



PRESS RELEASE:

London locations announced for Lift The Ban actions as prisoners' hunger strike reaches day thirteen - and "most widespread civil disobedience in modern UK history" is just days away



- Locations include Ministry of Justice, The Peace Garden in Tavistock Square, The Home Office and The Royal Courts of Justice
- Defend Our Juries next wave of actions starts next Tuesday in 18 towns and cities across every nation in the UK
- Six Palestine Action prisoners held without trial are now on hunger strike in what could become the largest coordinated prisoners' hunger strike since the 1981 Irish hunger strike led by Bobby Sands.

- **Zarah Sultana writes to Justice Secretary David Lammy in support of Palestine Action prisoners release**
- **Palestine Action activist Sean Middlebrough says he refuses to be “prisoner of war” and that his fellow activists have been kidnapped by counter-terror police**
- **Former MI6 director and others say definition of terrorism too broad in new report**
- **Advisers told ministers banning Palestine Action would backfire**
- **Five UN experts say ban is unjustified, unnecessary and a move more associated with authoritarian states**

Defend Our Juries are today (Thursday 13 November) announcing the locations for their UK-wide November wave of Lift The Ban actions as: The Ministry Of Justice (Thursday 20th), The Peace Garden in Tavistock Square (Saturday 22nd), The Home Office (Monday 24th) and The Royal Courts of Justice (Wednesday 26th).

The protests are part of what organisers say will be the “most widespread civil disobedience across the UK in modern British history” - with actions taking place in 18 cities and towns across every nation of the UK between Tuesday 18th and Saturday 29th of November.

Lift The Ban protests will take place in Edinburgh, Cardiff, Oxford, Leeds, Aberystwyth, Nottingham, Northampton, Gloucester and Truro (Tuesday 18 November), London (Thursday 20, Saturday 22, Monday 24, Wednesday 26), Belfast (Saturday 22), Edinburgh, Cardiff, Manchester, Birmingham, Cambridge, Bristol, Sheffield, Exeter and Lancaster (Saturday 29 November).

[Join the Defend Our Juries WhatsApp](#) for breaking news during the November wave of action and Judicial Review.

FOUR LONDON LOCATIONS, FOUR STORIES

The Ministry Of Justice (Thursday 20th) has been chosen as the site for the first London action because it oversees the prisons that are holding 29 alleged Palestine Action activists without trial, six of whom are now on hunger strike demanding their immediate right to bail and a fair trial. The MOJ also oversees the court system where - should the judicial review be unsuccessful - thousands of people charged with terrorism offences for holding cardboard signs will have less than a half an hour each to defend themselves.

The Garden in Tavistock Square (Saturday 22nd) is a memorial and peace garden with a statue of Mahatma Gandhi at its centre, a cherry tree planted to commemorate the victims of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and a maple tree planted by the League of Jewish Women celebrating the Year of Peace in 1986. **It is a reminder that people acting in the name of Palestine Action only ever acted to save lives, never to take lives.**

The Home Office (Monday 24th) is the office of state where former Home Secretary Yvette Cooper made her ill-fated decision to proscribe Palestine Action after meetings with arms

companies and lobbyists for Israel, despite [warnings](#) that the move would backfire and despite [deep concerns](#) amongst civil servants.

The Royal Courts of Justice (Wednesday 26th) is where the Judicial Review will be heard on 25–27 November and where world-famous street artist Banksy painted a judge hitting a protester with a gavel two days after over 800 Lift the Ban protesters were arrested in Parliament Square in September. At the Court Of Appeal on 15 October, Palestine Action co-founder Huda Ammori won [two more grounds](#) for her Judicial Review at the same time as the government lost their attempt to block the legal challenge. The Judicial Review is now twice as likely to succeed in overturning the proscription.

A SPOKESPERSON FOR DEFEND OUR JURIES SAID:

“The chorus of condemnation against the ban continues to grow as does the number of principled people standing up against the government’s authoritarian overreach.

“These historic mobilisations will honour those already imprisoned for risking everything to disrupt the flow of arms to Israel. The Filton 24 and Brize Norton 5 must be granted immediate bail and full access to the evidence they need to defend themselves.

“These actions will also, once again, be in solidarity with the people of Gaza and the West Bank. Both Conservative and Labour governments have been shamefully complicit in the horrors continuing to unfold in Palestine and the use of counter-terrorism legislation to silence their critics must end now.”

THREE DAMNING REPORTS IN TWO DAYS

This week the government’s proscription of Palestine Action has come under fire from expert bodies both in the UK and internationally with the release of three separate reports.

