

Leading Global Academics Urge UK to End Ban on Palestine Action

August 7, 2025

— Categories: Politics & Government



Dozens of internationally recognised scholars, including author Naomi Klein and civil rights activist Angela Davis, have urged the UK government to revoke its recent ban on the protest group Palestine Action. In an open letter, they warn that the proscription poses a serious threat to civil liberties, particularly freedoms of speech, assembly, and academic debate.

The group, comprising figures from universities around the world, argues that branding Palestine Action a terrorist organisation under UK anti-terror laws risks stifling lawful political dissent. The letter specifically highlights concerns for academic spaces, where critical engagement with political issues must be protected.

Palestine Action has carried out high-profile protests targeting firms connected to the arms trade, particularly those with links to Israel. The government's decision to ban the group followed a reported security breach, but critics say the move goes beyond public safety and into the territory of political suppression.

A demonstration organised by Defend Our Juries is set to take place on 9 August in defiance of the ban. Those participating face the possibility of arrest under laws that criminalise support for proscribed organisations.

In a separate initiative, around 300 British Jewish individuals, including artists, writers, and campaigners, have also condemned the government's actions. They argue that moral protest against perceived injustice, including that in Gaza, must not be conflated with terrorism.

Free speech and human rights organisations have also expressed concern that the combination of the ban with new online regulation laws could result in the over-policing of digital content. They warn that people expressing solidarity with Palestine could be wrongly caught in the scope of terrorism legislation, simply for sharing views online.

Calls are now mounting for greater clarity over what constitutes unlawful support, and for reassurances that political expression and academic freedom will not be undermined. The signatories of the letter are urging

ministers to reverse the decision, arguing that democratic values must not be compromised in the name of security.