

Europe's Proscription of Palestine Solidarity

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Summary

This report documents how European governments instrumentalise counterterrorism measures to criminalise Palestine solidarity groups. Drawing on legal frameworks and case studies from the UK, Germany, the Netherlands, and France, it exposes a convergent pattern of repression to demobilise opposition to the Israeli genocide against Palestinians.

These repressive measures – advanced through alliances between state actors, Zionist lobby groups, and arms manufacturers – follow established patterns of political control and colonial violence. The UK's Terrorism Act, Germany's Associations Act, and France's dissolution powers all employ legal mechanisms reminiscent of colonial emergency laws, suspending rights to maintain imperial dominance while disproportionately targeting marginalised communities. Europe's so-called counterterrorism measures perpetuate similar dynamics of selective enforcement, particularly targeting those who stand in solidarity with Palestinians, Arabs, and Muslims. Just as colonial administrations framed liberation movements as existential threats, European states now codify Palestine solidarity as 'terrorism' and 'public order threats'. These designations mobilise police powers, courts, and prisons to enforce repression while insulating European complicity in the Israeli settler-colonial and ethno-nationalist project.

The report highlights how vague definitions of 'terrorism' enable states to criminalise basic acts of solidarity and bypass judicial oversight. These measures are deployed against the Palestine solidarity movement to protect economic and political interests tied to the Israeli colonisation and occupation of Palestine. Cases like the UK's proscription of Palestine Action, Germany's ban of *Samidoun*, and France's targeting of *Urgence Palestine*, illustrate this repression, which is now expanding across Europe, with Belgium and Italy escalating measures that could pave the way for future proscriptions. Yet the report underscores that the intensity of this crackdown reflects the growing power of Palestine solidarity movements. While these bans aim to chill broader support for Palestinian liberation, historical precedent suggests such repressive tactics often fail against determined collective movements for justice.

Ultimately, this report serves both as documentation of alarming developments in Europe and as a reminder that standing in solidarity with oppressed and colonised peoples cannot be legislated away. While its focus is on repressive state measures, the very intensity of this crackdown reveals a truth beyond legislation: power escalates its violence only when forced to respond to movements it cannot contain. The bans detailed here are not proof of the state's strength, but of its fear.

Background: A Legacy of Complicity

The Israeli genocide against Palestinians is in its 23rd month with no end in sight. Tens of thousands of Palestinians in Gaza have been killed or are missing, with the true number likely even higher. Some are buried beneath the rubble. Others were evaporated by Israeli airstrikes, disappearing without trace. Tens of thousands more have been maimed. Countless children orphaned. Entire families erased. Palestinians are also being starved. The latest starvation deaths bring the [death toll from malnutrition](#) to at least 217, including 100 children.¹ Others continue to die due to the Israeli military's deliberate [targeting of health, food, and sanitation infrastructure](#),² even as over [100 humanitarian organisations](#) condemn how tonnes of life-saving supplies sit unused just outside Gaza.³ Israeli soldiers continue to [shoot at starved Palestinians](#) waiting for food aid.⁴ All while the Israeli defence ministry lays out [plans](#)⁵ to forcibly relocate all Palestinians in Gaza into a '[concentration camp](#)'⁶ – built on the ruins of Rafah – before [expelling](#) them outside the Strip.⁷

Since the beginning of the Israeli genocide against Palestinians, the EU and many of its member states have provided political cover and military and financial support for the Israeli state. The EU has enabled and normalised genocide by adopting a '[business as usual](#)' approach towards the Israeli state and the US,⁸ for example, by allowing US arms shipments bound for the Israeli state to transit through European territory, facilitating [transfers of arms components](#) like Elbit Systems' Skylark drone parts transiting through Frankfurt from Budapest,⁹ [supplying weapons directly](#),¹⁰ and [investing](#) in the Israeli state's arms industry.¹¹ The UK has also provided political and military support for the genocide as, among other things, it sends [thousands of military items](#) to the Israeli state,¹² and continues to deny the ongoing genocide against Palestinians.

This infrastructure of complicity extends far beyond weapons. To sustain their support for the Israeli genocide against Palestinians, European states also suppress the growing public outrage within their borders. European states are criminalising Palestinian existence itself: banning collectives, terror-tagging activists, and fabricating 'extremism' to justify the dismantling of dissent and to construct a regime of enforced silence. This repression is the necessary counterpart to imperial collusion; it is the logical violence of the carceral state that protects colonialism and apartheid while jailing those who fight back.

This is no mere alliance of convenience. The Israeli state has always been imperialism's garrison in the region, a settler colony weaponised by Europe and the US to discipline the people of SWANA and test repression's latest technologies. Its silencing campaigns abroad are not an innovation, but an extension of the role assigned to it since 1948: to export the violence of the frontier back to the metropole. The 2015 mandate of the Israeli Ministry of Strategic Affairs (MSA), to combat '[attempts to boycott and delegitimize Israel around the world](#)',¹³ formalised this function. The MSA builds and invests in infrastructure required for

the operation of 'pro-Israel' organisations as an organised network. It deploys an array of NGOs around the world to [engage in 'pro-Israel' activities](#).¹⁴ Meanwhile, the Israeli Ministry of Diaspora Affairs and Combating Antisemitism regularly publishes an '[Anti-Israel Protest Forecast](#)',¹⁵ categorising Palestine solidarity protests under a questionable 'risk level' methodology.¹⁶

Zionist lobby groups have a long history of levelling baseless allegations against Palestinian organisations, a key pillar of a broader campaign to [shrink space for Palestinian CSOs](#).¹⁷ In 2023, the UN Human Rights Council's investigation ([A/HRC/53/22](#)) concluded that the erosion of civic space for Palestinians stems from an 'intentional strategy, pursued by the Government of Israel, of delegitimising and silencing civil society'.¹⁸ This is further detailed in [Suppressing Dissent](#),¹⁹ which documents how Zionist lobby groups collaborate with Israeli authorities to target Palestinian civil society organisations (CSOs) and Palestine solidarity networks through smear campaigns, [lawfare](#),²⁰ and restrictive legislation. While Palestinian CSOs remain the primary targets of this transnational repression, enduring harassment, incitement campaigns, and movement restrictions aimed at stifling their advocacy, the same strategy has [increasingly been deployed](#) against Palestine solidarity movements in Europe.²¹

This coordinated repression has now entered an even more overt phase of criminalisation. On 5 July 2025, the UK government proscribed Palestine Action under the Terrorism Act 2000. Palestine Action describes itself as a movement '[committed to ending global participation in Israel's genocidal and apartheid regime](#)'.²² The group has indicated that it sustained a five-year campaign of direct action against businesses and institutions complicit in the continued colonisation of Palestinians and their land. Their actions escalated after the start of the Israeli genocidal onslaught on Palestinians in Gaza in October 2023, making them a target of increasing state crackdowns – a dynamic that is painfully familiar to Palestinian civil society.

