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Hundreds Face Risk of Arrest at Planned Westminster Protest Over Terror Ban

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A large demonstration is expected in Westminster on Saturday, with organisers estimating at least 500 participants aiming to express support for Palestine Action, a group recently classified as a proscribed terrorist organisation under UK law. The protest involves holding placards declaring “I oppose genocide. I support Palestine Action,” an act which police have confirmed may now constitute an offence under section 13 of the Terrorism Act 2000.

The event is coordinated by Defend Our Juries, a civil-liberties group that has publicly stated it is “very confident” of substantial turnout. However, the Metropolitan Police have

warned that anyone visibly supporting a proscribed organisation, even via silent or symbolic protest, may be subject to arrest. A spokesperson emphasised that law enforcement would proceed without regard to whether the protest remains peaceful or non-violent in tone.

Since the group's proscription came into effect on 5 July 2025, police reports indicate over 100 arrests across England and Wales, including 55 in Parliament Square. Similar actions were taken in Bristol, Manchester, Cardiff, and Truro, with detentions linked to visible displays of allegiance, such as banners, printed slogans, and stickers.

Huda Ammori, co-founder of Palestine Action, has secured permission from the High Court to challenge the proscription in a judicial review. In an interim ruling, Justice Chamberlain stated it is "reasonably arguable" that the ban may infringe her rights to freedom of expression and assembly. A full court hearing is scheduled for autumn 2025, subject to formal scheduling.

Defend Our Juries has circulated briefing materials stating participants face a "substantial risk" of arrest, even for displaying posters or slogans. The guidance advises attendees to remove personal electronic devices from their homes, use decoy devices where possible, and ensure room mates or family members are aware of potential police action.

Tim Crosland, representing the group, described the protest as a deliberate exercise of democratic rights. He noted that while holding a sign appears to be a peaceful form of protest, it may nonetheless fall foul of terrorism legislation under section 13. Organisers also suggested that a high turnout could spotlight tensions between civil disobedience and enforcement capacity.

Critics among them UN special rapporteurs and leading civil-liberties organisations, have described the ban as an "unprecedented legal overreach." They argue that by equating non-violent protest with terrorism, the legislation could have broader implications for free assembly across the UK.

Government representatives have made clear that the proscription followed "detailed security analysis" and cited reported incidents attributed to Palestine Action, including damage inflicted at military installations, as justification for classifying the organisation under terrorism law. Officials maintain that enforcement is a necessary component of public safety.

The Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) has confirmed preparations for high-visibility patrols and mutual aid deployment in anticipation of large crowds. While no exact figures on expected arrests have been released, authorities emphasise that enforcement actions will adhere strictly to statutory provisions.

As legal challenges continue and the weekend demonstration approaches, the case places the tension between public order and civil liberties at the centre of public debate. The outcome may help clarify the limits of protest under existing terrorism legislation.