

## Vehicle Ramming at Defence Contractor Sparks Terror Arrests in Edinburgh

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— Categories: Defence & Security



Three women have been charged under the Terrorism Act 2000 following an incident in Edinburgh where a van was driven into the security gate of a defence contractor, prompting a full counter-terrorism response. The event occurred during a pro-Palestine demonstration outside the Leonardo facility on Crewe Road North, with authorities stating the act may have been motivated by political intent.

Eyewitnesses reported that a light-blue Ford Transit van was deliberately driven into the security gate of the site before three women, aged 31, 34 and 42, climbed onto its roof. The group displayed banners while chanting slogans. Although the initial protest appeared peaceful, the use of a vehicle to breach a secure perimeter led to swift police escalation.

Officers from Police Scotland's counter-terrorism unit responded quickly, securing the scene with the support of specialist teams in tactical gear. The women were detained and later charged under the Terrorism Act 2000. Investigators are continuing to examine the evidence, and members of the public with information have been urged to come forward.

Leonardo, a major Italian-headquartered defence company, manufactures advanced electronic systems, sensors, and lasers for the United Kingdom's Ministry of Defence and allied nations. Its Edinburgh site is considered a key component in Britain's defence manufacturing network, with direct links to ongoing NATO defence programmes.

The incident raises broader concerns about the growing radicalisation of protest movements and the risk of direct action turning into threats to national security. Analysts have pointed out that targeting sensitive defence infrastructure, whether symbolic or operational, represents a dangerous escalation in protest tactics, particularly in a heightened global security environment.

While the right to protest remains a cornerstone of a democratic society, the boundary between lawful assembly and criminality must be respected. Legal experts note that the use of terrorism legislation in this case suggests police believe the actions were intended to intimidate or

influence political decisions, criteria that meet the legal definition of terrorism under UK law.

This case also reflects a wider trend in which overseas conflicts, especially in the Middle East, increasingly spill over into domestic tensions. Police and security services are maintaining high vigilance, especially where protests threaten public safety or national infrastructure.

The courts will now determine whether this was an extreme form of protest or a genuine act of politically motivated intimidation. Either way, the message is clear: protest must remain peaceful, and targeting defence infrastructure will be met with the full weight of the law.