[Netpol](#), an organisation that monitors public order, protest, and street policing [affirmed](#) that the ban 'is a political move intended to shut down solidarity campaigns by criminalising support for Palestine Action, and the widespread confusion about what the ban will mean in practice is intended to have a chilling effect on protest around the ongoing genocide'.²³ At the time of writing, over 800 arrests have already occurred under the proscription order, an order which the UN Human Rights Chief [condemned](#) as being 'at odds with the UK's obligations under international human rights law'.²⁴

The ban directly protects Palestine Action's primary target – Elbit Systems, the Israeli state's biggest weapons producer, which the UN Special Rapporteur Francesca Albanese has accused of profiting from the ongoing genocide in Gaza. In her latest report, '[From Economy of Occupation to Economy of Genocide](#)', Albanese highlights how the Israeli genocide against Palestinians has become a lucrative venture for companies like Elbit.²⁵ While focused on

Elbit, Palestine Action also targeted companies and institutions linked to the weapons producer. Most recently, in June 2025, they damaged two military planes at Royal Air Force (RAF) Brize Norton in the UK, where flights leave daily for RAF Akrotiri in Cyprus, a base that has served as the launch point for [at least 518 surveillance flights](#) over Gaza since December 2023.²⁶

While direct action groups and transnational solidarity networks have deep roots in [British](#)²⁷ and [European](#)²⁸ political history – from the widely [celebrated](#) struggle for women’s suffrage to anti-war movements²⁹ – today’s ban of Palestine Action must be understood within the context of Britain’s unbroken [colonial legacy in Palestine](#),³⁰ a continuum from the 1917 Balfour declaration, passing through the 1948 Nakba, all the way to today’s genocide. Yet as Declassified UK [reveals](#),³¹ this repression is now accelerated through coordination with Zionist lobby groups like UK Lawyers for Israel, Israeli embassy officials, and arms giant Elbis Systems, who reportedly lobbied the Home Office to pursue prosecutions of Palestine Action activists and demanded retrials when charges were dropped.

Fundamentally, the repression of Palestine solidarity in Europe targets any meaningful dissent that might disrupt the profitable machinery of genocide, which includes the arms factories supplying the Israeli state, as well as the political networks that legitimise it. The criminalisation of protestors, the silencing of those who oppose the genocide in Palestine, and the manufactured ‘extremism’ labels all serve the overriding purpose of safeguarding the [supply chains](#),³² [investments](#),³³ and [geopolitical arrangements](#)³⁴ that make the ongoing dispossession of Palestinians and numerous others so lucrative for Western powers.

The decision to proscribe Palestine Action is not an isolated incident but a continuation of a long-standing pattern of state repression targeting Palestine solidarity movements in the [UK](#)³⁵ and across [Europe](#)³⁶. As civil liberties groups and legal scholars have [documented](#),³⁷ ‘[e]xperience of previous counter-terror policing tells us that these powers are typically used in an overtly racist and Islamophobic way, and that, because there is so much discretion allowed to police about what constitutes an “expression of support” for a proscribed organisation, powers tend to be applied unevenly and unpredictably’. This repression hinges on the racist conflation of solidarity with Palestine – and with Arabs and Muslims more broadly – with ‘terrorism’, a narrative that paints entire communities as inherently violent, isolating them from [‘time, from causality, from prior action \[...\] \[portraying them as\] interested in wreaking havoc for its own sake’](#).³⁸

These measures replicate [the colonial logic of emergency rule](#),³⁹ where ‘anti-terror’ legislation was the legal veneer for suspending rights and imposing racialised double standards. This is also rooted in a resurgent [‘civilisational racism’](#) amplified after 9/11, which revives the Orientalist ‘clash of civilisations’ thesis. Here, the world is violently sorted into hierarchies of ‘civilised’ and ‘uncivilised’, with the Israeli state mythologised as ‘the only

democracy in the Middle East’ and a bulwark against Islamic terrorism – both racist constructs masquerading as security.⁴⁰

This is not theoretical – it operates with brutal clarity. When Germany’s Chancellor Friedrich Merz boasts that the Israeli state does the [‘dirty work for us’](#) in Iran,⁴¹ he lays bare the colonial division of labour: Western powers outsource violence to maintain dominance while cloaking themselves in liberal pretences. Palestine solidarity, like all anti-colonial resistance, must be criminalised precisely because it unmasks this hypocrisy, revealing the machinery of displacement and the profits extracted from genocide. These racialised security regimes, documented by researchers as [‘systemic state violence’](#),⁴² function as tools of foreign policy by other means, where domestic counterterrorism measures operate as an extension of geopolitical interests.

This is the context in which Europe now securitises dissent – a process we turn to next.

Context: The Securitisation of Solidarity

Building upon this deep-seated legacy of complicity, European states have intensified the securitisation of solidarity, systematically deploying ‘counterterrorism’ and ‘public order’ measures against Palestine solidarity efforts. Key trends include the expansion of already severe ‘anti-terror’ measures to target protests, speech, and direct action, along with the criminalisation of slogans, symbols, and online speech as support for ‘terrorism’.

Experts have [warned](#) that ‘European governments are on a fast-track to eroding civil liberties and human rights over the long term’.⁴³ Since October 2023, European states have exhibited a significant and escalating trend of banning and proscribing Palestinian and Palestine solidarity groups. This mirrors the Israeli state’s [designation](#) of Palestinian civil society organisations as ‘terrorist groups’ in 2021⁴⁴ – a baseless accusation later debunked by the [UN](#),⁴⁵ [multiple European governments](#),⁴⁶ and [human rights groups](#),⁴⁷ as well as the more recent decision by the Israeli state to [ban dozens of political and legal Palestine advocates in Europe and beyond](#).⁴⁸ In both cases, resistance to oppression is rebranded as ‘terrorism’, and those challenging state complicity in genocide are figured as ‘innate terrorists’. This process serves to valorise authoritarianism and state terror of others as ‘counterterrorism’ and denies the right to civil obedience against state violence.

This very concept of terrorism functions as an ideological shapeshifter, an intentionally elastic construct designed to criminalise dissent and pathologise resistance. Without fixed boundaries, it operates as the perfect tool of [state control](#),⁴⁹ disproportionately wielded against racialised communities and their allies. The European Legal Support Center (ELSC) has [documented](#) hundreds of incidents since 2019 where European authorities and media

platforms explicitly equated Palestine solidarity with ‘support for terrorism’ (though these numbers are just the tip of the iceberg)⁵⁰. Merely waving a Palestine flag or chanting ‘From the River to the Sea’ is systematically recast as ‘extremism’ across Europe. The same script repeats from Berlin to London to Paris. This pattern is institutionalised even in relation to boycott campaigns, as seen in Germany’s 2023 Constitutional Protection Report – [made public in June 2024](#) – which brands the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement as ‘secular Palestinian extremism’.⁵¹

These measures constitute more than repression, however. They undermine international legal obligations and represent a dangerous inversion of the foundational principle that states with the ‘capacity to influence’ a perpetrator of genocide bear responsibility to prevent it. They deny the application of [international law and principles of self-determination](#)⁵² and legitimate state terror, ethnic cleansing, and genocide. The criminalisation of those who resist genocide and war crimes – rather than those committing them – means that European governments are actively sabotaging their obligations under international law and transforming the duty to prevent genocide into complicity in its enforcement.

Below, we outline the legal frameworks that allow for the proscription of Palestine solidarity groups and organisations in Europe, provide some prominent examples of proscription, and shed light on the impact of these proscription orders.

United Kingdom

Legal Framework

The UK government’s primary legal tool is the Terrorism Act 2000, which allows for the proscription of organisations and criminalises belonging to, fundraising for, or even displaying items that suggest support for a listed group, including non-material support. Section 12(1A) of the Act, introduced in 2019, has effectively given the government the power to prosecute individuals for ‘thought crimes’, punishing ambiguous statements about banned groups under the pretext of [‘recklessness’](#).⁵³ This amendment aligns with the British state’s broader campaign to expand ‘terrorism’-related speech offences, exemplified by a November 2023 [proposal](#) to redefine ‘extremism’ to include those who ‘undermine’ the country’s institutions or ‘fundamental values’⁵⁴ – a dangerously vague standard.

