



ELSC

European Legal Support Center

On All Fronts: The Multi-Sited Repression of Palestine Solidarity in Britain

Acknowledgements

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My freedom is to be what they don't want me to be.

- Mahmoud Darwish

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Executive Summary

Since the onset of the Israeli genocide against Palestinians in Gaza, the repression of Palestine solidarity has escalated dramatically worldwide – and Britain is no exception. As expressions of solidarity have proliferated, so too has the intensity of the crackdown and the diversity of actors enforcing and enabling it. This repression draws its force from Britain's deeper structures of violence. The logic of capitalism tethering survival to wage labour, border regimes making residency conditional on political silence, and entrenched racial and class hierarchies all precondition who is targeted and how. Consequently, students, precarious workers, migrants, and racialised communities – already marginalised by these systems – face the brunt of the repression. To repress Palestine solidarity is, therefore, to reassert the structural power that these systems exist to protect.

To document and analyse the full scale and coordinated mechanics of this crackdown, the report provides the analytical context for Britain's *Index of Repression*, a database documenting the systematic, multi-sited campaign to repress Palestine solidarity across the country. Our analysis of **964** verified incidents between January 2019 and August 2025 confirms that this repression is executed by a coordinated network of state, institutional, and non-state actors. These incidents, it is critical to note, represent the tip of the iceberg. They are a monitorable sample that reveals a far wider and deeper structural mechanism of repression. This mechanism aims to depoliticise the Palestine solidarity movement by systematically dismantling its organisational capacity, a key stage in the larger project of erasing Palestinian history, presence, and the facts of their oppression from public consciousness and institutional memory.

The entire architecture of this repression is built upon an interpretive framework defined by two allegations: antisemitism and support for terrorism. The efficacy of these allegations as tools of repression stems from long-standing political projects rooted in imperial logic, which we briefly trace in this report. But more than justifying the crackdown, this framework functions as the decisive lens through which solidarity is perceived and processed by the state and its allies. By filtering political and ethical dissent through the categories of 'racial hatred' and 'security threat', the substantive claims of liberation politics at the heart of the Palestinian cause are actively redefined and rendered vacuous.

In practice, this framework enables repression through a sequence of escalating measures. First, the allegations are deployed to distort public discourse. This phase – documented in nearly **one-third** of all incidents in the database – involves a campaign of smearing, disinformation, and censorship by media outlets and Zionist advocacy and lawfare groups. Second, the allegations are taken up by institutions and translated into formal procedures, where individuals and groups become targets of legal threats (**136** incidents), and investigations and professional sanctions (**114** incidents). Schools, hospitals, universities, and cultural venues – among many others – invoke counterterrorism frameworks, equality laws, and conduct policies to act as enforcers, thus validating the original interpretive framework. Finally, the allegations justify more material and permanent forms of repression. With the target now formally 'labelled', the various actors involved move to arrests, job terminations, visa cancellations, and financial blacklisting (**221** incidents).

This system, while far-reaching, concentrates deliberately on sectors fundamental to shaping public discourse and holding public trust. The repression strategically targets the core pillars of the solidarity movement: its intellectual foundation, its public organisers, and its trusted public voices. Students, academics, and teachers (**336** incidents) appear most frequently as targets of repression. They face a two-pronged attack: first, a campaign of smearing and censorship, often led by their own institutions in concert with media outlets; and second, direct institutional sanctions, such as suspensions and investigations, frequently triggered by Zionist advocacy and lawfare groups.

Activists and organisers (**229** incidents) face the most direct state coercion. The primary tools used against them are arrests and police intervention, alongside intense regimes of surveillance and harassment, aimed at physically disrupting public organising and instilling fear. Healthcare and other public sector workers (**85** incidents) are pressured through workplace disciplinary procedures and legal threats. Artists and cultural workers (**71** incidents), meanwhile, are targeted through event cancellations and smearing, aimed at controlling public narrative and symbolic expression. This strategic targeting across sectors represents a kind of division of repressive labour. It aims to dismantle solidarity at every stage, from the formation of political consciousness in universities, to its expression in culture, to its organisation in public spaces. While these groups face the most direct and systematic harm, the repression silences and intimidates a far wider public.

To enforce this repression, the state and its allies rely on two primary enabling tools. The Terrorism Act 2000 permanently codifies emergency powers to criminalise political affiliation and expressions of solidarity with Palestine, especially through proscription (e.g., of Hamas and Palestine Action). The International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) working definition of antisemitism provides the quasi-legal grammar for suppressing anti-colonial and anti-Zionist critiques by redefining them as anti-Jewish racism.

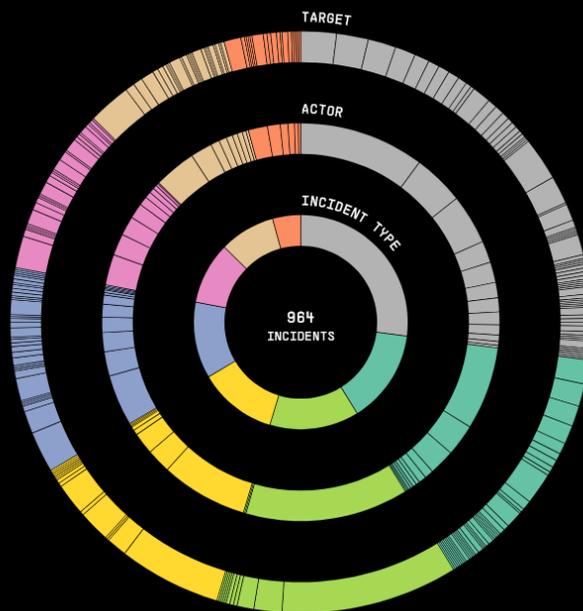
This campaign of repression is both a reflection of and a catalyst for a severe democratic crisis. The repression is so severe precisely because the Palestine solidarity movement's moral authority and power to build broad coalitions represent a fundamental threat to Britain's sponsorship of and complicity in genocide. This securitisation of the Palestine solidarity movement is a desperate attempt to protect a status quo that must be urgently and fundamentally dismantled.

Despite the severity and ubiquity of the repression, resistance persists and adapts. While the repeated performance of repression seeks to naturalise it, make it seem inevitable, this repetition also contains an inherent instability. The very need to constantly re-enforce these norms opens spaces for subversion, misfiring, and recontextualisation. The report highlights key successes where the movement has pushed back, reclaiming political space and demonstrating that this architecture can be contested, subverted, and, at times, defeated. It then translates these insights into actionable recommendations for the movement and its allies, offering them in the spirit of turning documentation into strategy.

This database and the analysis it anchors are offered as tools for solidarity, a call to see the connections, and a testament to a movement that, despite everything, persists. It is an act of telling our own stories of repression and solidarity against the forces of erasure – a systematic form of testimony that insists on being seen and heard. As the late Palestinian writer Refaat Alareer reminds us, 'telling stories is an act of life, [...] telling stories is resistance, [...] telling stories shapes our memories'. This report is offered in that spirit of steadfast and strategic struggle.

February 2026

PROPORTIONS MAP



- arrests/law enforcement intervention
- censorship/disinformation/smearing
- demonstration bans/cancelled events/refusal of service
- harassment/violence/doxing/surveillance
- legal/financial/professional repercussions
- sanctions at schools/universities/workplaces
- threats of legal action
- threats to employment/funding

Introduction

From Rafah in the south to Ra'as Al Naquora in the north, Palestine has a shoreline of about 224 km.

Crossing Borders: A Festival of Plates¹

In 2012, Shorouk, a Palestinian teenager, stood before her classmates at the Beit Lahiya Girls School in Gaza, facing a visiting delegation from the Chelsea Community Hospital School in London. With a camera pointed at her, she presented a small purse adorned with traditional Palestinian embroidery, speaking in carefully practiced English.² The room was filled with giggles and the eager, broken English of girls seizing a rare chance to speak with native speakers, who were responding in equally halting Arabic.

Three years earlier, in 2009, this UN-run school was targeted by the Israeli military, which fired white phosphorus shells at the 1,600 displaced people sheltering inside its walls. The attack killed two young brothers, injured their mother, and set a classroom ablaze.³ That same month, Israeli fire struck the Jabalia Preparatory Boys School, killing over 30 people.⁴ Within three years, both schools were rebuilt and holding classes. It was from these sites of recovery, and from connections forged during visits like the one Shorouk took part in, that artwork displayed in London's Chelsea and Westminster Hospital originated.

¹ 'Crossing Borders – A Festival of Plates', Chelsea Community Hospital School, London, accessed 16 February 2026, <https://cchs.org.uk/schoolnews/crossing-borders-a-festival-of-plates>.

² Chelsea Community Hospital School - Visit to Gaza, Gaza, Palestine, 2012, accessed November 20, 2025, <https://old.cchs.org.uk/international-projects/gaza/1066-visit-to-gaza>. This page now requires institutional login and is no longer publicly accessible.

³ Marc Garlasco et al., *Rain of Fire: Israel's Unlawful Use of White Phosphorus in Gaza* (Human Rights Watch, 2009), 4, <https://www.hrw.org/report/2009/03/25/rain-fire/israels-unlawful-use-white-phosphorus-gaza>.

⁴ Today, virtually every school and university in Gaza has been damaged or destroyed during the ongoing Israeli genocide in Palestine. If you want to learn more about scholasticide in Gaza, see Nicola Pratt, 'Scholasticide in Gaza: Settler Colonial Elimination, Genocide, and the Crisis of Academic Responsibility', *E-International Relations*, 25 November 2025, <https://www.e-ir.info/2025/11/25/scholasticide-in-gaza-settler-colonial-elimination-genocide-and-the-crisis-of-academic-responsibility/>.

First displayed in 2012, the artwork was based on designs by children from the Beit Lahiya Preparatory Girls School and the Jabalia Preparatory Boys School. The exhibit, 'Crossing Borders', translated the visions of these Palestinian children onto ceramic plates, and for over a decade, photographs of these plates, accompanied by text in Arabic and English, hung at the entrance to the children's outpatient department. This display would, however, eventually find itself at the centre of a contestation emblematic of a wider system of repression targeting Palestine solidarity in Britain.

That contestation arrived in February 2023, when UK Lawyers for Israel (UKLFI) submitted a complaint to the hospital,⁵ claiming the artwork was 'divisive and discriminatory' for including a text that noted Palestine's 224 km shoreline next to an image of a fisherman sitting on the shore. The complaint also focused on artwork depicting the Dome of the Rock – Jerusalem's most recognisable landmark – alongside a Palestinian flag and a hand holding an olive branch. The display's text read: 'Hoping to get an independent Palestinian state, he is holding an olive branch, the symbol of peace'.⁶ The group's campaign extended beyond the formal complaint. On its website, it mounted a public smear, contesting the very authenticity of the children's art by claiming the drawings 'all appear to be professional artwork, in the same style, and carried out by the same person'.⁷

For those at UKLFI, the social imaginaries and aspirations of Palestinian children are considered 'offensive for Jewish people',⁸ on the grounds that such expressions question or contradict the so-called legitimacy of the Israeli state. Faced with this allegation, the hospital, in the end, complied and removed the artwork after UKLFI's weaponisation of the hospital's anti-discrimination policies and the UK's Equality Act 2010, capitulating to a cynical distortion of anti-discrimination principles.⁹

This attack on children's art unfolds within a wider structure of state complicity that makes such erasure possible – indeed, necessary. Over the past two years, as the Israeli genocide in Palestine – accelerated by an imposed famine – reached a catastrophic scale, successive UK governments continued to arm Israel. British arms exports to Israel reached record highs in both June and September 2025. More than 300 arms export licences remain active, with the current government exempting F-35 components, used in the bombing of Gaza, from its partial, largely symbolic suspensions.¹⁰ Simultaneously, the Foreign Office formally assessed Wand concluded that Israel is not committing genocide.¹¹

5 This incident is recorded in Britain's *Index of Repression* as: NC-3864-Y1L1.

6 Chelsea Community Hospital School, 'Crossing Borders – A Festival of Plates'.

7 'Hospital Displays Divisive and Discriminatory Artwork', UK Lawyers for Israel, UK Lawyers for Israel (UKLFI), 9 February 2023, <https://www.uklfi.com/hospital-displays-divisive-and-discriminatory-childrens-artwork>.

8 UK Lawyers for Israel (UKLFI), 'Hospital Displays Divisive and Discriminatory Artwork'.

9 This incident is recorded in Britain's *Index of Repression* as: INC-1250-T1Y3.

10 Brian O'Flynn, 'FactCheck: UK Arms Received by Israel Reach Record High Value in 2025', Channel 4 News, 6 October 2025, <https://www.channel4.com/news/factcheck/factcheck-uk-arms-received-by-israel-reach-record-high-value-in-2025>.

11 Patrick Wintour and Geneva Abdul, 'UK Has "Not Concluded" Israel Carrying out Genocide in Gaza, Lammy Says', The Guardian, 9 September 2025, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2025/sep/09/uk-not-concluded-israel-commit->

It is within this permissive architecture that organisations like UKLFI operate. In May 2025, as famine consumed Gaza, UKLFI's Chief Executive, Jonathan Turner, sought to discredit *The Lancet's* projection of 186,000 deaths in Gaza as implausible.¹² In a callous dismissal of mass starvation, Turner suggested the analysis ignored potential mitigating factors, such as a 'reduction in obesity';¹³ perversely implying that mass starvation could yield public health benefits. UKLFI's denial of genocide is not an independent claim but a reiteration of the British state's own position. The state's material and diplomatic support for Zionism has normalised a framework in which Palestinian death is minimised and the fact of genocide is contested, even as we see it unfolding before our eyes.

This same framework enables the diffuse, everyday repression documented throughout this report. It is what makes possible the removal of Palestinian children's artwork from a hospital wall – a single thread in a dense fabric of institutional and discursive repression through which Palestinian history, presence, and aspiration are rendered administratively illegible and discursively unspeakable. The strategy of UKLFI – and the many other actors of repression identified in this report – thus targets Palestinian temporal existence: their present, past, and future. Its aim is not only to erase Palestinians' lives and historical expression, but to obliterate the very evidence of their deaths. This denial creates the discursive cover under which more direct acts of repression can proceed unchallenged, and under which British-made bombs continue to fall on Palestinians.

It is against this backdrop of state complicity, institutional capitulation, and organised denial that we have built the *Index of Repression* – a database designed to make this diffuse and systematic repression in Britain visible, verifiable, and actionable. Drawing on the *Index* – the first publicly accessible resource of its kind, originally launched in Germany in 2025 – we document the full scope of anti-Palestinian repression across Britain. Throughout this report and across the database, we identify numerous such absurdities as the story outlined above.

We argue that anti-Palestinian repression is a structural mechanism whose immediate function is to depoliticise the Palestine solidarity movement by systematically dismantling its organisational capacity. This depoliticisation, however, is not the final goal but a necessary stage in the larger political project of erasing Palestinian history, presence, and the very facts of their oppression from public consciousness and institutional memory.

Our data expose the sheer scope of this pattern and the specific mechanisms through which it operates: legal threats, disciplinary proceedings, arrests, smear campaigns, and more. It is

[ting-genocide-in-gaza-lammy-says](#).

¹² Rasha Khatib et al., 'Counting the Dead in Gaza: Difficult but Essential', *The Lancet* 404, no. 10449 (2024): 237–38, [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736\(24\)01169-3](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(24)01169-3).

¹³ The remarks were made in response to a motion scheduled for debate at the Co-operative Group's annual general meeting, which called on the retailer to cease selling Israeli produce: 'Co Op Motion to Boycott Israeli Goods Does Not Comply with Co-Op Rules', UK Lawyers for Israel, 3 May 2025, <https://www.uklfi.com/co-op-motion-to-boycott-israeli-goods-does-not-comply-with-co-op-rules>.

this pattern, and the mechanisms that sustain it, that the report sets out in detail. In **Part I**, we outline our methodology and reflect on how we have categorised and presented the data. We then present the database's main findings, tracing how repression unfolds in stages across education, culture, media, and other sectors. Through this analysis, we reveal how a network of state, institutional, and non-state actors operates in a coordinated, though often decentralised, system to target individuals, organisations, and groups standing with and organising for Palestinian liberation.

What unites this otherwise diffuse network – and what our data reveal as the single most consistent feature across every stage and sector – is a shared discursive architecture. Attacks on the Palestine solidarity movement rely overwhelmingly on two primary allegations: antisemitism and support for terrorism.¹⁴ These false allegations function as a governing discourse, constructing a framework within which solidarity is immediately rendered suspect and punishable. They force the movement into a perpetual defensive posture that consumes its resources, fractures its organisational capacity, and obscures its goals.

Despite their obvious distortions, these allegations are powerful discursive and legal tools that have consistently been deployed to target expressions of Palestine solidarity. In **Part II**, we deconstruct these allegations by exposing their historical foundations and analysing the legal and quasi-legal frameworks that lend them institutional force. We show how Britain's bureaucratisation of repression is operationalised through these frameworks. More than instruments of punishment, they are instruments of political production: they generate the very categories of transgression that legitimise excluding the accused from the moral and juridical protections of liberal society. In doing so, they reinforce the myth of a humane, neutral, and rational state while rendering political dissent – and the Palestinian reality it affirms – administratively and socially illegible.

Yet this architecture is neither seamless nor unassailable. **Part III** highlights key successes where the movement has pushed back against repression, reclaiming political space and demonstrating that the architecture of repression can be contested, subverted, and, at times, defeated. **Part IV** then translates these insights into actionable recommendations for the movement and its allies, offering them in the spirit of turning documentation into strategy.

This database and the analysis it anchors are offered as tools for solidarity – a call to see the connections that remain invisible, and a testament to a movement that, despite everything, persists. Together, they constitute an act of telling our own stories of repression and solidarity against the forces of erasure: a systematic form of testimony that, like Shorouk's presenta-

¹⁴ We have observed this trend not only in Britain but also in the Netherlands, see 'The Attempt to Chill Palestinian Rights Advocacy in the Netherlands', The European Legal Support Center (ELSC), accessed 16 February 2026, <https://elsc.support/resource/the-attempt-to-chill-palestinian-rights-advocacy-in-the-netherlands/>.

tion of her embroidered purse, insists on being seen and heard. As the late Palestinian writer Refaat Alareer reminds us, 'telling stories is an act of life, [...] telling stories is resistance, [...] telling stories shapes our memories'¹⁵ This report is offered in that spirit of steadfast and strategic struggle.

¹⁵ Refaat Alareer, *If I Must Die: Poetry and Prose* (OR Books, 2024).

PART I

Methodology and Manifestations: Documenting Anti-Palestinian Repression

Methodology

Across Europe, a concerted effort targets anyone who speaks out against the continent's complicity in the Israeli settler colonial project. Palestinian civil society organisations, NGOs, academics, journalists, students, artists, activists, and politicians who criticise Zionism have all faced silencing and punishment – a reality painfully familiar to those living under its weight. Yet those who name these patterns are routinely dismissed, their evidence treated as anecdotal, their accounts of a coordinated system reduced to complaints about isolated incidents. An authoritative resource was therefore needed: one capable of evidencing the widespread institutionalisation of repression and the shrinking space for civil society to speak and act against colonialism, genocide, and ethnonationalism. Such a resource would track incidents of repression – their numbers, patterns, mechanisms, targets, and actors – across different sectors of society. The methodology for the *Index of Repression* was designed to identify these trends while providing reliable and verifiable data capable of answering five core areas of inquiry:

1. The main actors responsible for repression and the primary targets;
2. The mechanisms used to repress Palestine solidarity, and how different mechanisms and actors interact;
3. The restrictive legislation and regulatory policies deployed to carry out repression;
4. The disinformation tactics employed within these processes; and
5. The unfounded allegations deployed to stigmatise and criminalise expressions of solidarity.

Research Approach

Our methodology is designed to capture the structured, multi-sited nature of Palestine solidarity repression. In addition to the data held in the ELSC *Index of Repression*, our analysis is informed by extensive desk research, direct engagement with communities and movements experiencing repression, and confidential interviews with affected individuals. As a movement lawyering centre, our research is rooted in and directed by the needs and experiences of the Palestine solidarity movement.

Grounded in this approach, our analysis conceptualises anti-Palestinian repression as a structured phenomenon rooted in the defence of imperialist interests. It coordinates administrative, legal, political, and discursive tactics to systematically delegitimise and fragment the movement. This repression is justified through the deployment of false allegations of antisemitism and support for terrorism, framing solidarity as an existential threat and enabling a spectrum of punitive measures – from censorship and disinformation campaigns to disciplinary action, legal harassment, and arrest. These measures are designed to silence, punish, exclude, and discredit Palestinians and their allies. Underpinning all of this is the weaponisation of legal and quasi-legal frameworks, exploiting asymmetric state and institutional power to actively dismantle the organisational capacity of the Palestine solidarity movement.

We gather and provide this evidence not to appeal to inherently compromised systems, but to indict them – laying bare how law, institutions, and bureaucracy are weaponised against solidarity. Yet this documentation also serves a practical purpose: as a tool for legal and advocacy interventions, helping to chip away at these systems and create space for accountability.

Data Collection and Verification

We collect incidents from four primary sources:

1. **A public report form** for individuals and organisations to submit incidents;
2. **Continuous monitoring** of mainstream and social media;
3. **Fieldwork and direct engagement** at events and protests;
4. **Private communications** with affected groups and individuals.

Each incident undergoes a rigorous verification process. We cross-check details against multiple sources – including testimonies, official documents, and independent reports – and only include cases that meet strict acceptance criteria: they must be relevant to expressions of solidarity with Palestine, factually corroborated, and traceable to credible sources. We exclude incidents that lack verifiable evidence or fall outside our definition of repression.

Ethical Considerations

We prioritise consent, anonymity, and safety: data are only published publicly when incidents are already in the public domain or with explicit consent. Those who report incidents may withdraw their submission at any time.

Categorisation and Analysis

Verified incidents are categorised using a **controlled vocabulary** to ensure consistency. We classify:

- Incident category (e.g., censorship/disinformation/smearing, legal/financial/professional repercussions);
- Actors responsible (e.g., state institution, Zionist advocacy or lawfare group);
- Targets (e.g., activist(s) or activist group, academics/writers/teachers);
- Allegation used to justify repression (primarily antisemitism or support for terrorism).

This structured categorisation allows us to identify patterns, track the weaponisation of specific allegations, and expose the systemic coordination behind seemingly isolated attacks. Full definitions for each incident category are publicly available on the 'Methodology' tab of the *Index of Repression* website and are further elaborated in the 'Typology of Repression' section of this report.¹⁶

Categorisation Decisions

Building on this framework, our categorisation process was informed by years of legal casework, documentation, and iterative review of incidents, scholarly literature, and theoretical frameworks concerning top-down (state) and bottom-up (societal) structures of repression targeting Palestine solidarity. We classified data into thematic categories to facilitate pattern recognition across sectors and enable robust identification of systematic tendencies.

Where appropriate, we group different types of repression into a single category after carefully assessing the similarity of their **effect on the lived experience** of those targeted. For example:

¹⁶ European Legal Support Center (ELSC), 'Index of Repression: A Database on the Systematic Repression of Palestinian Solidarity in Germany & Britain', Index of Repression, European Legal Support Center (ELSC) and Forensic Architecture (FA), <https://index-of-repression.org/>.

- The category **harassment/violence/doxing/surveillance** combines diverse means – from police violence to anonymous threats – because they are all decentralised acts of intimidation that lead to the internalisation of surveillance.
- The category **threats to employment or funding** groups threats to an individual's job with threats to an organisation's project funding, as both are attacks on material security.

Incidents are separated according to the **mechanism of repression**, not by actor or target. For example, if an incident involves multiple people being arrested during a demonstration, the database records it as **one incident** of arrest/law enforcement intervention, rather than recording each arrest individually. Separate repressive acts within the same event – such as kettling alongside arrests – are recorded as distinct incidents. This method avoids inflating incident counts while capturing the full range of mechanisms deployed.

Target Categorisation

A person is not reducible to a single category. Our classification of targets depends on both the **incident type** and the **actor**. For example, we categorise protesters as **activists**, even if individuals do not identify as such. This decision is informed by three considerations:

1. It acknowledges that protest is a vital part of organising and aims to encourage further engagement with grassroots groups;
2. It encourages individuals to recognise themselves as people of conscience with political responsibility and the power to participate in change;
3. In relation to the actors of repression – whether police, politicians, or media – protesters are uniformly perceived and treated as activists

We do not include the religion, ethnicity, nationality, or gender of the target or actor in incident subject lines unless it is the explicit reason for an incident of repression – for example, when an individual is denied entry to a country despite having a valid visa on the basis of holding a Palestinian passport.

Subject Lines and Description

The subject line for each recorded incident follows a **standard format and sentence order**, using a controlled vocabulary. These predefined values ensure consistency, uniformity, and reliable search and analysis.

Although 'Zionist organisation' is not a formal actor category, we refer to certain organisations as such in subject lines where they are **repeat actors** that consistently dox and smear individuals and organisations, report expressions of Palestine solidarity to police or regulators, and/or engage in Zionist advocacy and lawfare. One such actor is **UK Lawyers for Israel (UKLFI)**. While UKLFI presents itself as a voluntary association of lawyers, it operates and is perceived by its targets as a legal actor with the power to litigate. In correspondence with targets, UKLFI



invokes the Equality Act 2010, sets ultimatums for response, and positions itself as an authority on the law. Although UKLFI has no power to litigate directly, this is immaterial to how its communications function. By invoking legal frameworks, setting ultimatums for response, and invoking the authority of its legal patrons, UKLFI positions itself – and is reasonably perceived by recipients – as a legal actor with the power to inflict sanction. The absence of a disclaimer does not create the threat; the structure and language of the communication does.

Allegations

We consistently use the term '**alleging**' when describing claims of antisemitism or support for terrorism, including cases where courts have issued convictions. We maintain this language to reflect that the legal system is itself a tool of repression and that such allegations are deployed instrumentally, rather than accepted as determinations of fact.

Structural Context

These allegations, and the mechanisms that deploy them are underpinned by structural violence – the violence of capitalism and the coercive tethering of survival to wage labour, the violence of border regimes that make residency conditional on political silence, and the entrenched racial and class hierarchies that precondition who is vulnerable to sanction. While not always visible in individual incident records, this context is foundational to understanding who is targeted, how, and with what consequences. The silencing of Palestine solidarity thus functions not merely as a series of discrete punishments, but as a reassertion of structural power itself.

Limitations

As with any quantitative research project, the data we have collected – and therefore the number of incidents recorded in the database – represent only the **tip of the iceberg**. There are hundreds, if not thousands, of incidents that will never be reported to the ELSC nor receive media attention.

Underreporting and visibility bias. While our data collection includes direct reports, private communications, and fieldwork, we remain heavily reliant on publicly documented incidents. Repression that occurs informally, internally, or without media visibility is underrepresented in our dataset. This reflects the difficulty of reaching affected individuals and the absence of publicly accessible records, not the absence of incidents.

Verification exclusions. Our rigorous verification process excludes incidents that lack verifiable evidence or fall outside our definition of repression. This includes cases submitted via the public report form where we are unable to contact the submitter or collect sufficient corroborating evidence.

Scope boundaries. Unlike Zionist organisations that claim to monitor anti-Jewish racism by recording instances of Palestine solidarity as ‘antisemitism’, we do not register expressions of support for Israel as incidents of repression. Our scope is limited to anti-Palestinian repression specifically. This means that where an incident involves institutional racism (including anti-Muslim racism) but is not related to activism in solidarity with Palestine, it falls outside our criteria and is not included.

