URGENT ACTION

END PROSECUTION OF PEACEFUL PROTESTORS

On 9 August, 522 protestors were arrested in London, with more than 200 others arrested for similar offences in London and across the UK on previous weekends, for peacefully opposing the ban introduced on 5 July, against 'Palestine Action'. 70 have since been charged with terrorism-related offences under the UK's counter terror legislation and more charges are threatened. Amnesty International condemns the use of this legislation against protestors and is calling on the relevant authorities across all UK legal jurisdictions to drop the existing charges and to take no further action against these and any other individuals arrested and charged simply for the exercise of their rights to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly.

WRITE AN APPEAL IN YOUR OWN WORDS OR USE THIS MODEL LETTER

Director of Public Prosecutions of England and Wales, *Steven Parkinson*
Email: enquiries@cps.gov.uk
Director of Public Prosecutions for Northern Ireland, *Stephen Herron*
Email: info@ppsni.gov.uk
The Lord Advocate, *Rt Hon Dorothy Bain KC*
Email: LordAdvocate@gov.scot

Dear Directors of Public Prosecutions for England and Wales, Northern Ireland and Lord Advocate,

*I am writing to express deep concern at the arrests and potential prosecutions of over **700 individuals peacefully protesting the UK government's recent proscription of 'Palestine Action'**.*

Since the ban against 'Palestine Action' came into effect on 5 July, over 700 people have been arrested across the country for their engagement in acts of peaceful protest opposing the proscription. The majority of these arrests have followed protests organised by Defend Our Juries (DOJ), a grassroots campaigning group, where people have held placards with the slogan, "I oppose genocide, I support Palestine Action". 522 of the over 700 arrests were carried out on 9 August alone, when DOJ held a civil disobedience protest in London, in front of Parliament. All have since been released under investigation or on bail. As of 22 August, 70 individuals across the UK have been formally charged with terror related offences, under either section 12 or section 13 of the UK's 2000 Terrorism Act, with three individuals, at the time of writing, known to be appearing in court on 16 September.

Defend our Juries' next protest is due to take place on 6 September, with fears that more arrests are likely to be carried out.

Numerous human rights groups, including Amnesty International, have documented and exposed extensively Israel's continuing genocide against Palestinians in the Occupied Gaza Strip.

Under international human rights law, to which the UK is bound, any restriction on the rights to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly must be lawful, necessary and proportionate to achieving a legitimate aim. Criminalising speech in this context is only permitted when it incites violence or advocates hatred or discrimination. Expressing support for Palestine Action does not, in itself, meet this threshold. The European Court of Human Rights' case law confirms that such expressions, including those on placards, remain protected speech unless they directly and expressly incite violence. Arresting and prosecuting individuals in this context is a violation of the UK's obligations under human rights law.

I urge you to uphold UK's human rights commitments and drop the charges and not pursue prosecutions against all those who participated in peaceful protests in support of 'Palestine Action'.

Yours sincerely,

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

'Defend our Juries' is an activist-led, UK-based group that has made clear it neither promotes nor endorses violence. The arrested protesters come from a wide range of ages, professions and backgrounds, and a significant number of older adults. Protesters are peacefully expressing their outrage at Israel's ongoing genocide against Palestinians in Gaza, a viewpoint they are entitled to hold and express peacefully under international human rights law. Numerous human rights groups, including Amnesty International, have documented and exposed extensively Israel's continuing genocide against Palestinians in the Occupied Gaza Strip.

Prior to the 9 August London protest, Amnesty International urged the London Metropolitan Police Commissioner to respect the protesters' rights to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly by not arresting them for holding placards/signs. Amnesty International has written similarly to police chiefs in Scotland and Northern Ireland and Scotland's Lord Advocate.

Prosecutions under terrorism-related legislation, even without a conviction, can have serious and lasting consequences on individuals. These include restrictive bail conditions, surveillance, reputational damage, mental health impact, and negative consequences on employment, education and travel. A conviction under laws like the Terrorism Act 2000 brings even more severe consequences: a lifelong criminal record, visa and immigration issues, loss of job opportunities, professional licenses, and access to services, along with long-term social stigma and psychological harm. When such prosecutions target peaceful protest and civil disobedience, they create a chilling effect—deterring people from exercising their rights to free expression, protest, and political activism out of fear of being criminalized as 'terrorists'.

The arrests of peaceful protesters simply for displaying the message 'I Oppose Genocide. I Support Palestine Action' violates UK's international obligations to protect freedom of expression and peaceful assembly. Protesters have a right to peacefully express outrage at the ongoing genocide by Israel against Palestinians in Gaza. Under the international human rights framework to which the UK is a party, state interference with expression and peaceful assembly must be lawful, and a necessary and proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim. Expression of support for a proscribed organisation could only meet this threshold, if that expression were likely to induce its audience to partake in violence, and to do so imminently. As part of this assessment, the particular facts of the expression, the proscription and the nature of the organisation in question must also be considered. In this instance, it cannot be justified to treat expression of support for Palestine Action as inherently and uniformly incitement. Caselaw by the European Court for Human Rights stated that placards are protected speech unless they directly and expressly constitute incitement.

The legal basis for the use of terrorism-related legislation to carry out the arrests and initiate prosecutions against peaceful protesters is questionable as the High Court has allowed Palestine Action to seek judicial review of their proscription, suggesting it may be unlawful. Given this, continuing arrests would be a reckless use of police power, and inevitably risk breaching the test of legality. There is no reasonable basis to consider participants at 'Defend our Juries' actions as inciting violence. Consequently, arresting them is both disproportionate and a clear violation of the UK's obligations under international human rights law. Furthermore, categorising such individuals as 'terrorists' is deeply inappropriate and absurd.

PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET: English
You can also write in your own language.

PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL: 22 November 2025
Please check with the Amnesty office in your country if you wish to send appeals after the deadline.

NAME AND PRONOUNS: Peaceful protestors challenging the 'Palestine Action' ban (All)