# Northern Irish rap trio sparks controversy with Thatcher mockery amid terrorism charge



The Northern Irish rap trio is again stirring the pot, this time by brazenly mocking law enforcement, government officials, and even the late former Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher during a recent performance. This provocative display comes amidst serious legal troubles for one of the band’s members, who faces a charge under the Terrorism Act for allegedly waving a flag associated with the proscribed militant group Hezbollah during a concert.

Performing at the iconic 100 Club in London, the trio encouraged their sold-out audience to chant “Free Palestine” while launching into a raucous rendition of “Maggie’s in a box,” set to the tune of a classic. This was not the first time the group had invoked Thatcher’s name; similar chants echoed during their notorious outing at Coachella. Footage of these politically charged antics—filled with pro-Palestinian sentiments—resulted in the temporary censorship of their live stream, illustrating the precarious landscape artists navigate when engaging in overt political commentary, especially in today’s changing political climate.

The group, comprising Mo Chara, DJ Próvaí, and Moglai Bap, has faced mounting backlash in recent months. Following Mo Chara—real name Liam Ó hAnnaidh—arrest on charges for displaying the Hezbollah flag at a previous gig, they have sought to frame their legal troubles as an attack on freedom of expression. Upon taking the stage last Thursday, Ó hAnnaidh directly addressed law enforcement officials present, insinuating that they were merely profiting from an ineffective role. “There’s a lot of police inside this venue tonight; they’re making a lot of money for doing f\*\*\* all,” he declared.

Their latest track, "The Recap," also takes aim at the leader of the Conservative Party, insinuating that her attempts to block their arts funding are tied to the party's electoral decline. As the new Labour government shifts policies, many are questioning the influence of such inflammatory rhetoric on political stability. Critics believe that the band’s antics should disqualify them from performing at major festivals, with shadow figures suggesting their performances celebrate terrorism.

In a world increasingly scrutinising music as a medium for political dissent, this trio stands at the centre of heated discourse. Their politically charged performances, compounded by legal scrutiny leading to bans from various venues, have drawn alarm across the political spectrum. Videos reportedly capturing members of the band calling for violence, such as “the only good Tory is a dead Tory,” further expose the rift in public opinion. Even as they issue apologies to families of assassinated MPs, the trio insists their messages are misrepresented by political figures seeking to discredit them.

Defending their artistic expressions, the group claims that the charges against them signify a broader attempt to silence dissenting voices regarding global injustices, especially in light of the Labour government’s stance on the ongoing conflict in Gaza. They argue that their messages of resistance resonate deeply within a tradition of rebellious artistry that challenges the status quo.

Looking ahead, their appearances at notable festivals, including Glastonbury, remain the subject of intense scrutiny, with escalating calls for their cancellation among those opposed to their views. However, their following appears undeterred; tickets for their upcoming shows in Belfast sold out rapidly, highlighting a growing appetite for provocative music and political discourse at a time when civil liberties are under fire. In this shifting political landscape, the need for nuanced discussion about artistic freedom and its implications is more critical than ever.