This expansive prosecutorial power stems from the Act’s unusual definition of terrorism, which requires two distinct elements: first, conduct involving [‘use or threat of action’](#) involving serious violence, property damage, endangerment of life, public health risks, or electronic system interference; and second, political, religious, or ideological motivation

designed to influence government or intimidate the public. What makes this definition particularly noteworthy is how it treats these elements. While the conduct element broadly encompasses both violent and non-violent acts – including otherwise lawful activities that might create serious risk – the motivational element is unusually explicit in criminal law, making political dissent a constitutive component of terrorism.⁵⁵

This two-pronged definition creates several troubling consequences. First, it effectively [insulates government policy](#) from popular challenge by designating politically motivated offenses as especially dangerous. Second, it stigmatises particular ideologies regardless of the means employed by their adherents. In this way, the UK definition notably fails to exempt public protest, rendering dissent vulnerable to classification as terrorism when combined with the requisite political motivation.⁵⁶

Under this expansive definition, the Home Secretary holds the executive power to proscribe an organisation under section 3 of the Terrorism Act 2000. The Terrorism Act 2006 further widened this power to include [‘groups that encourage terrorism without engaging in it’](#) (section 3(5A) Terrorism Act 2000).⁵⁷ Proscription decisions typically follow intelligence assessments and agency recommendations, with draft orders then presented to Parliament. Yet MPs are denied access to the classified material underlying these decisions, enabling organisations to be banned through a process that requires no criminal conviction, discloses no evidence publicly, and operates with minimal judicial scrutiny.

Effectively, these broad measures and vague definitions reflect a deliberate legal framework designed to equate criticism of the state – or even solidarity with resistance or dissident movements – with existential threats. This framework extends beyond proscription into everyday surveillance through the Prevent strategy, established in 2003 as the UK’s [‘pre-criminal’](#) counterterrorism arm.⁵⁸ Just as the Terrorism Act’s elastic logic bans groups based on opaque intelligence, Prevent operates in a speculative realm where no crime is required, only the possibility that offenses ‘may occur in the future’.

The 2015 Prevent Duty (enacted under the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015) formalises this surveillance apparatus, legally conscripting teachers, doctors, and social workers as its agents by mandating they report political expression as ‘radicalisation’. Here, Palestine flags, ceasefire chants, or social media posts become grounds for intervention, similar to how proscription criminalises ‘non-material support’ for banned groups. In this way, Prevent completes the repressive circuit: if the Terrorism Act bans groups through undemocratic processes, Prevent then polices individuals at scale, effectively decentralising the reach of the security state. Information gathered, even without criminal basis, is stored and shared as de facto evidence, creating a perpetual dragnet of surveillance that disproportionately targets Muslim communities and Palestine solidarity activists under the elastic banner of counterterrorism.

This legal architecture has actively normalised the suppression of Palestine solidarity groups, producing a chilling effect on dissent, enabling countless arrests under broadly defined offences, and creating a framework readily deployed against other movements. The following examples of proscription demonstrate this pattern with stark clarity.

Prominent Examples of Proscription

Palestine Action

Palestine Action was proscribed under section 3 of the Terrorism Act 2000 on 5 July 2025, following a rushed parliamentary process. The Home Secretary's announcement (23 June) preceded any judicial review, and the Court of Appeal rejected a final appeal on 4 July, upholding the High Court's refusal to suspend the ban. The government [bundled](#) the vote with two neo-Nazi groups ('Maniacs Murder Cult' and 'Russia Imperial Movement'),⁵⁹ compelling MPs and the House of Lords to approve all three designations in a single motion, obscuring scrutiny of each group's distinct activities, and ensuring the ban passed without debate specific to Palestine Action.

The proscription relied on section 1(2)(b) of the Terrorism Act 2000, which defines terrorism as including acts involving 'serious damage to property'. Yet such tactics have long featured in protest movements without ever triggering proscription. The Suffragettes' window-smashing is celebrated despite property destruction, while contemporary parallels abound: in 2003, [activists damaging RAF equipment](#) to prevent war crimes in Iraq faced criminal charges – not terrorism accusations – with Keir Starmer even serving as defence counsel for one of the defendants;⁶⁰ likewise, 2017 protesters who broke into BAE Systems to disarm fighter jets in protest against the UK's role in the war on Yemen [were charged with minor criminal damage, despite their intention to target £1bn in military assets](#).⁶¹ This discrepancy is highly revealing. The proscription order was not merely concerned with property damage itself, but weaponised against the politics of those undertaking action in solidarity with Palestine. This latter point is further supported by the ELSC's evidence in the application for a judicial review of the proscription decision, which detailed the order's wide-ranging impacts, particularly its chilling effect on solidarity actions.

This repression now faces judicial challenge. On 30 July 2025, the High Court ruled that a judicial review challenging Palestine Action's proscription could proceed, [acknowledging](#) it is 'reasonably arguable' that the proscription order interferes with freedom of expression and protest rights. It also found it 'reasonably arguable' that the Home Secretary had a duty to consult Palestine Action before imposing the ban, and that there was no compelling reason to justify failing to do so.⁶² Yet the court denied interim relief, leaving the ban in force until at least November 2025 and maintaining the criminalisation of support for the group. The

decision to deny relief came despite the Home Secretary's own [assessment](#) that 'only three of Palestine Action's 385 actions would meet the statutory definition of terrorism'.⁶³ While this ruling specifically targets formal affiliation with the group, in practice police continue to conflate broader Palestine solidarity with 'terrorism' using the same draconian framework to justify arrests of protesters.

Hizb ut-Tahrir

Hizb ut-Tahrir was proscribed under the Terrorism Act 2000 on 19 January 2024, amid its vocal opposition to the Israeli genocide in Gaza. The UK government justified the ban by alleging the group incited terrorism and antisemitism, after they called on Muslim states to oppose the genocide. There had been two prior attempts to ban *Hizb ut-Tahrir*, but both failed after official reviews rejected the move. In 2005, both the Home Office and the Bar Council found no evidence linking the group to terrorism, noting it focused on political discourse rather than action. A 2011 review reached similar conclusions and found that the ban '[could have serious implications for freedom of speech and assembly in the UK](#)'.⁶⁴ Yet in 2024, the government ignored these findings to escalate its systematic suppression of Palestine solidarity.

Impact

The proscription of Palestine Action marks a dangerous escalation in the UK's weaponisation of counterterrorism frameworks against Palestine solidarity activism. Where actionists were once charged under criminal law, [with courts repeatedly acquitting them](#),⁶⁵ the state has now pivoted to terrorism legislation, exploiting its lower evidentiary thresholds. This shift was seen even before the proscription, where a group of Palestine Action activists – known as the [Filton 18](#)⁶⁶ (now the [Filton 24](#))⁶⁷ – who allegedly targeted Elbit Systems in Bristol, have been detained under counterterrorism powers since last year.

