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Protesters Detained in Cardiff as UK Clamps Down on Palestine Action Support

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South Wales Police arrested 13 people outside BBC Cymru Wales headquarters in Cardiff, as part of national protests during which over 70 arrests were made in total, including 42 in London and 16 in Manchester related to support for Palestine Action, proscribed under the Terrorism Act 2000. Arrests at parallel protests included 42 in London and 16 in Manchester, where demonstrators gathered to oppose the government's proscription of Palestine Action, making support a criminal offence punishable by up to 14 years in prison.

The Cardiff protesters, some lying on the ground with placards declaring "I oppose genocide" and "I support Palestine Action," were detained on suspicion of backing a proscribed organisation. One protester, speaking anonymously to local media, called the

designation “a direct attack on our democratic right to peaceful protest,” arguing it stifles dissent on the issue of Palestine.

Home Secretary Yvette Cooper announced the proscription of Palestine Action following a breach at RAF Brize Norton on 20 June 2025, where activists spray-painted two RAF tankers, causing several million pounds in damage. In her statement, Cooper described the act as part of “a long history of unacceptable criminal damage” by the group.

She highlighted Palestine Action’s escalating activities since 2024, Government statements accuse Palestine Action of escalating attacks on national infrastructure including defence firms, financial institutions, charities, universities, and government buildings and evidence considered that their methods have become more aggressive, with willingness to use force during acts of criminal damage, citing a rigorous evidence-based assessment by government, police, and security services.

South Wales Police issued a statement affirming their support for lawful protest but stressed that any activity breaching legal boundaries would face consequences. “We respect the right to make voices heard through protest, provided it is done within the law,” a spokesperson said.

The arrests come amid a tense national debate over the balance between security and civil liberties. Critics of the Labour government’s decision argue it risks alienating communities and undermining free expression, while supporters of the proscription maintain it is a necessary step to protect national interests. With Palestine Action’s protest actions intensifying, particularly after the RAF incident, the proscription reflects the government’s determination to curb what officials deem a growing threat to national security and public order.

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