

Reporter Sarah Wilkinson arrested by UK government for opposition to Gaza genocide

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British human rights activist and reporter Sarah Wilkinson was arrested by UK police on Thursday morning, and subsequently released, allegedly for content she published online in support of Palestine and against the Israeli genocide in Gaza.

The social media account Suppressed News quoted Jack Wilkinson, her brother, as saying, “The police came to her house just before 7.30am. [Twelve] of them in total, some of them in plain clothes from the counter-terrorism police. They said she was under arrest for ‘content that she has posted online.’ Her house is being raided, and they have seized all her electronic devices.”

MENA Uncensored, a media company recognized by Lebanon’s Ministry of Information for whom Wilkinson is a contributor and roving reporter, said that she was detained for “supporting the Palestinian resistance and relaying what is really happening in Gaza and the West Bank to the world.”

The publisher said the UK government alleges that Wilkinson supports terrorism. MENA Uncensored also published on its X account a copy of a letter it issued last April spelling out the role of Wilkinson as a reporter assigned to “cover the unfolding crisis in the Eastern Mediterranean region, particularly in Gaza, including accompanying the Freedom Flotilla aimed at breaking the maritime siege imposed on Gaza.”

Later in the afternoon, MENA Uncensored reported that Wilkinson had been released on bail and “is back to the comfort of her home.” The UK police have not released any official statements on her arrest and detention.

The co-founder of Palestine Action Richard Barnard was the same day charged with three offences for comments made in two speeches. He is accused of supporting a proscribed organisation under the

Terrorism Act (2000), and encouraging “criminal activity”. Barnard is to appear at Westminster Magistrates Court on September 18 for a plea hearing.

Barnard was first arrested on suspicion of the charges in November 2023. *The Canary* reported of his case this week, “This was four days before he was due to begin trial at Snaresbrook Crown Court as part of the ‘Elbit Eight’. During that trial, the state accused him of several offences. The court acquitted him of 3 of them, including a charge of encouraging criminal damage. Authorities previously stopped him under Schedule 7 counter-terrorism powers in November 2020 alongside fellow activist Huda Ammori.”

The arrests of Sarah Wilkinson and Barnard follow by two weeks the apprehension of independent Syrian-British journalist Richard Medhurst under the provisions of Section 12 of the Terrorism Act of 2000. Police arrested Medhurst at London’s Heathrow Airport as he exited from his airplane, detained and questioned him for 24 hours and confiscated his electronic devices and journalistic equipment.

The arrests also follow by less than a week the arrest of Telegram founder Pavel Durov by the French government in Paris on 12 different charges, including refusing to “share information or documents with investigators when required by law” and “complicity in managing an online platform to allow illicit transactions by an organized group.” Telegram has emerged from the start of the NATO-Russia war in Ukraine as a source of information about the conflict that is unfiltered by NATO and Ukrainian media.

Like the arrest of Medhurst, the detention of Wilkinson is part of the escalation by the British ruling class against left-wing journalists and outspoken opponents of the US-backed Israeli campaign of extermination of Palestinians in Gaza.

Fearful of growing public opposition to war and the Gaza genocide, the imperialist ruling elites around the world are attacking basic democratic rights such as freedom of the press in a desperate attempt to control the narrative and stop information about what is actually happening in Gaza and Ukraine from reaching the public.

The arrest of journalists by the UK Labour government of Keir Starmer is taking place while the US Biden-Harris White House is leading a crackdown against student protesters on college campuses demanding an end to the war and genocide. These developments show that the threat to democracy comes from all factions of the ruling class

Sarah Wilkinson, 61, has been an outspoken opponent of Zionism for decades. She has courageously reported from the “Freedom Flotilla Coalition,” an international initiative that collected and is attempting to deliver hundreds of tons humanitarian aid directly to Palestinians. The flotilla has been repeatedly blocked from making its way to Gaza due to interference by the Israeli government and its imperialist supporters.

A review of Wilkinson’s posts on X shows that she has been reporting on the horrific impact of Israel’s onslaught on Palestinian men, women and children. The volume of material that she has been posting from numerous sources within Gaza provides graphic proof of the war crimes being committed daily.

For example, on August 28, one day before she was arrested, Wilkinson posted 43 photos and videos showing mainly casualties and deaths of children in Gaza. In many cases, the posts show the impact of Israeli airstrikes on schools and residences and tell the stories of the victims and their families.

Wilkinson’s arrest was immediately denounced widely on social media. Rock music artist and founder of Pink Floyd Roger Waters, posted a video on X in which he said Sarah Wilkinson was arrested, “for standing up for human rights and campaign against genocide.” Waters went on, “We know that these are policies that Keir Starmer doesn’t agree with ... This is wrong. If you allow this to stand, the arrest of Sarah Wilkinson and the persecution of my friend Craig Murray among others, then you have absolutely accepted that England is now a fascist state. 1984 has arrived and is alive and well in the United Kingdom. Over my dead body.”



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