But it is not just actionists who are targeted using counterterrorism legislation. Since Palestine Action's proscription, [hundreds have been arrested](#) under counterterrorism powers (section 12 of the Terrorism Act 2000) for allegedly showing support for a proscribed organisation.⁶⁸ This is likely to continue as activists plan nationwide civil disobedience protesting the ban and holding up signs that read 'I oppose genocide, I support Palestine Action'. More recently, on 15 July 2025, three actionists from the direct action group Shut Down Leonardo were [arrested](#) in Edinburgh under the Terrorism Act for driving into the factory's fence,⁶⁹ and two days after, [a protester in Kent was threatened by armed police](#) for holding a 'Free Gaza' sign, with officers claiming that the phrase itself was supportive of Palestine Action. Kent police later defended this, stating that under the Terrorism Act 'it is a

criminal offence to carry or display items that may arouse reasonable suspicion that an individual is a member or supporter of a proscribed organisation such as Palestine Action'.⁷⁰

These arrests and threats of arrest are a blatant contradiction to the High Court's ruling on Palestine Action's proscription, which explicitly [affirmed](#) that supporters 'will remain legally entitled to [advocate for Palestine] in private conversations, in print, on social media and at protests. Even if their protests take the form of direct action which involves criminality'.⁷¹ The proscription's impact has been exacerbated by the High Court's 30 July 2025 refusal to grant interim relief to suspend the ban. The court acknowledged that the arrests that occurred because of the proscription order exemplify the ban's 'indirect' chilling effect but declined to stop the repression, leaving victims to navigate a legal limbo until at least November 2025, when the full judicial review is expected to be heard.

This expanding use of counterterrorism legislation against Palestine Action – granting the state unchecked power to criminalise solidarity while the proscription's legality remains contested after the denial of interim relief – represents just one pillar of the UK's repressive architecture. This legislation operates in tandem with mass surveillance and pre-criminal targeting of Palestine solidarity. Between October 2023 and January 2024, [over 100 schoolchildren and university students](#) faced Prevent referrals for expressing support for Palestine.⁷² As early as January 2020, a [Guardian investigation](#) revealed Prevent training materials listing organisations like Palestine Solidarity Campaign alongside neo-Nazi groups,⁷³ which very clearly exposes how the so-called Prevent duty and the larger counterterrorism framework systematically criminalises dissent, not prevent violence.

In 2023, Amnesty International demanded Prevent's abolition, citing its reliance on ['Islamophobic stereotypes' that conflate political speech with 'radicalisation'](#).⁷⁴ As [noted](#) by the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination in September 2024, Prevent has institutionalised racial profiling, and that the UK's counterterrorism strategies 'have created an atmosphere of suspicion towards members of Muslim communities and continue to have a negative impact on the exercise of their rights to freedom of expression, education, health, freedom of religion and freedom of peaceful assembly'.⁷⁵ Recently, the Special Rapporteur on the right to education has [condemned Prevent's use in schools](#)⁷⁶ in a UNHRC [report](#) addressing the right to be safe in education.⁷⁷

Many others have condemned the UK's expansive use of counterterrorism measures. In July 2025, against the backdrop of Palestine Action's proscription, five UN Special Rapporteurs, including Francesca Albanese (Palestine) and Irene Khan (free expression), [warned](#) the UK 'against misusing terrorism laws', stressing how proscription circumvents due process.⁷⁸ The same critiques were levelled against the failed 2005 and 2011 attempts to ban *Hizb ut-Tahrir*, where reviews found no terror links and acknowledged the chilling effect on political expression. Today, the British state bypasses scrutiny entirely, leveraging the post October

2023 climate to circumvent the rejection of politicised prosecutions by courts and falling back on executive-led terrorism designations. This overreach is particularly glaring when existing laws, including the National Security Act 2023, give [‘significant new protection to “critical infrastructure”, enabling defence locations to be assigned as “prohibited places” which police are given extra powers to protect’](#).⁷⁹ We are, therefore, left with one conclusion: the proscription’s true aim appears to be criminalising Palestine solidarity itself, rather than merely protecting critical infrastructure as claimed.

Germany

Legal Framework

While Germany lacks unified counterterrorism legislation, its [counterterrorism strategy](#) combines administrative and criminal measures across multiple legal codes.⁸⁰ The primary framework operates through two complementary systems: the Associations Act and the Criminal Code (StGB). Other instruments like migration law also contain counterterrorism provisions, though these fall beyond the scope of our analysis.

The [Associations Act \(Vereinsgesetz\)](#)⁸¹ of 1964 serves as the primary legal basis for proscription, detailing the implementation of bans on associations as broadly outlined in [Article 9\(2\) of the Basic Law](#).⁸² The power to proscribe an organisation at the national level lies with the Federal Ministry of Interior, while the sixteen State Ministries of Interior hold this authority at the state level. Without legal process – but subject to review by the administrative court – these ministries can issue a prohibition order if they consider an organisation of group to be acting against the criminal code, the constitutional order, or harming ‘international understanding’ (*Völkerverständigung*) – a [legally vague concept](#)⁸³ that has been mobilised to legitimate the proscription of resistance and solidarity movements. The ban applies comprehensively to all forms of an organisation’s activities, including the use of its symbols, meetings, fundraising, and public advocacy.

The Associations Act was first used to ban Palestinian organisations in Germany in 1972, when both the General Union of Palestinian Students and the General Union of Palestinian Workers were banned in West Germany after allegedly failing to properly condemn the Munich Olympics attacks. As a result, [around 100 Palestinians and Arabs were deported in the weeks after the bans and 1500 were denied entry to Germany](#).⁸⁴ The Act was similarly used to ban the Kurdish Workers Party (PKK) in 1993. Following 9/11, the number of proscriptions increased dramatically, particularly after the December 2001 ‘Security Package I’ amendment that cancelled so-called religious privilege, which excluded religious organisations from the applicability of the law, and expanded proscription pathways. Many Palestine-related groups have been targeted under this framework, often for alleged ties to

resistance movements through humanitarian funding, including *Al-Aqsa e.V.* in 2002, *Internationale Humanitäre Hilfsorganisation* in 2010, and *Ansaar International* in 2021.

The Criminal Code (StGB) provides the second pillar of Germany's counterterrorism framework. Section 129a, [enacted in 1976 in response to the Red Army Faction](#),⁸⁵ punishes founding or participating in a 'terrorist' organisation. This was expanded in 2002 with section 129b to cover 'foreign criminal and terrorist organisations'. Further amendments were introduced into the StGB in 2009 and in 2015 by the Act on the Prosecution of the Preparation of Serious Violent Offences Endangering the State. Sections 89a, b, and c criminalise a range of activities including maintaining 'relations with an organisation within the meaning of section 129a, also in conjunction with section 129b', and ['acts of terrorism financing'](#).⁸⁶ Section 86 of the StGB bans distribution of 'propaganda material' from 'unconstitutional and terrorist organisations', while section 86a specifically prohibits the use of their symbols, carrying penalties up to three years imprisonment. These provisions have been [increasingly weaponised](#) against expressions of Palestine solidarity,⁸⁷ with section 86a invoked to criminalise displays of the inverted red triangle and target slogans like 'From the River to the Sea'. Unlike the Associations Act, terrorist designations under the Criminal Code require evidentiary proof and recognition by the Federal Prosecutor General.

Prominent Examples of Proscription

Samidoun

The *Samidoun* Palestine Prisoner Solidarity Network – ['an international network of organizers and activists working to build solidarity with Palestinian prisoners in their struggle for freedom'](#)⁸⁸ – was banned on 2 November 2023 by then-Federal Minister of the Interior Nancy Faeser. The ban also targeted every iteration of *Samidoun's* work in Germany, including its *Hirak* and *Hirak e.V.* affiliations. The Federal Ministry of Interior claimed that *Samidoun* ['meets the requirements for a ban given in Article 9 \(2\) of the Basic Law and section 3 \(1\) sentence 1, section 14 \(1\) and section 14 \(2\) of the Act Governing Private Associations \[Association Law\]'](#).⁸⁹ Then-Chancellor Olaf Scholz first announced the intention to ban *Samidoun* on 12 October 2023, after the Network posted photos on their Instagram of Palestine solidarity activists distributing sweets in Berlin on 7 October 2023.