Temporal trends. The apparent density and distribution of repression during periods of heightened international attention on Palestine solidarity – such as the Unity Intifada in May 2021 or the onset of genocide in 2023 – is influenced by a confluence of factors. During these periods, both mobilisation *and* repressive activity increase, while public attention and reporting intensity also rise. Trends over time should therefore be interpreted with this visibility effect in mind; the timeline on the *Index* platform *illustrates shifts in documented* repression, not necessarily proportional changes in repressive practice itself, though the evidence strongly suggests that repression intensifies alongside mobilisation.

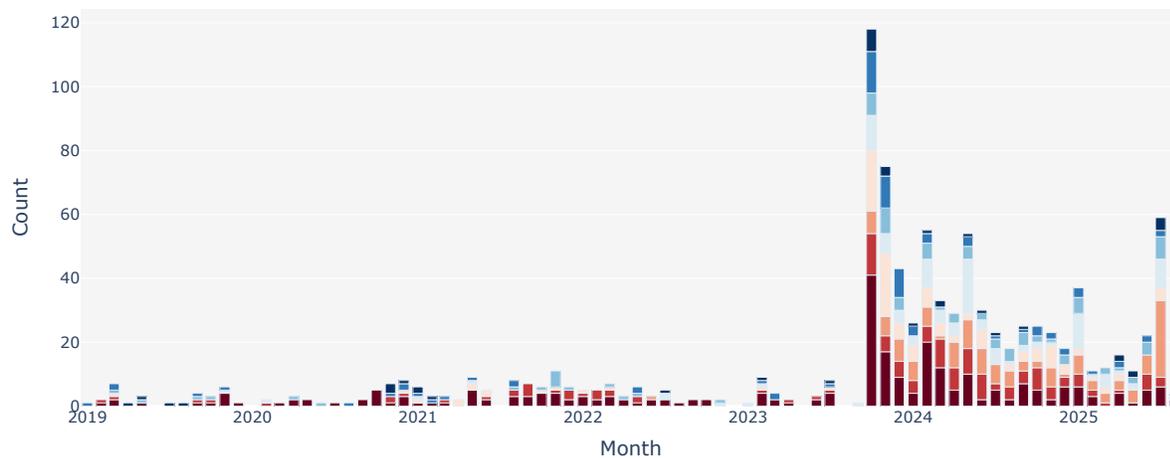
Depth vs. breadth. Our methodological focus on cross-sectoral pattern detection is effective in demonstrating systemic trends, but does not permit in-depth analysis of silencing mechanisms without supplementary case studies. Featured incidents on the *Index* platform contextualise the volume data by illustrating correlations between incidents and categories but they do not substitute for full case studies or detailed legal statements of fact.

Human factor. The database records incidents, not experiences. The subjective experience of repression – the fear, isolation, and lasting harm inflicted on individuals and communities – is not captured in the numbers. This absence is a limitation of the form, not a measure of the harm.

The methodology outlined above provides the evidential foundation and analytical lens for what follows. Applying this lens to our verified database reveals a clear, recurring architecture of repression. We now present this architecture as a formal typology, mapping the strategic stages and mechanisms through which solidarity is systematically attacked.

The Architecture of Anti-Palestinian Repression

The following typology maps the mechanisms through which Palestine solidarity is repressed in Britain. The categories presented in this section are not silos but nodes in an integrated system. The logic of repression moves through them sequentially – from discursive distortion, through bureaucratic enforcement, to material consequence – while also allowing for overlap and feedback between stages. What follows is both a conceptual map and an empirical landscape of that repression.



Incident Category

- | | |
|--|--|
| ■ Censorship/Disinformation/Smearing | ■ Harassment/Violence/Doxing/Surveillance |
| ■ Threats Of Legal Action | ■ Legal/Financial/Professional Repercussions |
| ■ Arrests/Law Enforcement Intervention | ■ Threats To Employment/Funding |
| ■ Sanctions At Schools/Universities/Workplaces | ■ Demonstration Bans/Cancelled Events/Refusal Of Service |

Censorship/disinformation/smearing (261 incidents)

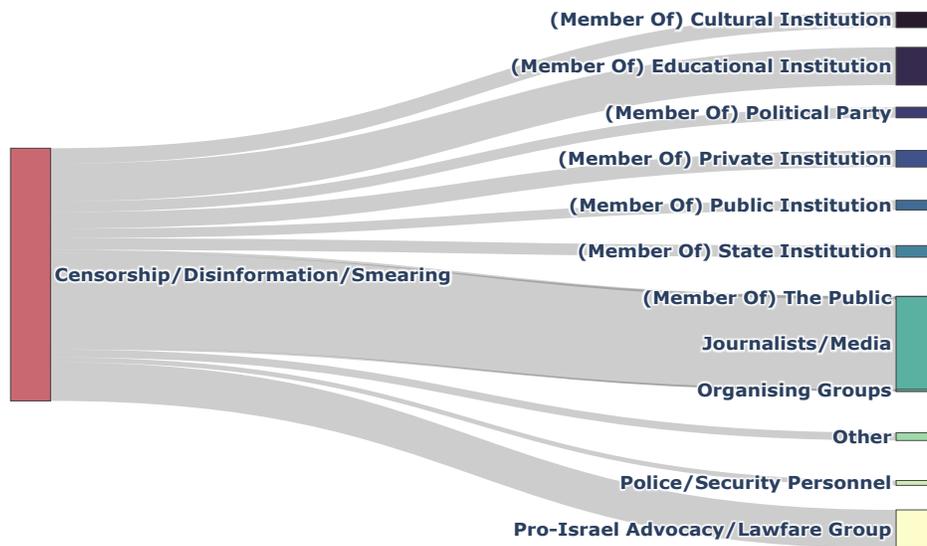
Unable to win the argument on the terrain of justice – given that the Zionist project is predicated on Palestinian dispossession, a reality irreconcilable with universal principles of freedom – Zionism operates instead by systematically distorting the historical and political narrative through a process of discursive severance. This works by disconnecting Palestine from liberation, re-signifying anti-Zionism as anti-Jewish racism, and reframing anti-colonial resistance as terrorism.¹⁷

If censorship removes expressions of solidarity and disinformation rewrites history, smearing targets the speaker rather than just the speech. By framing those who express solidarity as antisemitic, extremist, or terror-supporting, smearing contaminates the individual's character and credibility. The goal is both to silence an argument and to render the person making it a pariah – someone to be avoided, reported, or denounced. A smeared individual becomes a liability to employers, institutions, and colleagues who might otherwise stand in solidarity.

Together, these three tactics form an integrated discursive assault. Censorship removes Palestine solidarity from view; disinformation deprives it of historical grounding; smearing ensures that even when it appears, it comes already discredited, attached to a contaminated speaker. This generates a pervasive cloud of illegitimacy around solidarity, rendering a coherent political position unspeakable and crippling the movement's fundamental capacity to articulate its own story.¹⁸ This erosion of narrative agency produces the essential ideological precondition for all subsequent, materially concrete forms of repression. **It is this precondition – the successful framing of solidarity as illegitimate – that enables the allegations of antisemitism and support for terrorism to function as credible justifications for repression. Without this discursive gateway, those allegations would lack purchase.**

17 This framing of anti-colonial resistance as terrorism is critically examined in a roundtable discussion by critical, anti-colonial, feminist, and queer scholars, who challenge the exclusion of Palestine from terrorism studies and argue that the 'terrorism' label functions to justify mass violence and silence resistance. See Layla Aithadj et al., 'Where Is Palestine in Critical Terrorism Studies? A Roundtable Conversation', *Critical Studies on Terrorism* 17, no. 3 (2024): 437–62, <https://doi.org/10.1080/17539153.2024.2362966>.

18 This erosion of narrative capacity is vividly illustrated in a recent conversation among students and university workers reflecting on campus mobilisations in Belgium during the genocide. The authors contrast the silence and repression imposed by academic authorities with the everyday radical praxis of protest, revealing how institutional censorship operates precisely to render solidarity unspeakable. See Omar Jabary Salamanca et al., 'Forging Anticolonial Solidarity in the Hour of Genocide: Haki/Pláticas on Complicity, Dissent and Protest in a Belgian University', in *Palestine and the Western Academe* (Routledge, 2025).



(Incident Category – Actor)

Primary Actors: Zionist advocacy and lawfare groups, journalists, and media outlets are implicated in **138** incidents. Prominent among these is UK Lawyers for Israel (UKLFI), which figures as a primary or enabling actor in **29** documented incidents within this category, followed by the so-called Campaign Against Antisemitism (CAA) with **23** incidents. Media outlets including *The Jewish Chronicle* (**49** incidents), *The Telegraph* (**25** incidents), and the *Daily Mail* (**20** incidents) play a particularly significant role in public smearing campaigns.

INC-4041-K567
15/12/2024 / Online/In Print/Media

Newspaper The Times smeared British Medical Association (BMA) president Dr Mary McCarthy for social media activity on X (formerly Twitter) on Israeli genocide in Gaza, alleging "'hostile environment' for Jewish doctors"

ACTOR	TARGET
journalist / media	other

INC-4140-N4P8
14/08/2024 / Online/In Print/Media

Newspaper The Jewish Chronicle smeared University of Essex Palestine Solidarity Society for social media activity referring to Palestinian resistance in Instagram story, alleging support for proscribed organisation

ACTOR	TARGET
journalist / media	student(s) or student society / group / organisation

INC-3918-61J3

27/10/2023 / Online/In Print/Media

Newspaper The Times smeared University College London (UCL) academics for publishing academic article criticising settler colonialism in Palestine, alleging antisemitism

ACTOR

journalist / media

TARGET

academic / writer / teachers

INC-3918-61J3

27/10/2023 / Online/In Print/Media

Newspaper The Times smeared University College London (UCL) academics for publishing academic article criticising settler colonialism in Palestine, alleging antisemitism

ACTOR

journalist / media

TARGET

academic / writer / teachers

Strategic Functions:

- **Diagnostic and labelling function:** This mechanism systematically reframes ethical and political expression as criminal, risky, or extremist. A significant volume of incidents involves smearing targets through allegations of links to terrorism, frequently triggered by social media posts expressing support for Palestinians' right to resistance.¹⁹ Antisemitism allegations, often leveraging the IHRA definition, are deployed to conflate anti-Zionism with anti-Jewish racism.²⁰ A recurring discursive theme extends this mechanism to historical comparisons, where academics, medical professionals, and others are smeared or formally reported for 'comparing the Israeli state to Nazi Germany' or describing Gaza as 'worse than Auschwitz'.²¹
- **Erasure of Palestinian symbols and narrative:** The data reveal considerable efforts by councils and private entities to remove Palestinian flags and murals, often following legalistic interference by groups like UKLFI invoking allegations of 'breaching planning law', 'breach of company policy', 'breach of uniform policy', 'breach of charity law',²² and so on.²³ Workers and students are routinely censored for wear-

19 Example incidents recorded in Britain's *Index of Repression*: INC-3884-V1R9, INC-3869-V8Z8, INC-3869-V8Z8, INC-3759-W3K6, INC-3710-Y4V9, INC-3545-W7X9, INC-3355-Q5C4, INC-3349-D5C9, INC-2429-Y0G3, INC-2429-Y0G3, INC-1794-Z6X6, INC-1700-S9B0, INC-1677-D2M3, INC-1621-W5Y4, INC-1621-W5Y4, INC-1594-N5L3, INC-1560-W1V2, INC-1504-K8Q5, INC-1473-F6M2, INC-1385-V2L5, INC-1244-D6R2, INC-1193-G1B4, INC-3988-N8H9, INC-4140-N4P9.

20 Example incidents recorded in Britain's *Index of Repression*: INC-3880-K8V1, INC-3880-K8V1, INC-3626-N1Q6, INC-2966-Z6J3, INC-2783-J7D0, INC-1372-K4J3, INC-1372-K4J3, INC-1332-X4B3, INC-1252-V4S8, INC-1252-V4S8, INC-1226-Q0G5, INC-1218-T5C3.

21 Example incidents recorded in Britain's *Index of Repression*: INC-3873-Z2Z9, INC-3872-W1N8, INC-3595-K7V8, INC-3574-N3K0, INC-2188-Z9N6, INC-2114-L8Z7, INC-1796-B1P7, INC-1233-B7Z5, INC-3381-L8H2.

22 Charity law in the UK, primarily governed by the Charities Act 2011 and Charities Act 2022, requires organisations to have exclusively charitable purposes and operate for the public benefit. See Allwell Uwazuruike et al., *Charity Law and Regulation* (2026), <https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-10415/>.

23 Example incidents recorded in Britain's *Index of Repression*: INC-3875-F6R4, INC-3617-V3Q1, INC-3725-N5T6, INC-

ing Palestine flag badges, watermelon pins, or Kuffiyehs, with institutions deeming these symbols 'political' and 'offensive'.²⁴ This form of erasure extends to the domain of historical knowledge production, where educational materials and books are smeared or removed for 'labelling Palestine on a map instead of Israel'.²⁵

- **Weaponisation of 'neutrality':** The repression strategically deploys administrative concepts of 'neutrality', 'impartiality', and 'balance' as tools of censorship,²⁶ effectively repurposing bureaucratic protocols to suppress even minimal expressions of Palestine solidarity. Instances include NHS trusts and private companies ordering the removal of 'Free Palestine' badges,²⁷ and regulators such as Ofcom suspending directors for social media activity following smearing from Zionist blogs.²⁸ In educational spaces, headteachers have forcibly removed Kuffiyehs from pupils and universities have confiscated Palestine flags.²⁹ Within the media and cultural spheres, the BBC edited mentions of Gaza and calls for a ceasefire from its highlights of the Scottish BAFTA Awards to comply with 'editorial impartiality',³⁰ while artistic directors have censored speeches, citing 'neutrality concerns' and the potential to 'frighten' audiences.³¹

The allegations generated by the mechanisms of *Censorship/disinformation/smearing* circulate through institutional and legal channels, where they are accorded the status of established fact rather than contested political accusation. The subsequent mechanisms of repression – threats, sanctions, arrests – are procedurally predicated upon this initial act of discursive distortion and redefinition, thereby rendering all further coercive measures institutionally legible and actionable.

3708-L4H8, INC-3559-S7W2, INC-3546-C5R7, INC-2940-H9Q1, INC-2724-W6Q3, INC-2714-R6F5, INC-2427-D7Y8, INC-2412-J8X9, INC-2234-J5T1, INC-2106-B6J7, INC-1706-W8Q1, INC-1215-R2S5, INC-3989-R3W5, INC-3911-Y1F1.

²⁴ Example incidents recorded in Britain's *Index of Repression*: INC-3560-D4P9, INC-3505-M4R5, INC-2724-W6Q3, INC-2181-S1S0, INC-1882-K9R6, INC-1632-S8X4, INC-3605-X2Z5, INC-2823-V4M2.

²⁵ Example incidents recorded in Britain's *Index of Repression*: INC-3755-J7S5, INC-3754-B9Z4, INC-3753-Y0L3.

²⁶ Example incidents recorded in Britain's *Index of Repression*: INC-1359-F2Z2, INC-2933-L5J8, INC-2409-X3K4, INC-1802-Z0H1, INC-1760-G6Z2, INC-2933-L5J8, INC-1753-C4N4, INC-1662-X8X3.

²⁷ Example incidents recorded in Britain's *Index of Repression*: INC-3261-Y9Y3, INC-2772-Y2S5, INC-2138-D0J6, INC-1885-Y3F4, INC-1802-Z0H1, INC-1439-N2G9.

²⁸ This incident is recorded in Britain's *Index of Repression* as: INC-1547-P2L1.

²⁹ Example incidents recorded in Britain's *Index of Repression*: INC-2933-L5J8, INC-1704-J4L0.

³⁰ This incident is recorded in Britain's *Index of Repression* as: INC-1753-C4N4.

³¹ This incident is recorded in Britain's *Index of Repression* as: INC-2409-X3K4.

This case exemplifies the cascading effect of Censorship/disinformation/smearing.

CASE EXAMPLE – NHS DOCTOR:

The repression commenced with a coordinated smear campaign, orchestrated by the Daily Mail and Jewish News, which framed the doctor's social media posts – expressing support for Palestinians' right to resistance – as evidentiary of both antisemitism and support for terrorism (INC-1594-N5L3, Smearing). This publicity functioned as a direct catalyst for the ensuing stages of repression: anonymous actors leveraged the media coverage to file a formal complaint with the doctor's NHS Foundation Trust (INC-3865-G9C5, Threats to employment). This complaint, in turn, triggered an immediate internal investigation (INC-3866-Q0X3, Sanctions at workplaces), a referral to the Prevent counter-extremism programme (INC-3867-T3K2, Threats of legal action),³² and a report to the professional regulator (INC-3868-R7J8, Threats to employment). Within this trajectory, the allegations of 'antisemitism' and 'support for terrorism' were effectively operationalised to transmute protected political speech into a publicly defined 'transgression', thereby manufacturing the exigency for a comprehensive institutional-disciplinary response.

Demonstration bans/cancelled events/refusal of service (41 incidents)

If the first mechanism targets discourse, this one targets **space** – but not through the physical removal of bodies that characterises arrest. Where arrest extracts the already-gathered crowd as public spectacle, this mechanism operates pre-emptively: it denies solidarity its material and symbolic manifestation before it can take shape. The acts of repression in this category represent a systematic denial of the fundamental conditions for *political becoming*.³³ Their operative aim is the eradication of Palestinian presence from public space through the prohibition of gatherings, the cancellation of cultural events, and the refusal of service, thereby effecting a physical erasure of collective expression and negating the movement's visibility and organisational capacity. **This category is the spatial analogue of symbolic erasure.**

³² Prevent is one strand of Britain's CONTEST counter-terrorism strategy, introduced in 2003 but significantly expanded after the 7 July 2005 London attacks to address 'home-grown' terrorism. Its stated aims are to prevent 'radicalisation' by responding to 'extremist ideology', supporting individuals at risk, and working with institutions vulnerable to 'radicalisation'. In practice, Prevent has functioned primarily as a mechanism of discriminatory surveillance, disproportionately targeting Muslim communities by framing young Muslims as simultaneously a threat to be managed and a population to be saved. The Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015 placed Prevent on a statutory footing, legally requiring specified authorities, including higher education institutions, 'to have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism'. We discuss Prevent in more detail in Part II of this report.

³³ The concept of political becoming captures the process through which people develop political identities, agency, and the capacity to act collectively. Dorothy Holland, Charles Price, and William Westermeyer analyse how non-elite actors achieve this despite institutional power – a process our report shows being systematically denied through spatial and discursive foreclosure. See their chapter 'Political Becoming in Movements: Lessons from the Environmental, Tea Party, and Rastafari Movements', in *Political Sentiments and Social Movements: The Person in Politics and Culture*, ed. Claudia Strauss and Jack R. Friedman (Springer International Publishing, 2018), https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-72341-9_10.

Where the first category of *Censorship/disinformation/smearing* renders Palestine solidarity unspeakable, this category renders it un-assemblable – literally incapable of gathering.

Underpinning these tactics is a logic of spatial and temporal foreclosure. Public squares, lecture halls, and cultural venues are the sites where the ‘we’ of solidarity is performatively constituted, where freedom is exercised in collectivity, and where new political worlds are imagined and rehearsed.³⁴ The denial of access to these forums directly assaults the movement’s relational and ritual capacity to forge itself through shared presence. **This logic extends beyond physical space into the digital terrain.** When platforms disable event pages, suspend organising tools, or block fundraisers, they enact a form of virtual foreclosure – denying the movement the digital public spaces where contemporary organising takes root.

The **threat of cancellation, however, exerts control even when bans are not imposed.** Organisers must invest time and resources in contingency planning, legal advice, and crisis communications for every event, creating a climate where the possibility of cancellation becomes a standing condition of organising and internalises caution before any ban is formalised. **When an event is successfully cancelled, it generates its own publicity,** circulating through media and activist networks as a warning that signals to other organisers what themes, speakers, or language trigger institutional withdrawal. Each cancellation thus functions as a precedent, quietly teaching the boundaries of permissible gathering while depleting organisers’ temporal, material, and affective resources.

Primary Actors: Private institutions (**15** incidents), cultural institutions (**10** incidents), and educational institutions (**5** incidents). Actors strategically leverage allegations of breached terms of service,³⁵ antisemitism,³⁶ or safety concerns.³⁷ This results in the widespread removal of Palestine solidarity accounts and fundraisers across digital platforms,³⁸ and the cancellation of events across cultural spaces,³⁹ universities,⁴⁰ and local government,⁴¹ targeting everything from academic events to humanitarian appeals.

34 On the relationship between space, protest, and political meaning-making, see Jaleh Jalili’s thematic review of spatial dynamics in social movements, which examines how spaces function as sites of claim-making, cultural production, and are also sites of policing and control. This helps illuminate how the denial of access to public squares and lecture halls is not merely administrative but constitutes a foreclosure of the very conditions under which collective political subjectivity is formed. Jaleh Jalili, ‘Spatial Dynamics of Protest: Themes and Trajectories’, *Sociology Compass* 16, no. 4 (2022): e12971, <https://doi.org/10.1111/soc4.12971>.

35 Example incidents recorded in Britain’s *Index of Repression*: INC-3893-W4N2, INC-3890-L0K4, INC-3891-H2C2, INC-1292-C9G9.

36 Example incidents recorded in Britain’s *Index of Repression*: INC-3580-C2N8, INC-1696-L8H3, INC-1609-H5M3, INC-1415-B2N1, INC-1326-Q7P0, INC-1319-T3T1.

37 Example incidents recorded in Britain’s *Index of Repression*: INC-1554-N2W7, INC-1475-S6R2, INC-1478-Y3J1, INC-3695-P1H1.

38 Example incidents recorded in Britain’s *Index of Repression*: INC-3892-K7M7, INC-1398-H5J7.

39 Example incidents recorded in Britain’s *Index of Repression*: INC-2628-T6H0, INC-1731-S8F2.

40 Example incidents recorded in Britain’s *Index of Repression*: INC-1883-X9L2, INC-1552-M4J9, INC-4132-B8V3.

41 Example incident recorded in Britain’s *Index of Repression*: INC-1349-H9P6.

Threats of legal action & Threats to employment/funding (217 incidents combined)

These mechanisms weaponise uncertainty. Beyond the public control of space, repression operates through more insidious and individualised mechanisms: the strategic use of legal and bureaucratic threats to professional standing and institutional funding.⁴² The actors involved in this repression don't need to win cases; they only need to file complaints, trigger investigations, and exhaust resources. The function of these mechanisms is **anticipatory discipline** – making individuals police themselves before any sanction lands, and weaponising legal ambiguity, economic precarity, and institutional anxieties around 'reputational harm' and loss of funding.⁴³

This stage is often characterised by its opacity, with Zionist lawfare and advocacy groups exerting private pressure upon institutions prior to the awareness of the targets themselves. The primary goal is to generate a pervasive chilling effect, forcing self-censorship, sowing isolation, and injecting debilitating uncertainty into the movement's fabric. This uncertainty is compounded by structural precarity: for students on visas, precarious workers, or those without union protection, the threat is not merely to professional standing but to livelihood and life-chances itself. The disciplining effect ripples outward from each target, signalling to entire professions and communities that solidarity carries professional and financial risk.

The ultimate consequence is a strategic diversion of collective energy. The movement's resources are systematically redirected from generative organising to perpetual defence, exhausting its capacity before coordinated action can be fully conceived. A significant proportion of repressive activity is thus allocated, not to halting extant initiatives, but to the systematic foreclosure of future political possibility. The bureaucratic labour of defence – the hours spent gathering evidence, seeking legal advice, drafting responses – drains movement energy as effectively as any injunction. This is an asymmetric war of attrition, where targets must defend perfectly every time; institutional actors need only succeed occasionally.

Threats of legal action (136 incidents): This mechanism traverses multiple legal registers so that, for example, charity law is weaponised to penalise Students' Unions for motions in support of Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) demands;⁴⁴ planning regulations are invoked to threaten legal action and demand the removal of Palestinian symbology from public view;⁴⁵

42 On the use of Strategic Lawsuits Against Public Participation (commonly known as 'SLAPPs') – which refers to the improper, coercive use of legal action or threats of legal action to suppress political speech or criticism – see Peter Coe et al., 'Addressing Strategic Lawsuits against Public Participation (SLAPPs): A Critical Interrogation of Legislative, and Judicial Responses', *Journal of Media Law* 17, no. 1 (2025): 103–42, <https://doi.org/10.1080/17577632.2024.2443096>.

43 On the role of donor influence and financial precarity in shaping university responses to Palestine solidarity protests, see Adam Saifer and Fahad Ahmad, 'Elite Philanthropy, Neoliberal Universities, and the Politics of Suppression: The Case of the Palestine Solidarity Encampments', *Organization*, 23 August 2025, 13505084251364710, <https://doi.org/10.1177/13505084251364710>.

44 Example incidents recorded in Britain's *Index of Repression*: INC-3332-L9Z8, INC-3330-Y3X0, INC-3330-Y3X0, INC-2214-Q1P3, INC-2096-N6X6, INC-1289-D9N6, INC-1290-M1Z0.

45 Example incidents recorded in Britain's *Index of Repression*: INC-3682-W9F0, INC-3610-Z8G3, INC-2236-H1R0, INC-2187-D8D9, INC-1898-M4P6, INC-1436-L0K6, INC-1294-F5K8, INC-1307-X8W8, INC-1308-N8L4, INC-1309-G9K6, INC-

and equality legislation is appropriated to frame political and cultural expression as constitutive of a 'hostile environment'.⁴⁶

Primary Actors: Zionist advocacy and lawfare groups appear in **63** incidents, more often than not UKLFI, followed by (member of) Educational institution (**25** incidents), Police/security personnel (**20** incidents), and (member of) State institution (**7** incidents).

Threats to employment/funding (81 incidents): This mechanism involves the instrumental filing of complaints with employers, professional regulatory bodies, and funding entities, deliberately designed to jeopardise livelihoods and organisational survival. It is exemplified by the reporting of medical professionals to the General Medical Council (GMC) or legal practitioners to the Bar Standards Board based on scrutinised social media activity.⁴⁷ Similarly, funding is weaponised, as evidenced by arts councils initiating investigations following orchestrated media campaigns, and UKLFI's reporting of Palestine solidarity fundraisers to banks receiving the funds.⁴⁸

Primary Actors: (member of) Educational institution is the primary actor in this category (**33** incidents), followed by Zionist advocacy group/lawfare group, especially UKLFI (**17** incidents), and (member of) Public institution (7 incidents).

Harassment/violence/doxing/surveillance (111 incidents)

If legal and financial threats instrumentalise institutional systems to enforce a climate of apprehension, this category renders that fear visceral and corporeally personal. The operative logic here shifts decisively from institutional coercion to a regime of individualised terrorisation and atomisation. These mechanisms invade the private sphere, aiming to colonise the innermost self – thereby transforming the body, the home, and digital existence into contiguous extensions of the security apparatus.

This invasion takes multiple forms. Harassment – repeated, targeted intimidation – makes public space hostile and unpredictable. Activists are followed, shouted down, and subjected to sustained online abuse. Violence marks a further escalation, where physical assault against body or property leaves a mark – a reminder that solidarity carries bodily risk. Meanwhile, doxing renders the target permanently visible as their private information is circulated to enable other harms, and surveillance ensures that this visibility is continuous.

1123-L6X9.

⁴⁶ Example incidents recorded in Britain's *Index of Repression*: INC-3886-Q3T3, INC-3864-Y1L1, INC-3608-Z6D3, INC-3385-N4Z3, INC-2856-B0Q2, INC-2765-R5C5, INC-2682-F7H1, INC-2512-H2X6, INC-2486-K7G5, INC-2417-C1K2, INC-2376-C0T9, INC-2186-J6S0, INC-1307-X8W8, INC-1307-X8W8, INC-1298-S5J7, INC-1299-L8J1, INC-1122-P3B7.

