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Protest Turns Disruptive Outside Canary Wharf Hotel Housing Asylum Seekers

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A protest outside the Britannia International Hotel in Canary Wharf, now used to accommodate asylum seekers, escalated over the weekend, prompting police to issue a

28-day dispersal order against certain individuals involved in criminal behaviour. While the right to lawful protest remains intact, the Metropolitan Police have acted to remove those deemed to be causing disruption or harassment.

According to police, flares were ignited during the demonstration on Saturday, 4 August, and officers were required to intervene when protesters allegedly harassed hotel staff and residents, attempted to breach perimeter fencing, and obstructed delivery drivers. One man was arrested earlier in the day after allegedly assaulting an emergency worker. Footage from the scene showed the man being removed as bystanders shouted “shame” at officers.

In a statement, the Metropolitan Police confirmed the use of powers under the *Criminal Justice and Police Act 2001* to issue a targeted 28-day exclusion order. The order applies solely to individuals who crossed the line from lawful demonstration into criminality. A police spokesperson clarified: “We continue to encourage those exercising their lawful right to protest to do so responsibly. Anyone who crosses the line into criminal activity can expect to face police action.”

The protest drew public attention, with passers-by, including tourists and hotel guests, stopping to photograph the scene. Officers have remained on-site to reassure residents and businesses and to ensure any further protests proceed peacefully.

This incident follows a broader pattern of unrest over the government’s use of hotels to house asylum seekers. Just days earlier, on 2 August, nine people were arrested outside the Thistle City Barbican Hotel in Islington after rival protest groups clashed. Similar events have taken place across the country. In Newcastle, four individuals were arrested near the New Bridge Hotel, while Essex Police placed strict conditions on a protest in Epping, limiting its location and duration near the Bell Hotel, a site of frequent recent demonstrations.

Scotland Yard has indicated it is prepared for further activity at other hotel sites and will continue to balance the right to protest with maintaining public order.

The government's policy of housing asylum seekers in commercial hotels has become a growing flashpoint, raising concerns among local communities, prompting protests, and placing additional pressure on police forces tasked with managing tensions. The Britannia Hotel protest is the latest sign that this issue is unlikely to fade quietly.