# London protest crackdown raises concerns over misuse of anti-terror laws



Hundreds of protesters were detained in central London yesterday during a demonstration opposing the government’s recent banning of Palestine Action, a group proscribed under terrorism legislation. The rally in Parliament Square saw demonstrators waving Palestinian flags and silently holding placards bearing messages like “I oppose genocide. I support Palestine Action.” The Metropolitan Police confirmed that 466 individuals were arrested simply for supporting the organisation, with additional arrests linked to assaults on officers and other minor offences.

This move follows the government’s aggressive stance after claims of escalating violence and vandalism attributed to Palestine Action — including damage to RAF aircraft at RAF Brize Norton, an attack that the group publicly claimed responsibility for. Declaring the organisation a terror group effectively criminalises its supporters, with penalties of up to 14 years in prison. Such sweeping measures raise serious questions about the government’s commitment to freedoms of assembly and expression, especially when peaceful protests are met with mass arrests.

Within moments of the protest starting, police, including reinforcement units brought in from other forces to handle the heightened security demands, swiftly moved in to detain demonstrators. Some protesters reportedly attempted to resist arrest, adopting tactics designed to hinder police handling—such as going “floppy.” Despite the heavy police presence and arrests, organisers estimate that between 600 and 700 people participated in the rally, highlighting widespread concern over the criminalisation of legitimate activism.

Critics argue that this crackdown reflects a troubling misuse of anti-terror legislation to suppress civil liberties and dissent. The government claims the ban was necessary due to “serious security threats,” but the mass detentions signal an overreach that risks silencing ordinary citizens who wish to voice their opposition peacefully.

This confrontation underscores the deepening divide over issues related to the Israel-Palestine conflict in the UK. It also prompts urgent debate about the limits of anti-terror laws and whether they are being weaponised to stifle domestic protest rather than combat genuine threats. Supporters of free speech and democratic accountability must oppose such heavy-handed tactics that threaten to undermine our fundamental rights, especially when the government’s justification hinges on fear and suppression rather than justice.

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

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c62qrmpd7l5o?at_medium=RSS&at_campaign=rss> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/crime/palestine-action-protest-arrests-terror-ban-london-b2804807.html> - The Independent reports that the Metropolitan Police arrested 466 individuals during a protest in London against the government's ban on Palestine Action. Demonstrators gathered in Parliament Square, holding placards reading 'I oppose genocide. I support Palestine Action.' The protest was in response to the government's proscription of Palestine Action under terrorism laws, which is currently being challenged in the High Court. The Home Secretary stated that the ban was based on strong security advice following serious attacks committed by the group, involving violence and significant criminal damage.
3. <https://www.independent.co.uk/bulletin/news/palestine-action-arrests-met-police-b2804984.html> - The Independent reports that during a demonstration in London against the government's ban on Palestine Action, protesters were arrested for silently holding signs reading 'I oppose genocide. I support Palestine Action.' The Metropolitan Police confirmed 466 arrests for showing support for Palestine Action, with additional arrests for other offences, including assaults on officers. Protest organisers claimed that only a fraction of the hundreds of sign-holders were arrested, while the police estimated around 500 to 600 people were in Parliament Square when the protest began.
4. <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/palestine-action-protest-london-arrests-met-police-b2783219.html> - The Independent reports that 29 people were arrested on suspicion of terror offences at a Palestine Action protest in London, hours after the group was officially proscribed by the government. Protesters gathered in Parliament Square, holding placards that said: 'I oppose genocide. I support Palestine Action.' The protest started at about 1.10pm, and officers were seen taking people away shortly after 1.30pm. The designation as a terror group means that membership of or support for Palestine Action is a criminal offence punishable by up to 14 years in prison.
5. <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/juries-parliament-square-metropolitan-police-police-london-b2804816.html> - The Independent reports that hundreds of people were arrested in London for protesting against the terror ban on the group Palestine Action. Demonstrators gathered in Parliament Square to silently hold up signs reading: 'I oppose genocide. I support Palestine Action.' Within minutes of the protest starting, rows of police officers filed into the square and started handcuffing protesters. The Metropolitan Police brought in scores of officers from other forces to help with a busy weekend of protests. Organisers of the action claimed that between 600 and 700 people took part in the demonstration against the terror ban.
6. <https://www.independent.co.uk/bulletin/news/palestine-action-london-police-clash-video-b2775370.html> - The Independent reports that protesters clashed with police during a rally in London after the government announced plans to ban Palestine Action under anti-terrorism laws. Demonstrators, some wearing face coverings and waving Palestine flags, chanted 'shame on you' during confrontations with officers. Police reported that 13 arrests were made at the protest, which was moved to Trafalgar Square after Palestine Action was banned from protesting outside parliament. The protest occurred after Home Secretary Yvette Cooper announced plans to ban Palestine Action following their vandalism of two planes at an RAF base.
7. <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/metropolitan-police-parliament-square-palestine-parliament-london-b2783243.html> - The Independent reports that more than 20 people were arrested on suspicion of terror offences after protesters gathered in central London to show support for the now proscribed group Palestine Action. The Metropolitan Police posted on X (formerly Twitter) saying officers were responding to the demonstration in Parliament Square and making arrests. The designation as a terror group means that membership of, or support for, Palestine Action is a criminal offence punishable by up to 14 years in prison. The move to ban the organisation was announced after two Voyager aircraft were damaged at RAF Brize Norton in Oxfordshire on June 20, an incident claimed by Palestine Action.