⁴⁷ Example incidents recorded in Britain's *Index of Repression*: INC-3883-M0J3, INC-3868-R7J8, INC-3636-V8Z2, INC-3769-MOS0, INC-3254-S0R5, INC-1943-B2Z6.

⁴⁸ Example incidents recorded in Britain's *Index of Repression*: INC-3895-H9V3, INC-3542-S0F4.

This logic renders hyper-visibility not as the precondition for solidarity but as the very condition of enforced silence. This category systematically dismantles privacy and security, and recalibrates everyday existence into a permanent state of exposure and threat.⁴⁹ But it is not just that the category exposes the target; it weaponises exposure itself so that the target is rendered permanently visible – to employers, to state actors, to anonymous online publics – and this relentless scrutiny operates as a mechanism of containment. To be seen is to be tracked, to be tracked is to be vulnerable, and to be vulnerable is to be silenced. Visibility is no longer a precondition for solidarity and political speech but a barrier to it.

The overarching aim is atomisation: a deliberate rupture of the individual from the collective body, shrinking their subjective world into a state of anxious isolation that is structurally incapable of reconstituting collective agency.

Primary Actors: This mechanism operates through a diffuse network of actors: Zionist blogs *Gnasher Jew* and *Harry's Place* organise doxing campaigns targeting academics, medical professionals, and students;⁵⁰ police, members of the public, and security guards physically assault and verbally harass activists;⁵¹ coordinated online harassment campaigns are orchestrated by outlets including *The Jewish Chronicle* and *The Times*;⁵² and police impose restrictive bail conditions following arrests, subjecting activists to exclusion zones and reporting requirements that function as state-monitored surveillance.⁵³

These dispersed acts, across digital and physical spaces, collectively function as a form of social colonisation – disciplining individuals not only through what institutions do to them, but through what they fear others might do. This decentralisation produces a ‘virtual panopticon’ that internalises surveillance⁵⁴ – a mechanism whose ultimate objective is the severing of social bonds and the isolation of individuals from potential allies. By disrupting solidarity at the interpersonal level, it ensures that repression feels total and inescapable.

49 On the disciplinary actions, social backlash, and career implications that follow students who become visible in the movement and how hyper-visibility functions as a source of ongoing vulnerability and threat, see Mohamed Buheji, Mohamed BenAmer, and Aamir Hasan, 'How Pro-Palestine Protests Students are Sacrificing to Change the World', *Gradiva* 63, no. 5 (2024): 83-104. https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Mohamed-Buheji/publication/381010420_The_Sacrifice_-_How_Pro-Palestine_Protests_Students_are_Sacrificing_to_Change_the_World/links/66599cde479366623a338590/The-Sacrifice-How-Pro-Palestine-Protests-Students-are-Sacrificing-to-Change-the-World.pdf

50 Example incidents recorded in Britain's *Index of Repression*: INC-3638-R0Z5, INC-3625-C3C0, INC-3575-K5K1, INC-3356-V6Z9, INC-3025-S5T1, INC-2908-H9B0, INC-2801-R1F9, INC-2090-H6T3, INC-1996-Z4N0, INC-4133-P3D5, INC-3991-M2R3, INC-3734-H4Q0, INC-3361-D9V5.

51 Example incidents recorded in Britain's *Index of Repression*: INC-2960-Y8V4, INC-2169-K5K0, INC-2082-G4Y4, INC-2064-T3G8, INC-1791-T1F0, INC-2960-Y8V4, INC-2837-Z3Q1, INC-2445-L1T2, INC-3735-K0T7, INC-3622-C4D2, INC-3344-G4X6, INC-3258-C7K3, INC-1247-M0G1, INC-2440-N4T9.

52 Example incidents recorded in Britain's *Index of Repression*: INC-3611-Y2Z2, INC-2134-H8Y8.

53 Example incidents recorded in Britain's *Index of Repression*: INC-3724-S8N0, INC-3692-Z7Q5, INC-2618-F1H9, INC-4018-W1P3.

54 See Sheryl Nestel, 'The "Palestine Test" Revisited: Faculty, Students and Activists Talk about Their Experiences of Harassment, Intimidation and Suppression of Speech on Palestine', *TOPIA* 47 (September 2023): 24-32, <https://doi.org/10.3138/topia-2023-06-21>.

Featured Incident

Student repeatedly harassed and smeared King's College London (KCL) academic for teachings on Palestine

On 8 October 2023, a student emailed a King's College London (KCL) academic Dr Rana Baker, requesting to postpone their Palestine-related presentation to ensure "Israeli students are not harassed or assaulted on campus". The following day (9 October 2023), the Dr Baker declined the request, stating they could not grant exceptions.

On 6 March 2024, the academic escalated concerns to the student's personal tutor via email, citing irregular attendance, aggressive behaviour in class, and the unauthorised filming of a seminar. That same day, another professor alerted the Dr Baker that the student had filed a formal complaint against them.

On 15 March 2024, the Dr Baker learned the complaint investigation had been suspended following concerns raised by the University and College Union (UCU). The university resumed proceedings on 7 May 2024, notifying the academic and scheduling an investigatory meeting for that same day.

On 15 May 2024, the Dr Baker's UCU representative submitted a formal complaint regarding the student's vexatious complaint history, previous attempts to smear staff members, and the student's employment with Committee for Accuracy in Middle East Reporting and Analysis (CAMERA) on Campus, a Zionist organisation. On 20 May 2024, the university terminated the investigation entirely.

On 20 November 2024, the student publicly escalated their campaign by participating in a European Jewish Association (EJA) meeting, where they identified the academic de facto (naming their course and visa status while withholding their full name), falsely accused them of "distributing Hamas manifestos", and claimed the academic remained "under investigation by the university". When the academic sought clarification, the university confirmed no active investigation existed.

On 22 November 2024, newspaper The Jewish Chronicle submitted a media inquiry to Dr. Baker, followed by the publication of a smearing article on 27 November. The piece misrepresented the academic's social media posts on X (formerly Twitter) – which criticised the Israeli genocide in Gaza and affirmed Palestinians' right to resistance – as "propaganda material to 'indoctrinate' students". It further alleged that "one shocked student recorded the seminar and handed the tape to university authorities", falsely implying an ongoing investigation.

On 29 November 2024, the Daily Mail contacted Dr Baker with a media request. On 1 December, the student publicly accused the academic on X (formerly Twitter) of affiliations with Hamas and the Muslim Brotherhood. In response, the academic filed a formal complaint against the student on 2 December, citing harassment, libel, and defamation.

On 5 December 2024, the university informed Dr Baker, for the first time, that an external investigation had been commissioned into the matter. On 13 December, the university formally notified the academic via email that an external investigation had been initiated against them. On 15 December, the Daily Mail published a smearing article containing multiple false claims: that a student had provided seminar recordings as evidence; that the academic had "distributed Hamas propaganda"; and that the university had reopened its investigation in July 2024.

Arrests/law enforcement intervention (130 incidents)

If harassment and surveillance work by constricting the world into a sphere of private anxiety, arrests and law enforcement intervention operate as their public, spectacular counterpart. This category represents the most visible assertion of unmediated state power, designed to discursively re-code acts of solidarity as criminality and to publicly stage the material consequences of dissent.⁵⁵

This visibility is a performance of sovereign exception. The arrest marks the precise moment where the state suspends ordinary juridical rights, designating those in solidarity with Palestine – and, by extension, Palestinians themselves – as disposable subjects who may be detained outside the full protections of legal personhood. As a public ritual, this mechanism serves to violently reinforce the boundaries of acceptable political discourse and action. Its ultimate aim is to shatter the movement's embodied moral courage – specifically, the willingness to stake physical freedom upon the principle of Palestinian liberation.

The physical act of arrest – from the detention of 77 protesters⁵⁶ in a single march (counted in the database as one incident) to the raiding of homes under terrorism legislation⁵⁷ – functions as a performative ritual. It physically removes the dissenting body from public space and designates its political cause as existing within a zone of reduced legal personhood.

55 The dynamic described here – whereby states use exceptional measures to mark dissent as outside the legitimate political order – is examined in Katharina Fritsch and Andrea Kretschmann's analysis of the 'politics of exception'. Drawing on post-colonial perspectives, they show how protest regulation follows an expansionary logic that connotes increasing parts of the social as threats, thereby justifying state intervention. This framework helps explain how arrests function as public rituals that designate solidarity with Palestine as criminality. See Katharina Fritsch and Andrea Kretschmann, 'Politics of Exception: Criminalizing Activism in Western European Democracies', in *Criminalization of Activism* (Routledge, 2021).

56 Example incident recorded in Britain's *Index of Repression*: INC-2979-B6D8.

57 Example incidents recorded in Britain's *Index of Repression*: INC-3491-D8H6, INC-3236-B0D9, INC-2827-W7V0, INC-2822-T6M7, INC-2715-Y9F5, INC-2104-P8G0, INC-1520-Q6P6, INC-4143-M0P7.

Featured Incident

Police violently repressed Palestine solidarity demonstration, arresting 77 and charging at least 12 activists

On 20 November 2024, the Palestine coalition, comprising of organisations Palestine Solidarity Campaign (PSC), Friends of Al-Aqsa (FOA), Stop the War, Palestinian Forum in Britain (PFB), Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND) and Muslim Association of Britain (MAB) announced that a national Palestine solidarity demonstration on Whitehall to the BBC was to be held on 18 January 2025, to call for a permanent end to the Israeli genocide in Gaza, with police having approved the demonstration nearly two months prior.

On 9 January 2025, the Metropolitan police announced that they placed a ban on the marching demonstration, alleging that the demonstration could cause disruption to a nearby synagogue, despite it not being on the demonstration route. On the same day, an activist made a speech at another demonstration organised by the International Jewish Anti-Zionist Network (IJAN) against the Israeli ambassador, during which the activist listed actions to support in the coming weeks, including the national demonstration on Whitehall. Police arrested them a week later, on 17 January, at their home, and charged them under section 12 (6) and (10) of the Public Order Act 1986, alleging they had called for people to breach the conditions imposed on the demonstration.

On 18 January at midday, protesters began assembling around Whitehall. Police shortly formed a large line and forcefully ushered people towards Trafalgar Square. When the demonstration speeches ended, protesters began walking up to Whitehall, and whilst police attempted to segregate different blocks at the demonstration from one another, they did not try to prevent the crowd from moving through.

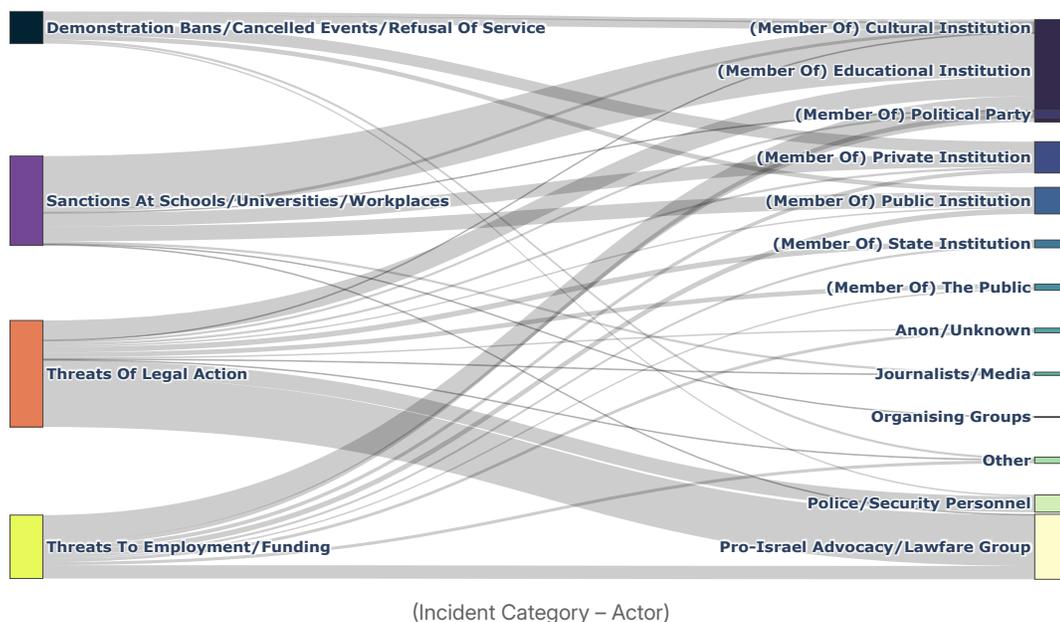
Later in the afternoon, police began violently kettling and detaining protesters, arresting 77 protesters and charging at least 12 with breaches of the Public Order Act. Police imposed bail conditions on activists following their arrest, which included not entering Trafalgar Square, not participating in London demonstrations, not attending events organised by Palestine Solidarity Campaign (PSC), or not to go within the vicinity of broadcaster BBC.

On 20 January 2025, the police published an article on their website, releasing the personal information of protesters charged, including their names, ages, and street addresses.

Sanctions at schools/universities/workplaces (114 incidents)

This mechanism weaponises the specific rationalities of education and employment. Within education, it exploits mechanisms of governance to censor pedagogy and discipline dissenting students.⁵⁸ Within the professions, it leverages asymmetrical power to purge expressions of solidarity, including collective action like strikes. In both spheres, the institution is reconstituted as an internalised police function, perverting its core normative mandate – whether the cultivation of critical thought or the guarantee of equitable labour – into instruments of disciplining and punishment.⁵⁹

More broadly, this mechanism enforces a regime of conformity, instrumentalising codes of conduct to excise solidarity with Palestine from structures ostensibly dedicated to critical inquiry and ethical obligation. Consequently, institutions of knowledge and care – such as universities, hospitals, schools – are repurposed to enforce political compliance, a dynamic of *disciplinary enclosure*. Sanctions here directly target the movement’s institutional legitimacy and its reproductive capacity, that is, its ability to sustain itself, grow its membership, and operate within professional and pedagogical fields. The strategic aim is to *uproot solidarity precisely where it would organically take root*, thereby neutralising its potential for long-term growth and structuration.



58 'Uncovered: The "worsening Crackdown" on pro-Palestine Activism at UK Universities', Liberty Investigates, 22 February 2025, <https://libertyinvestigates.org.uk/articles/revealed-the-worsening-crackdown-on-pro-palestinian-activism-at-uk-universities/>.

59 The dynamic by which institutions leverage asymmetrical power to suppress collective action is examined in Caroline Murphy's study of workplace activists facing fear of employer reprisal during union organising campaigns. Their mobilisation framework reveals how institutions weaponise the threat of sanction to inhibit collective action, effectively transforming the workplace into a site of disciplinary control – precisely the 'internalised police function' we identify here. See Caroline Murphy, 'Fear and Leadership in Union Organizing Campaigns: An Examination of Workplace Activist Behavior', *Sage Open* 6, no. 1 (2016): 2158244015623932, <https://doi.org/10.1177/2158244015623932>.

Legal/financial/professional repercussions (90 incidents)

Beyond the disciplinary enclosures of institutions lies the most structurally enduring mechanism of repression. Here, the operative logic aims at the systematic and *permanent* dismantling of an individual's livelihood, juridical standing, and future viability, eroding the foundational conditions of social and economic existence.⁶⁰ This stage represents the coalescence of systemic attacks, materialising as imprisonment, loss of funding, professional exile, or the denial of residency and freedom of movement.

This process enacts a logic of social death.⁶¹ It is the ultimate act of depoliticisation and erasure, rendering a person socially illegible and politically inert. For the movement, this constitutes the most devastating assault on its long-term sustainability and leadership. Experienced organisers are forcibly excised from the political field, their capacity annihilated, while others are terrorised into retreat, crippling the movement's ability to regenerate and endure.

Patterns of Material Foreclosure:

Professional termination: Individuals are dismissed from roles within healthcare,⁶² media,⁶³ education,⁶⁴ and cultural institutions,⁶⁵ a process frequently precipitated by external discursive pressure and media campaigns that reconfigure acts of solidarity into violations of professional neutrality or codes of conduct.⁶⁶

These terminations procedurally transmute scrutinised speech and symbolic expression into grounds for excision, where an NHS doctor is terminated for social media posts affirming Palestinians' right to resistance following a tabloid smear campaign;⁶⁷ a museum worker is dismissed for refusing to remain silent on the genocide during guided tours;⁶⁸ and an academic is removed for anti-Zionist commentary in a university seminar.⁶⁹ This pattern is paralleled by the dismissal of a broadcaster for conducting a substantively rigorous interview with an

60 See Abby Peterson and Mattias Wahlström, 'Repression: The Governance of Domestic Dissent', in *The Oxford Handbook of Social Movements*, ed. Donatella della Porta and Mario Diani (Oxford University Press, 2015), <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199678402.013.2>. The authors conceptualise repression as a dispersed mechanism for governing the dominant political and economic order, operating across geographic scales, institutional actors, and functional forms.

61 Lisa Marie Cacho, *Social Death: Racialized Rightlessness and the Criminalization of the Unprotected* (NYU Press, 2012). Cacho's analysis of how racialised populations are rendered 'rightless' and criminally actionable – their exclusion justified through the very grammars of worth that structure exploitation – provides the theoretical foundation for our use of 'social death' to describe the erasure of juridical standing and future viability documented here.

62 Example incidents recorded in Britain's *Index of Repression*: INC-3871-Q1J6, INC-2789-L8Y0.

63 Example incidents recorded in Britain's *Index of Repression*: INC-3712-Q8D3, INC-3487-K1C7, INC-2450-R5F7, INC-2057-T4Z1.

64 Example incidents recorded in Britain's *Index of Repression*: INC-3766-F9F7, INC-2995-Z2R5, INC-2629-F6Z2, INC-4161-Y8K5.

65 Example incidents recorded in Britain's *Index of Repression*: INC-3693-K9G4, INC-2870-B0T5.

66 Example incident recorded in Britain's *Index of Repression*: INC-3026-Z1N2.

67 Example incident recorded in Britain's *Index of Repression*: INC-3871-Q1J6.

68 Example incident recorded in Britain's *Index of Repression*: INC-3693-K9G4.

69 Example incident recorded in Britain's *Index of Repression*: INC-4161-Y8K5.

Israeli official,⁷⁰ the expulsion of a corporate employee for sharing anti-Zionist views via digital platforms,⁷¹ and the termination of a teacher for wearing a tie in the colours of the Palestinian flag.⁷²

Immigration weaponisation: The Home Office cancels visas and indefinite leave to remain for medical professionals and students, premised on the claim that Palestine solidarity is ‘not conducive to the public good’. This actively constructs a specific, exclusionary public agenda that mediates Palestine solidarity into a threat to national order, thereby reinforcing the far-right, anti-immigrant narratives it ostensibly merely reflects.⁷³ While the current scope of this weaponisation remains documentable in its discrete instances, its potential for escalation remains an open and critical question.⁷⁴ The infrastructure for such repression is now concretely established, integrating the political disciplining of Palestine solidarity directly into the punitive logic of Britain’s border regime.⁷⁵

Financial exclusion and defunding: Banking institutions and other financial platforms, prompted by lawfare groups, routinely close accounts for solidarity organisations, groups, and individuals, severing their access to essential financial infrastructure and crippling their operational viability.⁷⁶ State funding is similarly withheld as a disciplinary tool. The government, for example, suspended engagement with and funding of the National Union of Students (NUS) in 2022 following allegations of antisemitism – allegations that emerged from a smear campaign against President Shaima Dallali and were framed as a breach of the IHRA definition.⁷⁷

Charges and imprisonment: The Terrorism Act 2000, the Public Order Act 2003, and other statutes are deployed to secure convictions for speech, protest, and proscription of groups.⁷⁸

70 Example incident recorded in Britain’s *Index of Repression*: INC-2450-R5F7.

71 Example incident recorded in Britain’s *Index of Repression*: INC-2870-B0T5.

72 Example incident recorded in Britain’s *Index of Repression*: INC-2995-Z2R5.

73 Aurelien Mondon, ‘Populism, Public Opinion, and the Mainstreaming of the Far Right: The “Immigration Issue” and the Construction of a Reactionary “People”’, *Politics* 45, no. 1 (2025): 19–36, <https://doi.org/10.1177/02633957221104726>. Mondon argues that elite actors, including state institutions, actively shape and legitimise reactionary narratives rather than simply following ‘what the people want’.

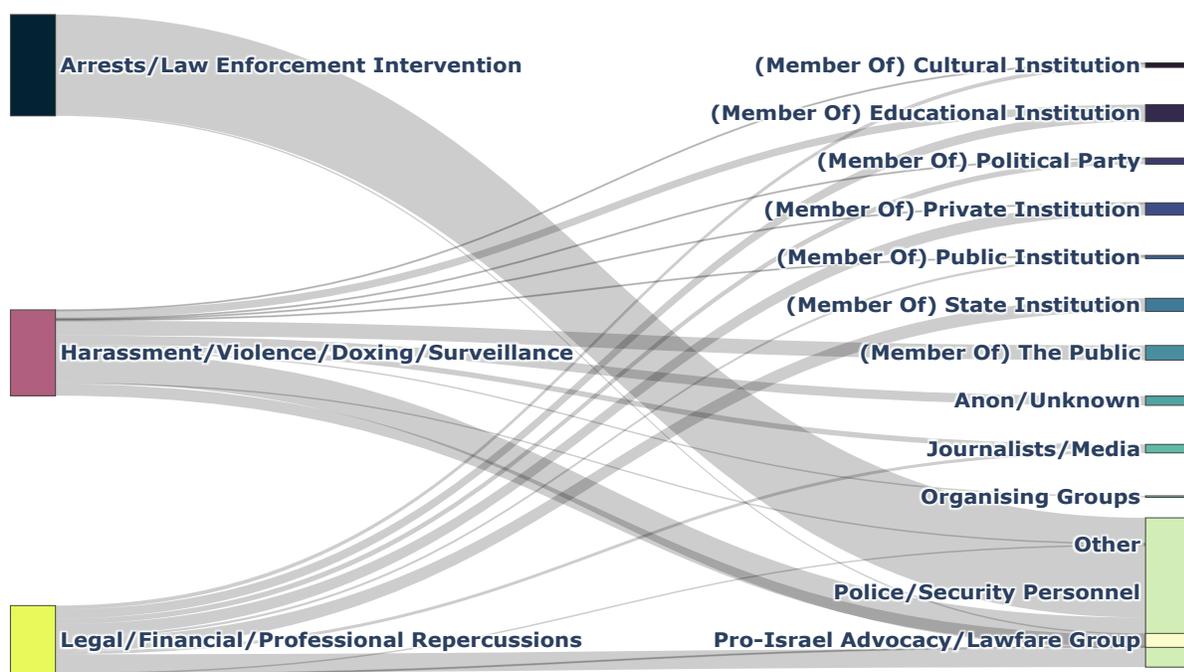
74 Sana Noor Haq, ‘A Student at a UK University Lost His Visa after Pro-Palestinian Activism. Some Academics Urge a Reversal’, CNN, 23 January 2026, <https://www.cnn.com/2026/01/23/europe/usama-ghanem-kcl-visa-revoked-intl-cmd>.

75 Example incidents recorded in Britain’s *Index of Repression*: INC-3870-D6J8, INC-2847-T8R7, INC-2759-D3M8, INC-1503-C2Y7, INC-1366-P5P6.

76 Example incidents recorded in Britain’s *Index of Repression*: INC-3853-F9R6, INC-3618-H2M0, INC-3569-M7C6, INC-2948-J9M0.

77 Incident recorded in Britain’s *Index of Repression*: INC-3019-Z0T6.

78 Example incidents recorded in Britain’s *Index of Repression*: INC-3949-C5D6, INC-3852-K5F7, INC-3633-D9R9, INC-3619-X2B4, INC-3578-P9M3, INC-3510-B1P0, INC-3474-D4H1, INC-3428-K5Z6, INC-3423-R0B9, INC-3359-L2T8, INC-2993-F9H4, INC-2980-D5W0, INC-2967-X1D9, INC-2918-Y2B6, INC-2760-X0L1, INC-2722-Q0R4, INC-2529-C8F5, INC-2452-K7F3, INC-2454-Q4F9, INC-2370-V8P9, INC-2343-V6C8, INC-4085-D9M4, INC-4081-S3H0, INC-4043-F0M0, INC-3986-J6J7, INC-4039-S3L7, INC-4167-D0T2, INC-4208-X2L9.



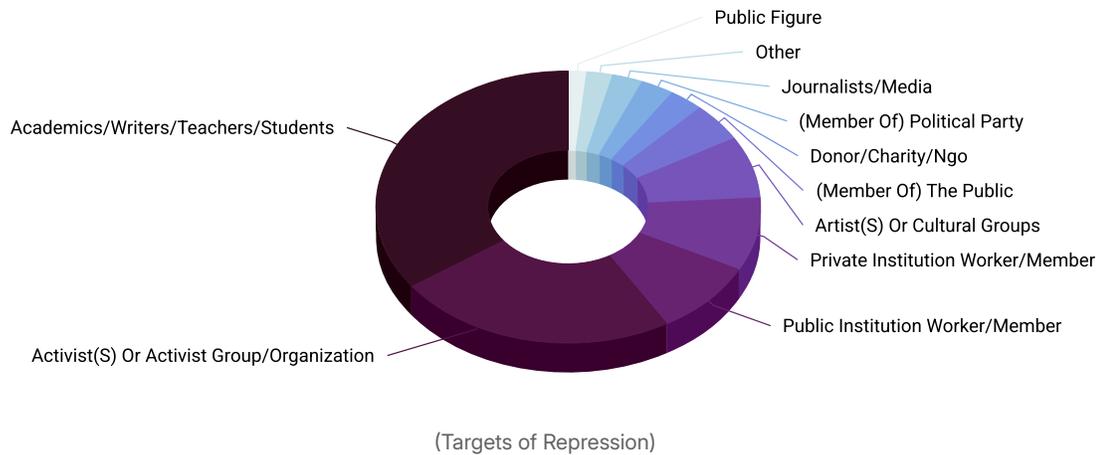
(Incident Category – Actor)

The sequential logic outlined above describes the system's ideal-typical operation. In practice, an individual may experience harassment before a legal threat, or a sanction without prior smearing. The categories are not sequential in any simple sense at the level of individual experience. But together they form a coherent system: one that moves from delegitimising speech, through containing space and exhausting resources, to finally annihilating the conditions of political existence.

The Targets of Harm

While pervasive and systematic, repression is not evenly distributed. It concentrates on sectors vital to public discourse, education, healthcare, and civil society. In Britain, these sectors are the very infrastructure through which the state's own historical and ongoing colonial complicity is challenged. They are targeted because they are zones where Britain's foundational contradiction – between its self-image and its role as author of the Zionist settler colonial project – is most visibly contested. Universities and schools are spaces where students meet, organise, and build political communities; healthcare workers hold trusted public authority, which lends weight to their ethical witness; cultural producers shape public narratives and memory; civil society groups coordinate campaigns and mobilise opposition to genocide. Controlling these sectors allows the British state to manage the political and social infrastructure through which dissent over its colonial legacy and contemporary complicity are organised and amplified. It does so using the legal, bureaucratic, and security mechanisms outlined above.

The data below detail the primary targets of this repression, outlining those subjected to the most systematic harm for their expressions of solidarity with Palestine.



