# Public outrage mounts over £2 million funding for controversial Irish rap group Kneecap



The controversial Irish rap band Kneecap has attracted significant attention following the revelation that they received nearly £2 million in public funding, including a staggering £15,000 grant to transport themselves to the Sundance Film Festival in a Land Rover styled like a police vehicle from the Police Service of Northern Ireland. This unconventional and provocative arrival occurred in January 2023 in Provo, Utah—an area notorious for its association with the former Provisional IRA.

Kneecap, infamous for their inflammatory lyrics celebrating organisations such as the IRA, Hamas, and Hezbollah, produced a BAFTA award-winning film titled "Kneecap," featuring a semi-autobiographical narrative steeped in anti-British sentiment. The film, helmed by Richard Peppiatt, a former journalist turned director, has received equal parts acclaim and disdain.

This financial support primarily stemmed from the UK Global Screen Fund, overseen by the British Film Institute (BFI) and backed by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport. An in-depth investigation revealed that the total financial assistance surpassed £1.9 million—an outrageous figure funded in part by the National Lottery and various arts grants. Such extensive public financing has ignited outrage among ordinary citizens, particularly those directly impacted by political violence during the Troubles in Northern Ireland.

Just as these financial details came to light, the Metropolitan Police's Counter Terrorism Command announced an investigation into certain staged performances by Kneecap featuring inflammatory remarks. One particularly egregious incident featured a band member allegedly calling for violence against Conservative MPs, uttering the chilling phrase "The only good Tory is a dead Tory. Kill your local MP" during a live performance in London. Another concert saw a member draped in a Hezbollah flag while inciting chants for both Hezbollah and Hamas—a clear violation of social cohesion.

In response to mounting backlash, several venues across Germany have already scrapped scheduled performances by Kneecap, alongside calls to remove them from the lineup at the iconic Glastonbury festival. The band has mockingly dismissed their critics by posting videos that reference historical events with inflammatory rhetoric, demonstrating a glaring lack of accountability.

Katie Amess, the daughter of the late Conservative MP Sir David Amess, expressed the profound toll that comments made by Kneecap have taken on her family. Meanwhile, Conservative party leader Kemi Badenoch aptly noted that the initial grant awarded to the band should never have been sanctioned for individuals who exhibit open hostility towards the United Kingdom.

As criticism swells, Kneecap issued a defiant statement insisting their comments were misinterpreted and that they do not endorse violence; yet, their actions speak volumes. They argue that excerpts taken out of context are being weaponized to fabricate a false narrative around their intentions. The backlash has led to concert cancellations and growing public concern regarding their incitement of sectarian hatred—a legacy resulting from years of tumult.

Political leaders across the spectrum have, rightly, voiced their condemnation. A spokesperson for Prime Minister Sir Keir Starmer condemned the band's comments as "completely unacceptable," pledging to halt any further public funding directed towards Kneecap.

The BFI has reiterated that its funding does not equate to an endorsement of the political messages espoused in the film or by its creators. Given the mounting scrutiny surrounding Kneecap, the nature of their performances, provocative statements, and the extent of public financing are set to remain pressing topics in political discourse throughout the UK—and underscore the urgent need for a more discerning approach to funding in the arts that does not champion divisive rhetoric.

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

## References

* <https://www.itv.com/news/utv/2024-11-29/kneecap-wins-legal-case-against-government-over-block-to-funding-award> - This article reports on Kneecap's legal victory against the UK government, which had previously blocked their £14,250 funding award, highlighting the controversy surrounding the band's political views and the funding decision.
* <https://www.irishtimes.com/culture/music/2024/02/08/kneecap-accuse-uk-government-of-trying-to-silence-them-by-blocking-funding/> - This piece discusses Kneecap's accusation that the UK government attempted to 'silence' them by blocking a significant music funding award, emphasizing the tension between the band's political expression and government funding decisions.
* <https://www.screendaily.com/news/irish-rap-trio-kneecap-wins-arts-funding-case-against-uk-government/5199588.article> - This article details Kneecap's legal challenge against the UK government over the withdrawal of an arts grant, underscoring the intersection of artistic freedom and political controversy.
* <https://www.ft.com/content/c54616b6-30c0-4fa9-b02c-fb312c465e0e> - This report covers Kneecap's legal battle against the UK government, highlighting the band's condemnation of the funding block as an attempt to censor art that doesn't align with government views.
* <https://www.ft.com/content/2a228472-da0f-4d7f-81f3-dbbbf23455ae> - This article examines the controversy surrounding Kneecap's performances, including their provocative slogans and the debate over whether their protest crosses into hate speech.
* <https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/irish-rappers-kneecap-apologise-families-murdered-uk-lawmakers-2025-04-29/> - This piece reports on Kneecap's apology to the families of murdered UK lawmakers following resurfaced footage of controversial remarks made during their performances.
* <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14668489/Anti-British-rappers-Kneecap-terror-probe-2million-taxpayer-cash.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490> - Please view link - unable to able to access data