# London protests see over 400 arrests amid crackdown on proscribed activist group



Over 400 individuals were detained in London amidst a massive protest organized by supporters of a radical activist group that the government has recently designated as a terrorist organisation under the 2000 Terrorism Act. The rally, held on a politically charged Saturday outside Parliament, saw hundreds rallying under banners condemning genocide and expressing solidarity with this banned group. Authorities made it clear well in advance that any public support for the organisation would be met with swift arrest.

The Metropolitan Police confirmed that more than 425 arrests were made, predominantly for offences linked to supporting a proscribed organisation. The situation escalated as some activists resisted detention, leading to charges such as assault on officers and public order offences. Deputy Assistant Commissioner Claire Smart described the abuse faced by officers—ranging from punching to spitting—as "intolerable," asserting that police are tasked with enforcing the law while respecting genuine peaceful protests.

This group was proscribed earlier this year following acts of vandalism that caused significant damage, including a royal air force base attack estimated at around £7 million. This marked a disturbing development as the first UK organisation focused on property damage to be classified alongside internationally recognised extremist groups such as Hamas and ISIS. In defending this stance, Home Secretary Yvette Cooper emphasised that the group’s activities posed a serious threat to national security. Penalties for supporting the organisation can be severe, with organisers potentially facing up to 14 years in prison and individual supporters risking jail sentences of six months or more.

Nevertheless, the government’s crackdown has been met with fierce criticism from human rights advocates, legal experts, and campaigners who argue that such broad use of anti-terror laws encroaches on civil liberties. Prominent organisations such as Amnesty International, Greenpeace, and even the United Nations have questioned the proportionality and legality of the government’s approach. Civil rights groups like Defend Our Juries have accused policymakers of misleading the public and interfering in ongoing judicial processes, particularly as legal challenges to the ban continue. While the group has officially disbanded, efforts to overturn the proscription persist, with a judicial review scheduled for November and the government seeking to appeal earlier rulings that allowed its co-founder to challenge the ban.

In the lead-up to Saturday’s protest, authorities arrested five key organisers, including Tim Crosland of Defend Our Juries—a move critics see as an attempt to silence free speech just before planned peaceful demonstrations. Interestingly, other rallies supporting the same cause on the same day drew around 20,000 participants with minimal interference, illustrating a clear political bias by authorities, who distinguish between lawful expression and their heavy-handed treatment of what they label as threats.

Opposition voices argue that the government should refocus its priorities, addressing the real humanitarian concerns motivating these protests rather than resorting to draconian legislation and arrests aimed at suppressing dissent. Behind the scenes, the conflict in Gaza continues to escalate with Israeli strikes targeting Hamas in Gaza City, intensifying the debate and heightening tensions around these demonstrations. Critics believe that, instead of suppressing voices critical of government policy, there should be honest dialogue about the complex issues at play—something this government appears increasingly unwilling to facilitate.