- The most systematically targeted groups within the documented repression are students, academics, writers, and teachers (336 incidents) alongside activists and solidarity organisations (256 incidents). These subjects constitute the foundational organisational and intellectual substrate of the movement.
- For students and academics, writers, and teachers the predominant mechanism is censorship, disinformation, and smearing (102 incidents), a tactic overwhelmingly executed by the educational institutions themselves (38 incidents) in concert with media actors (36 incidents), jointly policing discursive boundaries within learning spaces. This primary discursive pressure is compounded by the direct imposition of sanctions in schools and universities (66 incidents), and by threats to employment and funding (43 incidents), frequently instigated by external Zionist advocacy and lawfare groups. The inclusion of writers alongside students, academics, and teachers shows that this repression extends beyond institutional boundaries into the broader infrastructure of intellectual life.
- For activists and organisers, the tactical emphasis shifts decisively towards the direct application of sovereign power. The primary repressive mechanism becomes arrest and law enforcement intervention (97 incidents), accompanied by significant regimes of harassment, violence, and surveillance (45 incidents).
- Cultural workers and artists (71 incidents) encounter a distinct pattern of repression oriented towards the control of public narrative and symbolic production. This is effected predominantly through censorship and smearing (34 incidents) and the cancellation of events or refusal of service (10 incidents), actions frequently undertaken by cultural institutions and Zionist advocacy and lawfare groups.

- Public institution workers, including those within the NHS (85 incidents), are subjected to pressure through workplace sanctions (20 incidents) and legal threats (18 incidents). Healthcare workers occupy a uniquely targeted position. Their professional credibility and ethical authority – amplified during a genocide in which medics are themselves being killed – make their witness particularly important. The silencing of doctors, nurses, and other health professionals through GMC referrals, workplace sanctions, and other mechanisms is thus central to managing the moral legitimacy of the state’s complicity.

These individual incidents, however, tell only part of the story. The data also capture systematic attacks on the very infrastructure that sustains the movement. Student unions face threats, smears, and funding cuts for passing BDS motions; Palestine solidarity organisations face bank account closures, smearing, and proscription; community venues cancel bookings under pressure; fundraising appeals are blocked by platforms. These represent an assault on the organisational infrastructure without which collective action cannot survive. When infrastructure is targeted, the harm extends far beyond any single individual or group, degrading the movement’s capacity to coordinate, resource, and sustain itself over time.

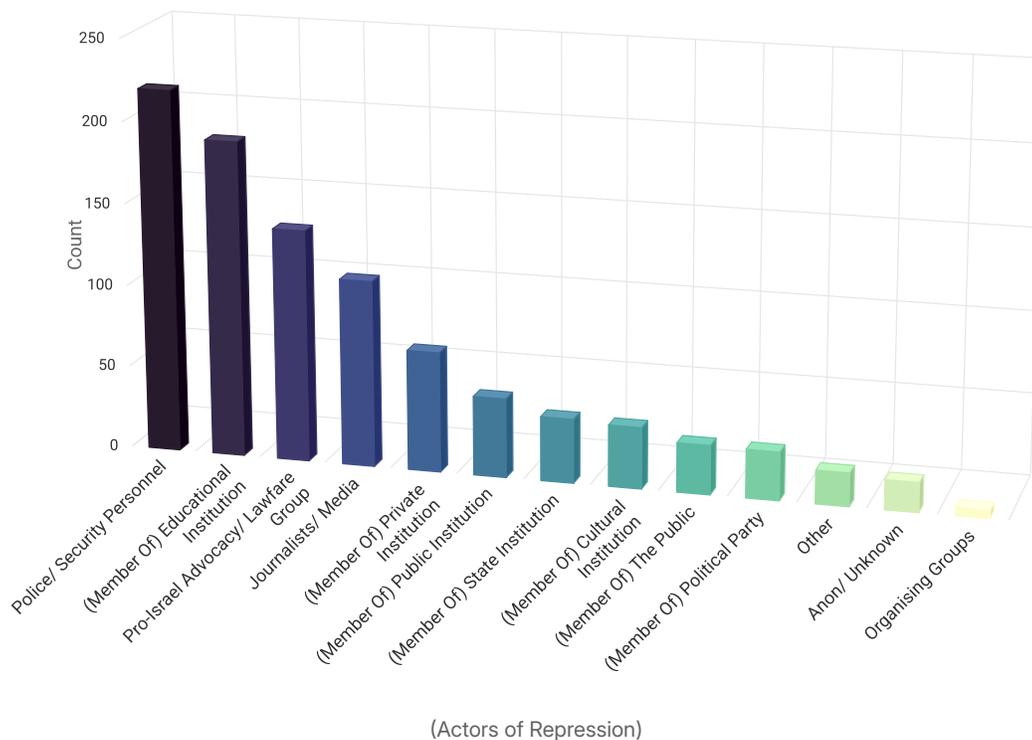
This infrastructural harm compounds the burden on individuals, who are themselves targeted across multiple fronts. The categories presented above – student, activist, cultural worker, public sector professional – are analytically distinct but often converge on single persons. The student activist, the doctor who writes, the cultural worker who organises, each faces compounded pressure across multiple domains. Repression in one sphere bleeds into others, creating a cumulative burden that data, by necessity siloed, can only partially convey.

And beneath each data point lies a human story that numbers alone cannot tell. The 964 incidents documented here represent 964 trajectories of harm. Behind each data point are months or years of stress and uncertainty; financial costs from legal fees and lost work; health impacts including anxiety, depression, and burnout; relationship strain; and, too often, withdrawal from organising altogether. What the count cannot capture is the larger population deterred before any incident occurs – those who self-censor, who decline to speak, who quietly step back, their absence invisible in the data but profoundly felt in the movement’s diminished capacity. Nor can it fully convey the cumulative toll on collective morale: the exhaustion of perpetually defending rather than organising, the slow attrition of hope that sustained repression is designed to produce.

The Architecture of Plausible Deniability

Beneath the apparent chaos of individual incidents, the database reveals a coordinated political ecology of repression. The actors documented here – including state and public institutions, lawfare groups, media outlets, educational bodies, private companies – do not operate as a unified command structure. They function instead as a distributed network, each node performing a distinct but complementary role: **the media manufactures discursive cover, lawfare groups weaponise legal frameworks, institutions enforce discipline, police stage public spectacles of sovereign power, and so on.**

This division of labour allows repression to appear diffuse, uncoordinated, even spontaneous. Yet the cumulative effect is systematic and constitutes a multi-sited assault that targets solidarity from every direction while granting each actor plausible deniability. No single institution bears full responsibility; no single hand is seen to strike the blow. This insulates each node from legal liability, public outrage, and reputational damage, allowing institutions to maintain their liberal self-images while participating in illiberal outcomes. The network is held together by a shared political project, what Hil Aked terms 'state-private networks'.⁷⁹ These are informal channels through which official power and private advocacy reinforce one another. Elite access, revolving doors between government and lobby groups, coordinated legislative pushes, and the quiet alignment of institutional policy with Zionist advocacy all ensure that the network coheres without needing to conspire.



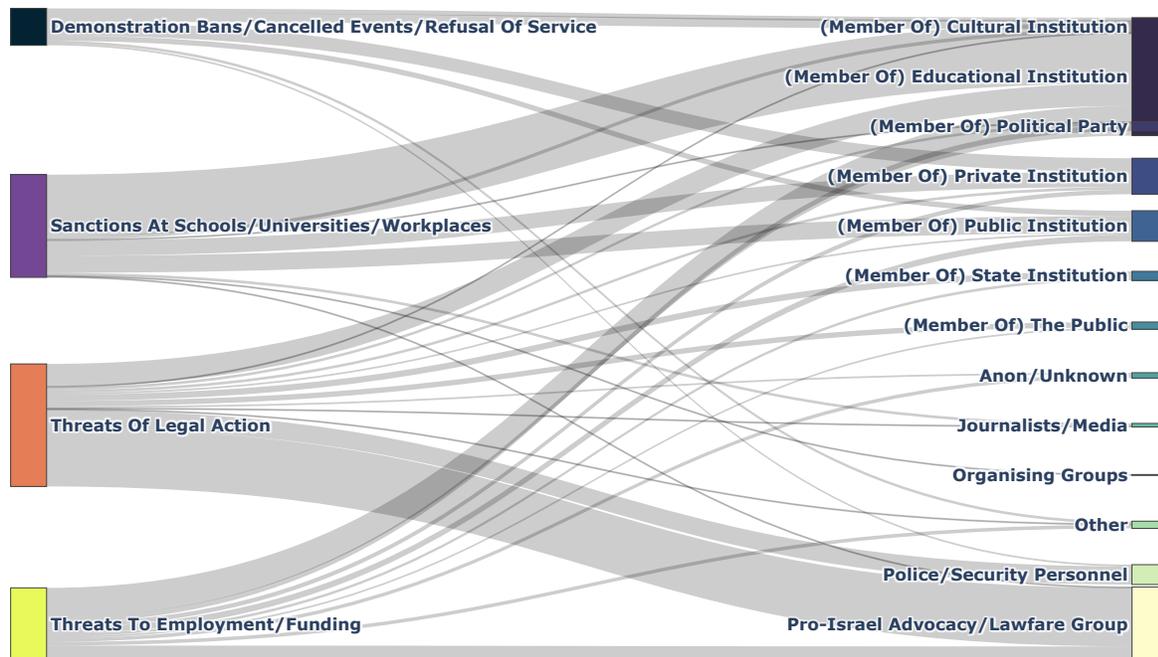
⁷⁹ Hil Aked, *Friends of Israel: The Backlash Against Palestine Solidarity* (Verso Books, 2023).

The network is not static, but learns and adapts as the movement evolves. Power is constantly responding to resistance; when solidarity strategies shift, the nodes recalibrate, where media outlets refine their smearing frames, lawfare groups identify new legal vulnerabilities, and institutions update their disciplinary procedures. This responsiveness makes the ecology of anti-Palestinian repression dynamic, capable of containing solidarity across its ever-changing forms.

Nor is this network contained by British borders. Lawfare groups coordinate with Israeli counterparts; smearing narratives circulate through transatlantic media ecosystems; funding flows through global Zionist infrastructure. The British node is one part of a transnational apparatus, though its operation within domestic institutions gives it a distinctive local texture.

Moreover, the network does not only act upon its targets, but it also performs for a public audience. Each act of repression signals to anyone who wants to speak or act in solidarity with Palestine that surveillance is everywhere and consequences are unavoidable. The distributed nature of the network makes this threat feel inescapable, as though repression is the natural atmosphere of liberal society itself.

In this sense, the repression of Palestine solidarity in Britain is not the work of rogue actors or isolated overreachers. It is the predictable output of an integrated system whose efficiency lies precisely in its decentralisation, and whose power lies in its capacity to make systematic violence look like the mundane functioning of liberal institutions. What this network produces, above all, is not just a catalogue of incidents but a governing narrative – one that renders Palestine solidarity legible only as a problem of security, extremism, or hate. It is to the construction and operation of this narrative that we now turn.



(Incident Category > Actors)

PART II

By All Accounts, Allegedly: Unpacking the Script Against Solidarity

This section charts the construction of the political discourse that enables and justifies the repression of Palestine solidarity in Britain. We show how the British state and allied actors have operationalised two core allegations – antisemitism and support for terrorism – as both rhetorical smears and, crucially, as direct legal and bureaucratic levers. These accusations form part of a strategic backlash designed to make critical scrutiny of Zionism appear dangerous and taboo.⁸⁰

The attachment of these allegations to the Palestine solidarity movement occurs through two interconnected avenues. First, through the conflation of anti-Zionism with anti-Jewish racism via the ‘new antisemitism’ thesis, which redefines certain criticisms of Israel or Zionism as a novel form of racism. This framing has been most effectively institutionalised through the IHRA definition. Second, through the stigmatisation of the movement as ‘extremist’ and linked to ‘terrorism’, which justifies state surveillance through programmes like Prevent and opens the door to financial and legal sanctions.

⁸⁰ Hil Aked, *Friends of Israel: The Backlash Against Palestine Solidarity* (Verso Books, 2023).

These allegations form a self-reinforcing narrative through constant repetition in media, official statements, and quasi-legal complaints. This narrative is the essential predicate for material forms of repression, manifesting directly as the language of police arrests, Prevent referrals, employment suspensions, and deplatforming orders.⁸¹ Through a systematic redefinition of solidarity – one that frames mass protests as ‘hate marches’ and equates anti-Zionism with inherent racial hatred – the state and its network have inverted a cause of liberation into a symptom and cause of ‘extremism’. Discursively, the ‘Palestine solidarity activist’ is thereby transformed into the ‘antisemite’ or the ‘terrorism sympathiser’, a necessary administrative and legal classification that then authorises a spectrum of repression.

The goal of this analysis is to denaturalise this politically produced process. It exposes its origins, key architects, and evolving tactics, showing how strategic allegations are codified into a reusable script and how that script is mobilised to delegitimise and criminalise the movement – ultimately protecting the state of Israel and its international sponsors from accountability by shifting focus away from material actions onto the purported motives of its critics.

Featured Incident

University of Warwick reported student to police for carrying sign that drew parallels between Israel and Nazi Germany during a Palestine solidarity demonstration on campus

On 29 November 2023, a University of Warwick student participated in a demonstration on campus, organised by an anti-racist society against the Israeli genocide in Gaza. During the demonstration, the student held a placard reading, “Gaza forever, as one gone” (with an arrow pointing to a German flag) “next one born” (with an arrow pointing to an Israeli flag) “free Palestine”.

On 5 December 2023, police arrested the student at their university accommodation on allegations of aunder caution, and detained for 15 hours. Police informed the student that the university had reported them in the first instance due to the contents of the sign.

On 14 December 2023, the University of Warwick sent the student a notice of investigation and scheduled an investigation meeting, which took place on 19 December 2023. The investigation was conducted under Section 10.9 of the Process for Responding to Student Behaviour Misconduct, following the student’s acceptance of a caution (Out-of-Court Disposal Order) for a breach of Section 4A of the Public Order Act regarding a sign displayed at an on-campus protest.

On 23 January 2024, with the support of ELSC and external partners from our legal network, the police agreed to revoke the student’s caution and delete all associated records. After reviewing the case, police acknowledged that the student had not admitted guilt for any offense under Section 4 of the Public Order Act 1984. On 7 March 2024, the university informed the student that “there will be no further disciplinary action in relation to [the] allegation”.

⁸¹ ‘Deplatforming’ refers to the practice of preventing individuals or groups from speaking in particular forums through event cancellations, withdrawn invitations, conference bans, or removal from digital platforms.

Shifting Definitions: Alleging Antisemitism in Britain

*To my mind there is only one way to describe those marches: they are hate marches.*⁸²

Home Secretary Suella Braverman

On the afternoon of 7 November 2023, an emergency meeting of the Cabinet Office Briefing Rooms (COBRA) – the UK government’s crisis response committee convened for matters of national emergency – met in Whitehall. Its stated purpose was to assess threats to Britain following Hamas’s insurgent attack one month prior.⁸³ That same day, Gaza’s Ministry of Health reported over 10000 Palestinians killed by the Israeli military, 1.5 million displaced, and a total electricity blackout entering its fifth week.⁸⁴ In London, half a million people marched in protest against the genocide and the UK government’s complicity.

Emerging from the COBRA meeting, then-Home Secretary Suella Braverman was asked about the protest. For her, the mass demonstration – with its chants of ‘from the river to the sea, Palestine will be free’ and its sea of Palestinian flags – boiled down to one thing: vicious antisemitic hatred.⁸⁵ By branding it a ‘hate march’,⁸⁶ Braverman evoked a powerful and affective image: of masses mobilising to incite violence, posing a threat to ‘communities’ in Britain. With this image, Braverman enacted a core mechanism of repression. She translated political solidarity with a people facing annihilation into an alleged racial threat.



Our data show that of 964 incidents of anti-Palestinian repression in Britain since 2019, the allegation of antisemitism is invoked **232** times⁸⁷ to delegitimize and punish a vast range of activities, expressions, and events.

82 “These are hate marches”: Home secretary hits out at pro-Palestinian protests as UK terror threat level remains ‘substantial’, *Sky News* (London), 30 October 2023, <https://uk.news.yahoo.com/hate-marches-home-secretary-hits-151400077.html>.

83 “These are hate marches”, *Sky News* (London).

84 ‘Hostilities in the Gaza Strip and Israel - reported impact, 7 November 2023’, *United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs* (OCHA), 7 November 2023, <https://www.unocha.org/publications/report/occupied-palestinian-territory/hostilities-gaza-strip-and-israel-reported-impact-7-november-2023-2359>.

85 “These are hate marches”, *Sky News* (London).

86 “These are hate marches”, *Sky News* (London).

87 This number includes all incidents where the allegation is antisemitism, or creating a hostile environment for Jewish people, or intimidation of Jewish people.

INC-3949-C506

29/02/2024 / Nottingham

Police charged individual under Malicious Communications Act 1998 for sending photos of victims of Israeli genocide in Gaza during online debate with Facebook user, alleging “antisemitic hate speech online”

ACTOR

police / security personnel

TARGET

(member of) the public

INC-3918-6133

27/10/2023 / Online/In Print/Media

Newspaper The Times smeared University College London (UCL) academics for publishing academic article criticising settler colonialism in Palestine, alleging antisemitism

ACTOR

journalist / media

TARGET

academic / writer / teachers

INC-2888-Q8C8

30/03/2022 / Sheffield

Labour Party investigated councillor candidate following smearing by newspaper The Jewish Chronicle for participation in Palestine solidarity demonstration, for chanting “Israel is a terrorist state”, and designing poster using slogan “from the river to the sea, Palestine will be free”, alleging antisemitism and breach of policy

ACTOR

(member of) political party

TARGET

(member of) political party

dedness. It is weaponised through quasi-legal frameworks like the IHRA definition and leveraged via laws such as the Equality Act 2010.⁸⁸ Lawfare groups such as UK Lawyers for Israel (UKLFI) and the so-called Campaign Against Antisemitism (CAA) use these tools to threaten individuals and institutions, arguing that boycott campaigns (e.g., the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement) or historical criticism of Israel create an unlawfully ‘hostile environment’ for Jewish people.

This contemporary repression draws its power from a long and twisted history. The allegation that anti-Zionism is anti-Jewish racism finds its origins in the very foundation of the Zionist project – a foundation laid by British imperial policy.

88 Incidents involving the allegation of breaching the 2010 Equality Act in UKLFI's threats of legal action: INC-3886-Q3T3, INC-3864-Y1L1, INC-3385-N4Z3, INC-2856-B0Q2, INC-2765-R5C5, INC-2682-F7H1, INC-2512-H2X6, INC-2486-K7G5, INC-2417-C1K2, INC-2376-C0T9, INC-2186-J6S0, INC-1299-L8J1, INC-1122-P3B7

From Imperial Solution to Repressive Framework

The history of antisemitism in Britain is intimately intertwined with the history of racism and opposition to immigration. At the dawn of the 20th century, violent pogroms and economic deprivation forced many Jews, especially the poor and working class, to flee the Pale of Settlement – a territory west of the Russian Empire which Jews were confined to – and seek refuge elsewhere, including in Britain.⁸⁹ Their arrival marked a historic shift, as Jews were officially expelled per decree by King Edward I in 1290 and only a small community of affluent Sephardic Jews had been granted residence in London since.

In 1905, answering to public opposition to the arrival of predominantly poor migrants, then-Prime Minister Lord Arthur Balfour ensured the passing of the Alien's Act, a piece of legislation aimed at restricting Jewish immigration. Balfour's anti-immigration policy was paired with a political moral panic about the threat posed by revolutionary, especially anarchist Jews. This panic fixated on figures like those engaged in a jewellery robbery to fund revolutionary activities in East London's Stepney Green. It was further reinforced by an antisemitic narrative that considered Jews to 'self-segregate' in areas like Whitechapel, depicting them as both unas-similable and racially distinct.⁹⁰

Just over a decade later and a year after the secret Sykes-Picot treaty expanded French and British imperial frontiers from Gaza to Baghdad, in 1917, Lord Balfour, now British Foreign Secretary, would send a letter to the Zionist Federation of Great Britain and Ireland, which set the foundation for Zionist settlement in Palestine. The Balfour Declaration of 1917 was, in the words of its author, then-Foreign Secretary Arthur Balfour, a strategic solution to a problem he framed in starkly antisemitic terms: how to manage what he called 'a Body which [Western civilization] too long regarded as alien, even hostile, but which it was equally unable to expel or absorb'.⁹¹

Zionism offered an imperial answer that redirected a racialised 'Jewish question' in Europe by sponsoring a settler colonial project abroad. The Declaration's infamous formulation – a 'national home for the Jewish people' with 'nothing [to] prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities' – legally encoded a hierarchy of political belonging. Palestinians were defined not by their own nationhood, but by what they were not: 'non-Jewish'.⁹²

This foundational contradiction was identified immediately by the only Jewish member of the wartime cabinet, Edwin Samuel Montagu. In a fierce memorandum, he warned that establishing a Jewish 'national home' would inevitably undermine Jewish citizenship in Europe,

89 Yousef Munayyer, 'It's Time To Admit That Arthur Balfour Was A White Supremacist — And An Anti-Semite Too', *Institute for Palestine Studies*, 1 November 2017, <https://www.palestine-studies.org/en/node/232119>.

90 Nasar Meer and Tehseen Noorani, 'A sociological comparison of anti-Semitism and anti-Muslim sentiment in Britain', *The Sociological Review*, 56:2 (2008), <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-954X.2008.00784.x>.

91 Cited in Munayyer, 'It's Time To Admit That Arthur Balfour Was A White Supremacist'.

92 Munayyer, 'It's Time To Admit That Arthur Balfour Was A White Supremacist'.

reinforcing the antisemitic claim that Jews were perpetual aliens. Montagu argued,

There is no Jewish race now as a homogenous whole. It is quite obvious that the Jews in Great Britain are as remote from the Jews in Morocco or the [B]lack Jews in Cochin as the Christian Englishman is from the Moor or the Hindoo [sic]...If only our peoples would...take their place as non-conformists then Zionism would obviously die and Jews might find their way to esteem.⁹³

Montagu's concerns reflected a wider scepticism among British Jewry towards Zionism. Even *The Jewish Chronicle*, whose contemporary reporting features prominently in our database as a source of allegations and smears,⁹⁴ argued in March 1897 that 'The battle against antisemitism must be fought in Europe, not in Asia; it is a campaign that will need centuries of patient endurance'.⁹⁵ The paper also opposed Herzl's convening of a congress to found the World Zionist Organization: 'The very notion of an "International" Congress was an insult to the patriotism of Jews of various nationalities, and antisemites have not been slow to avail themselves of the groundless insinuations that Jews are now confessedly unpatriotic and half-hearted as citizens of the states in which they live'.⁹⁶

The contradiction embedded in the Balfour Declaration – a promise of national self-determination for one people that required the political erasure of another – did not remain a theoretical debate. It materialised in the ethnic cleansing of the 1948 Nakba, through the expulsion of the majority of the Palestinian population and the founding of a state premised on their ongoing and permanent removal. It was this lived reality of Zionism as a political project, not an abstract debate about Jewish identity, that propelled the issue onto the global stage. As decolonisation movements gained strength in the 1960s and 70s, Palestine became a central symbol of unfinished liberation, and Zionism was analysed through the same lens applied to South African apartheid and other settler colonial regimes.

By 1975, a global majority predominantly made up of the Arab League, the Non-Aligned Movement, and nations who had recently struggled successfully against colonial domination, de-

93 Edwin Samuel Montagu, 'Memorandum of Edwin Montagu on the Anti-Semitism of the Present (British) Government – Submitted to the British Cabinet, August, 1917', *Great Britain, Public Record Office, Cab. 24/24*, Aug. 23, 1917, <https://libcom.org/article/anti-semitism-present-british-government>.

94 Example incidents recorded in Britain's *Index of Repression*: INC-3849-T3P1, INC-3848-G6Y7, INC-3755-J7S5, INC-3731-T7M0, INC-3716-JOW4, INC-3688-G6P1, INC-3681-J2M8, INC-3679-Z5Z7, INC-3678-N5B9, INC-3620-T5L8, INC-3544-F5B3, INC-3543-R4N0, INC-3542-SOF4, INC-3536-D4V7, INC-3535-TOM5, INC-3457-L6F7, INC-3400-H7H8, INC-3354-R6K9, INC-3352-G1S9, INC-3351-Z4N6, INC-3350-G0V1, INC-3349-D5C9, INC-3295-T1T4, INC-3282-K0P2, INC-3251-D5P6, INC-3250-F2D9, INC-3246-G9B0, INC-3026-Z1N2, INC-3010-B1B2, INC-2989-Q0C9, INC-2945-Z6K1, INC-2944-M9S9, INC-2920-D4B9, INC-2852-Q2Y0, INC-2490-R9L2, INC-2464-P0W3, INC-2234-J5T1, INC-2237-S2S7, INC-2218-K6D6, INC-2182-F2V7, INC-2164-M8C6, INC-2114-L8Z7, INC-2113-Y6Y9, INC-1836-K4Q5, INC-1700-S9B0, INC-1520-Q6P6, INC-1509-G7B1, INC-1509-G7B1, INC-1369-K2L9, INC-1369-K2L9, INC-1373-H9C3, INC-1337-F4Y7, INC-1332-X4B3, INC-1244-D6R2, INC-1241-T0B3, INC-1255-Q8R9, INC-1245-B1S2, INC-1246-C4S4, INC-1232-M6L6, INC-1222-N9Y5, INC-1216-T2F1, INC-1193-G1B4, INC-3988-N8H9, INC-4140-N4P9.

95 In David Ceserani, *The Final Solution: Origins and Implementation* (Routledge, London, 2002), 86-7.

96 Ceserani, *The Final Solution: Origins and Implementation*.

clared Zionism a form of racism and racial discrimination in UN Resolution 3379. The adopted text based its analysis of Zionism within a global critique of imperialism, the racist dimensions of foreign occupation and colonialism, and the apartheid regime in South Africa and Namibia. Britain opposed the resolution presented in 1975 and later voted to de-adopt the 'Zionism is racism' resolution in 1991, following the leadership of the United States, Britain's ally, during the concurrent first Gulf War on Iraq. However, the global debate over whether Zionism was the realisation of Jewish self-determination and the only logical response to the atrocities of the Holocaust, or an ethnonationalist state premised upon the erasure of native Palestinians – their culture, history, and political formation – did not end with the de-adoption of the UN resolution.

By the new millennium, the allegation of antisemitism is now systematically deployed not to challenge the antisemitic logic Balfour wielded, but to *protect the colonial reality his Declaration created*. Palestinian resistance and its global solidarity are recast as a new, mutated form of anti-Jewish hate. This 'new antisemitism'⁹⁷ thesis was forged in a pivotal moment of global anti-racist struggle: the 2001 UN World Conference Against Racism in Durban.

At Durban, the demand to confront Israeli apartheid and affirm Palestinian rights was met with a concerted political offensive. Led by the US and Israel, who staged a walkout, opponents framed the conference itself as an attack on Jewish people. Before leaving the conference, Israeli ambassador Mordechai Yaid accused both the UN conference and the NGO Forum of 'hatred of the Jew that, under the cover of anti-Zionism, has emerged out of this conference'.⁹⁸ Criticism of Zionism as a form of racism was re-narrated as the core of a modern, 'anti-Zionist antisemitism'. This 'Durban narrative' provided the ideological framework for a powerful new tool: the IHRA definition.

Drafted in 2016 and swiftly adopted by the UK government, the IHRA definition operationalised the 'new antisemitism' thesis. While its core definition is broad, its controversial 'contemporary examples' – which include 'denying the Jewish people their right to self-determination, e.g., by claiming that the existence of a State of Israel is a racist endeavor'⁹⁹ – functionally equate anti-Zionism with hate speech. This non-legally binding definition was aggressively promoted by the Israeli government as a strategic tool to counter the growing Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement. In Britain, it was adopted not through democratic scrutiny but presented as a technical fix to a manufactured crisis. It provided the quasi-legal grammar for the repression documented in our database.

