

Fifth Individual Charged Over RAF Brize Norton Aircraft Vandalism

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— Categories: Defence & Security



A fifth person has been charged following the high-profile break-in at RAF Brize Norton, where pro-Palestinian activists allegedly caused millions of pounds in damage to two military aircraft. The incident, which took place on 20 June, has triggered a nationwide review of security at UK defence sites.

Authorities say the group, linked to Palestine Action, gained access to the base by riding electric scooters past security. Once inside, they used adapted fire extinguishers to spray paint aircraft engines and damaged equipment with crowbars. The act resulted in extensive damage to two Voyager A330 MRTT aircraft, temporarily grounding them and disrupting vital air-to-air refuelling operations.

Counter Terrorism Policing South East initially charged four individuals, two men aged 24 and 36, a 29-year-old woman, and a 41-year-old woman accused of assisting an offender, with conspiracy to trespass on a prohibited site and criminal damage. A fifth person has now been formally charged in connection with the investigation, which remains ongoing.

While prosecutors have not filed terrorism charges, the Crown Prosecution Service is expected to argue that the incident carries a clear terrorist context. Authorities estimate the damage to be around £7 million.

Prime Minister Keir Starmer publicly condemned the attack, calling it “disgraceful.” Home Secretary Yvette Cooper has also taken action by proposing new legislation to proscribe Palestine Action as a terrorist group, which could make membership or support for the organisation a criminal offence punishable by up to 14 years in prison.

Palestine Action has defended the operation, claiming it targeted aircraft allegedly linked to British involvement in the Gaza conflict. The group has described the break-in as a direct protest against UK arms and military support for Israel.

However, legal experts and civil liberties advocates have raised concerns about whether the proposed ban on the group could infringe on the right to protest. Former ministers have warned against using terrorism legislation to suppress political dissent.