The ban of *Samidoun* crystallises how German institutions collaborate with the Israeli state and manufacture domestic consent for repression. After [Israeli officials publicly demanded Samidoun's ban in June 2023](#),⁹⁰ Germany's expanding surveillance infrastructure began constructing a 'threat' narrative. In the months before the ban, Germany's Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF), upon receiving documents by Berlin's Senate Department for the Interior, revoked an activist's refugee status over his involvement with *Samidoun* –

lacking domestic legal grounds for the decision, the Department for the Interior [cited](#) the group's proscription by Israeli officials in 2021.⁹¹

In 2022, *Samidoun* was mentioned for the first time in the annual report by the Berlin domestic intelligence service (*Bundesamt für Verfassungsschutz*), which labelled *Samidoun* as an 'extremist' organisation and granted intelligence authorities greater possibilities to surveil activists who it identified as (potential) members. The decision to list an organisation as 'extremist' remains solely with the domestic intelligence service. Thus, the criteria that justify the expansion of the security apparatus to surveil individuals and groups remain ambiguous.

Palästina Solidarität Duisburg

[Palästina Solidarität Duisburg \(PSDU\)](#)⁹² was banned in May 2024. PSDU, a locally based activist group founded in the summer of 2023, quickly gained momentum through demonstrations and vibrant social media presence advocating for Palestinians' right to resistance. The ban was enacted by the North Rhine-Westphalia's Interior Ministry with collaboration from state security police and the federal intelligence agency (*Verfassungsschutz*). The ban cited politically motivated grounds lacking legal basis, such as unsubstantiated allegations of antisemitism, breaches of *Völkerverständigung* (understanding amongst the peoples of the world), and the nebulous charge of providing 'intellectual support' to Hamas. Authorities assembled a [240-page dossier](#)⁹³ purporting to justify the ban, but the dossier appeared to be a [compilation of misrepresentations, contextual omissions, and demonstrable inaccuracies designed to obscure the complete lack of prosecutable offenses](#).⁹⁴

The PSDU ban presents a clear example of Germany's use of surveillance and administrative procedures to target Palestine solidarity organising. The ban ['involved an extensive espionage operation by state authorities'](#),⁹⁵ including informant infiltration and coordinated surveillance by the *Verfassungsschutz*, state security police, and North Rhine-Westphalia's Interior Ministry. State surveillance agencies targeted the group precisely due to the traction it gained in a short period of time, deploying pre-emptive repression against its growing advocacy for Palestine. Like the *Samidoun* case, we see here a leading role played by intelligence agencies in manufacturing 'extremism' allegations, where protected political speech is recast as national security threats.

Impact

Alongside dissolving an association and confiscating its funds, the process of proscription involves the identification and criminalisation of symbols associated with the organisation. In

November 2023, the Federal Ministry of Interior identified the slogan ‘From the River to the Sea’ as a symbol of Hamas and *Samidoun*, thus criminalising the slogan. The prohibition order lists several symbols which the ministry associates with the two organisations. Whether and how the slogan can be persecuted remains contested and often depends on the judgment of the public prosecutor's office and the judges. Since the slogan was listed, at least hundreds of criminal charges have been filed – likely even thousands – against individuals for chanting or writing ‘From the River to the Sea’, both online and at demonstrations. Many of the cases resulted in heavy fines, along with dozens of house raids by authorities attempting to gather evidence under Section 86a of the Criminal Code (use of symbols of terrorist or proscribed organisations) or under Section 130 (incitement to hatred). Still, some judges have rejected the criminalisation of the slogan, acquitting defendants in their courts, meaning the ban remains legally contested.

The criminalisation of symbols and slogans is invariably accompanied by intensified state violence against individuals. Just weeks after banning *Samidoun* in November 2023, German authorities conducted coordinated raids on 15 properties under the pretext of ‘enforcing’ the ban. Then-Minister Nancy Faeser explicitly tied the bans to suppressing criticism of the Israeli state, declaring Germany [‘will not tolerate any glorification or support of the barbaric terror of Hamas against Israel’](#).⁹⁶ Faeser’s use of ‘barbaric’ resurrects colonial tropes that frame the resistance of colonised peoples as inherently savage, while legitimising Germany’s own state violence as ‘civilised enforcement’.

On 16 May 2024, over 50 armed police officers stormed homes and workplaces of PSDU’s members across North Rhine-Westphalia. These raids operationalised the racist conflation of Palestine solidarity with terrorism and antisemitism, as evidenced by Interior Minister Herbert Reul’s claim that often [‘solidarity with Palestine hides \[...\] hatred of Jews’](#).⁹⁷ Such statements perpetuate the Orientalist trope of the ‘innately violent Arab’ and violate the basic rights of those who stand in solidarity with Palestine. Those affiliated with or seen to be affiliated with PSDU and *Samidoun* have faced [arbitrary financial penalties, barring protest attendance, police threats to residency status, and violations of basic procedural rights during searches, including documented cases of officers mocking detainees’ family photos and personal belongings](#).⁹⁸ Moreover, at least [one employee was dismissed because of PSDU membership](#).⁹⁹

The violence of these operations, both materially and rhetorically, belies their administrative framing. While authorities publicly justify raids as targeting ‘illegal structures’, their tactics reveal an overt political objective, which is to harass and distract Palestine solidarity networks, movements, and organisations into silence. The repression reaches much further beyond the targeted individuals and organisations. The operations are coordinated through Germany’s institutionalised repression infrastructure. The *Bundeskriminalamt* (BKA), or Federal Criminal Office, receives its ‘crime’ data directly from the domestic intelligence

service (BfV), and weaponises these statistics to justify raids. Both these agencies collaborate in the Shared Extremism and Terrorism Prevention Centre (GETZ).

This institutional infrastructure has not stopped at proscribing *Samidoun* and PSDU, but continues to expand its reach with the Boycott, Divestment and Sanction (BDS) movement as its next major target. Since 2017, anti-BDS measures have escalated from non-legally binding city council resolutions in Berlin, Munich, and Frankfurt, to the Bundestag's 2019 non-binding anti-BDS resolution, culminating in the 2024 [‘Never Again is Now’ resolution](#) exploring BDS's full ban in Germany.¹⁰⁰ By May 2025, intelligence agencies had already referred to BDS Berlin and BDS Bonn as ‘secular Palestinian extremism’ in domestic intelligence reports, and framed allied groups like Palestine Speaks and Jewish Voice as a threat, paving the way for future bans. The pattern works as follows: first stigmatise and securitise Palestine solidarity in political declarations and in the media, then legitimise surveillance, and finally outlaw entirely.

The same framework is also being leveraged by German NGOs and [public broadcasters](#) against Masar Badil (the Palestinian Alternative Revolutionary Path Movement),¹⁰¹ accusing it of [‘promoting terror’](#)¹⁰² for affirming the right of colonised people to armed resistance under [international law](#),¹⁰³ and of ‘violent rhetoric’ for the Movement's anti-imperialist discourse that criticises the European Union as a colonial institution.