This redefinition performs a specific political function, that which illegitimately extends the protection granted to Jewish people as a group to the State of Israel as a political entity. By

97 See a critique of the new anti-semitism thesis in Neve Gordon, 'The "New Anti-Semitism"', *London Review of Books*, 4 January 2018, <https://www.lrb.co.uk/the-paper/v40/n01/neve-gordon/the-new-anti-semitism>.

98 Pierre Hazan, *Judging War, Judging History: Behind Truth and Reconciliation*, (Stanford University Press 2010), 82.

99 'IHRA non-legally binding working definition of antisemitism', 26 May 2016: <https://holocaustremembrance.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/IHRA-non-legally-binding-working-definition-of-antisemitism-1.pdf>.

listing examples that include describing Israel as a 'racist endeavour' or denying its 'right to exist' as potentially antisemitic, the IHRA framework effectively forecloses the very language through which Palestinians and their allies name their historical and material reality. The Nakba, the system of apartheid, and the structures of settler colonial occupation become, under this logic, unspeakable – recoded as expressions of racial hatred rather than descriptions of political fact.¹⁰⁰

Legislating the Crisis: Conflating Anti-Zionism and Anti-Jewish Racism

The Crown Prosecution Service will consider the words 'Zionist' or 'Zio' for inclusion as part of its current guidance for prosecutors. The guidance covers lessons from practice and reflects on the changing nature of language and terminology in relation to anti-Semitism.

Government Response to Home Affairs Committee Report: 'Anti-Semitism in the UK' (2016)

In Britain, new regulatory frameworks on antisemitism expanded rapidly after 2016 and were bolstered by public scandalisations and 'crises'. Crises, and the moral unrest they produce, are deliberately exploited for political ends, such as introducing new laws and regulations not only to respond to the 'crisis', but to eradicate what or who is seen to have caused it.¹⁰¹ What makes the allegation of antisemitism particularly potent is that – as the above quote makes clear – the term itself keeps being redefined, warranting constant updating of the legal toolbox. This section traces how the framing of 'Israel-related antisemitism' has expanded the repressive toolbox, by engaging the IHRA definition and attempts to mobilise the Equality Act 2010 to cast anti-Zionism as antisemitism. The production of public scandalisations, such as those against the Labour Party and the National Union of Students (NUS), leading to NUS defunding in 2022, and the suspension of Professor David Miller from the University of Bristol, have provided the necessary narrative shift to lend legitimacy to repression.

Such public scandalisations erupted also in the context of increasingly successful BDS campaigns following the 2014 Israeli military assault on Gaza, especially across university campuses and municipalities in Britain.¹⁰² In response, then-Government minister Mathew Hancock announced attempts to restrict BDS efforts during a joint press conference with Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu in 2016,¹⁰³ a threat reiterated in the Tory party's 2019 manifesto, and finally resulting in a 2023 Bill preventing public bodies from engaging in boycotts,

¹⁰⁰ Hil Aked, *Friends of Israel: The Backlash against Palestine Solidarity*, (Verso Books 2023).

¹⁰¹ Barnaby Raine, 'What Do People Panic About When They Panic About Antisemitism?', 21 October 2025: <https://salvage.zone/what-do-people-panic-about-when-they-panic-about-anti-semitism/>.

¹⁰² Davina Cooper and Didi Herman, 'Doing Activism like a State: Progressive Municipal Government, Israel/Palestine and BDS', *Environment and Planning C: Politics and Space* 38, no. 1 (2020): 40–59. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2399654419851187>.

¹⁰³ Asa Winstanley, 'UK threatens to fine town halls that boycott Israel', *Electronic Intifada*, 18 February 2016, <https://electronicintifada.net/blogs/asa-winstanley/uk-threatens-fine-town-halls-boycott-israel>.

allegedly to prevent 'a rise in antisemitism'¹⁰⁴. Conjointly with the adoption of the problematic IHRA definition in 2016 – a definition whose expanded framing of 'Israel-related antisemitism' was directly promoted by the Israeli Ministry of Diaspora Affairs, as evidenced in its own 2016 report¹⁰⁵ – these regulatory frameworks have shifted the meaning of antisemitism and opened up new avenues for repressing dissent to Israeli settler colonialism and genocide in Palestine.

Our data confirm that public crises which posit actions taken in support of Palestine as antisemitic, are produced by a network of actors who amplify this narrative as fact and put pressure

104 Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities and The Rt Hon Michael Gove, 'UK public bodies banned from imposing their own boycotts against foreign countries', 19 June 2023, <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/uk-public-bodies-banned-from-imposing-their-own-boycotts-against-foreign-countries>.

105 The Israeli Ministry of Diaspora Affairs, 'Antisemitism In 2016. Overview, Trends and Events', 29 November 2016: <https://eurojewcong.org/resources/report-on-antisemitism-in-2016-overview-trends-and-events/>.

Government attempted to pass anti-boycott bill aimed at preventing local bodies from implementing BDS policies

From 2016, the Conservative Party government began publishing a series of guidance documents aimed at public bodies, such as the NHS and local councils, who were seeking to divest from companies deemed to be unethical, including companies targeted by the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) campaign. In September 2016, the Department for Communities and Local Government issued guidance that prohibited Local Government Pension Schemes (LGPS) from pursuing BDS, alleging it to be “inappropriate”. The guidance came despite a public consultation in 2015 that found 98% of respondents to be against such proposals on the basis that local members should be able to democratically decide where to invest their pension funds.

In June 2017, the Palestine Solidarity Campaign (PSC) brought a Judicial Review challenge that ultimately led to a Supreme Court decision on 28 April 2020, ruling that banning LGPS from implementing divestment policies was unlawful.

Yet on 22 February 2022, parliament voted in favour of an amendment to the Public Service Pensions and Judicial Offices Bill, brought by Conservative Party MP Robert Jenrick. The amendment allowed ministers to intervene where LGPS have made decisions in conflict with government foreign and defence policy.

On 19 June 2023, the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, Michael Gove, introduced the government’s “Economic Activity of Public Bodies (Overseas Matters) Bill” to parliament. In his introduction, Gove said the bill “affirms the important principle that UK foreign policy is a matter for the UK Government; it ensures that local authorities concentrate on serving their residents, not directing resources inefficiently; and, critically, it provides protection for minority communities, especially the Jewish community, against campaigns that harm community cohesion and fuel antisemitism.” Shortly after, a coalition of over 70 organisations, including the ELSC, launched the “Right to Boycott” campaign. On 1 September 2023, PSC delivered a petition signed by nearly 18,000 people, calling on the Prime Minister Rishi Sunak to scrap the bill that would ban local bodies from engaging in BDS campaigns.

On 10 January 2024, the bill passed its second reading in parliament, and on 20 February 2024, it passed its second reading in the House of Lords. However, PM Rishi Sunak called for a general election on 22 May 2024, and the bill failed to receive Royal Assent and become law before parliament was dissolved.

on institutions to act by citing quasi-legal tools and policies. This has severe effects on people's livelihoods,¹⁰⁶ wellbeing, and capacity to organise. Key actors who drive the application of new and expanding repressive tools are the newspaper *The Jewish Chronicle*, the lawfare group UKLFI, the Security and Community Trust, and CAA.

In turn, UKLFI and other actors, including educational, cultural, private or public institutions, regularly cite smear articles by *The Jewish Chronicle* to legitimise acts of repression. Recent research provides evidence of the staggering conflation of anti-Zionism with antisemitism in reporting by *The Jewish Chronicle*.¹⁰⁷ An analysis of all articles published between 1925 and 2024 shows that the word 'antisemitism' appeared almost twice as many times in 2019, at the height of Labour Party candidate Jeremy Corbyn's election bid, compared to the term's appearance in 1938, when new anti-Jewish policies were introduced on a daily basis in Nazi Germany.¹⁰⁸ Between October 2023 and June 2024, over 50% of all published articles made reference to antisemitism, often to describe strong condemnation of the Israeli state or anti-Zionist individuals, groups, or expressions.

This narrative shift is cemented as common sense when Zionist lawfare weaponises regulatory bodies and legal mechanisms to submit disciplinary complaints and threaten legal action not only against those engaging in anti-Zionist critique, but also against those who host or work with them. For example, our data show that actors such as CAA and UKLFI routinely draw on the Equality Act 2010 to escalate their repression of Palestinians and their allies. In invoking the Act, passed in 2010 to unify existing anti-discrimination legislation into one statute, the CAA and UKLFI depict anti-Zionism as unlawful harassment of Jews, protected under the categories of 'race' and 'religion or belief', under section 26.¹⁰⁹ Such claims purport that anti-Zionist activism on campus,¹¹⁰ or a lecture on Balfour's role in the erasure of Palestinian land and life, create a 'hostile environment' because of an assumed inherent connection between British Jews and the Israeli state or Zionism. This assumed inherent connection between Jews as a group and Zionism as a political state project is decidedly disputed and has always received significant pushback¹¹¹ – a fact also recognised by those investigating the conflation of Zionism and Judaism.

The case of *Parker vs Sheffield Hallam University*, reviewed by the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA) in May 2015 – one year after the Israeli onslaught on

106 This occurs, for example, when workers are reported to their employer, as in incident INC-3883-M0J3.

107 Neve Gordon, 'The Weaponisation of Antisemitism: *The Jewish Chronicle* and the Production of a Moral Panic'. *Media, Culture & Society*, 27 September 2025, 01634437251375360. <https://doi.org/10.1177/01634437251375360>.

108 Gordon, 'The Weaponisation of Antisemitism'.

109 Lesley Klaff, 'What is an English Jew?: The Legal Construction of Jewish Identity Under the UK Equality Act of 2010', *Indiana Journal of Law and Social Equality*, 11 (1), 2023, <https://www.repository.law.indiana.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1163&context=ijlse>.

110 See for instance the claims made as part of the employment tribunal of *Mr R. Fraser v. UCU*, 22 March, 2013: <https://www.judiciary.uk/wp-content/uploads/JCO/Documents/Judgments/eemployment-trib-fraser-v-uni-college-union-judgment.pdf>.

111 See the Employment Tribunal's verdict on Zionism as a protected philosophical belief in the case of Prof. David Miller's dismissal from the University of Bristol. E.g. Matthew Bolton, 'Anti-Zionism as "Protected Belief": The Case of David Miller', *Industrial Law Journal*, 2025, <https://doi.org/10.1093/indlaw/dwaf048>.

INC-1201-L8R3

13/11/2019 / Coventry

University Jewish Society President filed complaint against academic for referring to "Israeli lobby" during lecture, alleging antisemitism

ACTOR

(member of) educational institution

TARGET

academic / writer / teachers

INC-3881-Q4N6

11/04/2022 / Uxbridge

Brunel University forced lecturer to remove article on effect of Israeli apartheid policies on Palestinian mental health from occupational therapy course following UK Lawyers for Israel (UKLFI) interference, alleging insult to Jewish students

ACTOR

(member of) educational institution

TARGET

academic / writer / teachers

INC-3385-N4Z3

13/02/2024 / Birmingham

UK Lawyers for Israel (UKLFI) threatened University of Birmingham with legal action for teaching module by academic on discrimination against disabled Palestinian children with Israeli citizenship, alleging "anti-Israel political propaganda" and breach of Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) under Equality Act 2010

ACTOR

pro-israel advocacy / lawfare group

TARGET

academic / writer / teachers

INC-1554-N2W7

20/10/2023 / Liverpool

Liverpool Hope University cancelled lecture by historian Avi Shlaim for being critical of Zionism and creation of Israeli state, alleging safety concerns and complaints by local Jewish community

ACTOR

(member of) educational institution

TARGET

academic / writer / teachers

INC-3357-N9B5

01/12/2024 / Online/In Print/Media

Student smeared King's College London (KCL) academic on X (formerly Twitter) for teachings on Palestine, alleging support for proscribed organisation

ACTOR

(member of) educational institution

TARGET

academic / writer / teachers

INC-3354-R6K9

08/10/2023 / London

Student repeatedly harassed King's College London (KCL) academic and shared information to newspaper The Jewish Chronicle for teachings on Palestine, alleging antisemitism, support for proscribed organisations, and delegitimisation of Israel

ACTOR

(member of) educational institution

TARGET

academic / writer / teachers

INC-2181-S1S8

29/02/2024 / Birmingham

University of Birmingham removed lecture on discrimination against disabled Palestinian children with Israeli citizenship from academic's teaching module following UK Lawyers for Israel (UKLFI) interference, alleging "anti-Israel political propaganda"

ACTOR

(member of) educational institution

TARGET

academic / writer / teachers

Gaza as part of its Operation Protective Edge – provides some examples of what the plaintiff considered to contribute to said hostile environment. Namely: social media posts by the university's Palestine society accusing Israel of genocide and deliberately killing Palestinian civilians as well as the annual Israeli Apartheid Week (IAW).¹¹² However, in a landmark decision (which we elaborate on in Part III of this report) the Bristol Employment Tribunal¹¹³ ruled in the case of academic Professor David Miller – who had been dismissed from his position at Bristol University over statements describing Zionism's expression in structures of apartheid, ethnic cleansing and territorial expansionism – that anti-Zionism constitutes a 'protected philosophical belief'.¹¹⁴ Miller's dismissal was preceded by smearing and reporting to his employer by the faith-based organisation Community Security Trust (CST),¹¹⁵ a reoccurring actor of repression in our database. Thus, Miller's case exemplifies a broader system of repression that involves targeted and coordinated smear campaigns alongside official complaint structures, which can lead to wrongful loss of employment and long and costly legal battles.

Efforts to expand the notion of racial discrimination against Jews to include opposition to the systematic destruction of Palestinian life, whether by way of the Equality Act 2010 or the IHRA

112 Klaff, 'What is an English Jew?'

113 Bristol Employment Tribunal *Miller v University of Bristol*, 5 February 2024, <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6707c243366f494ab2e7b67d/Miller-judgment-1400780.2022-JDT...pdf>.

114 *Miller v. University of Bristol*.

115 See incident INC-4157-T0H6 in the *Index of Repression*.

definition, are central mechanisms for leveraging institutional, legal, and quasi-legal force against individuals, institutions, and political parties. Two examples of how this mechanism is deployed by actors like CAA and UKLFI are the scandals involving antisemitism allegations against the Labour Party under Jeremy Corbyn and against the National Union of Students (NUS).

In May 2019, the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) initiated an investigation into allegations of antisemitism made against the Labour Party and found that it was in breach of the Equality Act 2010 for unlawful harassment and discrimination. Moreover, the Commission found that the party repeatedly mishandled or dismissed internal antisemitism complaints. The public scandal revolved not only around the Party but, to a large extent, around its 2015 elected leader, Jeremy Corbyn, known for his long-term involvement in anti-fascist and anti-apartheid politics, as well as his vocal support for the Palestinian liberation struggle. Supporters of Corbyn claimed that the allegations served the political purpose of character assassination to prevent Corbyn's leadership bid, whilst others claimed that the blanket dismissal of the allegations was testimony to Labour's refusal to engage seriously with structural discrimination and racism internally.

Significantly, the Commission's conclusions were shaped substantially by the involvement of CAA, which filed several disciplinary complaints against Jeremy Corbyn to the Labour Party and finally referred the Labour Party to the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) in 2018, requesting the Party's investigation. CAA is an organisation founded in 2014 and celebrates the carceral logic behind their work, stating: 'We have put antisemites behind bars, put antisemitism on the front pages and trained anyone from regulators to schoolchildren in how to identify and address antisemitism'.¹¹⁶ CAA is also credited as providing evidence to the EHRC report and in 2019 put together a now deleted dossier that alleged Corbyn's responsibility for 24 out of 300 antisemitic incidents that CAA judged against the IHRA definition.¹¹⁷ The Labour Party remained under investigation by the EHRC until 2023.

The crisis around antisemitism allegations within and against the Labour Party cemented an increasingly hegemonic narrative about left-wing antisemitism, or the 'new antisemitism' thesis. This 'crisis' exemplified how antisemitism could be weaponised for factional ends. The allegation was deployed not in response to an actual surge in anti-Jewish racism, but as a tool in an internal power struggle to discredit a leadership whose vocal support for Palestinian rights had made it a target. This political weaponisation – detached from meaningful engagement with anti-Jewish racism and redeployed as a mechanism of internal discipline – set a precedent for how the charge could be used beyond the party, against any public figure or institution that refused to conform to the Zionist consensus.

116 Campaign Against Antisemitism, 'CAA, ten years on', 9 September 2024, <https://antisemitism.org/caa-ten-years-on>.

117 Campaign Against Antisemitism, 'CAA releases case files showing Jeremy Corbyn personally responsible for 24 antisemitic incidents, four times more than all candidates for other major parties combined', 9 December 2019, <https://antisemitism.org/caa-begins-releasing-case-files-showing-jeremy-corbyn-personally-responsible-for-24-antisemitic-acts-four-times-more-than-all-candidates-for-other-major-parties-combined>.

INC-1232-M6L6

31/03/2022 / Online/In Print/Media

Media including newspaper The Jewish Chronicle and tabloid Daily Mail smeared National Union of Students (NUS) President Shaima Dallali for Palestine solidarity advocacy, alleging antisemitism

ACTOR

journalist / media

TARGET

student(s) or student society / group / organisation

INC-3022-L8K3

01/11/2022 / London

National Union of Students (NUS) dismissed President Shaima Dallali following smearing by media for Palestine solidarity advocacy, alleging antisemitism

ACTOR

other

TARGET

other

INC-3019-Z0T6

13/05/2022 / London

Government suspended engagement with and funding of National Union of Students (NUS) following allegations of antisemitism following smearing of President Shaima Dallali, alleging breach of IHRA working definition of antisemitism

ACTOR

(member of) state institution

TARGET

student(s) or student society / group / organisation

INC-3019-Z0T6

13/05/2022 / London

Government suspended engagement with and funding of National Union of Students (NUS) following allegations of antisemitism following smearing of President Shaima Dallali, alleging breach of IHRA working definition of antisemitism

ACTOR

(member of) state institution

TARGET

student(s) or student society / group / organisation

As such, the 'crisis' served to legitimise previously adopted frameworks that depicted BDS efforts or anticolonial critiques of Israeli statehood on Palestinian land as antisemitic. Whereas British support for Zionist aspirations in the early 20th century was legitimised by antisemitic racism, the inverted logic of antisemitism today casts opposition to Zionism, including when it is expressed by British Jews, as antisemitic.

In May 2022, another 'crisis' around antisemitism (re)established a threat narrative around anticolonial critiques of Israeli statehood. Echoing Durban and marking university campuses across Britain as a central locus of antisemitic hate speech, the Department for Education under Boris Johnson's Conservative government announced that it would defund and sever its partnership with the National Union of Students (NUS) following allegations of antisemitism. In their press release, the Department explained that they understood their action as part of a wider effort to 'encourage more higher education providers to sign up to the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) definition of antisemitism'.¹¹⁸ Despite the wide-scale adoption of the IHRA definition by many universities – often without proper consultation¹¹⁹ – several working groups set up to review university policies on handling discrimination and racism complaints,¹²⁰ academic experts,¹²¹ and academic associations¹²² have found the definition to be unfit for purpose and posing a threat to academic freedom and freedom of speech on Palestine.

The defunding of the NUS was also celebrated and claimed as a win by UKLFI, who had previously smeared the incoming National President Shaima Dallali for her support of BDS, tweeting 'from the river to the sea', and for participating in a protest against the former Israeli deputy prime minister.¹²³ Overall, UKLFI argued that Dallali was guilty of antisemitism 'when judged against the IHRA's working definition'.¹²⁴ UKLFI's involvement went even further, including reporting Dallali to the NUS and providing statements to the subsequent investigations made into the NUS.

The final report, published by Rebecca Tuck KC in January 2023, is damning. Similar to the ECHR report on the Labour Party, it points out the lack of complaint structures for handling incidents of antisemitism. The report acknowledges that the NUS has historically condemned

118 Department for Education, The Rt Hon Michelle Doneland and The Rt Hon Nadhim Zahawi, 'Government suspends engagement with the NUS over antisemitism', 13 May 2022, <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-suspends-engagement-with-the-nus-over-antisemitism>.

119 At the University of Edinburgh, for instance, IHRA was adopted by Executive Decision in July 2020, during term break, see <https://equality-diversity.ed.ac.uk/respect/antisemitism>.

120 For example: UCL Academic Board, 'Report of the Academic Board Working Group on Racism and Prejudice', 16 December 2019, <https://discovery.ucl.ac.uk/id/eprint/10155924/1/wg-racism-and-prejudice-report.pdf>.

121 Rebecca Ruth Gould, 'The IHRA Definition of Antisemitism: Defining Antisemitism by Erasing Palestinians', *The Political Quarterly* 91, no. 4 (2020), 825–31, <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-923X.12883>.

122 See: European Legal Support Center (ELSC) and British Society for Middle Eastern Studies (BRISMES), 'Freedom of Speech and Academic Freedom in UK Higher Education: The Adverse Impact of the IHRA Definition of Antisemitism', September 2023, <https://www.brismes.ac.uk/files/documents/brismes-elsc-joint-report-ihra.pdf>.

123 'NUS President sacked over breaches of NUS policy following investigation', *UKLFI*, 1 November 2022, <https://www.uklfi.com/nus-president-sacked-over-breaches-of-nus-policy-following-investigation>.

124 'NUS President sacked over breaches of NUS policy', *UKLFI*.

antisemitism but argues that what Rebecca Tuck sees as 'new antisemitism', or antisemitic 'hostility to Israel', has not been adequately addressed.¹²⁵ Indeed, according to the author, the 'origins within the conflict' go back to 1975, when the NUS cited the UN Resolution on Zionism as a form of racism in a motion intended to cut ties with complicit Zionist organisations. In doing so, the report fuels not only the allegations against the NUS but also falsely depicts political opposition to settler colonial ethnonationalism and affirmations of Palestinian self-determination – i.e. by supporting BDS, opposing Zionism, and demanding a liberated Palestine

INC-2449-H4S0

27/04/2024 / London

UK Lawyers for Israel (UKLFI) threatened Royal College of Art (RCA) Students' Union with legal action following successful motion to campaign for immediate ceasefire in Gaza, and support Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS), alleging breach of charity law

ACTOR

pro-israel advocacy / lawfare group

TARGET

student(s) or student society / group / organisation

INC-1894-J9C1

07/12/2023 / London

UK Lawyers for Israel (UKLFI) reported four London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE) academics to police for social media activity in support of Palestinians' right to resistance, alleging support for proscribed organisation

ACTOR

pro-israel advocacy / lawfare group

TARGET

academic / writer / teachers

INC-1289-D9N6

17/11/2020 / Coventry

UK Lawyers for Israel (UKLFI) threatened University of Warwick Students' Union with legal action for proposed motion on divestment from companies complicit in Israeli Apartheid, alleging antisemitism and breach of charitable objectives

ACTOR

pro-israel advocacy / lawfare group

TARGET

student(s) or student society / group / organisation

INC-1290-M1Z0

31/03/2022 / London

President of City St George's University Israel Society reported Students' Union to Charity Commission for passing Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) motion at student assembly, alleging breach of charitable objectives

ACTOR

(member of) educational institution

TARGET

student(s) or student society / group / organisation

INC-3332-L9Z8

23/03/2024 / Nottingham

UK Lawyers for Israel (UKLFI) threatened University of Nottingham Students' Union with legal action for motion to campaign against government's anti-Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) bill and calling for ceasefire in Gaza, alleging breach of charity law and exacerbating "hostility towards Jewish students"

ACTOR

(member of) educational institution

TARGET

student(s) or student society / group / organisation

INC-2214-Q1P3

23/03/2024 / London

UK Lawyers for Israel (UKLFI) threatened trustees of Goldsmiths University of London Students' Union with legal action following successful motions to campaign against UK government's anti-Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) bill, to lobby university to follow BDS guidelines, and call for an immediate ceasefire in Gaza, alleging breach of charity law

ACTOR

pro-israel advocacy / lawfare group

TARGET

student(s) or student society / group / organisation

INC-2106-B6J7

21/12/2023 / Coventry

University of Warwick Students' Union Trustee prevented Students' Union from passing motion calling for ceasefire and end to Israeli genocide in Gaza, alleging breach of charity law

ACTOR

(member of) educational institution

TARGET

student(s) or student society / group / organisation

INC-2006-N6X6

18/12/2023 / Manchester

UK Lawyers for Israel (UKLFI) threatened University of Manchester Students' Union with legal action for motion calling for support for Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS), alleging breach of charity and public procurement laws

ACTOR

pro-israel advocacy / lawfare group

TARGET

student(s) or student society / group / organisation

INC-3330-V3X0

23/03/2024 / Liverpool

UK Lawyers for Israel (UKLFI) threatened Liverpool Guild of Students with legal action for motion to lobby University of Liverpool to support Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS), alleging breach of charity law

ACTOR

pro-israel advocacy / lawfare group

TARGET

student(s) or student society / group / organisation

'from the river to the sea', as anti-Jewish racism.

Beyond its central role in the defunding of the NUS, UKLFI has reported students to the police, sent threatening letters to university administrations alleging policy breaches for permitting anti-genocide encampments, and intervened to prevent universities from divesting from companies providing technological expertise and hardware to the Israeli military – companies directly complicit in the destruction of Palestinian lives.¹²⁶

Zionist lawfare groups like UKLFI and CAA have systematically targeted anti-Zionist expressions and advocacy in solidarity with Palestine by mobilising regulatory frameworks and non-legal tools like the IHRA definition to threaten public institutions and smear individuals. By continuously expanding definitions of antisemitism to include anti-Zionism or support for Palestinian liberation struggles, such groups, aided by newspapers like *The Jewish Chronicle*, capitalise on previous crises which have severely impacted and demobilised progressive student movements (i.e. by having funding cut) and opposition to Britain's ongoing imperial legacy. The targeting of universities, student activists, and academics reveals how central spaces of knowledge production are to policing the boundaries of legitimate discourse around Palestine in Britain. However, policing and defaming Palestine advocacy as anti-Jewish racism does not stop at slogans or expressions but even targets the narration of Palestinian history. The campaign against Dr Salman Abu Sitta, ahead of his lecture on the occasion of the centenary of the British Mandate in Palestine, illustrates how the repressive mechanisms outlined throughout this report – including targeted campaigns and mobilisation of the IHRA framework – have weaponised the accusation of antisemitism to silence and deny Palestinian history by overwriting it with colonial historiography.

¹²⁶ 'Edinburgh University postpones decision on divestment', *UKLFI*, 15 July 2024, <https://www.uklfi.com/edinburgh-university-postpones-decision-on-divestment>; <https://www.uklfi.com/university-student-charged-with-supporting-hamas>.

A Palestinian Address to Lord Balfour

Your Declaration was the promise of those who did not own, to those who have no title, giving away the property of the absent lawful owners.

Salman Abu Sitta's 'Palestinian Address to Lord Balfour'¹²⁷

On 8 November 2022, 100 years after the League of Nations confirmed Britain's request to colonially administer Mandate Palestine, Dr Salman Abu Sitta, distinguished historian, cartographer, and survivor of the 1948 Nakba, stood at the front of the old lecture hall at the University of Edinburgh's Old College. Next to him, a portrait of Lord Balfour, former chancellor of the University of Edinburgh, sat propped up on a chair, facing the audience whilst Balfour's gaze is shyly directed towards Dr Abu Sitta, who begins his 'Palestinian Address to Lord Balfour'. Over the next hour or so, Abu Sitta recounted some of the history that this section started with – the racist motives underpinning Balfour's passing of the Alien's Act, the imperial interests of the Mandate and his infamous declaration – and tells Balfour of what came of his deeds after he died in 1930: what happened to the Palestinian villages ethnically cleansed during and after the Nakba, including Abu Sitta's natal land of Ma'in Abu Sitta and Britain's invasion of Egypt, alongside the Israeli and French military. Salman Abu Sitta's address traces the legacy of Balfour all the way from 1905 to the present-day lecture hall of the University of Edinburgh,¹²⁸ where Balfour served as chancellor for forty years.

