

## London Protesters Risk Arrest Over Palestine Action Ban

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Hundreds of demonstrators are expected to gather in London this weekend in defiance of the recent ban on Palestine Action, despite warnings from the Metropolitan Police that those showing support could face arrest under terrorism laws.

The demonstration, organised by the group Defend Our Juries, is set to take place in Parliament Square. Organisers predict more than 500 people will attend, carrying placards

and chanting in support of the proscribed organisation. The Home Office declared Palestine Action a terrorist group last month, making membership or public support a criminal offence under the Terrorism Act 2000. Convictions can lead to prison sentences of up to 14 years.

Deputy Assistant Commissioner Ade Adelekan of the Metropolitan Police said extra officers have been drafted in from forces across the UK to maintain a “significant policing presence” in the capital. “Anyone showing support for Palestine Action can expect to be arrested,” he warned. “An arrest under the Terrorism Act can have very real long-term implications – from travel restrictions to employment and financial consequences. As we have seen this week, an arrest in these circumstances will likely lead to a charge.”

The warning comes after the first three people in England and Wales to face charges for alleged support of the group were named. Jeremy Shippam, 71, Judit Murray, 71, and Fiona Maclean, 53, have each been accused of displaying an article in a public place that could arouse reasonable suspicion they were supporters of a proscribed organisation. The charges stem from their participation in a protest last month.

Since the ban came into force, more than 200 people have been arrested during Defend Our Juries demonstrations nationwide.

The Metropolitan Police said they are well-prepared to respond to any escalation, with resources and processes in place to manage multiple large-scale events. “We will not go into specific operational details, but the public can be assured that we can respond to any eventuality,” Mr Adelekan said.

In addition to the Parliament Square rally, London will see two other major demonstrations this weekend. The Palestine Coalition will march from Russell Square to Whitehall, ending with speeches. Police have placed strict public order conditions on the event: the march must not begin before midday, participants must stick to the agreed route without stopping to form assemblies, and it must conclude by 5:30 pm.

Meanwhile, the pro-Israeli group Stop the Hate will hold its march in central London on a separate day.

The demonstrations come during an already busy period for police in the capital. The Community Shield football match between Liverpool and Crystal Palace at Wembley Stadium will also require significant policing resources.

“This is going to be a particularly busy few days in London with many simultaneous protests and events,” Mr Adelekan said. “I’m grateful not just to the Met officers who will be working incredibly hard over the coming days, but also to colleagues from other forces who have been deployed to London to support us.”

The Home Office has defended the decision to ban Palestine Action, citing its record of direct action targeting businesses and facilities linked to the Israeli defence industry. Human rights campaigners have criticised the move, warning it could have a chilling effect on lawful protest and political expression in the UK.

Under the Terrorism Act 2000, the Home Secretary has the power to proscribe an organisation if it is believed to be involved in terrorism. Once proscribed, it becomes a criminal offence to belong to the group, arrange meetings in support of it, or publicly express support. The ban on Palestine Action marks one of the most high-profile uses of this power in recent years, drawing sharp debate over the balance between national security and freedom of expression.