

Dozens Detained Across UK in Protests Supporting Outlawed Group

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Across several cities in the United Kingdom, police arrested close to 100 individuals during demonstrations backing Palestine Action, a group recently designated a terrorist organisation. The protests, held for the third consecutive weekend, challenged the government's ban and drew nationwide attention for their scale, message, and legal consequences.

Palestine Action was proscribed following a June 20 incident in which its activists infiltrated Royal Air Force (RAF) Brize Norton in Oxfordshire. There, they vandalised military aircraft by spraying red paint into jet engines and using crowbars to cause damage. In response, Parliament enacted legislation officially designating the group as a terrorist organisation, making any public support for it a criminal offence carrying penalties of up to 14 years in prison.

Saturday's protests unfolded in London, Manchester, Edinburgh, Bristol, Londonderry, and Truro. Many participants carried signs reading "I oppose genocide, I support Palestine Action." Law enforcement maintained a heightened presence, particularly in London, where police made 65 arrests, including 55 in Parliament Square under Section 13 of the Terrorism Act 2000. This law prohibits expressions of support for outlawed organisations. Officers also searched bags and confiscated placards.

Deputy Assistant Commissioner Ade Adelekan warned that individuals publicly supporting Palestine Action could face arrest. "Those who see this as an opportunity to test the limits of the law will likely be committing an offence," he said in a statement issued Thursday.

The group Defend Our Juries, which coordinated many of the protests, said nearly 100 arrests were made across the country. Notably, in Truro, Cornwall, eight protesters were arrested on the steps of the cathedral, including Deborah Hinton, an 81-year-old retired magistrate.

The protests sparked heated exchanges. Pro-Israel demonstrators countered with chants and placards claiming there is no genocide, while accusing Palestine Action supporters of harbouring antisemitic views. "They hate the idea of a Jewish state," a spokesman for the Campaign Against Anti-Semitism told The Telegraph, asserting that such protests often reveal deeper animosity rather than genuine humanitarian concern.

Elsewhere in London, a member of the Royal Opera House cast raised a Palestinian flag during an encore performance of *Il Trovatore*, defying attempts to remove it. The venue has not yet commented on the incident.

Meanwhile, violence continued in Gaza, where at least 36 Palestinians were killed near an aid distribution site. The Israel Defence Forces (IDF) said it had fired warning shots at individuals who approached troops but failed to stop. The Gaza Humanitarian Foundation

(GHF), a United States-supported charity, stated the casualties occurred hours before their sites opened and at locations some distance away.

The ongoing conflict stems from the October 2023 attack by Hamas-led militants on Israeli soil, which resulted in 1,200 deaths and over 250 hostages. Since then, the Israeli military's campaign in Gaza has reportedly killed around 58,000 people, according to local health sources. Indirect negotiations, mediated by Qatar and Egypt and backed by the United States, continue in hopes of securing a temporary ceasefire and a hostage deal, though progress remains elusive.