Outside the lecture hall, on the lawn of Edinburgh's Old College, a small group of students assembled to protest Abu Sitta's lecture by holding a banner reading 'Make Hummus not Hate'. The banner insinuated that Abu Sitta was hateful because he did not participate in the liberal normalisation of settler colonialism in Palestine that claims the equality of Jews and Palestinians, premised on the idea that both 'make hummus'. Prior to the event, a coordinated campaign accused Dr Abu Sitta of antisemitism.

First, on 19 October 2022, CAA published an online allegation that Dr Abu Sitta had breached the IHRA definition by making comments, presented out of context, about the weaponisation of antisemitism and Jeremy Corbyn's solidarity with Palestine. CAA further noted that the University had signed on to the IHRA definition and called on students to get in touch, should the upcoming lecture make them 'concerned about antisemitism'. The allegations were repeated by the university's Jewish Society, the student newspaper *The Tab*, and in an article published

¹²⁷ Salman Abu Sitta, 'A Palestinian Address to Balfour: In honor of truth, memory, and justice', *Mondoweiss*, 30 November 2022, <https://mondoweiss.net/2022/11/a-palestinian-address-to-balfour-in-honor-of-truth-memory-and-justice/>.

¹²⁸ A detailed account of Balfour's imperial legacy in Palestine connected to the University of Edinburgh can be found in Nicola Perugini and Shaira Vadasaria, 'Appendix 3: University of Edinburgh and the Question of Palestine: Balfour's Imperial Legacy and its Afterlife', July 2025, <https://www.ed.ac.uk/sites/default/files/2025-07/Appendix%203%3A%20The%20University%20of%20Edinburgh%20and%20the%20Question%20of%20Palestine%3A%20Balfour%E2%80%99s%20Imperial%20Legacy%20and%20its%20Afterlife.pdf>.

by *The Jewish Chronicle* one day later.¹²⁹ David Hirsh, a researcher and founder of the campaign against the academic boycott of Israeli institutions, is quoted by *The Jewish Chronicle* stating that Dr Abu Sitta's presence fosters a 'hostile environment at the university', thus mirroring the language that protects against racist harassment under the Equality Act 2010

INC-1249-K3W3
20/10/2022 / Online/In Print/Media

University of Edinburgh Jewish Society smeared historian Dr Salman Abu Sitta for planned participation at "A Palestinian address to Balfour: in honour of truth, memory, and justice" event, alleging antisemitism

ACTOR (member of) educational institution TARGET academic / writer / teachers

INC-3282-K0P2
20/10/2022 / Online/In Print/Media

Media including newspaper The Jewish Chronicle and student tabloid The Edinburgh Tab smeared historian Dr Salman Abu Sitta following smearing by University of Edinburgh Jewish Society for planned participation at "A Palestinian Address to Balfour: In Honour of Truth, Memory, and Justice" event, alleging antisemitism

ACTOR journalist / media TARGET academic / writer / teachers

The campaign against Abu Sitta's lecture illustrates a modern application of this foundational logic: the Palestinian narrative, grounded in documented history and personal testimony, is pre-emptively recast as a form of racial hatred. A Palestinian historian, speaking from the site of the Nakba he survived, is rendered by the apparatus of the 'new antisemitism' as a figure of hate, where his testimony is recast as incitement and his scholarship as a breach of institutional policy. This inversion of resistance into racial hatred, embedded in the Balfour Declaration and operationalised contemporarily through the IHRA definition, requires a complementary allegation to fully foreclose the space for solidarity: the charge of supporting terrorism. If the Palestinian cannot be a legitimate political subject, they must become a figure of existential danger. It is to this second allegation – and its roots in the same colonial logic – that we now turn.

¹²⁹ See also Nadia Abu El-Haj, *Facts on the Ground: Archaeological Practice and Territorial Self-Fashioning in Israeli Society*, University of Chicago Press (2002).

'Support for Terrorism': Britain's Counterterrorism as the Continuation of Its Colonial Counterinsurgency by Other Means

Terrorize the terrorists . . . catch them and just wipe them out.

British intelligence officer, Captain Orde Wingate, 1938¹³⁰

The contemporary classification of Palestine solidarity and anti-Zionism as 'support for terrorism' has a long history rooted in empire. This classification, discursively, legally, and politically, is not a novel development but, as this section argues, constitutes the domestic reactivation of a governing logic refined over a century of imperial rule. This logic originated from Britain's varied counterinsurgency doctrines in its colonies,¹³¹ aimed at subordinating and suppressing movements for liberation and self-determination.

A relevant, coherent and instructive expression of this colonial genealogy can be found in Mandate Palestine. The command to 'terrorize the terrorists', issued by Captain Orde Wingate, architect of Britain's Special Night Squads (SNS) during the Arab Revolt, encapsulates the formative logic of this paradigm: the designation of anti-colonial rebels as 'terrorists' to justify their annihilation. His operations were built upon a foundation of deep intelligence collaboration, where British Special Service Officers relied on the Jewish settler population to monitor Palestinians and infiltrate their resistance networks.¹³² British military and intelligence apparatuses merged with Zionist militias, embedding platoons within settlements and actively training settler troops in 'dirty war' methods aimed at targeting civilians and villages to suppress and terrorise. This partnership transformed the *Haganah* (the Zionist paramilitary organisation that became the Israeli army in 1948) into an auxiliary force, reproducing and embedding a model of joint militarised counterinsurgency.¹³³

Contemporaneous accounts, collated in appeals to British authorities and the League of Nations by figures such as Palestinian politician Jamal al-Husayni, detailed a systematic repertoire of atrocity that included the 'decimation' of male villagers – executing every eight or

130 Quoted in Caroline Elkins, 'The "Moral Effect" of Legalized Lawlessness: Violence in Britain's Twentieth-Century Empire', *Historical Reflections/Réflexions Historiques*, *Historical Reflections/Réflexions Historiques* 44, no. 1 (2018): 78, <https://doi.org/10.3167/hrrh.2018.440109>.

131 'Counterinsurgency' refers to the full spectrum of state actions - military, political, economic, psychological, and civilian - deployed in combination to defeat insurgencies. Developed and refined through Britain's 'small wars' in Malaya, Kenya, Aden, and Cyprus, and later adopted by the US in Vietnam and its post-9/11 interventions, counterinsurgency doctrine treats rebellion not merely as a military problem but as a total political and social threat requiring comprehensive suppression.

132 Matthew Hughes, 'Terror in Galilee: British-Jewish Collaboration and the Special Night Squads in Palestine during the Arab Revolt, 1938–39', *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 43, no. 4 (2015): 591, <https://doi.org/10.1080/03086534.2015.1083220>.

133 Hughes, 'Terror in Galilee'.

fifteenth man to force the surrender of weapons – as well as scorching of flesh, the mutilation of detainees, summary executions, and sexualised violence.¹³⁴ But this documentation of state and settler brutality was officially dismissed as ‘absolutely baseless’ Arab propaganda and foreign disinformation, while affirming the unimpeachable ‘character of the British soldier’.¹³⁵

This disavowal of colonial violence through appeals to civilisational virtue constituted a rehearsed performance that has insulated and justified imperialism to this day. These appeals also play an important role in another strategic imperative integral to counterinsurgency doctrines, that of ‘winning hearts and minds’ (WHAM). Counterinsurgency aims to both defeat insurgents militarily, and to dismantle their social and political foundations by winning the support of local people and isolating the insurgents from their civilian support base. This was seen sometimes as more ‘effective’ and ‘economical’ than relying only on coercion.¹³⁶ While Wingate’s engagement with appeasing the local population was limited, the SNS did not ignore the effort to manage relations with and avoid unnecessarily alienating the local Palestinian population.¹³⁷ This effort was grounded in the core counterinsurgency principle that intelligence, its lifeblood, was understood to flow from cultivated consent, not just from coerced compliance. Indeed, WHAM was deployed at various times across Britain’s imperial history and would be reprised later in interventions such as those in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Decades before contemporary counterterrorism legislation, the imperial state was cementing the practice of designating anticolonial resistance as terrorism while enacting barbaric violence against those it colonised. But this colonial logic would not remain confined to the colonies. Palestine, like many other locales in the empire, served as a ‘temporal link’ in ‘horizontal circuits’ of colonial knowledge, where techniques were perfected and then repatriated,¹³⁸ establishing the very conceptual relationship between counterinsurgency and later counterterrorism paradigms. As Philip Schlesinger argued in the 1970s, counterinsurgency tactics ‘are the product of Western colonial and imperial expansion and the consequent relations of dominance imposed on the Third World’,¹³⁹ and that a ‘consideration of counterinsurgency thinking [...] is currently highly relevant for an analysis of the *domestic* exercise of state power in numerous Western European states’.¹⁴⁰

This repatriated logic did not merely bring tactics home; it also imported a specific conceptual vocabulary. The colonial antecedents of this doctrine had constructed the categories

134 Elkins, ‘The “Moral Effect” of Legalized Lawlessness’, 78.

135 Elkins, ‘The “Moral Effect” of Legalized Lawlessness’, 79.

136 Paul Dixon, ‘“Hearts and Minds”? British Counter-Insurgency Strategy in Northern Ireland’, *Journal of Strategic Studies* 32, no. 3 (2009): 454, <https://doi.org/10.1080/01402390902928271>.

137 H. Nelis, ‘A Forerunner to Post-War Special Forces Counter-Gangs? A Comparison of Orde Wingate’s Special Night Squads and British Post-War Special Forces Counter-Gang Conduct in Colonial Irregular Warfare and Counterinsurgency’ (PhD diss., University of Oxford, 2025), 190, <https://ora.ox.ac.uk/objects/uuid:13c69af5-821b-40db-b597-225db033948b>.

138 Laleh Khalili, ‘The Location of Palestine in Global Counterinsurgencies’, *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 42, no. 3 (2010): 413, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0020743810000425>.

139 Philip Schlesinger, *On the Shape and Scope of Counter-Insurgency Thought*, ed. Gary Littlejohn et al. (Croom Helm, 1978), 99, <https://eprints.gla.ac.uk/190544/>.

140 Schlesinger, *On the Shape and Scope of Counter-Insurgency Thought*, 99.

of 'insurgent', 'radicalisation', and 'terrorist', concepts which later became naturalised within Western policy literature as impartial truth. **Importantly, a central node within this logic is the notion that insurgency is a continuum, where everyday political demonstrations are conceptualised as 'preparatory' stages on a 'rising staircase' leading to insurgency, thereby justifying early military-style intervention into civic life.**¹⁴¹ This framework inherently criminalises both armed resistance and the entire ecosystem of political solidarity that sustains it. It is this conceptual move that helps explain the expansive, pre-emptive repression targeting the full spectrum of Palestine solidarity expression, from protests and speeches to cultural and educational work.

Constructing the Legal and Social Order

The 'continuum view of insurgency',¹⁴² which frames all political solidarity as a preparatory stage for insurgency, was domestically adapted via Northern Ireland, leading to a 'radical, militarised, restructuring' of urban policing. When the British state mobilised troops in Belfast in 1969, it initiated what would become a 38-year military presence. This period saw a suite of 'supposedly temporary' emergency powers – the Prevention of Terrorism Acts and the Northern Ireland (Emergency Provisions) Acts – become permanent fixtures. These laws 'dramatically increased the powers of the police and armed forces' and 'fundamentally altered the basic rights of the civilian population',¹⁴³ sometimes to coerce them into becoming informants. This established a precedent where exceptional, illiberal measures were routinely expanded, thereby embedding counterinsurgency logic into everyday domestic policing. From this period onwards, counterterrorism has functioned as a tool for the politics of repression, selectively targeting so-called problem groups including trade unions, disarmament campaigners, and industrial conflict. Moreover, it was through the UK's Prevention of Terrorism Act that the state perfected the technique of proscription as a political tool, thereby criminalising not just acts, but political affiliation, identity, and expression associated with the cause, a point we will return to later.

Beyond legal codification, Northern Ireland fostered a profound social transformation that acclimatised the population to a government acting beyond the rule of law and established a frame where security agencies were empowered to define 'who belongs to the community and who can be put under suspicion by acts of profiling'.¹⁴⁴ Suspicion, once legitimised, generates a pre-emptive imperative where institutions feel a 'duty' to 'anticipate' and 'prevent' perceived threats.¹⁴⁵ The Northern Ireland experience established the foundations of what would later become permanent terrorism laws in Britain, and forged a 'specific matrix of governmentality of population under suspicion with the use of an anti-terrorist discourse justifying illiberal

141 Jenny Hocking, 'Counterterrorism As Counterinsurgency: The British Experience', *Social Justice* 15, no. 1 (31) (1988): 85.

142 Hocking, 'Counterterrorism As Counterinsurgency', 85.

143 Didier Bigo and Emmanuel-Pierre Guittet, 'Northern Ireland as Metaphor: Exception, Suspicion and Radicalization in the "War on Terror"', *Security Dialogue* 42, no. 6 (2011): 485, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0967010611425532>.

144 Bigo and Guittet, 'Northern Ireland as Metaphor', 486.

145 Bigo and Guittet, 'Northern Ireland as Metaphor', 487.

practices.¹⁴⁶ This matrix would become the operational blueprint for the post-9/11 'War on Terror' and consequently, for the securitisation of the Palestine solidarity movement in Britain.

Simultaneously, at the international level, a parallel history was suppressed. Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, postcolonial and Non-Aligned Movement states pushed within the United Nations for a definition of terrorism that would explicitly include state terrorism. They argued that the most devastating and systemic forms of political violence were perpetrated by states, especially colonial and apartheid regimes, and including the State of Israel.¹⁴⁷ These efforts were systematically blocked by Western powers, led by the United States and Britain, who insisted on a definition focused solely on non-state actors.¹⁴⁸ The British position was consistent with its counterinsurgency heritage: to protect the state's monopoly on the legitimate use of force and to ensure that the violence of empire and its proxies remained outside the frame of 'terrorism'. The successful foreclosure of this debate ensured that the international legal architecture on terrorism would develop asymmetrically, where non-state actors involved in resistance practices are criminalised, while state and settler colonial violence is couched in the language of law and order and 'self-defence'.

This victory is what now allows the British state and its diffused network of enforcers to persecute and prosecute Palestine solidarity activists while enabling genocide in Palestine. **It established the asymmetry that defines 'terrorism' solely as non-state violence, thereby shielding Israeli state actions from the label and framing all opposition to them as support for terrorism. The suppression of the state terrorism discourse is the essential international complement to the domestic repression we are witnessing.**

With the new millennium, the post-9/11 'War on Terror' firmly attached the figure of the terrorist to Muslims and Arabs. Over time, and especially post-9/11, terms like 'violent extremism', 'radicalisation', and 'terrorism' became inextricably linked in Western security frameworks. Following the 7/7 attacks in 2005,¹⁴⁹ the government narrative established ideology as the 'golden thread' of terrorism – a 'malignant' force inseparable from Islam, casting the British Muslim community as a 'foreigner within',¹⁵⁰ and culminated in explicitly linking extremism to a

146 Bigo and Guittet, 'Northern Ireland as Metaphor', 491.

147 United Nations. *Observations of States submitted in accordance with General Assembly resolution 303(k) (XXVII)*. U.N. Doc. A/AC.160/1, 16 July–10 August 1973, p. 36. <https://docs.un.org/en/A/AC.160/1>.

148 See Richard Jackson, 'The Ghosts of State Terror: Knowledge, Politics and Terrorism Studies', *Critical Studies on Terrorism* 1, no. 3 (2008): 377–92, <https://doi.org/10.1080/17539150802515046>. Jackson's analysis reveals how the exclusion of state terrorism from academic and policy discourse has profound political consequences: it constructs a legitimising public discourse for state violence and forecloses critical space for articulating alternatives. This directly parallels the successful foreclosure of the UN debates on state terrorism, which ensured that international legal frameworks would develop asymmetrically, criminalising non-state resistance while immunising state violence.

149 On July 7, 2005, four suicide bombers linked to al-Qaeda detonated explosives aboard three London Underground trains across the city and on a bus killing 52 people and injuring over 770 others, 'London Bombings of 2005', accessed 16 February 2026, <https://www.btp.police.uk/police-forces/british-transport-police/areas/about-us/about-us/our-history/london-bombings-of-2005/>.

150 Maria Norris, 'Contesting Identity and Preventing Belonging? An Analysis of British Counter Terrorism Policy since the Terrorism Act 2000 and the Selective Use of the Terrorism Label by the British Government.' (PhD diss., London School of Economics and Political Science, 2015), 212, <https://researchonline.lse.ac.uk/id/eprint/134320/>.

perceived lack of 'shared British values'.¹⁵¹

These values are understood to be a common feature of Europe's liberal society, of which Israel is part. The inclusion of Israel within the 'Western community – The 'West' being a historical construct rather than a geopolitical space or natural territory – renders support for the Zionist state a litmus test of loyalty to these values, and criticism of it a sign of deviation/ *deviance*. Within this racialised logic, attentiveness to the struggle of Palestinians is framed as a 'contagion from outside'.¹⁵² Consequently, anyone supporting Palestinian liberation is discursively positioned as supporting terrorism. It is within this framework that "'terrorism" is the name by which Palestinian existence and resistance to Zionism is characterised, automatically de-legitimising both and rendering them an abomination. From this perspective, it does not matter whether Palestinians are writing poems, documenting human rights abuses, harvesting olives, or taking up weapons to resist their occupier'.¹⁵³

The Permanent Legal Framework: Terrorism Act 2000, Prevent, and Proscription

For decades, the focus of so-called anti-terrorism legislation in Britain was directed against Irish organisations and the Irish community. From the Civil Authorities (Special Powers) Bill (Northern Ireland) 1922,¹⁵⁴ the Prevention of Violence (Temporary Provisions) Bill 1939,¹⁵⁵ to the Northern Ireland (Emergency Provisions) Act 1973,¹⁵⁶ Prevention of Terrorism (Temporary Provisions) Act 1974,¹⁵⁷ and its subsequent updates in 1976, 1984, and 1989, these were all presented as exceptional, temporary measures, enacted as direct responses to specific episodes of political violence. This changed decisively with the Terrorism Act 2000. This legislation marked the moment when emergency powers were not merely renewed but permanently codified into British law, creating a powerful domestic toolkit for repression.

Britain's counterterrorism legal landscape is uniquely broad, consisting of seven permanent statutes passed since 2000: The Terrorism Act 2000, Anti-Terrorism Crime and Security Act 2001, the Prevention of Terrorism Act 2005, the Terrorism Act 2006, the Counter-terrorism Act 2008, the Terrorism Prevention and Investigation Measures Act 2011 and the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015. Together, the permanence of these legislative measures reshaped the state's relationship to the law and threat perception. The legal architecture itself now per-

151 Norris, 'Contesting Identity and Preventing Belonging?', 245.

152 Muneeza Rizvi, 'Solidarity and the Secular: Palestine, "British Values," and European Community', *Religion and Society* 15, no. 1 (2024): 146, <https://doi.org/10.3167/arrs.2024.150115>.

153 Aitlhadj et al., 'Where Is Palestine in Critical Terrorism Studies?', 7.

154 The Civil Authorities (Special Powers) Acts (Northern Ireland) 1922 to (Northern Ireland) 1949, SR & O (NI) 1949 No. 147 (1922), <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/sro/1949/147/contents/made>.

155 Prevention of Violence (Temporary Provisions) Act 1939, 2 & 3 Geo. 6 c. 50 § UK Public General Acts (1939), <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/Geo6/2-3/50/enacted>.

156 Northern Ireland (Emergency Provisions) Act 1973, 1973 c. 53 (1973), <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1973/53>.

157 Prevention of Terrorism (Temporary Provisions) Act 1974, 1974 c. 56 (1974), <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1974/56/contents/enacted>.

manently enshrines the logic of securitisation, where terrorism is treated as an existential threat justifying continuous, exceptional state powers that bypass ordinary legal constraints. The exception has become the rule.

Terrorism Act 2000

The most relevant to the repression of Palestine solidarity in Britain is the Terrorism Act 2000. Enacted with all-party support prior to 9/11, the Terrorism Act 2000 served to permanently codify and broaden the series of anti-terrorism statutes presented above. The Act's expansive prosecutorial power stems from its unusual two-part definition of terrorism. First, it defines the *conduct* broadly, encompassing not only serious violence but also the use or threat of action, where action includes serious property damage and the endangerment of life or a serious risk to public health. This sweep can include otherwise lawful acts if they are deemed to create a 'serious risk' to the health or safety of the public or a section of the public, such as civil disobedience that obstructs roads or public transport, peaceful protests near sensitive sites that trigger security responses, or public expressions of solidarity that authorities claim could incite others to unrest.¹⁵⁸ Second, and crucially, it explicitly requires that the use or threat of action be political, religious, or ideological,¹⁵⁹ and be specifically aimed at influencing a government or intimidating the public. This second element is what makes the definition particularly insidious: by embedding political motivation as a core component of the crime, it directly criminalises a spectrum of dissent and protest, reinterpreting political opposition into a constitutive element of terrorism.

This framework is most aggressively applied under sections dealing with support for proscribed organisations. Specifically, sections 12(1) and 12(1A) criminalise the deliberate invitation or 'reckless' encouragement of such support,¹⁶⁰ carrying a potential sentence of up to 14 years' imprisonment.¹⁶¹ In practice, this has enabled the systematic criminalisation of a vast spectrum of Palestine solidarity expression. The use of section 12 is documented in the *Index of Repression* in **13** incidents for acts as simple as giving a speech or posting online affirming Palestinians' right to resist colonisation. Even section 13,¹⁶² which applies to wearing or displaying an item that might arouse 'reasonable suspicion' of support,¹⁶³ functions as a de facto glorification offence and also appears in the *Index* **13** times. While the latter carries a six-month maximum, its use alongside the draconian section 12 creates a powerful mechanism for penalising expression and association. These two provisions have thus become deliberately vague, catch-all tools that grant the statewide discretion to decide when and when not

158 Terrorism Act 2000, 2000 c. 11 (2000), <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2000/11/section/1>.

159 Terrorism Act 2000, section 1(1)(c).

160 Terrorism Act 2000, section 12(1A)(b).

161 Section 12 appears in Britain's *Index of Repression* in the following incidents: INC-3863-Y4Y2, INC-3624-P1X2, INC-3358-Q0Y3, INC-2826-B3F2, INC-2821-N7R3, INC-2715-Y9F5, INC-2104-P8G0, INC-1926-C6B4, INC-4176-R1Z1, INC-3359-L2T8, INC-2993-F9H4, INC-2760-X0L1, INC-2722-Q0R4.

162 Section 13 appears in Britain's *Index of Repression* in the following incidents: INC-3987-Z7G6, INC-2452-K7F3, INC-4180-F8V1, INC-2843-G4C2, INC-2828-L9P4, INC-2444-K5V1, INC-3985-B5F5, INC-4178-X6L8, INC-3724-S8N0, INC-4043-F0M0, INC-3986-J6J7, INC-4177-M7H9, INC-4179-H6X3.

163 Terrorism Act 2000, section 13(1)(b).

to criminalise expression under terrorism legislation. This discretion is not exercised neutrally, however. The expansive wording of sections 12 and 13 could, in theory, encompass a wide range of protests – from climate activism to industrial action – yet prosecutions have overwhelmingly targeted Palestine solidarity and, more broadly, racialised and religious minority communities. Sections 12 and 13 thus operate within a broader pattern of selective enforcement, which transforms speeches, social media posts, and symbolic gestures into potential terrorism offences, but doing so in a systematically discriminatory manner.

INC-2104-P860

30/01/2024 / London

Police raided home and arrested SOAS student under section 12 of Terrorism Act 2000 following doxing by Zionist blog Gnasher Jew for speech made at Palestine solidarity demonstration on campus in support of Palestinians' right to resistance, alleging support for proscribed organisations

ACTOR

police / security personnel

TARGET

student(s) or student society / group / organisation

INC-4176-R1Z1

30/10/2023 / London

Police arrested two activists under section 12(1)(a) of Terrorism Act 2000 for sticking printed image of parachute to backs at Palestine solidarity demonstration, alleging support for proscribed organisation

ACTOR

police / security personnel

TARGET

activist(s) or activist group / organisation

INC-4176-R1Z1

30/10/2023 / London

Police arrested two activists under section 12(1)(a) of Terrorism Act 2000 for sticking printed image of parachute to backs at Palestine solidarity demonstration, alleging support for proscribed organisation

ACTOR

police / security personnel

TARGET

activist(s) or activist group / organisation

INC-3359-L2T8

13/11/2023 / Brighton

Counter Terrorism police charged University of Sussex student under section 12(1)(a) of Terrorism Act 2000 for speech in support of Palestinians' right to resistance during Palestine solidarity demonstration, alleging support for proscribed organisation

ACTOR

police / security personnel

TARGET

student(s) or student society / group / organisation

Moreover, references made to the right to resistance or to 7 October 2023 have additionally, though to a lesser extent, been prosecuted under sections 1 and 2 of the Terrorism Act 2006,¹⁶⁴ which deal with 'glorification and encouragement of terrorism' and 'disseminating terrorist publications'.¹⁶⁵ The origins of this Act can be traced back to the London bombings of July 2005, which were carried out by British citizens. The Act was framed as an essential measure to counter an unprecedented terrorist threat.

164 Polona Florijancic, 'Controlling the Narrative through Terrorism Laws: Case of United Kingdom', *Bogazici Law Review* 3, no. 1 (2025): [i]-63. DOI:10.69800/blr.1627717.

165 Terrorism Act 2006, 2006 c. 11 (2006), <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/11/contents>. Our dataset from Germany further reveals that the allegation of 'disseminating terrorist publications' or propaganda materials against expressions of solidarity with Palestine, constitute a transnational trend. For instance, use of the slogan 'From the river to the sea, Palestine will be free' (or variations thereof) has been criminalised following the proscription of *Samidoun* and *Hamas* and is prosecuted as 'use of symbol of a terrorist organisation' under §86a of the German Criminal Code. We have recorded 88 incidents in the German Index of Repression where use of the slogan led to arrests, charges, or home raids. E.g.,: INC-2471-H0T4, INC-2405-C8R0, INC-3286-M6K4.

Featured Incident

Court convicted three activists under section 13 of Terrorism Act 2000 for displaying printed image of parachute stuck to backs and attached to sign at Palestine solidarity demonstration

On 14 October 2023, editor of the newspaper Jewish News posted a photo to X (formerly Twitter) of the backs of two protesters at a Palestine solidarity demonstration on the same day. It showed a black-and-white printed image of a parachute, stuck to their backs with tape. The photo was captioned, "'Pro-#Palestine' protesters wearing paraglider pictures on the streets of London right now. Hamas sent terrorists on paragliders to a rave in #Israel where they raped, mutilated, and massacred 260 youngsters". The post garnered over a million views and social media users responded to the post by tagging the account of the Metropolitan Police. It was shared by more than a thousand accounts, including by Aaron Bastani, co-founder and contributing editor of the news platform Novara Media, who referred to them as "morons", performing "childish indecency".

On 15 October 2023, the Metropolitan Police shared a post to X (formerly Twitter), appealing for information to identify the activists in the image, and another individual who was "seen with the pair" for carrying a sign on which the printed image was attached to. On 30 October, the two activists in the photo voluntarily went to the police station and were arrested under section 12(1)(a) of the Terrorism Act 2000, alleging inviting support for a proscribed organisation.