The Netherlands

Legal Framework

The Netherlands' crackdown on Palestine solidarity operates through a two-pronged legal and security apparatus. [Civil Code Book 2 Article 20](#) serves as the primary tool,¹⁰⁴ allowing courts to dissolve groups and organisations deemed ‘contrary to public order’ – a deliberately vague standard encompassing ‘threats to national security’ or the ‘international legal order’ (Art. 20(2)). In 2021, an [amendment](#) lowered the burden of proof for prosecutors, enabling pre-emptive bans against organisations that ‘could constitute’ threats.¹⁰⁵ This was compounded by a recent [cabinet-approved bill](#) criminalising ‘glorification of terrorism’, punishable by three-year sentences for symbols, social media posts, or verbal ‘praise’ of banned groups.¹⁰⁶ The bill is under public consultation (until 16 August 2025) before parliamentary votes (first in the House of Representatives, then the Senate).

This framework systematically weaponises ‘public order’ and ‘terrorism’ to criminalise political expressions in solidarity with Palestine and Palestinians. Elastic definitions of ‘glorification’ allow the state to recast *Kuffiyehs*, chants, and social media posts into ‘security threats’. Meanwhile, they also empower the National Coordinator for Counterterrorism and

Security (NCTV) – which raised the national terror threat level to 4/5 in 2023, [explicitly citing the ‘Gaza War’](#)¹⁰⁷ as justification – to treat solidarity with Palestine not as protected political speech but as a destabilising force. Critically, the process for designating ‘terrorism’ relies on opaque mechanisms. Nominations for the national sanctions list require only an official report from the General Intelligence and Security Service, *Algemene Inlichtingen- en Veiligheidsdienst* (AIVD) or Public Prosecution Service, provided a link to the Dutch legal order is alleged (e.g., accusations of facilitating ‘terrorist activities’ via financial transactions or Dutch entities). Ultimately, the decision to freeze assets of individuals and organisations and put them on the sanctions list is taken by the Minister of Foreign Affairs in agreement with the Ministers of Finance and of Justice and Security.

This legal ambiguity enables security overreach, which then justifies further legislative repression, all while obscuring the [Netherlands’ own complicity in the genocide](#).¹⁰⁸

Prominent Examples of Proscription

While no Palestine solidarity group has been fully banned yet, the Dutch state has systematically laid the groundwork for future proscription. The repression has escalated through both legislative and administrative measures.

Targeting Samidoun

In October 2024, the Dutch House of Representatives voted 100 to 50 to approve a [motion](#) by Diederik van Dijk of the Reformed Political Party (SGP) and Joost Eerdmans of the Conservative Liberals Party (JA21) designating *Samidoun* for national terror listings.¹⁰⁹ The motion explicitly cited *Samidoun*’s German ban as precedent. The vote gained momentum after November 2024’s [violent attacks by Israeli football fans in Amsterdam](#),¹¹⁰ when lawmakers leveraged a [disinformation campaign around the events](#)¹¹¹ to fuel anti-Palestinian sentiment and push for EU-wide bans against *Samidoun*. Yet, [parliamentary records](#) reveal that the Minister of Justice and Security admitted the Public Prosecution Service and AIVD currently possess ‘no information’ justifying a ban or sanctions listing.¹¹²

Despite this, the government has initiated EU-wide consultations to ‘gather information’ on banning groups ‘linked to terrorist organisations’ elsewhere in the Union, pledging ‘additional measures’ if existing tools prove ‘insufficient’. In this instance, we see the state clearly admit that it lacks legal grounds for proscription while actively constructing new mechanisms to circumvent due process. For European states, Palestine solidarity is a uniquely criminalisable form of dissent, subject to tactics that would be unthinkable for other movements. The state’s admission of having ‘no information’ to legally proscribe the group, even as it invents new mechanisms to ban it, highlights that the true threat lies in the challenge Palestine solidarity poses to Dutch complicity in genocide. Moreover, the push for

EU-wide repression exposes a transnational colonial logic. European states coordinating bans across borders collectively constructs Palestine solidarity as an exceptional 'security threat', and mirrors historical imperial tactics used to criminalise liberation movements, where the mere assertion of resistance is framed as terrorism.

This logic of exceptionalising dissent reached its zenith with the proposal of the controversial 'Administrative Ban on Subversive Organisations' bill. If it had been approved, [this proposal would have granted the Minister of Justice and Security unilateral power to outlaw vaguely defined 'undermining organisations' without judicial review.](#)¹¹³ Framed as targeting motorcycle gangs, the bill's sweeping definition of 'organisations that promote a culture of lawlessness' risked encompassing Palestine solidarity networks like *Samidoun*, as well as climate activists like Extinction Rebellion. For now, the Dutch Senate rejected the bill in May 2025, but its rejection notwithstanding, the bill's very introduction reveals the state's trajectory, which seeks to bypass courts entirely and empower ministers to criminalise dissent through executive fiat.

Impact

The Dutch state's crackdown on Palestine solidarity extends far beyond attempts at formal proscription, manifesting in parallel measures designed to suppress the movement through administrative and surveillance tactics. Entry bans in Europe, such as [the exclusion of Mohammed Khatib](#) (*Samidoun's* Europe coordinator) from speaking at Radboud University in October 2024,¹¹⁴ are a clear example of how [immigration controls are weaponised to isolate and silence Palestine solidarity.](#)¹¹⁵

Meanwhile, universities have become laboratories for securitisation, with the NCTV collaborating closely with administrators to monitor Palestine solidarity activism as an existential threat. For example, at Leiden University's The Hague Campus, [FOIA documents](#) expose how counterterrorism measures, justified by vague references to 'tensions in the world',¹¹⁶ have transformed academic spaces into surveillance zones. Following October 2023, the university abruptly closed the campus citing unspecified 'security risks', later deploying undercover guards, mandatory ID checks, and visitor QR codes. Internal risk assessment by a private firm, Dyami Security Intelligence, framed academic subjects such as Conflict Studies and the presence of international students as potential vectors of 'terrorism and (militant) activism'.

This institutionalised paranoia is very similar to the UK's Prevent strategy, which trains staff to view political engagement, especially Palestine solidarity, as inherently suspect and always already 'terrorist' or 'terrorist adjacent'.

France

Legal Framework

France's post-2014 counterterrorism laws have created one of Europe's most expansive frameworks for criminalising speech and banning organisations. The cornerstone is [Penal Code Article 421-2-5](#),¹¹⁷ which punishes '*apologie du terrorisme*' (glorification of terrorism) with up to seven years in prison. Originally enacted in 1881 but strengthened after the Charlie Hebdo attacks in 2015, this provision has been weaponised to prosecute [social media posts deemed 'insensitive' to terror victims, as well as minors including children as young as 10](#).¹¹⁸

The repression has escalated sharply since October 2023. In June 2025, nursing student Amira Zaiter was sentenced to six months in prison (reduced on appeal from three years) and a €6,000 fine for 'glorification of terrorism' after [exposing an IDF soldier's return to Nice and posting about Gaza on social media](#).¹¹⁹ Her case constitutes the first jailing in France of a Palestine solidarity activist for social media posts. In December 2024, a French court handed activist Elias d'Imzalene a [five-month suspended sentence](#) for 'incitement to hatred' after referencing *Intifada* (*trans.* Uprising) at a protest.¹²⁰

These speech restrictions operate in tandem with sweeping administrative powers under [Articles L212-1 to L212-2 of the Internal Security Code](#),¹²¹ which allow the Council of Ministers to dissolve any association by simple decree for allegedly provoking discrimination or hatred (Art. L212-1 (6)); engaging in actions 'likely to provoke terrorism' domestically or abroad (Art. L212-1(7)), or any of five other vague criteria ranging from inciting 'violent acts' to threatening 'republican legality'. The Minister of Interior initiates dissolution by ministerial decree (*arrêté ministériel*), after which the organisation is notified and has a short period of time to submit written observations. The decree must then be approved by the Council of Ministers and published in the *Journal Officiel*.

