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UK Rights Groups Urge Pause on Palestine Action Prosecutions

August 16, 2025

– Categories: General News

Several leading rights organisations have called on the Attorney General to suspend prosecutions of individuals linked to the proscribed activist group Palestine Action, pending the outcome of a judicial review into the government’s decision to proscribe the organisation.

In a letter to Richard Hermer KC, the attorney general for England and Wales, campaign groups including Greenpeace UK, Human Rights Watch, Friends of the Earth, Global Witness and the Quakers argued that continuing prosecutions before the review could raise “serious legal and moral questions”.

The judicial review, scheduled for November 2025, will examine whether the proscription of Palestine Action under the Terrorism Act 2000 was lawful. Campaigners say proceeding with criminal cases in the meantime risks prejudging that ruling.

Over 700 people have been arrested under Section 13 of the Terrorism Act since the group’s proscription in early July 2025. This includes 522 demonstrators detained at Parliament Square on 9 August 2025, many of whom were aged over 60 and carried placards stating “I oppose genocide, I support Palestine Action.” Most were released on bail, but at least ten have been formally charged.

The letter emphasised that the Attorney General holds authority over how such cases proceed and urged him to delay action in the public interest. Areeba Hamid, co-executive director of Greenpeace UK, warned that the prosecutions could represent a

disproportionate restriction on freedom of expression. She said hundreds risked potential prison sentences “for sitting quietly holding placards”.

The High Court granted permission for the judicial review after Mr Justice Chamberlain expressed concern that prosecutions proceeding now could create “a recipe for chaos” if criminal courts reached conflicting conclusions on the legality of the ban.

The organisations have asked that no further prosecutions proceed until the review is resolved. They argued that continuing now could undermine human rights protections and complicate the legal process if the proscription were later overturned.

Separately, the Liberal Democrats have written to Jonathan Hall KC, the independent reviewer of terrorism legislation, raising concerns about what they described as a “troubling precedent” in applying terrorism powers to peaceful protesters. Lisa Smart, the party’s home affairs spokesperson, acknowledged Palestine Action’s history of unlawful activity, including vandalism of military equipment, but questioned the proportionality of applying terrorism measures in this context.

Meanwhile, reports indicate that a woman awaiting trial for an alleged break-in at an arms factory has been on hunger strike in prison since earlier this week. Teuta Hoxha, 29, is awaiting trial in 2026 on charges of criminal damage, aggravated burglary and violent disorder linked to a protest at Elbit Systems in Filton, near Bristol.

The attorney general’s office has been approached for comment.