On Tuesday a panel of experts including a former MI6 director said [terrorism laws needed rewriting](#) as they had become too broad to keep the country safe, hitting out at the ‘serious property damage’ clause” which has resulted in a nonviolent domestic direct action group being designated as terrorists for the first time.

Later that same day it was revealed that an advisory body had told ministers that [banning Palestine Action could backfire](#) by [inadvertently raising the group’s public profile](#), becoming “a flashpoint for significant controversy and criticism” of the government, heightening Muslim-Jewish community tensions, and being seen as evidence of bias towards Israel.

On Wednesday morning five UN experts published their letter to the UK government saying the ban is [unjustified, unnecessary and a move more associated with authoritarian states](#).

SIX PEOPLE HAVE SO FAR JOINED PRISON HUNGER STRIKE

28 prisoners are currently being held in UK prisons without trial for allegedly taking part in actions claimed by Palestine action. They are known as the Filton 24 and the Brize Norton Five. Most will be held for two years without trial - exceeding the [six month pre-trial](#) custody limit - because the Crown Prosecution Service is claiming there is a “terrorist connection” on the basis of criminal damage.

However no charges have been brought under the Terrorism Act against these prisoners and the actions took place before Palestine Action was proscribed by the government.

As far back as November 2024 [United Nations special rapporteurs](#) raised their concerns over prison treatment due to the alleged “terrorist connection” in a letter to the UK government saying: “we are concerned by the effect of the security limitations on the activists’ access to medication, right to communicate with the outside world, and right to exercise cultural and religious rights while on remand, which may constitute violate [sic] international human rights law.”

Six of these prisoners are now on a rolling hunger strike. The hunger strike started on Saturday 2nd November - Balfour Day - with two people after the Home Secretary failed to respond to [their demands](#) including immediate bail, access to documents necessary for the right to a fair trial and the de-proscription of Palestine Action. The strike is “rolling” because more people continue to join the strike as their demands remain unmet.

On Tuesday [Zarah Sultana MP wrote to Justice Secretary David Lammy](#) in support of Palestine Action prisoners release.

According to Ministry of Justice guidelines, hunger strikers are supposed to be given a "[full initial medical assessment](#)" on the first day of a strike. Yet repeated requests for electrolytes and medical attention by hunger strikers have been refused by the prison authorities.

Sean Middlebrough, who is one of the Filton 24, failed to return to prison after being given bail to attend his brother’s wedding. Sean says he is not “on the run” but that he is “[refusing to be held as a prisoner of war](#) of Israel in a British prison.” Of the hunger strikers he said: “They are the best of us, and we must rally behind their fight.”

In August of this year T Hoxa of the Filton 24 went on [hunger strike](#) for 28 days, eventually [winning most of her demands](#).

According to Prisoners For Palestine, most of the 33 activists are expected to join the strike in coming weeks, in what **could become the largest coordinated prisoners’ hunger strike since the 1981 Irish hunger strike led by Bobby Sands.**

For more information on the hunger strikers see [Prisoners for Palestine](#).

BACKGROUND ON THE LIFT THE BAN CAMPAIGN

So far over 2,000 people have been arrested under terrorism legislation for taking part in these now famous actions in which people sit silently holding handwritten cardboard signs saying “I oppose genocide. I support Palestine Action.” Around 170 of these have so far been charged with section 13 offences under the Terrorism Act 2000, offences which carry a maximum six month prison sentence.

The [demands](#) of the Lift The campaign are firstly to lift the ban on Palestine Action and secondly to name the ongoing Israeli assault on the Palestinian people as a genocide and comply with the resulting legal obligations, including by ending all military trade and other military cooperation with Israel.

Last month the UN issued its draft report [Gaza Genocide: A Collective Crime](#) detailing the complicity of states [including the UK](#) in the destruction of Gaza. Amongst other things, the UK continued to supply arms including components for F-35 stealth bombers, undertook daily surveillance flights over Gaza for Israel, maintained normal trade relations, and allowed Israel to undertake international crimes with impunity.

[The genocide continues](#) to unfold in Gaza. Since October 11, the first full day of the ceasefire, Israel has killed at least 245 Palestinians in Gaza and wounded 627. Israel continues to attack Gaza, with at least three airstrikes on Wednesday. The UN says Israel is blocking vaccines and baby bottles. More than 1,500 buildings beyond the “yellow line” have been destroyed. And in the West Bank yesterday settlers set fire to vehicles, including dairy trucks.

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<https://defendourjuries.net/lift-the-ban/>