These dissolution powers allow the government to target groups and organisations through administrative measures rather than criminal proceedings, bypassing standard evidentiary requirements and due process protections. However, dissolved organisations retain some legal recourse. They have the right to administrative appeal before France's highest administrative court, the Council of State (*Conseil d'État*), which can annul dissolution decrees deemed disproportionate or insufficiently evidenced, and potentially enabling damages claims. Additionally, they may file two distinct types of urgent interim appeals: standard summary procedures (*référé*) and a [special fast-track option \(*référé-liberté*\)](#) available specifically when fundamental rights violations are alleged.¹²² While this layered appeals process provides important procedural safeguards, its effectiveness in countering politically motivated dissolutions remains questionable in practice.

Experts, including Amnesty International, [warn](#) that the French dissolution law 'is not consistent with international human rights law. It allows for dissolution on the basis of vague grounds, such as “incitement to hatred”, “incitement to armed demonstrations” or “apology for terrorism”, without prior judicial review’.¹²³

The vague language of these provisions has been particularly used against Palestine solidarity groups, with French authorities routinely conflating criticism of Israel with anti-Jewish racism. This trend risks escalating further with new legislative efforts to explicitly criminalise discourse against the Israeli state and France’s complicity with its architecture of colonisation. In October 2023, 16 senators introduced a [proposal](#)¹²⁴ to amend the criminal code to extend sanctions against anti-Jewish racism to include [‘denial of, insult towards, or incitement to hatred and violence against the State of Israel’](#).¹²⁵ Such proposals are an attempt at granting the Israeli state unique legal protection from scrutiny under French Law and obscuring [France’s complicity in genocide](#).¹²⁶

Prominent Examples of Proscription

Targeting Urgence Palestine

On 28 April 2025, the French Minister of the Interior, Bruno Retailleau, initiated proceedings to dissolve *Urgence Palestine* – a collective established in October 2023, [‘mobilized for the self-determination of the Palestinian people’](#).¹²⁷ Retailleau claimed it was necessary to [‘strike the Islamists’](#)¹²⁸ and the Ministry accused Urgence Palestine of [‘advocating a terrorist organisation like Hamas, \[...\] calling for an intifada on national territory and \[...\] provoking hatred, violence or discrimination against Jews’](#).¹²⁹ Amnesty International warned that [‘the dissolution of \[...\] \[Urgence Palestine\] could have a deterrent effect on all individuals and organizations engaged in solidarity actions with the Palestinian people and the fight against racism and discrimination in France’](#).¹³⁰

Collectif Palestine Vaincra

On 9 March 2022, then-Minister of Interior Gérald Darmanin announced the dissolution of two Palestine solidarity groups: *Collectif Palestine Vaincra* (CPV) – an anti-Zionist organisation campaigning for a one-state solution in Palestine – and *Comité Action Palestine* – [‘an association that works for the realization of the national rights of the Palestinian people and in particular the right to self-determination and the right of return of refugees’](#).¹³¹ In an emergency ruling on 29 April 2022, the Council of State granted interim relief to suspend both dissolution orders while the full appeal against the ban proceeds. In its ruling, the court found the dissolution decree [‘neither necessary nor appropriate and disproportionately infringes on freedom of expression and freedom of association’](#), and that

these groups neither provoke nor contribute ‘to discrimination, to hatred or violence, that [...] positions on Israel and Zionism are not anti-Semitic, [...] that the campaign of boycotting Israeli products is a legitimate way of expressing protesting opinions’.¹³²

However, in February 2025, the Council of State rejected CPV’s request to annul the dissolution decree and upheld the legality of the dissolution in the substantive proceedings.¹³³ The court argued that while CPV’s positions ‘cannot, in this case, be regarded as actions intended to provoke acts of terrorism’, ‘the radical and unequivocal messages it disseminates give rise to the posting, on its social media accounts, of particularly aggressive and hateful comments targeting, under the guise of targeting “Zionists”, all Israeli citizens of the Jewish faith, and sometimes with explicitly anti-Semitic connotations. Such comments must be regarded as incitement to discrimination, hatred or violence within the meaning of the provisions of Article L. 212-1, paragraph 6 of the Internal Security Code’.¹³⁴

The judicial reversal of CPV’s dissolution exemplifies the elastic nature of ‘terrorism’ in France’s legal system, where the same court first recognised Palestine solidarity as protected speech, then later reinterpreted it as grounds for dissolution. This mirrors the UK’s proscription of Hizb ut-Tahrir in 2024: like CPV, the group had twice survived prior ban attempts (in 2005 and 2011) after official reviews found no terrorism links and warned of free speech threats, only to be outlawed when its opposition to the Israeli genocide in Palestine became politically inconvenient. Such cases reveal how ‘anti-terror’ laws operate not as consistent legal standards, but as political tools that ensure Israeli impunity while punishing Palestine solidarity as ‘extremism’ for daring to demand justice.

Impact

The French government’s escalating use of administrative dissolution powers has created a climate of systematic repression for Palestine solidarity activists and allied social movements. The impending dissolution of *Urgence Palestine*, following the ban on *Collectif Palestine Vaincra*, illustrates how these measures can paralyse political organising. On 21 May 2025, the French government froze the assets of an Urgence Palestine spokesperson¹³⁵ – an extraordinary measure taken despite no dissolution decree being issued, and with no criminal proceedings or convictions against the targeted individual. But even before the decision to ban the organisation, the French government has ‘repeatedly resorted to a range of authoritarian measures to silence and dismantle the pro-Palestinian movement. These have included police raids, house arrests, arbitrary detentions, deportations from France, and politicised trials against activists’ since October 2023.¹³⁶

This repression extends far beyond Palestine solidarity. Under Macron, dissolutions have surged to unprecedented levels,¹³⁷ targeting Muslim civil society groups like the Collective

Against Islamophobia in France (CCIF), which was banned for allegedly ‘inciting rebellion’ against police racism, as well as [anti-fascist collectives](#) and anti-capitalist organisations.¹³⁸

If the dissolution of *Urgence Palestine* becomes final and an appeal is rejected, the French state will gain sweeping powers to surveil homes, phones, and individuals, restrict certain people from speaking to one another, and even impose travel bans. Moreover, anyone deemed to be ‘reconstituting’ a dissolved collective could face up to three years in prison and a €45,000 fine.

When asset freezes precede trials and dissolution decrees override judicial review, France’s ‘state of emergency’ tactics become permanent governance. The targeting of *Urgence Palestine*, like CCIF and CPV before it, shows us, yet again, that ‘anti-terror’ laws function as a regime of political vetting, where specifically Muslim and Palestine solidarity activism is presumptively treated as criminal contagion.

Conclusion

As the evidence above demonstrates, the proscription of Palestine solidarity groups across Europe is not random but systematic. The bans on Palestine Action in the UK, *Samidoun* in Germany, and the pending ban on *Urgence Palestine* in France lay bare a deliberate strategy to criminalise Palestine solidarity while obscuring state complicity in the Israeli genocide against Palestinians and the broader project of ethno-nationalism and settler-colonialism in Palestine. These measures are only one part of a vast imperial apparatus that relies on branding anti-colonial resistance as ‘terrorism’, twisting legal frameworks to suppress movements that challenge Western hegemony and imperial interests. Far from a break with the past, this repression echoes colonial tactics of emergency rule, where vague ‘counterterrorism’ laws suspend rights, enforce racialised double standards, and sanitise state violence under the guise of ‘security’.