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

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14744205/Kneecap-London-Free-Palestine-Margaret-Thatcher-terror-offence.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.ft.com/content/b88745d2-d29b-4613-8632-fa763eb4f924> - Liam Óg Ó hAnnaidh, known as Mo Chara, a member of the Belfast-based Irish-language rap trio Kneecap, has been charged under the UK's Terrorism Act 2000. The charge relates to allegedly displaying a Hezbollah flag during a concert at London's O2 Forum in November 2024, suggesting support for a proscribed organization. Ó hAnnaidh is scheduled to appear at Westminster Magistrates' Court on June 18. Kneecap has denied the allegations, calling the charges a political distraction and an attempt to silence artists critical of global injustices, particularly in Gaza. They emphasized their condemnation of all attacks on civilians and denied support for Hamas or Hezbollah. The group's performances, including a recent appearance at Coachella, have drawn attention for their political stance and symbolism rooted in Irish Republican sentiments. The charge follows an investigation by the Metropolitan Police’s Counter Terrorism Command using audience-filmed footage.
3. <https://www.reuters.com/world/irish-band-kneecap-say-terrorism-charge-seeks-silence-artists-2025-05-22/> - Irish-language rap group Kneecap has condemned a terrorism-related charge against band member Liam O'Hanna as an attempt to silence politically outspoken artists. O'Hanna, 27, was charged by London's Metropolitan Police for allegedly displaying a Hezbollah flag—representing the Iran-backed militant group banned in the UK—during a performance in November. Kneecap stated the flag was thrown on stage and denied endorsing Hezbollah or Hamas, emphasizing their condemnation of all attacks on civilians. The band, known for advocating Irish identity and Irish unity, has been scrutinized recently for pro-Palestinian messaging during their Coachella performance. In April, they also apologized for previously controversial comments perceived as encouraging violence against MPs. O'Hanna is scheduled to appear in court on June 18. Despite mounting criticism, including calls from UK lawmakers for their exclusion, Kneecap is still set to perform at the Glastonbury Festival in June.
4. <https://apnews.com/article/951643fa3345a152f86b59bbdcbd0a49> - Liam Óg Ó hAnnaidh, also known by his stage name Mo Chara and a member of the Irish hip-hop group Kneecap, has been charged by British police under the Terrorism Act for allegedly displaying a Hezbollah flag during a performance at London's Kentish Town Forum on November 21, 2024. The charge comes amid a broader investigation into the group by counterterrorism authorities, following videos purportedly showing the band endorsing Hezbollah and Hamas and inciting violence against lawmakers. Kneecap has denied these allegations, claiming their remarks were misrepresented by political figures. The group, based in Belfast, is recognized for promoting Irish-language culture but is controversial for its provocative lyrics and political stances. The controversy has led to several concert cancellations and calls from politicians to drop the band from events, including the upcoming Glastonbury Festival. Kneecap garnered wider attention following the release of their gritty self-titled feature film, which premiered at the 2024 Sundance Film Festival and was shortlisted for Academy Awards but did not advance to the final nominations. Ó hAnnaidh is scheduled to appear in court on June 18, and police continue to investigate footage from a separate 2023 concert.
5. <https://www.itv.com/news/2025-05-01/counter-terror-police-investigate-kneecap-over-up-hamas-kill-your-mp-videos> - Counter-terrorism police will investigate online videos allegedly showing rap trio Kneecap calling for the death of MPs and shouting 'up Hamas, up Hezbollah'. The band from Belfast has sparked controversy across the political divide and had gigs cancelled, while a flurry of artists like Primal Scream and Paul Weller signed an open letter throwing their support behind the trio. The Met Police has confirmed it will investigate two videos believed to be filmed in 2023 and 2024 at music events in London where the band were performing. One video from a November 2023 gig appeared to show one member of the trio saying: 'The only good Tory is a dead Tory. Kill your local MP.' Footage from another concert in November 2024 appears to show a member of Kneecap shouting 'up Hamas, up Hezbollah' – groups which are banned as terrorist organisations in the UK. The group has apologised to the families of murdered MPs, but claimed footage of the incident had been 'exploited and weaponised', while they also said they have 'never supported' Hamas or Hezbollah, which are both banned organisations in the UK. Rap trio apologises to murdered MPs' families over dead Tory comment. Tory leader suggests Kneecap could be jailed for incitement. In a statement released on Thursday, the Metropolitan Police said: 'Both videos were referred to the Counter Terrorism Internet Referral Unit for assessment by specialist officers, who have determined there are grounds for further investigation into potential offences linked to both videos.
6. <https://www.thejc.com/news/uk/counter-terror-police-investigating-anti-israel-band-kneecap-over-hamas-video-ud6pn416> - Support our workBecome a Member. UK. Counter Terror Police investigating anti-Israel band Kneecap over ‘up Hamas’ video. Clips circulated on social media showing members of the group apparently praising terror organisations and telling an audience ‘kill your local MP’. May 1, 2025 09:53. Anti-Israel band Kneecap is under investigation by Counter Terror Police over clips of its members saying 'up Hamas, up Hezbollah' and 'kill your local MP' (Image: Getty). By Jacob Jaffa. 2 min read. The UK’s Counter Terror Police has confirmed that it will investigate anti-Israel band Kneecap over comments made by members of the Northern Irish rap trio. Videos from two separate concerts, one in 2023 and another in 2024, have circulated on social media showing members of the group making offensive statements. In the former, one bandmember said “the only Tory is a dead Tory” and told the crowd: “kill your local MP”. The latter saw another draped in a Hezbollah flag while shouting “up Hamas, up Hezbollah”. Both groups are proscribed under the Terrorism Act, making inviting support for them a criminal offence. The statements prompted widespread condemnation, including from the government and across the House of Commons, and calls for an investigation.
7. <https://www.nme.com/news/music/kneecap-speak-out-on-hamas-hezbollah-violence-against-mps-after-distortion-and-avalanche-of-outrage-and-condemnation-3859084> - Kneecap have spoken out on Hamas, Hezbollah, violence against MPs and more after being subjected to counter-terrorism investigations. 'The real crimes are not in our performances; the real crimes are the silence and complicity of those in power'. By Surej Singh. 29th April 2025. Kneecap have spoken out on Hamas, Hezbollah, violence against MPs and more after being subjected to counter-terrorism investigations. An anti-Tory sentiment also emerged at Kneecap’s controversial sets at Coachella this month, the first of which saw them leading the crowd in a chant of “Maggie’s in a box”, referring to the late Conservative prime minister Margaret Thatcher. The Coachella performances led to calls from Sharon Osbourne to revoke their working visas. The two sets at the festival also reportedly left organisers “blindsided” due to their overtly political nature, including showing pro-Palestine projections on the screen behind them and encouraging the audience to chant “Free, Free Palestine”. Kneecap have since called the controversy “a coordinated smear campaign” against their efforts in “exposing the ongoing genocide against the Palestinian people”. 'For over a year, we have used our shows to call out the British and Irish governments’ complicity in war crimes. The recent attacks against us, largely emanating from the US, are based on deliberate distortions and falsehoods,' they said, adding that they are 'taking action against several of these malicious efforts'. 'The reason Kneecap is being targeted is simple — we are telling the truth, and our audience is growing,' the statement read. 'Those attacking us want to silence criticism of a mass slaughter. They weaponize false accusations of antisemitism to distract, confuse, and provide cover for genocide,' bringing up 'massive numbers of Jewish people' who are 'outraged by this genocide just as we are'. 'What we care about is that governments of the countries we perform in are enabling some of the most horrific crimes of our lifetimes — and we will not stay silent. No media spin will change this,' they wrote. At time of writing, the band’s appearances at Glastonbury, TRNSMT and other European festivals remain intact. Elsewhere yesterday, their huge Belfast show with Fontaines D.C. had sold out in just over half an hour, despite calls from the DUP to have it axed.