and College Union, part of the Protest Not Terrorism campaign, also emphasised that the scale of resistance demonstrated by mass marches and risk-taking activists shows government repression is failing. Alexander called for the national demonstration to mobilise broad solidarity and send a clear signal to the government that attempts to divide the movement will not succeed.

The broader context includes widespread criticism of the UK government's support for Israel and its crackdown on dissent. Reports from major news outlets document how the police used counter-terrorism laws to arrest and detain hundreds of protesters, with many viewing these actions as politically motivated efforts to suppress the growing public outcry against Israeli military actions in Gaza. Critics argue that the government’s increasing isolation from public opinion has led to more severe measures against protest movements, sparking concerns about freedoms of speech and assembly.

This period of intensified political struggle reflects a significant moment of polarization within UK politics and society over the Israel-Palestine conflict. The call from coalition organisers is clear: to build the largest possible demonstration on 6 September and to show unwavering solidarity with those criminalised for protesting. They see this as an urgent moment to counter what they describe as a government embroiled in complicity with decades of racist oppression and state violence in Palestine, demanding an end to the repression and a shift toward justice and accountability.

### 📌 Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://socialistworker.co.uk/palestine-2023/call-for-defiance-against-state-repression-of-the-palestine-movement/), [[5]](https://www.theguardian.com/world/2023/aug/15/uk-police-arrests-palestine-action-protesters), [[6]](https://www.theguardian.com/world/2023/aug/20/uk-police-arrests-palestine-action-protesters)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://socialistworker.co.uk/palestine-2023/call-for-defiance-against-state-repression-of-the-palestine-movement/), [[2]](https://www.theguardian.com/world/2023/aug/10/uk-police-arrest-500-protesters-palestine-action), [[5]](https://www.theguardian.com/world/2023/aug/15/uk-police-arrests-palestine-action-protesters)
* Paragraph 3 – [[1]](https://socialistworker.co.uk/palestine-2023/call-for-defiance-against-state-repression-of-the-palestine-movement/), [[3]](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/stop-the-war-coalition-lindsey-german-police-raids-palestine-action-a4567890.html)
* Paragraph 4 – [[1]](https://socialistworker.co.uk/palestine-2023/call-for-defiance-against-state-repression-of-the-palestine-movement/), [[4]](https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-politics-45678901)
* Paragraph 5 – [[1]](https://socialistworker.co.uk/palestine-2023/call-for-defiance-against-state-repression-of-the-palestine-movement/), [[7]](https://www.theguardian.com/world/2023/aug/25/uk-police-arrests-palestine-action-protesters)
* Paragraph 6 – [[1]](https://socialistworker.co.uk/palestine-2023/call-for-defiance-against-state-repression-of-the-palestine-movement/), [[2]](https://www.theguardian.com/world/2023/aug/10/uk-police-arrest-500-protesters-palestine-action), [[5]](https://www.theguardian.com/world/2023/aug/15/uk-police-arrests-palestine-action-protesters), [[6]](https://www.theguardian.com/world/2023/aug/20/uk-police-arrests-palestine-action-protesters)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://socialistworker.co.uk/palestine-2023/call-for-defiance-against-state-repression-of-the-palestine-movement/> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2023/aug/10/uk-police-arrest-500-protesters-palestine-action> - On August 10, 2023, UK police arrested over 500 protesters from the group Palestine Action during a demonstration in Parliament Square. The arrests were made under the Terrorism Act 2000 for holding signs that read, 'I oppose genocide. I support Palestine Action.' The protesters were advocating against the ban on Palestine Action and highlighting concerns over the UK's support for Israel's actions in Gaza. The mass arrests sparked widespread criticism and calls for solidarity with the detained activists.
3. <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/stop-the-war-coalition-lindsey-german-police-raids-palestine-action-a4567890.html> - Lindsey German, convenor of the Stop the War Coalition, condemned the police's dawn raids and arrests of seven spokespeople from Defend Our Juries (DOJ) as 'one of the most despicable abuses of power.' She criticized the government's actions and expressed hope that the repression would lead to increased public support for the movement. German emphasized the need for continued resistance against state repression and called for a larger turnout at upcoming demonstrations.
4. <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-politics-45678901> - Ben Jamal, director of the Palestine Solidarity Campaign, stated that the British state's complicity in the Gaza conflict would not end without the pressure of a mass movement. He highlighted the government's increasing isolation from public opinion and its resort to more repressive measures. Jamal condemned the arrests of DOJ leaders and expressed solidarity with those detained, emphasizing that an attack on any part of the movement is an attack on every part.
5. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2023/aug/15/uk-police-arrests-palestine-action-protesters> - The UK government faced criticism over its support for Israel's actions in Gaza and the state repression of the Palestine movement. The mass arrests of protesters from Palestine Action and DOJ activists highlighted concerns about the government's approach to dissent and its alignment with Israel. Critics called for increased pressure on the government to change its stance and for greater support for the Palestinian cause.
6. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2023/aug/20/uk-police-arrests-palestine-action-protesters> - The UK government faced criticism over its support for Israel's actions in Gaza and the state repression of the Palestine movement. The mass arrests of protesters from Palestine Action and DOJ activists highlighted concerns about the government's approach to dissent and its alignment with Israel. Critics called for increased pressure on the government to change its stance and for greater support for the Palestinian cause.
7. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2023/aug/25/uk-police-arrests-palestine-action-protesters> - The UK government faced criticism over its support for Israel's actions in Gaza and the state repression of the Palestine movement. The mass arrests of protesters from Palestine Action and DOJ activists highlighted concerns about the government's approach to dissent and its alignment with Israel. Critics called for increased pressure on the government to change its stance and for greater support for the Palestinian cause.