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

## Bibliography

1. <https://sg.news.yahoo.com/uk-police-arrest-hundreds-latest-011031577.html> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://apnews.com/article/a3be82e2c3716a934170f8e840841004> - On Saturday, over 400 individuals were arrested in London during a protest supporting the banned group Palestine Action. Demonstrators gathered near the UK Parliament, holding placards opposing genocide and expressing solidarity with Palestine Action. The Metropolitan Police had previously warned that supporting the proscribed group would lead to arrests. The protest was organized by Defend Our Juries, and the arrests were made under the Terrorism Act. The UK government had proscribed Palestine Action in July 2025 after members vandalized military aircraft at an RAF base, causing significant damage. Critics argue that the ban infringes on freedom of expression and misapplies counterterrorism laws. A separate pro-Palestinian demonstration in London attracted around 20,000 participants and proceeded with few arrests.
3. <https://www.reuters.com/world/uk/uk-police-arrest-around-425-latest-protest-banned-palestine-action-2025-09-06/> - UK police arrested approximately 425 individuals during a pro-Palestinian demonstration in London supporting the banned group Palestine Action. The protest took place near Parliament, with demonstrators holding signs condemning genocide and expressing solidarity with Palestine Action. The group was proscribed under the Terrorism Act in July 2025 after members damaged military aircraft at an RAF base. The ban makes support for the group a criminal offense, punishable by up to 14 years in prison. Authorities had warned that public support for the group would lead to arrests. Human rights groups argue that the ban curtails peaceful expression, while the government maintains that the group's actions threaten national security.
4. <https://www.reuters.com/world/uk/uk-police-arrest-dozens-latest-protest-banned-palestine-action-2025-09-06/> - On Saturday, British police arrested dozens of protesters under anti-terrorism laws for expressing support for Palestine Action, a pro-Palestinian group banned in July 2025 for alleged terrorist activities. The proscription came after members reportedly broke into a Royal Air Force base and damaged military aircraft. Demonstrators gathering near the UK Parliament held signs opposing genocide and supporting Palestine Action, despite warnings from London's Metropolitan Police. Authorities stated that displaying support for the banned group is a criminal offense under the Terrorism Act, punishable by up to 14 years in prison. Human rights organizations criticized the ban as excessive and a threat to free speech, while the UK government maintained the group caused significant criminal damage but affirmed that other pro-Palestinian protests remain legal. Over 500 Palestine Action supporters were arrested in one day last month, with many of the detained being over 60 years old.
5. <https://www.ft.com/content/2d4b7866-597b-4354-b3bc-1456692302ed> - Five organisers connected to protests supporting the activist group Palestine Action were arrested by UK counterterrorism officers ahead of a major demonstration planned in London on September 6. The arrests—carried out during early morning raids—included Tim Crosland, spokesperson for the group Defend Our Juries. The group described the arrests as an attack on free speech, coming just before a press conference announcing further peaceful protests. A rescheduled press conference is to feature Irish author Sally Rooney. Over 700 people have been recently arrested for displaying signs supporting Palestine Action, which was designated a terrorist organisation by the UK government in July. The group had conducted direct actions targeting military infrastructure and arms manufacturers, including Elbit Systems. Authorities allege the group engaged in criminal damage and endangering national security, prompting the home secretary to label their campaign as escalating and violent. The five individuals arrested are accused of encouraging support for a proscribed group, under section 12 of the Terrorism Act. Palestine Action is appealing the proscription in a case to be heard in November, though the government has been granted permission to challenge the judicial review process.
6. <https://www.ft.com/content/42eb102c-c279-4329-8079-7d1ca3bc5959> - UK Home Secretary Yvette Cooper has strongly defended the government’s decision to ban the pro-Palestinian group Palestine Action, emphasising its escalating campaign of criminal damage, intimidation, and threats to national security infrastructure. The group was officially proscribed under the Terrorism Act 2000 last month, making it a criminal offence to support or belong to it, with penalties up to 14 years in prison. This followed incidents including the June break-in at RAF Brize Norton and damage to military aircraft. Over 500 supporters were recently arrested at a largely peaceful protest, triggering criticism and calls from the Liberal Democrats for an urgent review of the Terrorism Act’s application. While Palestine Action has disbanded and is appealing the ruling, legal proceedings continue for dozens of supporters. Cooper insisted that the ban targets only those involved in illegal acts, not broader pro-Palestinian demonstrations. However, the civil rights group Defend Our Juries accused the government of misleading the public and of interfering in ongoing legal cases, drawing criticism over freedom of expression and proportionality. A senior government official suggested most arrested individuals might not face jail time but could receive lesser penalties.
7. <https://www.reuters.com/world/uk/london-police-arrest-more-than-40-supporters-banned-pro-palestinian-group-2025-07-12/> - UK police arrested at least 86 individuals across the country, including 41 in London and 16 in Manchester, for showing support for the newly banned group Palestine Action. The group was recently proscribed under Britain's anti-terrorism legislation, placing it alongside organisations like Hamas and ISIS. This action came after some members of the group broke into a Royal Air Force base and damaged aircraft in protest of the UK’s support for Israel. Demonstrations occurred in various locations, including outside the British parliament, where about 50 protesters displayed pro-Palestine Action placards. The government ban on Palestine Action marks the first time a UK group focused on direct action, mainly property damage, has been classified as a terrorist organisation. Critics argue that such use of anti-terror laws is excessive, particularly as the group’s actions have largely targeted Israeli-linked businesses such as Elbit Systems using tactics like spray-painting and blockades. A court appeal to overturn the ban was unsuccessful. These events coincide with ongoing international proceedings at the International Court of Justice, where South Africa has accused Israel of genocide in the Gaza war, charges that Israel denies.