This crackdown reaches far beyond prohibiting the activities of specific organisations; it strikes at the heart of solidarity itself, and with it, the very possibility of liberating Palestine. European states have targeted slogans, symbols, and even humanitarian advocacy to continue to enforce a racialised, imperial order, systematically dismantling networks of resistance that expose their complicity in genocide. Despite the different contexts, the UK’s Terrorism Act, Germany’s Associations Act, and France’s dissolution decrees share the common logic of insulating state violence from accountability while rendering Palestinian resistance and its allies as existential threats. This repression is the unmasked ‘logical violence of the carceral state’.

While this report highlights the ELSC’s focus countries where repression is most severe, the wave of proscriptions is metastasising across Europe. In Belgium, Palestine solidarity

repression is accelerating, with the federal government approving a July 2025 draft law to ban [‘radical organisations’](#),¹³⁹ explicitly naming *Samidoun* as its primary target. The law’s administrative ban mechanism, lifted straight from the French and German playbook, allows the state to outlaw groups by executive decree, bypassing judicial scrutiny. Prime Minister Bart De Wever and Interior Minister Bernard Quintin cynically accuse *Samidoun* of ‘glorifying terrorism’, even as the group remains the sole named target in the draft law. The repression is anything but theoretical; in April 2025, Belgian police arrested *Samidoun*’s European coordinator at a Palestine solidarity protest, and by early July 2025, the state announced that *Samidoun* will be added to the Coordination Unit for Threat Analysis database, signalling the state’s intent to criminalise *Samidoun* under the guise of countering extremism.

Meanwhile, Italy is rapidly expanding its legal arsenal to criminalise Palestine solidarity under the guise of ‘counterterrorism’. In a telling April 2025 power grab, the Italian government [abruptly adopted a security decree](#)¹⁴⁰ – spearheaded by the Ministries of Interior, Justice, and Defence – lacing the penal code with sweeping [provisions](#) and deliberately vague definitions of ‘terrorism’.¹⁴¹ Italy has already been weaponising [apologia di terrorismo](#)¹⁴² and *crimine di odio* (hate crime) to hunt down [social media posts](#) and smear Palestine solidarity protests as extremist.¹⁴³ The pattern repeats in Austria, where the government’s bid to ban [Dar al-Janub/the Association for Anti-Racist and Peace Initiatives](#),¹⁴⁴ which is, among other things, a Palestine solidarity organisation, leans entirely on Islamophobic surveillance by its state funded [Documentation Center for Political Islam](#)¹⁴⁵ – a counterinsurgency database passing itself off as research. What emerges, then, is not coincidence but blueprint, where ‘anti-terror’ measures serve as racialised general warrants, cynically exploiting the rhetoric of ‘democratic order’ to resurrect colonial violence through court orders and police batons.

What is to be done?

The bans are not about security; they are about enforcing silence. European states have sabotaged international legal obligations to prevent genocide and, in the process, have transformed complicity into policy. But law alone cannot dismantle this system; collective resistance can. This report aims to expose the systematic nature of this repression – documenting its warning signs, from smear campaigns to legislative overreach – so that solidarity networks can anticipate, resist, and disrupt its escalation. By mapping these tactics, we hope to seed strategies to strengthen transnational solidarity, be that legal advocacy challenging proscription laws in European courts or grassroots coordination protecting banned groups.

The fight against proscription is a fight against imperialism itself, demanding solidarity transcends borders and rejects the criminalisation of justice. This report does not seek to

alarm, but to illuminate. At the ELSC, we document repression not as a deterrent, but as a call to collective action. This means sharing resources to circumvent bans, filing joint submissions to international bodies, and synchronising protests to amplify pressure. The escalating crackdown on Palestine solidarity across Europe is not inevitable; it is a challenge to be met with unity. The use of ‘anti-terror’ measures and other mechanisms of repression show us the fragility of power; how fiercely it clings to silence, and how easily it unravels when confronted by organised resistance. The bans, raids, and prosecutions detailed here are not signs of the movement’s weakness, but of its growing strength.

To those reading: You are not alone. This repression targets all of us because solidarity, by its nature, cannot be proscribed.

[Report an incident of repression here.](#)

Useful Resources

- Find sanctions targets and persons of interest: <https://www.opensanctions.org/>.
- Know your rights flyer on house raids (in German): [flyer hausdurchsuchung 2021](#)
- KOP (campaign supporting victims of racist police violence, including toolkits and know your rights documents): <https://kop-berlin.de/>.
- Tools for requesting personal information from German domestic intelligence agencies: <https://www.datenschmutz.de/cgi-bin/auskunft> and <https://wirbeobachtenzurueck.de/>.
- **European Legal Support Center (ELSC).** (2024). *The Defunding of Palestinian Organizations and Their Allies: A Tactic to Suppress Palestinian Voices and Shield Israel from Accountability (FAQ)*. Available at <https://elsc.support/resources/the-defunding-of-palestinian-organisations-and-their-allies-a-tactic-to-suppress-palestinian-voices-and-shield-israel-from-accountability-faq>.
- **United Nations Human Rights Council.** (2023). *Report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and Israel*, A/HRC/53/22, 9 May 2023. Available at <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/4012713>.

¹ Al Jazeera. ‘Palestinian Boy Killed in Gaza Aid Drop as Starvation Toll Rises to 217’. 10 August 2025. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2025/8/9/israeli-forces-kill-aid-seekers-as-gaza-starvation-death-toll-rises>.

² Gaza: UN Aid Teams Reject Israel’s ‘Deliberate Attempt to Weaponize Aid’. United Nations, 2025. <https://news.un.org/en/story/2025/05/1162946>.

³ Gritten, David. ‘Gazans “wasting Away” as Mass Starvation Spreads, Humanitarian Groups Warn’. Middle East. *BBC News* (Jerusalem), 23 July 2025. <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/ce9xkx7vnmxo>.

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- ⁵ Graham-Harrison, Emma. ‘Israeli Plan for Forced Transfer of Gaza’s Population “a Blueprint for Crimes against Humanity”’. World News. *The Guardian* (Jerusalem), 7 July 2025. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2025/jul/07/israeli-minister-reveals-plan-to-force-population-of-gaza-into-camp-on-ruins-of-rafah>.
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- ⁷ Foley, Stephen. ‘BCG Modelled Plan to “Relocate” Palestinians from Gaza’. World. *Financial Times* (New York), 4 July 2025. <https://www.ft.com/content/c0e661cc-55db-4e2a-b17b-a656e0cf6c14>.
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- ¹⁵ The Ministry for Diaspora Affairs and Combating Antisemitism. ‘Weekly Restricted Report: Anti-Israel Protest Forecast, July 31-August 7’. 3 August 2025. https://www.gov.il/en/pages/weekly_restricted_report_anti_israel_protest_forecast_2025-07-31_to_2025-08-07.
- ¹⁶ Recently, however, the Netherlands included Israel for the first time on its list of foreign states that pose a threat to the country after that same ministry circulated a document – through unofficial channels – to Dutch journalists and politicians. The document contained ‘unusual and unwanted personal details about Dutch citizens’. See Asiran, Abdullah. ‘Netherlands Lists Israel among Countries Posing Threat to It for 1st Time’. Europe. *Anadolu Agency* (Rotterdam), 24 July 2025. <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/europe/netherlands-lists-israel-among-countries-posing-threat-to-it-for-1st-time/3640341>.

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