

UK Lawmakers Vote to Ban Palestine Action as a Terrorist Organization

July 3, 2025

— Categories: Human Rights



British lawmakers have approved a government motion to designate Palestine Action as a terrorist organization, a move that has sparked both support and outrage. The vote, which passed by 385 to 26 in the House of Commons, means the group, known for targeting arms companies linked to Israel, will be outlawed under the Terrorism Act 2000, placing it alongside extremist groups such as the Islamic State and al-Qaeda. The

measure moves to the House of Lords and is expected to become law within days.

Supporters of the ban, including Home Secretary Yvette Cooper, argued that Palestine Action's tactics, including damaging property with paint and crowbars, storming military facilities, and targeting defence contractors, pose a threat to public safety and national security. Cooper emphasized that while protest is a democratic right, the group's methods cross the line into criminal and terror-related activity.

Critics, however, say the government is criminalizing dissent. Human rights organizations, legal scholars, and some Members of Parliament (MPs) warn that the proscription sets a troubling precedent. Amnesty International UK described the move as an "unprecedented legal overreach," while UN experts warned it could chill lawful activism. Labour MP Zarah Sultana, speaking against the ban, said equating "a spray can of paint with a suicide bomb is grotesque" and warned it risks silencing political solidarity with Palestinians.

Palestine Action, which has led protests at sites linked to Israeli weapons manufacturer Elbit Systems, is mounting a legal challenge to the designation. The group insists its actions are acts of non-violent civil disobedience and denies any intent to harm individuals. A court hearing is scheduled to determine whether the ban can be suspended while a full judicial review is underway.

The vote also extended to two far-right organizations, the Maniacs Murder Cult and the Russian Imperial Movement, which were similarly proscribed. Despite broad cross-party support, civil liberties groups remain concerned that the government is expanding anti-terror laws in

ways that could be used to suppress controversial but non-violent activism.

As the legislation moves through the final stages, debate continues over whether the UK is striking the right balance between national security and the fundamental rights to protest and free expression.