On 3 November, police charged the two activists under section 13 of the Terrorism Act 2000, alleging carrying or displaying an article arousing reasonable suspicion as to being a member or supporter of a proscribed organisation. Police arrested and brought the same charges against the third protester on 8 November.

On 10 November 2023, the three activists pled not guilty to the charges, and on 12 February 2024, a trial was held at Westminster Magistrates' Court. Prosecutors alleged that the printed image suggested "celebrating the use of the paragliders' tactic" on 7 October 2023. Barrister and lawyer of two of the activists, Mark Summers KC, argued that the images depicted a parachute emoji rather than paragliders, and that the image of flying was commonly used to be symbolic of freedom and peace. On 13 February 2024, the court convicted the three activists and sentenced them to a 12-month conditional discharge.

Two months after the attack, the government's counterterrorism strategy, CONTEST – developed as a response to the 9/11 attacks in 2003 – was made public in July 2006.¹⁶⁶ It has since been updated several times. CONTEST's stated mission is to 'reduce the risk from terrorism to the UK, its citizens and interests overseas, so that people can go about their lives freely and with confidence'.¹⁶⁷ The strategy emphasises the importance of '[i]ntegration, social cohesion and counter-extremism initiative [...] to preserve British values'.¹⁶⁸ CONTEST established

¹⁶⁶ Norris, 'Contesting Identity and Preventing Belonging?', 92.

¹⁶⁷ HM Government, 'Counter-Terrorism Strategy (CONTEST) 2023', Home Office / GOV.UK, 18 July 2023, <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/counter-terrorism-strategy-contest-2023>.

¹⁶⁸ HM Government, 'Counter-Terrorism Strategy (CONTEST) 2023', 32.

Prevent as one of its four pillars alongside Pursue, Protect, and Prepare. Prevent gradually became the bureaucratic heir to the colonial WHAM doctrine and has resulted in creating a diffuse network of counterterrorism enforcers.

The Prevent Duty: WHAM!

The Prevent Duty represents a domestic incarnation of the Winning Hearts and Minds (WHAM) logic – a counterinsurgency strategy that seeks to align civilian populations with state security objectives through persuasion, values promotion, and the co-option of everyday institutions. Prevent is concerned with ‘detering those who facilitate terrorism and those who encourage others to become terrorists by changing the environment in which the extremists and those who perform radicalisation can operate’; and aims to ‘engage in the battle of ideas via challenging the ideologies that extremists believe can justify the use of violence, primarily by helping Muslims who wish to dispute these ideas to do so’.¹⁶⁹

From the inception of Prevent, it was designed as a *pre-criminal* space. Initially a government programme, it was the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 that transformed Prevent from a policy into a statutory *duty*, legally mandating schools, universities, NHS trusts, local authorities, and a wide range of public bodies to ‘have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism’.¹⁷⁰ This duty requires institutions not only to act but to *demonstrate* their compliance.¹⁷¹ In this way, Prevent formalises allegations of support for terrorism by embedding them into the daily functions and accountability structures of public institutions. Through risk management protocols and compliance procedures, schools, universities, hospitals, and other public-sector workplaces are conscripted into the work of surveillance and disciplinarianism. The counterterrorism apparatus, through Prevent, has thus diffused far beyond the police and courts to become effectively omnipresent.¹⁷²

This creates what is practically a state-mandated surveillance network, conscripting teachers, doctors, lecturers, and social workers into the role of frontline counterinsurgency agents, expanding the network of ‘governors’. Such a profound anti-democratic transformation shifts the primary function of trusted public sector workers from providing care and education to monitoring the political consciousness of their communities, fundamentally altering the ethos of public institutions. The statutory duty, by posing democracy as a fixed ‘British value’ to be upheld, evacuates the concept of democracy itself – denying its historical and constitutive nature as a site of struggle and contestation. For example, teachers are placed in an impossible bind when teaching the history of movements like the Suffragettes, whose ‘extremist’ tactics

169 HM Government, ‘Countering International Terrorism: The United Kingdom’s Strategy’ (London, HM Government, 2006), 1-2.

170 HM Government, ‘Prevent Duty Guidance’, Home Office / GOV.UK, 2015, 3, https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukdsi/2015/9780111133309/pdfs/ukdsiod_9780111133309_en.pdf.

171 Suke Wolton, ‘The Contradiction in the Prevent Duty: Democracy vs “British Values”’, *Education, Citizenship and Social Justice* 12, no. 2 (2017): 123–42, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1746197917693021>.

172 Example incidents recorded in Britain’s *Index of Repression*: INC-1789-Z8Z5, INC-1520-Q6P6, INC-1260-K6G7, INC-3867-T3K2, INC-3765-G0Z7, INC-3631-M5V6, INC-3623-L4K4, INC-3351-Z4N6, INC-3251-D5P6, INC-2281-V9H6.

tigations, create permanent records, and can lead to life-altering consequences including exclusion from education, dismissal from employment, and referral to de-radicalisation programmes, all without charge or trial. The duty thus institutionalises a culture of pre-emptive suspicion, where the 'risk' of 'radicalisation' is imagined as external to democracy. Critically, a Prevent referral often serves as the initial 'soft' evidence that can justify a later referral to police for investigation under terrorism legislation, including for support of a proscribed organisation like Hamas.

Proscribing Palestine Solidarity

The contemporary use of proscription powers – the state's authority to ban organisations as terrorist under section 3 of the Terrorism Act 2000 – is a direct descendant of the colonial governor's power to outlaw rebel groups, a power exercised without judicial oversight and based on political expediency.¹⁷³ This executive power, vested solely in the Home Secretary, is expansive by design. It was further widened by the 2006 Terrorism Act to include not only groups that engage in violence but also those deemed to 'encourage terrorism'.¹⁷⁴ It represents a decisive escalation beyond the policing of specific actions or protests. Where banning a protest targets a single event, proscription targets the very possibility of organised collective life. It is an existential attack on a movement, designed to dismantle the unique dependencies of groups on legal recognition, financial infrastructure, and public identity.

The most potent and far-reaching expression of proscription powers can be found in two important moments. The first is the 2021 proscription of Hamas in its entirety, extending the ban beyond the military wing (in 2001) to encompass the political and social movement. The second is the proscription of Palestine Action in 2025. The target of these proscriptions has been domestic repression since bans make it a criminal offence to invite support for the group, with those found guilty facing up to 14 years in prison (under section 12 of the Terrorism Act 2000). This proscription legally codified the core conflation underpinning the state's response to solidarity, which deems support for Palestinian liberation inherently suspect and treated as support for terrorism.¹⁷⁵ This framework transformed a vast spectrum of political expression into a potential terrorism offence. The effect is to force solidarity activists into a constant posture of legal risk-assessment: affirming solidarity with a cause while distancing oneself from a proscribed group, however inseparable the two may be.

173 ELSC, *Europe's Proscription of Palestine Solidarity* (European Legal Support Center, 2025), <https://elsc.support/new-elsc-report-europes-proscription-of-palestine-solidarity/>.

174 Boukalas, Christos. 'U.K. Counterterrorism Law, Pre-Emption, and Politics: Toward "Authoritarian Legality"?' *New Criminal Law Review* 20, no. 3 (2017): 355–90. <https://doi.org/10.1525/nclr.2017.20.3.355>.

175 Since the ban on Palestine Action came into force in early July 2025, there have been over 2,700 arrests across the UK. A large proportion of these arrests are for the simple act of holding placards with messages such as 'I oppose genocide, I support Palestine Action'. See 'UK: Further Information: Over 600 Further Arrests at Peaceful Protests', Amnesty International, 11 December 2025, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/eur45/0540/2025/en/>.

INC-3562-L1W8

18/07/2025 / Glasgow

Police arrested Palestine solidarity activist for carrying sign reading "genocide in PALESTINE time to take ACTION", alleging support for proscribed organisation Palestine Action

ACTOR

police / security personnel

TARGET

activist(s) or activist group / organisation

INC-3492-S4Q4

14/07/2025 / Canterbury

Police threatened activist with arrest for carrying signs reading "Free Gaza" and "Israel is committing genocide", alleging support for proscribed organisation Palestine Action

ACTOR

police / security personnel

TARGET

activist(s) or activist group / organisation

INC-3566-M4Y8

19/07/2025 / London

Police arrested protester at Palestine solidarity demonstration for holding sign reading "I support Palestine. Action is needed now", alleging support for proscribed organisation Palestine Action

ACTOR

police / security personnel

TARGET

activist(s) or activist group / organisation

INC-3979-B5C8

08/07/2025 / Dover

Police singled out, interrogated and recorded personal details of individual travelling through Dover port for Palestine-related badges, alleging membership of proscribed organisation Palestine Action

ACTOR

police / security personnel

TARGET

(member of) the public

This not only criminalises political action, but political identity, creating a permanent state of suspicion and authorising pre-emptive repression. Police and intelligence agencies surveil, investigate, and arrest individuals not for concrete acts, but for who they are perceived to be or what they might do in the future based on alleged affiliation. The goal, most clearly, is demobilisation. By making it illegal to donate money, provide meeting spaces, or maintain a public website, proscription systematically destroys the organisational infrastructure of a group. It prevents recruitment, severs communication channels, and dismantles the accumulated knowledge, strategies, and relationships built over years of struggle.

Furthermore, proscription acts as a political accelerant. Once a group is officially designated 'terrorist', the state justifies a massive escalation in response – deploying resources, powers, and a rhetorical ferocity that would be unthinkable for a public order issue. This escalation is underwritten by the most insidious effect of proscription: the manufacture of a powerful and lasting stigma. The terrorist label legitimises smear campaigns and frames the entire movement not as a legitimate political cause, but as a criminal and security threat. It taints all supporters with guilt by association, isolates the movement from potential allies, and, in the case of the proscription of Palestine Action, protects weapons manufacturers complicit in genocide.

Ultimately, this genealogy has crystallised into a boundary-security nexus. Contemporary counterterrorism now functions as a mechanism for regulating membership. The selective application of the 'terrorism' label to some violence, while often relegating other (far-right) violence to general criminal law, constructs a nationalist boundary that places Muslims and those perceived as Muslims outside the 'mainstream'. By 2015, with Prevent embedded as a statutory duty across public institutions, counterterrorism had completed its transition: from a specific military response to anti-colonial resistance, it had become a pervasive technique of social control through which the state simultaneously defines national security and national identity.

The Activation of Counterinsurgency Against Palestine Solidarity

This fully assembled apparatus is now in active use to manage and suppress solidarity with Palestine. The allegations, discursively established under colonial frameworks and embedded in post-9/11 racialised logics, have been updated and aggressively reactivated following October 2023.

The conflation of political speech and action with terrorism has been a persistent strategy, articulated and re-articulated from the highest levels of government. For example, as well as referring to Palestine solidarity demonstrations in London as 'hate marches' in 2023, Suella Braverman also claimed that '[b]ehaviours that are legitimate in some circumstances, for example the waving of a Palestinian flag, may not be legitimate such as when intended to glorify

acts of terrorism'.¹⁷⁶ In March 2024, then-Prime Minister Rishi Sunak, alleged that there are extremist groups engaged in Palestine solidarity work in Britain and that these groups are 'trying to tear us apart'. His speech also warned that '[y]ou can demand the protection of civilian life [...] but no, you cannot call for violent Jihad',¹⁷⁷ and was delivered in the context of the government's publication of a new definition of 'extremism' that linked this alleged domestic threat to 'the aftermath of the terrorist attacks in Israel on 7th October 2023'.¹⁷⁸ Sunak had already framed the mass protests against the Israeli genocide in Palestine in February 2024, claiming that there is a 'growing consensus that mob rule is replacing democratic rule'.¹⁷⁹

The repeated use of the label 'extremist' to characterise Palestine solidarity activism and expressions casts those labelled as *foreigners within*, and as subjects living entirely outside the moral and political boundaries of British society.¹⁸⁰ This discursive expulsion constructs the solidarity activist as an ideological alien whose values place them beyond the pale of legitimate civic discourse. It is a strategy that pathologises the political and ethical commitments of the Palestine solidarity movement, *and* absolves the state of any democratic obligation to engage with their critique, which is now re-cast as a symptom of dangerous, 'un-British' belief.¹⁸¹ Meanwhile, not only are expressions of support for the Israeli genocide in Palestine not considered 'extremist', but dual citizens who travel from Britain to join the Israeli army face no legal consequences from the British state.

False allegations of supporting a proscribed organisation targeting expressions of solidarity with Palestine and anti-Zionist beliefs appear in the *Index of Repression* **184** times, demonstrating the scale of the conflation of anti-Zionism with support for terrorism. It is also important to note that the legal and quasi-legal frameworks presented here are not exhaustive. The Public Order Act 2023,¹⁸² for instance, grants police sweeping powers to shut down demonstrations, including new stop and search powers for protest settings and the ability to impose conditions on protests deemed disruptive.¹⁸³ While this legislation operates independently of terrorism law, together they form a layered apparatus for targeting activists. The Public Order

176 Rajeev Syal and Aubrey Allegretti, 'Waving Palestinian Flag May Be a Criminal Offence, Braverman Tells Police', Politics, *The Guardian*, 10 October 2023, <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2023/oct/10/people-supporting-amas-in-uk-will-be-held-to-account-says-rishi-sunak>.

177 Rishi Sunak, 'PM Address on Extremism: 1 March 2024', 1 March 2024, <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/pm-address-on-extremism-1-march-2024>.

178 HM Government, *New Definition of Extremism (2024)* (GOV.UK / Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, 2024), <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/new-definition-of-extremism-2024/new-definition-of-extremism-2024>.

179 'Rishi Sunak Says the UK Is Descending into "mob Rule" Due to Protests', Euronews, 29 February 2024, <https://www.euronews.com/2024/02/29/rishi-sunak-says-the-uk-is-descending-into-mob-rule-because-of-pro-palestine-protests>.

180 Malcolm N. MacDonald et al., 'Citizenship, Community, and Counter-Terrorism: UK Security Discourse, 2001-2011', *Journal of Language and Politics* 12, no. 3 (2013): 445-73, <https://doi.org/10.1075/jlp.12.3.07mac>.

181 Jamie Grierson, 'Keir Starmer Calls Student Protests on 7 October Anniversary "Un-British"', Politics, *The Guardian*, 7 October 2025, <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2025/oct/07/keir-starmer-calls-student-protests-on-7-october-anniversary-un-british>.

182 Public Order Act 2023, 2023 c. 15 (2023), <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2023/15/contents>. The Public Order Act has been used to accuse protesters of inciting racial hatred, among other things. It appears in Britain's *Index of Repression* 33 times.

183 'The Public Order Bill: Explained', Amnesty International UK, 26 April 2023, <https://www.amnesty.org.uk/knowledge-hub/all-resources/public-order-bill-explained/>.

Act provides police with a lower-threshold tool to arrest protesters for 'breaching conditions', enabling the disruption and criminalisation of protest even where terrorism offences are not alleged. This legal architecture is set to expand further with amendments to the Crime and Policing Bill, currently before the House of Lords, which would grant police additional powers to restrict protests in the vicinity of places of worship and to target recurring protests based on their supposed 'cumulative impact' broadening the scope for pre-emptive intervention.¹⁸⁴ This apparatus, characterised by pre-emptive logics, expansive legal definitions, and the discursive production of threats, disproportionately targets racialised and minority communities within Britain. These are communities already rendered hyper-visible and 'risky' through decades of preceding security strategies and whose members constitute a significant presence within the current Palestine solidarity movement.

The deployment of surveillance, the application of terrorism legislation to protest, and the public framing of solidarity as support for terrorism are not anomalous measures. They represent the contemporary instantiation of a durable political technology – a mode of government refined across a century of imperial and post-imperial statecraft, produced in the colonial counterinsurgency laboratory, adapted for domestic counterterrorism, and refined through

¹⁸⁴ See Palestine Solidarity Campaign, '*Cumulative Impact: Why the Government's Latest Proposal to Further Erode the Right to Protest Should Be Opposed*', <https://palestinecampaign.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/01/20251216-PSC-briefing-on-cumulative-impact-police-powers-2.pdf>.

Featured Incident

Police arrested thousands of Defend Our Juries protests for holding sign reading "I oppose genocide. I support Palestine Action" at demonstrations across Britain

On 5 July 2025, following the government's proscription of direct-action group Palestine Action, campaign group Defend Our Juries organised a demonstration in central London. The demonstration was the first as part of "Lift the Ban" campaign demanding the lift of the proscription of Palestine Action, stop the targeting of Palestine solidarity direct actioners, and end trade and other military partnerships enabling the Israeli genocide of Palestinians. Police arrested 29 protesters at the demonstration in Parliament Square, alleging offences under the Terrorism Act 2000, for sitting on the ground and holding signs reading, "I oppose genocide, I support Palestine Action".

On 12 July 2025, Defend Our Juries organised demonstrations in London, Manchester, Derry and Cardiff, at which police arrested a total 70 protesters for holding the same sign. On 13 July, Defend Our Juries reported that police raided a protester's home following their arrest at the Cardiff demonstration in front of the broadcaster BBC Cymru headquarters the day prior. The group also referred to the "the lottery of the police response", as one protester "who wrote to police in advance of going out to hold his sign was not arrested. The police didn't even show up".

On 19 July, demonstrations were held in London, Manchester, Bristol, Edinburgh and Truro, and police arrested 95 protesters. Referring to the arrests made, police alleged breaches under section 13 of the Terrorism Act 2000, which makes it a criminal offence to wear, carry or display an article or item of clothing that may "arouse reasonable suspicion that he is a member or supporter of a proscribed organisation". On 21 July, police arrested a further four protesters at a Defend Our Juries demonstration in Liverpool. Many of the Defend Our Juries protesters arrested by police have been pensioners.

Although ELSC's database does not currently include incidents beyond 1 August in Britain, on 6 August, Defend Our Juries shared a post to their Instagram account, reporting that their website had been taken down following contact "by a person or group suggesting that we may be in breach of their terms and conditions". Defend Our Juries has continued to organise numerous demonstrations, including on 9 August 2025, at which police arrested 522 protesters for demonstrating against the proscription of Palestine Action. According to the group, "over 2,700 people have been arrested for holding signs as part of the Lift The Ban campaign so far, leading to a 660% rise in UK "terrorism" arrests in the year to end of September 2025". Since the proscription, police have also frequently gone against explicit guidance that has been sent to police officers that clearly stated support for Palestine was not support for proscribed organisations.

PART III

Building Resistance: Victories, Strategies, and Imperatives

The architecture of repression documented in this report is neither seamless nor unassailable. Across Britain, Palestine solidarity activists, workers, students, and their legal advocates have successfully resisted sanctions, overturned convictions, held repressive actors to account, and won legal recognition for anti-Zionist belief. These victories are not anomalies. They are evidence that the movement can contest, subvert, and at times defeat the mechanisms of harm deployed against it. This section documents key successes and distils their strategic implications.

Legal Recognition of Anti-Zionist Belief

In October 2021, the University of Bristol dismissed Professor David Miller following a targeted smear campaign involving the Board of Deputies of British Jews, the Community Security Trust, and politicians. The allegations centred on comments made during a webinar in which Miller discussed restrictions on free speech, the backlash to anti-Zionist teaching, and his own targeting by the University's Jewish Society and the Union of Jewish Students. He was dismissed on grounds of antisemitism, incitement, and reputational harm.

In 2024, an Employment Tribunal ruled in Miller's favour, finding unfair and wrongful dismissal. Critically, the Tribunal held that Miller's critique of Zionism as 'inherently racist, imperialist and colonial' constituted a genuinely held philosophical belief protected under the Equality Act 2010.¹⁸⁵ Assessing the claim against the five criteria as set out in *Grainger plc v Nicholson*, the Tribunal determined that Miller's anti-Zionism met the threshold for protection: (i) The belief must be genuinely held; (ii) It must be a belief and not, [simply], an opinion or viewpoint based on the present state of information available; (iii) It must be a belief as to a weighty and substantial aspect of human life and behaviour; (iv) It must attain a certain level of cogency, seriousness, cohesion and importance; (v) It must be worthy of respect in a democratic society, be not incompatible with human dignity and not conflict with the fundamental rights of others.¹⁸⁶

Although the University is appealing the decision, the ruling in this case has already been invoked repeatedly, and at times, successfully in courts, tribunals, and internal disciplinary proceedings to defend Palestine advocates and secure protection for anti-Zionist belief. This ruling has fundamentally altered the legal landscape, and it is no longer tenable for institutions to treat anti-Zionism as presumptively discriminatory or beyond the pale of protected speech.

Accountability of Politicians and the Home Office

The movement has also secured important victories in holding political actors accountable for the misuse of state power.

In June 2024, two activists confronted their MP, Alex Davies-Jones, on her voting record regarding the genocide in Palestine while she canvassed in their local area. A 20-second video that the two activists posted on social media showed the MP denying she had abstained on a ceasefire vote, contradicted by a screenshot of her voting record. Within three hours of posting the clip, one activist was raided and arrested, and both were subjected to 11 bail conditions prohibiting social media activity.¹⁸⁷

In June 2025, they were convicted of harassment, with the judge describing their actions as a 'deliberate and sustained campaign' designed to 'cause alarm and distress'.¹⁸⁸ On appeal, the conviction was overturned. The court called the prosecution 'unnecessary'.¹⁸⁹ Francesca

¹⁸⁵ Miller v University of Bristol, No. 1400780/2022 (Bristol Employment Tribunal 2024), <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6707c243366f494ab2e7b67d/Miller-judgment-1400780.2022-JDT...pdf>.

¹⁸⁶ Patrick Brione, 'Employment Tribunal Rulings on Gender-Critical Beliefs in the Workplace', *House of Commons Library Insight*, 7 December 2022, <https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/employment-tribunal-rulings-on-gender-critical-beliefs-in-the-workplace/>.

¹⁸⁷ Social media clip: [Ayeshah \[redacted\]](https://www.instagram.com/queenieshah/reel/C8zdSiZos-8/) | EDIT: 2025 - I Planned to Post the Full 5 Minute Conversation Shortly after Posting This Clip, Back in June 2024, but Sadly I Was Raided... | Instagram, n.d., accessed 17 February 2026, <https://www.instagram.com/queenieshah/reel/C8zdSiZos-8/>.

¹⁸⁸ Example incident recorded in Britain's *Index of Repression*: INC-3428-K5Z6.

¹⁸⁹ Amy Mackrill, 'Pro-Palestine Activists Have Alex Davies-Jones Harassment Convictions Overturned', Wales, *BBC News*, 19 November 2025, <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c07m79z7gq2o>.

Cociani, solicitor for the activists, stated that their arrest, prosecution, and conviction had been ‘an egregious affront’ on their right to free speech, which they were entitled to exercise ‘in our free and democratic country’.¹⁹⁰ The ruling affirmed that constituents hold the right to question their elected representatives directly, and that doing so does not constitute harassment.

A related victory concerned the Home Office’s revocation of Dana Abu Qamar’s visa on grounds of her expressed solidarity with Palestine. On 8 October 2023, Sky News interviewed Abu Qamar – a law student at the University of Manchester, president of its Friends of Palestine solidarity and a dual Jordanian Canadian citizen of Palestinian origin – at a Palestine solidarity demonstration in Manchester. In the interview Dana said:

For 16 years Gaza has been under blockade, and for the first time they are actively resisting, they are not on the defence, and this is truly a once in a lifetime experience ... we are both in fear, but also in fear of what, how Israel will retaliate and how we’ve seen it retaliate overnight, and the missiles that it’s launched and the attacks, but also we are full of pride. We are really, really full of joy of what happened.¹⁹¹

The comments spread rapidly and a pile-on ensued. Then-Policing Minister Chris Philp posted on X (formerly Twitter) that he was ‘appalled’ anyone held ‘these repugnant views’.¹⁹² UKLFI and CAA both reported Abu Qamar to the authorities. UKLFI also reported her to the University of Manchester, which stated it was ‘taking appropriate action to investigate this matter’.¹⁹³

Court documents later revealed that the former immigration minister Robert Jenrick had taken a direct interest in the case. In October 2023, a member of Jenrick’s team wrote to Home Office officials noting that the minister was interested in ‘finding out about Dana Abu Qamar’ and inquiring whether it would be ‘possible to revoke her student visa’.¹⁹⁴ On 1 December 2023, the government revoked her visa on the basis that her presence in the UK was ‘not conducive to the public good’.¹⁹⁵

But in 2024, a tribunal found the revocation incompatible with her right to free speech. In a press release, Dana Abu Qamar remarked:

190 Amy Mackrill, ‘Pro-Palestine Activists Have Alex Davies-Jones Harassment Convictions Overturned’.

191 Jim Dickinson, ‘The State Revoked Her Visa. The State Lost at Tribunal’, *Wonkhe*, 1 November 2024, <https://wonkhe.com/blogs/the-state-revoked-her-visa-the-state-lost-at-tribunal/>.

192 Dickinson, ‘The State Revoked Her Visa. The State Lost at Tribunal’.

193 Dickinson, ‘The State Revoked Her Visa. The State Lost at Tribunal’.

194 ‘Disclosed Emails Reveal Tory Minister’s Secret Personal Request to Cancel a Palestinian Student’s Visa’, Press Release, *European Legal Support Center*, 4 September 2024, <https://elsc.support/disclosed-emails-reveal-tory-ministers-secret-personal-request-to-cancel-a-palestinian-students-visa/>.

195 Geneva Abdul, ‘Robert Jenrick Inquired into Revoking Palestinian Student’s Visa, Emails Reveal’, Politics, *The Guardian*, 3 September 2024, <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/article/2024/sep/03/robert-jenrick-inquired-into-revoking-palestinian-students-visa-emails-reveal>.

This case has reinforced Palestinians' right to resist occupation in the domestic context; that the expression in support of that right cannot be conflated with support for terrorism; that there is no room for abuse of power by ministers and arbitrary decision-making to undermine the rule of law. I hope that this ruling inspires and strengthens supporters of the Palestinian movement to continue advocating against Israel's flagrant violations of international law.¹⁹⁶

In the wake of the tribunal's ruling in favour of Abu Qamar, there has been no repeated attempt by the government to rescind an individual's legal status on the basis of speech in solidarity with Palestine.

Featured Incident

On 7 October 2023, University of Manchester student Dana Abu Qamar wrote a post that appeared on the Manchester Friends of Palestine (MFOP), inviting viewers to join a Palestine solidarity demonstration the following day. On 8 October, the student gave a speech at the demonstration in support of Palestinians' right to resistance and gave a spontaneous interview to Sky News where they condemned Israeli colonisation and occupation. On 9 October 2023, the MFOP posted on their Facebook page that Sky News had taken the student's words out of context and clarified that "no support for any named faction was mentioned nor was the killing of civilians condoned".

On 20 October 2023, the Secretary of State served Dana a notice of intention to cancel permission to enter on the basis that their presence in the UK is "not conducive to the public good" and alleged that their "expressed views could be construed as support for" a proscribed organisation.

On 3 November 2023, Dana submitted detailed representations for a human rights claim against the notice. On 1 December, the Secretary of State refused the student's human rights claim and cancelled their leave to enter the country, alleging that they made statements "which support and/or justify and/or glorify an act of terrorism". On 6 December, the student appealed the decision to a First-tier Tribunal in the Immigration and Asylum Chamber.

On 26 and 27 September 2024, the appeal hearing took place, and, on 15 October 2024, the Tribunal allowed the appeal on human rights grounds and concluded that the removal of Dana in consequence of the decision to cancel their permission to enter the UK was unlawful under section 6 of the Human Rights Act 1998.

¹⁹⁶ Abdul, 'Palestinian Student Stripped of UK Visa after Gaza Remarks Wins Human Rights Appeal'.

