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UK Court Upholds Ban on Palestine Action Amid Legal Challenge and Public Debate

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Palestine Action has officially been banned in the United Kingdom after the High Court and the Court of Appeal refused the group's attempts to halt the government's decision to proscribe it as a terrorist organisation. The ban, which took effect on Saturday, criminalises support for the group, with penalties of up to 14 years in prison.

The Home Secretary, Yvette Cooper, announced the decision to proscribe the group on 23 June, citing its involvement in damaging two military planes at Royal Air Force (RAF) Brize Norton, a protest that reportedly caused £7 million in damages. The move marked the first time a direct-action group without a record of advocating violence was listed under the Terrorism Act 2000. A draft order to amend the Act was laid before Parliament earlier this week, and four individuals have been charged in connection to the incident.

In the High Court, Justice Jeremy Chamberlain ruled against Palestine Action's request for interim relief, stating that the risk to public safety justified the enforcement of the proscription. He wrote that the potential harm of denying the request was outweighed by the public interest in maintaining the order. The group challenged this ruling at the Court of Appeal, which reaffirmed that the Secretary of State's power to proscribe organisations is a matter of parliamentary accountability rather than judicial intervention.

Raza Husain KC, representing group member Huda Ammori, argued that the government's move was a misuse of power and that criminalising civil disobedience without violent intent was an authoritarian overreach. Husain stressed that Palestine Action's methods, though disruptive, involved protest rather than terrorism. In a written statement after the judgment, Ms. Ammori expressed dismay, saying many would now be criminalised for supporting a group that opposes arms sales to Israel through non-violent protest actions.

The court acknowledged concerns over free speech and protest rights but concluded that such matters fall under legislative, not judicial, scrutiny. With this decision, Palestine Action joins a list of more than 80

proscribed organisations in the UK, including groups like Hamas and al-Qaida.

Campaigners and legal representatives say they intend to continue challenging the decision and seeking dialogue with the government. Meanwhile, the Home Office welcomed the ruling, reinforcing its commitment to addressing what it considers threats to national security and public order.