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London Police to Prosecute 60 over Banned Group

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— Categories: Crime



London's Metropolitan Police say at least 60 people will face prosecution for “showing support” for Palestine Action, the activist group banned last month under UK terrorism legislation. This follows more than 700 arrests since the group was proscribed on 7 July.

Police said three people have already been charged, and further prosecutions are expected in the coming weeks. In a statement, the force noted: “We have put arrangements in place that will enable us to investigate and prosecute significant numbers each week if necessary.”

According to police figures, 522 arrests were made at a London demonstration last weekend for displaying placards in support of the proscribed group, marking one of the largest mass arrests in the capital in recent years.

Director of Public Prosecutions Stephen Parkinson described the cases as “the first significant numbers” since the ban and warned that “many more can be expected in the next few weeks.” He added that those found guilty could face prison sentences of up to six months under the Terrorism Act, along with other penalties.

The Equality and Human Rights Commission has urged authorities to ensure that policing of protests remains proportionate and based on clear legal tests. Human rights organisations including Amnesty International and Greenpeace have criticised the proscription, warning that it could restrict freedom of expression.

Home Office Minister Yvette Cooper defended the decision, stating: “UK national security and public safety must always be our top priority. The assessments are very clear, this is not a non-violent organisation.”

The ban was introduced shortly after Palestine Action claimed responsibility for a break-in at an air force base in southern England, with officials reporting approximately £7 million in damage to two aircraft. The Home Office has also linked the group to other incidents involving violence, injuries and criminal damage.

Metropolitan Police Commissioner Mark Rowley praised the coordination between police and prosecutors, stating that he was “proud of how our police and CPS teams have worked so speedily together to overcome misguided attempts to overwhelm the justice system.”

The Liberal Democrats expressed concern over using anti-terrorism legislation against protesters, calling for careful consideration of how the powers are applied.

Protests relating to the war in Gaza have drawn large crowds in London and across the UK over the past two years, with campaigners urging the government to halt arms sales to Israel. In July, the Prime Minister said the UK would recognise a Palestinian state by September unless Israel takes further steps towards peace—a proposal that has received mixed reactions from demonstrators.