

# URGENT ACTION

## OVER 600 FURTHER ARRESTS AT PEACEFUL PROTESTS

Between 18 and 29 November, over 600 more protesters were arrested for peacefully opposing the ban on the 'Palestine Action' group at a series of peaceful protests organized by grassroots campaigning group 'Defend Our Juries'. Over 2700 arrests have now been carried out across the UK since the ban came into force in early July 2025. Approximately 254 protesters have so far been charged with terrorism-related offences under the UK's counter terror legislation, and more charges are threatened against the arrested protesters. Amnesty International continues to call on the relevant UK authorities to drop the existing charges and 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.

### TAKE ACTION: 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](mailto:enquiries@cps.gov.uk)

*Director of Public Prosecutions for Northern Ireland, Stephen Herron*

Email: [info@ppsni.gov.uk](mailto:info@ppsni.gov.uk)

*The Lord Advocate, Rt Hon Dorothy Bain KC*

Email: [LordAdvocate@gov.scot](mailto:LordAdvocate@gov.scot)

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

Between 18 and 29 November, **over 600 protesters** were arrested for peacefully opposing the ban on the 'Palestine Action' group at a series of peaceful protests organized by grassroots campaigning group 'Defend Our Juries' (DOJ) across the UK.

Since the ban against 'Palestine Action' came into effect on 5 July, over 2700 arrests of peaceful protesters have taken place across the country, simply for their engagement in acts of peaceful protest opposing the proscription. The majority of these arrests have followed protests organised by Defend Our Juries.

As of 4 December, approximately 254 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 trials due to take place in 2026, and more charges are threatened against the arrested protesters.

Amnesty International sent observers to DOJ protests in several locations between August and November 2025. At each of these protests Amnesty International observed protesters holding 'I oppose Genocide, I support Palestine Action' signs to be entirely peaceful.

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, hatred or discrimination. Expressing support for Palestine Action does not in itself meet this threshold.

***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. Since July 2025, they organised four mass actions of peaceful disobedience expressing opposition to the proscription of Palestine Action group – three actions took place in London (9 August, 6 September, 4 October) and one in Liverpool (on 28 September). They have since organised a further series of peaceful disobedience protests across the UK between 18 – 29 November 2025.

These latest peaceful protests were organised around the start of the judicial review hearing of the UK governments proscription of 'Palestine Action' as a 'terrorist' group which took place at the Royal Courts of Justice, in London, on 26-27 November and 2 December. Amnesty International intervened in the case through a legal submission, which argued that the ban is disproportionate.

The arrested protesters come from a wide range of ages, professions and backgrounds, and include a significant number of older adults. Protesters are peacefully expressing their outrage at Israel's 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 extensively documented and exposed Israel's continuing genocide against Palestinians in the Occupied Gaza Strip.

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 the Occupied Gaza Strip. 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 recently heard a judicial review of the proscription of Palestine Action but not yet given its decision. Given this, continuing arrests would be a reckless use of police power, and 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: 1 June 2026**

Please check with the Amnesty office in your country if you wish to send appeals after the deadline.

### **NAME AND PRONOUN: Peaceful protesters challenging the 'Palestine Action' ban (All)**

**LINK TO PREVIOUS UA:** <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/EUR45/0377/2025/en/>