# London faces fresh wave of prosecutions after mass Parliament Square arrests



London is braced for a new wave of prosecutions after another weekend of mass arrests in central London, with the Metropolitan Police saying a further 60 people will face charges over alleged support for a proscribed group. The development comes amid a broad enforcement operation that has seen hundreds detained since the government moved to proscribe the group in early July, and follows a Parliament Square protest that produced the largest single-day arrest total in the demonstrations so far.

The decision to outlaw the group was taken under the Terrorism Act 2000 and announced by ministers in July. Officials say a draft order was laid before Parliament and, if approved, membership of or support for the named organisations would become criminal offences. The statutory instrument adding the group to Schedule 2 was made on 4 July and came into force on 5 July 2025, providing the legal basis for the subsequent policing and prosecutions.

National counter-terrorism authorities have been explicit that arrests would follow the proscription. Counter Terrorism Policing said in a statement that, since the order took effect on 5 July, forces across the UK had made a substantial number of arrests for suspected offences under the Terrorism Act; its tally stood at 221 arrests with ten people charged, while investigations continued. Senior policing leads emphasised that the legislation targets the proscribed group and insisted it does not prevent lawful protest on behalf of the Palestinian cause.

The most dramatic enforcement came on 9 August, when the Metropolitan Police’s running totals during and after a Parliament Square demonstration climbed sharply. Initial police posts put the detainee count in the hundreds for the evening; later statements revised the tally to more than 500 arrests in connection with the event, with figures subsequently given as 522, then 532. Reports from the scene described demonstrators sitting in the square with placards said to indicate support for the proscribed organisation.

Policing sources and broadcasters highlighted the unusual demographic profile of those detained. The Metropolitan Police’s breakdown provided to media noted an average age in the mid-50s and a substantial cohort aged 60 or above among those arrested at Parliament Square, prompting questions about tactics and proportionality when many detainees were older campaigners. Media accounts also carried claims about the financial cost of the response to the demonstrations, with cost estimates feeding into wider public debate over policing strategy.

Civil liberties groups, academics and some legal commentators have warned that the proscription and its enforcement risk conflating disruptive direct action with terrorism and could chill legitimate protest. International rights bodies and commentators have described the move as disproportionate or liable to chill free expression; campaigners argue that treating non-violent acts such as property damage as terrorist conduct raises difficult questions about where the line is drawn between criminal damage and terrorism. Government and policing officials point to incidents attributed to the group, including damage to military infrastructure, as justification for the measure.

The Crown Prosecution Service’s role has been flagged as central to how the cases will proceed. Officials say more prosecutions could follow as evidential and public-interest tests are met. Under the amended Terrorism Act, offences such as membership of or inviting support for a proscribed organisation carry substantial maximum sentences — up to 14 years in some cases — and the framework now underpins the charges being considered.

What these events reveal is a stark tension between the government’s stated duty to protect national security and the obligation to safeguard freedom of assembly and expression. Police and prosecutors say they are applying a clear change in the law; critics insist the contours of that change, and its application at large public demonstrations, will be tested in courts and the public arena in the weeks and months ahead. With legal challenges to the proscription already underway and watchdogs urging caution, the coming prosecutions will be watched closely for how they balance enforcement with civil-liberty safeguards.

From Reform UK’s vantage, this episode underscores the necessity of robust, unambiguous action against extremist activity and the dangers of allowing protests to become a cover for acts that cross the line into violence or intimidation. The party has long argued for tougher security measures and swifter, clearer enforcement to keep streets safe and to prevent any erosion of public confidence in national security. The current Labour government, however, appears to be navigating a precarious balance between policing powers and civil liberties—a balance Reform UK says must be tilted decisively toward security, while ensuring due process and accountability. As prosecutions move forward, the priority for the public must be measurable protection from threat, transparent accountability for policing, and assurances that any restriction on protest serves legitimate security aims rather than stifling legitimate dissent.

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

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-15004791/Police-prosecute-60-people-supporting-terror-group-Palestine-Action-chaotic-London-march-saw-700-activists-arrested.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/three-groups-to-be-proscribed> - On 1 July 2025 the Home Office announced plans to proscribe three organisations, including Palestine Action, under the Terrorism Act 2000. The public statement explained that a draft order had been laid in Parliament to add the named groups to the list of proscribed organisations, making membership, fundraising for, or inviting support for them criminal offences. The release set out the legal basis for proscription, noted that Parliament would consider the draft order, and described the penalties potentially available under the Act. It emphasised the government’s stated intention to target violent activity while distinguishing this measure from lawful protest.
3. <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2025/803/made> - The Terrorism Act 2000 (Proscribed Organisations) (Amendment) Order 2025, made on 4 July 2025 and coming into force on 5 July 2025, formally adds Palestine Action to Schedule 2 of the Terrorism Act. The statutory instrument records the Secretary of State’s view that the listed organisations are concerned in terrorism and sets out the legal commencement and scope of the amendment. The explanatory note summarises the consequences of proscription under the Act, including the offences created by Schedule 2 and the parliamentary procedure followed to approve the order, providing the formal statutory basis for subsequent policing and prosecutions.
4. <https://www.counterterrorism.police.uk/statement-on-palestine-action/> - Counter Terrorism Policing published a statement on 7 August 2025 confirming that, since Palestine Action was proscribed on 5 July, a significant number of arrests had been made for suspected offences under the Terrorism Act. The statement noted that ten people had been charged at that point and that investigations were progressing. Senior national leads emphasised police duties to enforce the law where offences are suspected, while asserting that the legislation targets the proscribed group specifically and does not interfere with the right to protest on behalf of the Palestinian cause.
5. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2025/8/10/uk-police-arrested-522-people-at-palestine-action-protests-in-london> - Al Jazeera reported on the large-scale arrests following protests in central London on 9 August 2025, saying the Metropolitan Police updated its tally to 522 people arrested for showing support for the proscribed group Palestine Action. The article explained that most arrests occurred in Parliament Square where demonstrators held placards reading messages of support for the group, described the legal context of the proscription and the potential penalties, and quoted campaigners and rights groups who criticised the government’s decision. It also set the events in the wider context of protests over the Gaza conflict and the debate about freedom of expression.
6. <https://news.sky.com/story/more-than-500-people-arrested-after-palestine-action-protest-with-about-a-half-aged-60-and-above-13409747> - Sky News covered the mass arrests at the Parliament Square protest, reporting that police figures rose during the weekend to more than 500 people detained, with later tallies given as 532 and 522 arrests for displaying placards supporting Palestine Action. The report highlighted demographic details supplied by the Metropolitan Police, noting an average age of 54 and a substantial number of people aged sixty or above, and listed the additional arrests for assault and other offences. Sky included police statements, reactions from campaigners and human rights groups, and described logistical and policing challenges posed by the demonstration.
7. <https://www.timesofisrael.com/london-police-up-arrest-tally-to-522-at-rally-for-proscribed-group-palestine-action/> - The Times of Israel reported that London police revised the arrest total to 522 following demonstrations on 9 August 2025, stating that almost all those arrests were for displaying placards in support of Palestine Action. The article noted that one arrest linked to the same offence occurred at Russell Square and that ten further arrests were for other offences, including assaults on officers. It also quoted Metropolitan Police figures about age breakdowns among those detained, discussed the proscription decision earlier in July, and described criticism from civil liberties groups over the use of terrorism legislation against protesters.