

Police send file on British independent journalist Richard Medhurst to Crown Prosecution Service

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16 May 2025

Independent journalist Richard Medhurst remains under threat of draconian terrorism charges, nine months after being arrested at London's Heathrow Airport.

Syrian-born Medhurst, a British citizen and son of Nobel Peace Prize winners, opposes Israel's genocide in Gaza and Netanyahu's war against Lebanon, backed by US and British imperialism. Operating a YouTube channel since 2006, he has more than one million followers on social media.

Almost nine months since his August 15, 2024 arrest, Medhurst posted on X on May 12, "The police in England have sent my file to the Crown Prosecution Service, to decide whether to charge me with terrorism for my reporting on Gaza & Lebanon. Can the CPS be trusted to decide fairly, when their contact info was passed to the Israeli embassy weeks after my arrest?" An additional post read, "Bail moved to November."

Medhurst, a freelance journalist, was arrested on arrival at London Heathrow Airport, detained under the Terrorism Act 2000, and his phone and recording devices seized. No legal support was offered until he questioned officers on this right.

Speaking at the time of his arrest under counter-terror laws brought in by Tony Blair's Labour government, Medhurst said, "They arrested me—not detained, they arrested me—under Section 12 of the Terrorism Act of 2000 and accused me of allegedly, 'expressing an opinion or belief that is supportive of a proscribed organization', but wouldn't explain what this meant."

Medhurst was the first journalist to be arrested under Section 12 of the Terrorism Act, which after being amended in 2019 under a Conservative government stipulates that a person can be jailed for up to 14 years

for merely "express[ing] an opinion or belief that is supportive of a proscribed organisation" and "is reckless as to whether a person to whom the expression is directed will be encouraged to support a proscribed organisation." He faces an additional 2-5 years in prison if he doesn't give up, as he refused to do, the passwords to his devices.

On February 3 this year, Medhurst was detained and had his home ransacked by intelligence agents in Vienna, Austria. In that operation, Medhurst was detained for six to seven hours, fingerprinted, had his DNA taken, was photographed for mug shots, and had many of his possessions confiscated. He was accused of encouraging terrorism, disseminating propaganda and even of being involved in organized crime.

Medhurst has produced a valuable timeline of events surrounding his arrest and detention, putting them into the context of the persecution of other journalists and prominent anti-genocide opponents of the Israeli state. It points to collusion at the highest level of the British state, the Starmer government, and Israel.

On May 2, Medhurst issued a video, "Did the Israeli embassy order my arrest?". He said, "The British government and the Israeli Embassy in London have been in contact with each other discussing legal cases in the UK." Displaying a heavily redacted email, Medhurst said it "shows that the British government gave the Israeli Embassy in London the contact information of prosecutors and counter-terrorism policies. This is personally addressed to Daniella Grudsky, who is the Deputy Israeli ambassador. And who gave this to them? The Attorney General's Office, the government's top lawyer. It stated September 9 to follow up to a meeting that they had on August 28.

“Why were we arrested? For criticizing Israel. When was I arrested? Two weeks earlier. Who arrested me? The counter-terrorism police, that’s the same force being mentioned in the email.

“And if I were to be prosecuted, who would prosecute me? The Crown Prosecution Service. Does it seem a bit weird that all these arrests, not just mine, but all these arrests, happened in the weeks surrounding this meeting and this email?”

He continued, “Let’s look at the timeline. We know of at least one meeting on August 28, there could be even more but we know about this one. So I was arrested on August 15, and just the day before, Richard Barnard of Palestine Action was charged, on August 14. And on August 6, ten of their activists were arrested. Sarah Wilkinson was raided on August 29. Asa Winstanley was raided in mid-October. Tony Greenstein was charged in November. Another eight from Palestine Action were arrested that month and Natalie Strecker arrested as well. So there’s a very clear calculated timeline of arrests, very clear crackdown against prominent critics of Israel’s genocide in Gaza.”

At the time pressure was mounting on the UK government to cease arms sales to Israel, but Starmer’s Attorney General Richard Hermer, Medhurst notes, said “he doesn’t think that the government should cut weapons to Israel. He’s no problem with them.”

Medhurst points out, “Now, the government did end up suspending a few licenses, a handful, to shield themselves from war crimes prosecution, perhaps. Nevertheless, the Israelis probably threw a tantrum, and since the attorney general seems to be sympathetic towards Zionism, well, it makes you wonder, is it possible that the British government arrested me and other critics of Israel as compensation for cutting off a few weapons to Israel?”

Showing a copy of a 47-page Israeli government report published in September 2024, “Antisemitism & Anti-Zionism in Europe since October 7, 2023”—in which he is prominently identified—Medhurst notes, “In the last month, the Israeli government has even singled me out, and Palestine Action, as well to try and smear us as ‘antisemites’. We’re clearly on their radar. So it’s hardly far-fetched to think that they’re behind these raids. Especially when after being arrested at Heathrow I got detained, raided and had my residency

threatened in Austria, in another country. So I’ve no doubt the Israelis in the UK played a role in that too.”

The Starmer government has emerged as the chief accomplice of Trump’s repression of anti-genocide protests. It was Labour’s Blairites that pioneered the use of the “left antisemitism” smear to criminalise opposition to war and genocide in their years long campaign against Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn, which resulted in his removal in 2020. Thousands of his supporters were expelled or driven out of the party, which Corbyn himself did nothing to oppose.

Central to facilitating the arrest and persecution of Medhurst and other anti-war journalists and activists is the near total silence of the mainstream media, including the nominally liberal *Guardian*. The *Guardian* has not issued a single *news report* or editorialised on Medhurst’s arrest or that of any others hounded by the Starmer government.

The only mention of Medhurst in his defence was a paragraph in a column last November by Kenan Malik in the *Observer*—then the *Guardian*’s sister paper—more than three months after he was arrested at Heathrow. The *Observer* is no longer owned by the *Guardian* group, having been sold to Tortoise Media in April.

This silence denotes the tacit support of the entirety of Britain’s media for the arrest and persecution of journalists and anti-genocide and anti-war activists.



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