

Kneecap denounce escalating campaign to silence them: “The real crimes are the silence and complicity of those in power”

Steve James
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An orchestrated campaign, led by pro-Zionist government groups on both sides of the Atlantic, has been set in motion to silence Irish hip-hop trio Kneecap.

Kneecap’s crime has been to inform its hundreds of thousands of followers worldwide that, in the words of the band’s projected slogan at the Coachella festival, “Israel is committing genocide against the Palestinian people... It is being enabled by the U.S. government who arm and fund Israel despite their war crimes. F*ck Israel; free Palestine.”

Two video clips, recorded at Kneecap gigs in which band members are said to have shouted “Up Hamas”, “Up Hezbollah”, “the only good Tory is dead Tory” and “kill your local MP” have been seized on as pretext. The clips were unearthed after an orchestrated social media trawl, and made, it seems, in the heat of Kneecap’s noisy and boisterous performances. They are now being investigated by the UK’s Counter Terrorism Internet Referral Unit.

A succession of outraged British politicians and commentators have called for the band to be charged under anti-terror laws, their funding to be cut, their gigs cancelled and even the band’s name to be dropped from public statements.

The Labour government rushed to lead the witch-hunt. Prime Minister Sir Keir Starmer’s spokesman condemned Kneecap’s comments “in the strongest possible terms”. Home Secretary Yvette Cooper told *Times Radio*, “What they’re reported to have said is a total disgrace.”

Home Office minister Dan Jarvis called the comments “utterly vile” and warned fellow MPs “not to do or say anything that will interfere with what is a live police investigation.” He encouraged MPs “not to give them any further publicity by naming them,” while calling on organisers of the Glastonbury festival, Britain’s largest, to

“think very carefully about who is invited to perform there.”

Leader of the opposition, Conservative Party leader Kemi Badenoch, called for the band to be prosecuted. Scottish First Minister John Swinney of the Scottish National Party spoke out against their planned appearance at the TRNSMT festival in Glasgow, July 11. Labour MP David Taylor called for the band to be removed from “iTunes, Spotify, YouTube and others”. In response Eden Sessions Limited who run the Eden Project in Cornwall, have cancelled Kneecap’s July 4 gig.

Germany’s Hurricane Festival and Southside Festival cancelled Kneecap earlier this week. This has been followed by the cancellation of the trio’s headline shows in Germany in September, in Cologne, Berlin and Hamburg.

The band replied with a statement declaring:

They want you to believe words are more harmful than genocide.

Establishment figures, desperate to silence us, have combed through hundreds of hours of footage and interviews, extracting a handful of words from months or years ago to manufacture moral hysteria.

Let us be unequivocal: we do not, and have never, supported Hamas or Hezbollah. We condemn all attacks on civilians, always. It is never okay. We know this more than anyone, given our nation’s history.

We also reject any suggestion that we would seek to incite violence against any MP or individual. Ever. An extract of footage, deliberately taken out of all context, is now being

exploited and weaponised, as if it were a call to action.

This distortion is not only absurd - it is a transparent effort to derail the real conversation.

All two million Palestinian people in Gaza are currently being starved to death by Israel.

At least 20,000 children in Gaza have been killed. The British government continues to supply arms to Israel, even after scores of NHS doctors warned Keir Starmer in August that children were being systematically executed with sniper shots to the head.

Instead of defending innocent people or the principles of international law, the powerful in Britain have abetted slaughter and famine.

This is where real anger and outrage should be directed towards.

Kneecap's statement directly addressed the families of two MPs, Sir David Amess and Jo Cox. Amess, a long standing Tory MP, member for Southend West, was stabbed to death in 2021 in his Essex constituency by Ali Harbi Al, a UK citizen, previously referred to the British government's Prevent counter-extremism programme. Cox, Labour MP for Batley and Spen in Yorkshire was killed by far-right British nationalist, Thomas Mair.

To the Amess and Cox families, we send our heartfelt apologies, we never intended to cause you hurt.

Kneecap's message has always been — and remains — one of love, inclusion, and hope. This is why our music resonates across generations, countries, classes and cultures and has brought hundreds of thousands of people to our gigs.

No smear campaign will change that.

Suddenly, days after calling out the US administration at Coachella to applause and solidarity, there is an avalanche of outrage and condemnation by the political classes of Britain.

The real crimes are not in our performances; the real crimes are the silence and complicity of those in power.

Shame on them.

who prominently quoted relatives of both murdered MPs denouncing the band.

Kneecap's manager, Daniel Lambert defended the band to Irish broadcaster RTE and placed the campaign against them in context:

“We're in the space now of moral hysteria and moral outrage, and you've a band being held to higher moral account than politicians who are ignoring international law. Why are the Palestinians where they are today? They're where they are because there's been a wholesale denial of their rights as human beings.”

Lambert re-iterated, “What led to this campaign is the reaction of young people in America—young people who aren't willing to support a genocide and who have empathy and sympathy for the Palestinian people. It's solely about de-platforming artists. It's about telling the next young band—through the music industry and through the political class—that you cannot speak about Palestine.”

The attacks on Kneecap extends and deepens the international campaign of vilification against Roger Waters, whose decades long defence of the rights of Palestinians, opposition to nuclear war, to the NATO-Russia war in Ukraine and support for numerous human rights causes has made him a hate figure for world imperialism.

Waters' 2023 “This is not a Drill” tour was the subject of countless efforts to cancel gigs, targeted with bogus, Zionist organised accusations of antisemitism. In early 2024, Waters was the subject of another deluge of slanderous journalistic attacks and dropped by his German music publisher, BMG. Waters latest album, a live reworking of his *The Dark Side of the Moon Redux* is currently topping charts in the UK and internationally, testifying to the popularity not only of the artist but also of all those ready to take a stand against genocide.



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The principled statement infuriated the British press