Holding *Other* Repressive Actors to Account

The movement has also succeeded in subjecting Zionist advocacy organisations and media outlets to regulatory scrutiny, exposing patterns of misconduct and, in some cases, securing formal investigation.

- In April 2025, the Independent Press Standards Organisation (IPSO) published a statement regarding editorial standards at The Jewish Chronicle, acknowledging a 'pattern of upheld complaints'.¹⁹⁷ Peer-reviewed research by Professor Neve Gordon found that 51% of investigated complaints against the newspaper were upheld by IPSO, with the regulator finding breaches of ethical standards.¹⁹⁸
- In August 2025, the ELSC and the Public Interest Law Centre filed complaints against UKLFI director Caroline Turner for alleged breaches of the Solicitors Regulation Authority's Principles and Code of Conduct, including the use of Strategic Lawsuits Against Public Participation (SLAPPs), which are lawsuits intended to limit freedom of expression on matters of public interest. The complaint also called for an investigation into whether UKLFI is operating as an unregulated law firm and urged the SRA to bring it under regulatory oversight. The SRA has confirmed that an investigation is underway.
- In July 2025, the UK Charity Commission confirmed it had opened an investigation into UKLFI's charitable wing, following complaints submitted by CAGE and Led By Donkeys.¹⁹⁹

These parallel complaints mark a significant shift as these organisations, long accustomed to weaponising regulatory and legal frameworks against Palestine solidarity activists are now themselves subject to scrutiny.

Judicial Rejection of Abusive Prosecution

One of the most damning judicial rebukes of a Zionist advocacy organisation came in December 2025, in a private prosecution brought by the so-called Campaign Against Antisemitism (CAA) against comedian Reginald D. Hunter.

Hunter's 2024 Edinburgh Fringe performance included a joke about Israel. Two Israeli audience members objected; fellow audience members booed them. What followed was a tar-

¹⁹⁷ IPSO (Independent Press Standards Organisation), 'Statement on Editorial Practices at the Jewish Chronicle', IPSO, 8 April 2025, <https://www.ipso.co.uk/statement-on-editorial-practices-at-the-jewish-chronicle/>.

¹⁹⁸ Neve Gordon, 'The Weaponisation of Antisemitism'.

¹⁹⁹ Areeb Ullah, 'Charity Watchdog Investigating UK Lawyers for Israel's Charitable Trust', *Middle East Eye*, 25 July 2025, <https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/charity-commission-launches-investigation-uk-lawyers-israels-charitable-trust-0>.

geted smear campaign by Zionist commentator Heidi Bachram on X (formerly Twitter), and a private prosecution by the CAA alleging that Hunter's responses to Bachram on the platform were offensive under sections 127(1)(a) and (3) of the Communications Act 2003, with reference to the IHRA definition.²⁰⁰

In his judgement delivered on 23 December 2025, District Judge Snow dismissed the charges. He noted that CAA had failed to disclose the simultaneous Charity Commission investigation into its own conduct and had summarised its application in a 'misleading and partial' manner. His conclusion was unequivocal:

The CAA have demonstrated by the misleading and partial way in which it summarised its application and its wilful, repeated, failure to meet its disclosure obligations, that its true and sole motive in seeking to prosecute RH is to have him cancelled. I have no doubt that the prosecution is abusive ... My view of the conduct of the CAA is consistent with them as an organisation which is not 'playing it straight' but is seeking to use the criminal justice system, in this case for improper reasons.²⁰¹

While this ruling does not set a binding legal precedent, it carries substantial political and evidentiary weight. It represents a judicial endorsement of what the Palestine solidarity movement has long asserted: that organisations like CAA weaponise the criminal justice system not from genuine necessity, but to suppress speech and exact political retribution.

Movement Resistance and Jury Acquittals

The most recent and symbolically powerful victories belong to the movement itself. They arise from the case of the 'Filton 24' – a group of direct actionists arrested and charged for targeting Elbit Systems, the Israeli arms manufacturer based in the UK.

Acts that would typically be prosecuted as criminal damage have, in this instance, been persistently characterised by the state as connected to 'terrorism' – despite the absence of any terrorism charges. This marks the first time the British state has sought to treat allegations of property damage as terrorism, a framing later used to justify the proscription of Palestine Action. The actions attributed to the 'Filton 24' defendants took place before that ban was imposed and were instrumental in building the case for it.²⁰² Detained well in excess of the six-month statutory pre-trial detention limit, the defendants argue that political interference from Elbit Systems, the Israeli Embassy, and senior politicians has denied them a fair trial.

200 *The Campaign Against Antisemitism v Reginald Hunter* (Westminster Magistrates' Court 23 December 2025), <https://www.judiciary.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/12/The-Campaign-Against-Antisemitism-v-Reginald-Hunter.pdf>.

201 *The Campaign Against Antisemitism v Reginald Hunter*, 17.

202 'Justice Denied: 7 Injustices in the Filton 24 Case', Cage International, 23 January 2026, <https://www.cage.ngo/articles/justice-denied-7-injustices-in-the-filton-24-case>.

Throughout the proceedings, evidence of interference has accumulated. In August and November 2024, the Crown Prosecution Service issued press releases that insinuated a terrorism link, shaping public perception of the case before any verdict.²⁰³ The Home Secretary reinforced this narrative in the press, publicly stating that the CPS had identified a terrorism connection.²⁰⁴ The Israeli embassy itself pursued multiple avenues of intervention. Documents obtained through freedom of information requests reveal that embassy officials pressed the Attorney General's Office to intervene in the court cases relating to the prosecution of activists.²⁰⁵ Moreover, Elbit Systems secured meetings with Home Office ministers, with a 2023 internal email revealing instructions to 'reassure Elbit Systems UK that the government cares about the harm the group is causing the private sector'. A leaked Home Office document further indicated that police were instructed to prioritise the company's interests and the remand of activists.²⁰⁶

Taken together, these interventions reveal a political and prosecutorial environment shaped by sustained pressure from foreign state actors, commercial interests, and government ministers. In this context, the movement's victories are all the more significant.

In January 2026, following sustained pressure from the prisoners themselves – who had undertaken months-long hunger strikes that rapidly deteriorated their health – and from the Palestine solidarity movement, the UK government declined to award a £2 billion contract to a subsidiary of Elbit Systems UK.²⁰⁷ Three of the 'Filton 24' activists ended their hunger strikes on this news. In February 2026, jury rulings acquitted all 'Filton 24' activists on charges of aggravated burglary. The jury was unable to reach verdicts on the remaining charges.²⁰⁸ In the same month, 23 of the activists were granted bail.²⁰⁹

These outcomes demonstrate that juries, drawn from the public, can and do reject the state's framing of Palestine solidarity activism as criminality, even when that framing has been reinforced by government ministers, security agencies, foreign state actors, and, in this case, a judge who instructed the jury that their views on Gaza were 'entirely irrelevant' to the proceedings.

203 Cage International, 'Justice Denied'.

204 Yvette Cooper, 'Yvette Cooper: Palestine Action "Is Not Lawful Protest"', *The Observer*, 17 August 2025, <https://observer.co.uk/news/opinion-and-ideas/article/palestine-actions-violent-criminality-is-not-lawful-protest>.

205 Haroon Siddique and Haroon Siddique Legal affairs correspondent, 'Israeli Embassy Officials Attempted to Influence UK Court Cases, Documents Suggest', UK News, *The Guardian*, 20 August 2023, <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2023/aug/20/israeli-embassy-officials-attempted-to-influence-uk-court-cases-documents-suggest>.

206 John McEvoy, 'Labour Held Secret Meeting with Top Israeli Arms Firm', *Declassified UK*, 12 March 2025, <https://www.declassifieduk.org/labour-held-secret-meeting-with-top-israeli-arms-firm/>.

207 Haroon Siddique and Haroon Siddique Legal affairs correspondent, 'Three Palestine Action Protesters End Their Hunger Strike', UK News, *The Guardian*, 14 January 2026, <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2026/jan/14/three-palestine-action-protesters-end-their-hunger-strike>.

208 Haroon Siddique and Haroon Siddique Legal affairs correspondent, 'Palestine Action Activist Says Jury Verdicts Were Vindication of Cause', UK News, *The Guardian*, 11 February 2026, <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2026/feb/11/palestine-action-activist-says-jury-verdicts-were-vindication-of-cause>.

209 Al Jazeera Staff, 'Twelve Palestine Action Activists Granted Bail', Al Jazeera, 20 February 2026, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2026/2/20/heads-held-high-12-palestine-action-action-prisoners-granted-bail>.

Featured Incident

On 6 August 2024, 6 activists from the direct-action group Palestine Action broke into the factory of Israel's largest weapons company, Elbit Systems, in Filton, near Bristol. The activists were initially detained under Section 41 Terrorism Act 2000, which allows for 14 days of detention without charge. At this time, Palestine Action was not a proscribed organisation for the purposes of the Terrorism Act. The 6 activists were not charged with terror offences, but with: aggravated burglary, criminal damage and violent disorder. In the days following the action, the Terrorism police arrested a further 4 activists in connection with the action. On 19 November 2024, the homes of another 10 activists were raided and they were arrested, known in total as the "Filton 18".

On 15 July 2025, following the government's proscription of Palestine Action, police arrested five more activists under section 41 of the Terrorism Act 2000. All "Filton 24" activists have been denied bail and remain on remand well beyond the legal custody time limit of 182 days. As of January 2026, the original 6 activists have been on remand for approximately 540 days. Many of the activists have reported dire conditions while on remand in prison, which escalated following the proscription of Palestine Action.

Teuta Hoxha, arrested during a house raid in November 2024, was removed from her prison library job, denied her mail and removed from recreational activities following the proscription of Palestine Action. Following a 28-day hunger strike from August to September 2025, Teuta achieved the reinstatement of her recreational activities and received her withheld mail.

Kamran Ahmed, who has also been arrested in a violent dawn raid by Counter Terrorism police in November 2024, faced restrictions on visits and mail and was arbitrarily subjected to isolation and limited access to the prison library.

Zoe Rogers, who was imprisoned in August 2024, did not receive a Kuffiyeh that was sent to her in HMP Bronzefield. The prison stated that the Kuffiyeh was withheld "because it features branding associated with the Palestine Action Group". Other prisoners at HMP Bronzefield subsequently had their Kuffiyehs taken away.

On 2 November 2025, the anniversary of the Balfour Declaration, some of the activists began a coordinated hunger strike to demand: an end to the censorship of their mail in prison, immediate bail, disclosure of documents of the collusion between the British and Israeli government on their case, the deproscription of Palestine Action and for Elbit Systems to be shut down. This hunger strike became one of the longest in British history.

Hunger strikers were routinely denied medical care. It was reported that Qesser Zuhrah was left on her cell floor at HMP Bronzefield after experiencing heart palpitations on Day 46 of her hunger strike. Following intervention from MP Zarah Sultana and sustained protest outside the prison, the prison called an ambulance and Qesser was hospitalised. The British government refused to meet with the representatives of the hunger strikers. On 17 December 2025 MP Jeremy Corbyn urged the Justice Minister Jake Richards to meet with the representatives. He dismissed the questions and refused. After 73 days, Heba Muraisi and Kamran Ahmed ended their hunger strikes.

Also in the same month, on 13 February 2026, the movement secured another landmark victory. The High Court ruled that the government's proscription of Palestine Action as a 'terrorist' group was unlawful.²¹⁰ As a result, thousands of activists arrested for participating in Defend Our Juries protests against the proscription now face the prospect of those arrests being rendered unlawful. While the court did not acknowledge how politically motivated the proscription was, and dismissed arguments about Palestine Action's intention to prevent conduct constituting the aiding and abetting of genocide, evidence of Palestine solidarity repression provided crucial contextual support for its analysis on proportionality.²¹¹ The ELSC submitted seven witness statements collating incidents of repression to evidence the impact the proscription had on the wider movement, making arguments on the resulting chilling effect.

It remains to be seen whether the Home Secretary will appeal the decision to defend this unlawful and disproportionate interference to disable the movement's organisational capacity. Until then, and even if the decision is reversed at a later date, this judgement exposes the government's executive overreach against political dissent and affirms that the terrorism framework cannot absorb direct action protest.

Worker's Power and International Solidarity

Trade unions have played a growing role in formalising aspects of Palestine solidarity through policy motions and guidance to members.

- Council pension divestment efforts have been significantly shaped and supported by trade union organising. Unions like UNISON have played a sustained role in challenging government attempts to restrict Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) funds from pursuing ethical divestment. In 2020, legal challenges and campaigning by the Palestine Solidarity Campaign, backed by trade unions, successfully overturned earlier UK government regulations that sought to block such divestment decisions.²¹² Despite this victory, efforts to defend and expand pension divestment remain ongoing, as local branches resist renewed restrictions and push for ethical investment policies that divest from companies like Palantir and Caterpillar, which are two of many companies complicit in the genocide in Palestine.
- In January 2025, The Fire Brigades Union (FBU) advised members not to assist police in removing protesters, reinforcing a boundary between emergency services and

210 'UK Decision to Ban Palestine Action as "Terror Group" Unlawful, Court Says', *Al Jazeera*, 13 February 2026, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2026/2/13/uk-decision-to-ban-palestine-action-as-terror-group-unlawful-court-says>.

211 R (on the Application of Huda Ammori) v Secretary of State for the Home Department, [2026] EWHC 292 (Admin) (High Court of Justice, King's Bench Division, Divisional Court 13 February 2026), <https://www.judiciary.uk/wp-content/uploads/2026/02/R-Ammori-v-SSHD-OPEN-Judgment-final.pdf>.

212 'Palestine Solidarity Campaign Wins in the Supreme Court: Ban on LGPS Ethical Divestment Unlawful', Bindmans, 29 April 2020, <https://www.bindmans.com/news-insights/news/palestine-solidarity-campaign-wins-in-the-supreme-court-ban-on-lgps-ethical-divestment-unlawful/>.

protest policing. FBU's general secretary, Steve Wright made clear that the union has 'a long history of supporting the right to protest, as well as peace and justice for Palestine'.²¹³

- In June 2025, doctors within the British Medical Association (BMA) voted overwhelmingly for their union to sever ties with the Israel Medical Association and affirm that criticising the Israeli genocide is not antisemitic.²¹⁴ This represents an important defence of political expression within a profession that, as our database demonstrates, has been disproportionately targeted by coordinated complaints and lawfare campaigns.
- In July 2025, Unite, one of Britain's largest unions, committed to support members who refuse to build, handle, or transport weapons destined for Israel and called for a full arms embargo, embedding solidarity within sectors linked to the arms trade.²¹⁵ At national level, the Trade Union Congress passed 'The Crisis in Palestine motion', demanding a ceasefire, an end to UK arms trade and military collaboration with Israel, and implementation of international legal rulings.²¹⁶

What unites these otherwise distinct interventions is a shared recognition that workers' power and international solidarity are inseparable. The question now is whether those motions will protect members on the ground, and whether the promised embargoes, divestments, and protest rights will be implemented in practice.

What the Victories Teach Us

These victories do not undo the scale of repression documented in this report, but they refute its inevitability. In the drive to criminalise Palestine Action, for example, a coordinated array of forces mobilised in full: the state pursued proscription and prolonged pre-trial detention; ministers refused to meet hunger strikers and endorsed prejudicial narratives; police arrested hundreds for civil disobedience; foreign embassy officials pressed for intervention; and a major arms company lobbied government directly. They brought every tool to bear against the movement. And the movement did not break. The Filton acquittals, the Palestine Action ruling, and Judge Snow's judgment all affirm that the architecture of repression can be breached. They show that the very frameworks weaponised against solidarity – equality law, criminal procedure, professional regulation – can, under sustained challenge, be turned back on those

213 'Firefighters Must Not Be Asked to Remove Protestors, FBU Reiterates', Fire Brigades Union, 24 January 2025, <https://www.fbu.org.uk/news/2025/01/24/firefighters-must-not-be-asked-remove-protestors-fbu-reiterates>.

214 'ARM 2025: BMA Passes Resolutions on International Relations - BMA Media Centre - BMA', The British Medical Association Is the Trade Union and Professional Body for Doctors in the UK., 25 June 2025, <https://www.bma.org.uk/bma-media-centre/arm-2025-bma-passes-resolutions-on-international-relations>.

215 Polly Smythe, 'Unite Votes for Israel Arms Embargo', *Novara Media*, 14 July 2025, <https://novaramedia.com/2025/07/14/unite-votes-for-israel-arms-embargo/>.

216 'C14 The Crisis in Palestine', TUC Congress Motions, 16 August 2025, <https://congress.tuc.org.uk/c14-the-crisis-in-palestine/>.

who misuse them. And they yield strategic lessons: legal defence works; regulatory complaints can constrain repressive actors; juries are persuadable; coordinated movement pressure, including direct action and hunger strikes, can extract material concessions from the state and its commercial partners; and mass non-compliance can render even proscription unenforceable. Above all, they confirm that the movement's political and legal literacy is itself a form of resistance – one that must be continually strengthened and shared.

PART IV

Recommendations

The victories documented in this report are not the endpoint. They are evidence that repression can be resisted, but also that it will persist and adapt. As the movement in Britain draws breath from these successes, the actors who target Palestine solidarity are regrouping, refining their tactics, and importing new forms of repression from elsewhere. The transnational coordination that the ELSC tracks across Britain, Germany, the Netherlands, and in various other places in Europe shows that repression that succeeds in one jurisdiction is quickly adapted and adopted in another. For example, attempts to criminalise the word '*Intifada*' and the slogan 'from the river to the sea' borrow directly from the repressive playbook the German state employs. The fight ahead requires strategic clarity, collective action, and a willingness to learn from what has worked. Below we set out our recommendations.

1. Build and Fortify Solidarity Networks

No sector can resist alone. Students, workers, healthcare professionals, artists, and legal advocates each face forms of repression specific to their context, but the forces arrayed against them are the same. We must create and deepen alliances across sectors.

2. Protect and Reclaim Spaces for Organising

Universities, workplaces, and cultural institutions are not merely sites where repression happens, but they are the terrain on which political subjectivity is formed and collective power is built. Defend them as such. Support strikes and boycotts, and recognise protests not simply as exercises of speech, but as essential gateways to building mass power and enabling more effective direct action. When institutions capitulate to pressure from lawfare groups, or act entirely on their own, hold them accountable.

3. Build on Preliminary Legal Victories

The Miller ruling, Abu Qamar's tribunal decision, and Palestine Action's proscription judgement each demonstrate that the law can be turned back on those who weaponise it. These rulings are tools for everyone, anti-Zionism is a protected philosophical belief, and that protection applies not only to those deemed 'experts', like academics, but to students, workers, and activists. Use these rulings. Cite them in disciplinary hearings, in correspondence with employers, in complaints to regulators. Embed them in the movement's collective legal literacy.

4. Utilise Every Available Complaints Process

Regulatory bodies and professional standards authorities exist, in theory, to constrain bad actors. The investigations opened into UK Lawyers for Israel, the Charity Commission's scrutiny of the Campaign Against Antisemitism, and IPSO's findings against *The Jewish Chronicle* all show that these mechanisms can be made to work. Identify the relevant regulator for the actors targeting you or your organisation – whether legal, charitable, media, or professional – and file complaints. These processes are slow and resource-intensive, but they create public records of misconduct, constrain repeat offenders, and shift the climate in which repression operates.

5. Demand Institutional Accountability

Focus on the institution you are part of. Universities that adopt the IHRA definition to conflate anti-Zionism with anti-Jewish racism or hospitals that remove children's artwork under legal threat are sites and opportunities where accountability can be pursued. Demand that your institution disclose communications with lawfare groups, explain its adoption of contested definitions, and justify its responses to political speech. Use freedom of information requests, student union mechanisms, and trade union branches to force transparency.

6. Push Your Union to Act

Trade unions remain one of the few sources of collective power available to workers facing repression. If you experience disciplinary action, suspension, or dismissal for Palestine solidarity, your union should fight for you. But unions must also act prospectively and challenge the adoption of the IHRA definition in workplaces; move and support BDS motions; organise solidarity with workers facing repression; and resist the securitisation of the public sector through Prevent. If your union is not doing these things, organise within it to make them priorities.

7. Oppose Repressive Legal and Policy Frameworks

The Terrorism Act 2000, the Prevent strategy, and the IHRA definition are the enabling architecture of repression documented throughout this report. Call for independent investigations into the role of police, prosecutors, and counterterrorism units in the systematic targeting of Palestine solidarity. Demand that government departments and local authorities cease their adoption and enforcement of IHRA. Oppose Prevent not only on principle but in line with the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, which has urged the UK government to suspend Prevent.

8. Hold Politicians Accountable

The Dana Abu Qamar case and the Davies-Jones appeal both show that politicians can be held to account for the misuse of power. Ask your MP direct questions about their voting record, their position on arms exports, and their stance on repression of Palestine solidarity. If they evade, organise locally to make their evasion public. If they act with integrity, support them. The right to question elected representatives directly is fundamental, and the movement's willingness to exercise it must remain undeterred.

9. Consider Vulnerabilities and Use Your Privilege

Those organising against repression do so from vastly different positions of security, Migrants, precarious workers, students on visas, and racialised communities face heightened risks. The Defend Our Juries protests, in which thousands of people – many of them not usual activists – stood in solidarity against the proscription of Palestine Action despite the risk of arrest (many were indeed arrested), offer a model of how privilege can be mobilised to protect the most exposed. If you face fewer consequences speaking out, use that margin of safety to shield others. If you have resources, share them.

10. Build Community Solidarity and Legal Defence Funds

Legal defence is expensive, and the state's strategy of attrition depends on exhausting the movement's resources. Build community solidarity funds. Establish legal defence funds before they are needed. Pool resources to support those facing repression – whether with bail, legal representation, or material support for themselves and their families. The 'Filton 24' hunger strikers survived in part because the movement organised around them: that organising required resources. Build that capacity now, not in the moment of crisis.

11. Use Documentation as a Tool of Counter-Power

The *Index of Repression* exists to expose patterns, legitimise grievances, and inform activism. But it is only as powerful as the movement that feeds it. Continue reporting incidents to us. Your documentation expands our collective capacity to fight back and shapes the strategic response. Turning private experience into public evidence is a foundational act of counter-power. Use the database, share it, and build its visibility.

12. Resist Distraction and Sustain Focus on Core Demands

The database makes plain what many have long suspected: repression is designed to consume the movement's time, resources, and emotional energy in perpetual defence. To allow this coordinated effort to dictate our priorities is to cede the terrain of struggle. We must consciously and collectively resist this depletion, continuing to organise around the central demands of Palestinian liberation: an immediate, *meaningful*, and permanent ceasefire; a comprehensive arms embargo; the strategic BDS campaign; and support for Palestinian political prisoners.

Conclusion

Throughout this report, we have demonstrated that the repression of Palestine solidarity in Britain is a systematic and multi-sited campaign engineered to transform a historically and ethically grounded political movement into a security problem to be eradicated. Through the documentation of 964 verified incidents, the findings reveal a coordinated architecture of state, institutional, and non-state actors working to render Palestinian history, presence, and oppression administratively and socially illegible. This process seeks to strip the Palestine solidarity movement of its political character and ethical force, dismantling its organisational capacity as part of a wider project to erase Palestine from public consciousness and institutional memory.

Our data reveal the true scope of the apparatus assembled to repress Palestine solidarity. Police and security personnel are the most frequent perpetrators, followed closely by educational institutions transformed into frontline sites of political surveillance and censorship. Zionist advocacy and lawfare groups operate in concert with state actors, while journalists and media outlets function as agents of smearing and disinformation rather than independent scrutineers of power. Students, academics, teachers, and writers constitute more than one-third of all targets – a deliberate strategy to capture and neutralise the sites where political consciousness and effective organising are formed. Activists and organisers face the most direct forms of state coercion, while workers (including academics, teachers, journalists, and healthcare workers) are pressured through workplace disciplinary procedures – the very same workplaces that, if organised, could wield collective power to strike and impose economic pressure on the institutions and industries complicit in genocide. Artists and cultural workers are also targeted with the aim of suppressing the cultural production that sustains the stories, symbols, and collective imagination through which solidarity is built and renewed.

The empirical patterns above reflect a deeper structural logic, one in which the systematic repression of solidarity with Palestine performs three constitutive functions of violence. First, it manufactures the ideational structures that generate the social and political permission necessary to justify physical violence against Palestinians. Second, it enacts an epistemic erasure that denies Palestinians the fundamental right to narrate their own history and reality. Third, and ultimately, it combines the effects of permissibility and erasure to actively extend, enforce, and reproduce material oppression by insulating the economic, military, and diplomatic structures enabling genocide, displacement, and siege from meaningful accountability. In this precise sense, the silencing of Palestine solidarity in Britain is not ancillary to the violence in Palestine; it is a direct enabling mechanism and a constitutive element of its continuity.²¹⁷

217 Rafeef Ziadah, 'Outside the Multicultural: Solidarity and the Silencing of Palestinian Narratives' (PhD diss., York University, 2013), 2.

This constitutive violence is organised through two interconnected logics: a cross-sectoral division of repressive labour that seeks to dismantle solidarity from its formation in education, to its expression in culture, to its organisation in public space, and a ritualised repetition that naturalises its premises. The state and its diffused network of institutional and individual 'governors' repeatedly invoke the language of 'national security', 'fighting antisemitism', and 'public order' to justify the repression. Each police intervention, political speech, or media headline that invokes these norms reiterates and consolidates their authority. Through this compulsive repetition, the state and its diffuse network of governors naturalises the premise that Palestine solidarity is inherently suspect, rendering this premise self-evident and beyond contestation.

This repeated performative act produces the very category it claims to police. The 'extremist' or 'hateful' protester is not an essence the state discovers but an identity it actively constructs through the ritual of naming, policing, and arresting.

But this dependence on repetition is also power's weakness. The very condition of power's operation – its reliance on repetition – exposes its vulnerability. Where there is a ritual, there is space for subversive reiteration. The Defend Our Juries protests against the Palestine Action ban, for example, have offered a powerful model of resistance through deliberate, knowing subversion of the state's own frameworks. Protesters publicly and repeatedly hold signs with the forbidden phrase: 'I oppose genocide, I support Palestine Action'. These protests do not simply defy the proscription; they render visible the political violence of the classification act itself. They shift the question from 'Are they terrorists?' to 'Why is opposing genocide being framed as terrorism?'

The subsequent arrests are not a failure of the protests but their necessary *and* successful culmination. The willingness to submit to arrest transforms the body into the site where the violence of the state's performative power is rendered spectacularly, irrefutably visible. This repeated enactment of vulnerability is a strategic occupation of the state's own ritual, a re-signification of arrest as testimony.

The lesson of Defend Our Juries and the many acts of defying this repression is that resistance matters not only for the victories it wins, but for what it makes possible. For how it makes visible that the state's performance of power is never fully under its control. There is something world-making and transformative about the knowledge that the ritual can be interrupted, that others can and will join – it opens a future that repression tries to foreclose.

It is in this tradition of counter-testimony that we offer this report. Ultimately, this report and the accompanying *Index of Repression* are themselves acts of resistance. Our documentation is an act of epistemic reclamation. We convert smears into documented evidence, bans into records of censorship, and bureaucratic threats into legible patterns of harassment. In a counter-discursive practice, we seek to re-signify the mechanisms of repression to reassemble the fragmented political subject, insisting that solidarity with Palestine is a foundational

political imperative.

Understanding the architecture of repression outlined in this report is not an end in itself. It is the essential first step toward dismantling the networks of complicity – institutional, legal, and ideological – that sustain violence both in Britain and in Palestine. This report is offered in the spirit of steadfast struggle, as both a strategic map of the terrain of repression and a testament to a movement that, despite everything, persists.

Live like a porcupine and fight like a flea.

Basel Al-Araj

