

Kneecap rap group member charged with terrorism offence

“We stand proudly with the people. You stand complicit with the war criminals. We are on the right side of history. You are not.”

Socialist Equality Party (UK)
22 May 2025

The Socialist Equality Party calls for the immediate dropping of the Terrorism Act charge against Kneecap member Liam Óg Ó hAinmáidh (Liam O’Hanna).

London’s Metropolitan Police issued a statement on Wednesday stating that O’Hanna, who uses the stage name Mo Chara (My Friend), “has been charged... with displaying a flag in support of Hizballah, a proscribed organisation...”

Penalties for violating Section 13 include imprisonment for up to six months and/or a “statutory maximum” fine—the highest level of fine a magistrate’s court can impose for a summary offence.

The charge against O’Hanna comes exactly one month after the Met’s Counter Terrorism Command announced they had been “made aware” of an online video of Kneecap’s concert last November in Kentish Town, London. The video was posted by Danny Morris from the pro-Zionist Community Security Trust (CST), prompting a counter-terror investigation.

A hysterical campaign by supporters of Israel’s genocide against the Palestinians demanded Kneecap be censored, banned from playing gigs, and prosecuted.

There is a danger that more charges could follow. The initial investigation included allegations that a Kneecap member shouted “up Hamas, up Hezbollah” at a gig. Both organisations are proscribed under UK terror law as part of efforts to criminalise support for the Palestinian people. Hamas won elections held in Gaza in 2006 and Hezbollah was elected to government in Lebanon in 2018.

The Met’s counter terrorism internet referral unit (CTIRU) have said they are assessing another video in

which a Kneecap member allegedly called for the killing of Conservative Party MPs.

Kneecap have refused to be cowed by their persecutors, while making clear they have never supported Hamas or Hezbollah or endorsed the killing of MPs.

In a statement posted Thursday on X—viewed over 1.4 million times in its first 14 hours—the group said:

14,000 babies are about to die of starvation in Gaza, with food sent by the world sitting on the other side of a wall, and once again the British establishment is focused on us.

We deny this ‘offence’ and will vehemently defend ourselves, this is political policing, this is a carnival of distraction.

We are not the story, genocide is, as they profit from genocide, they use an ‘anti-terror law’ against us for displaying a flag thrown on stage. A charge not serious enough to even warrant their crown court, instead a court that doesn’t have a jury. What’s the objective?

To restrict our ability to travel. To prevent us speaking to young people across the world. To silence voices of compassion. To prosecute artists who dare speak out.

Instead of defending innocent people, or the principles of international law they claim to uphold, the powerful in Britain have abetted slaughter and famine in Gaza, just as they did in Ireland for centuries. Then, like now, they claim

justification.

The IDF [Israel Defence Forces] units they arm and fly spy plane missions for are the real terrorists, the whole world can see it.

We stand proudly with the people. You stand complicit with the war criminals. We are on the right side of history. You are not.

We will fight you in court. We will win. Free Palestine.

Kneecap's targeting under counter-terrorism laws underscores the connection between imperialist war, genocide, and the turn to dictatorial forms of rule.

They are being persecuted to deflect from a genocide that has killed at least 54,000 Palestinians in Gaza, including over 16,500 children, with tens of thousands more buried under 51 million tons of rubble and hundreds of thousands facing starvation and ethnic cleansing.

They are being persecuted because they are giving voice to the deep anger, disgust and moral outrage felt by hundreds of millions of workers and youth worldwide who want the genocide to end, and the perpetrators punished.

They are being persecuted to intimidate and ultimately criminalise mass opposition to genocide and war.

Thursday night's concert by Kneecap in London sold out in less than 90 seconds, showing the depth of feeling among young people. And just days before the charge against O'Hanna was announced, hundreds of thousands protested in the streets of London amid blanket media censorship.

Kneecap's public stand for the Palestinian people has become a global event. Their onstage projection at Coachella in the US last month spoke for millions: "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".

O'Hanna/Mo Chara told the crowd, "The Irish not so long ago were persecuted at the hands of the Brits, but we were never bombed from the fucking skies with nowhere to go. The Palestinians have nowhere to go, It's their fucking home, and they're bombing them from the skies. If you're not calling it a genocide, what

the fuck are you calling it?"

The state persecution of Kneecap raises fundamental political issues.

O'Hanna's alleged "terror offence" took place in Kentish Town, in the Holborn and St Pancras constituency held by Labour Prime Minister Sir Keir Starmer. Since taking office last July, Starmer has led an escalating state crackdown on student protesters, left-wing media and other opponents of the Gaza genocide.

Nearly a decade ago the Blairite wing of the Labour Party mounted a political coup to remove Jeremy Corbyn and his tens of thousands of supporters from the Labour Party, branding lifelong opponents of racism and fascism as "antisemites".

This campaign of lies was never challenged by Corbyn, who allowed his supporters to be thrown to the wolves. He insisted that Labour must remain a "broad church" embracing left and right, before meekly handing power to Starmer, the Blairites' chosen vessel.

Today, the increasing resort to counter-terror laws backed ideologically by accusations of "antisemitism" poses a fundamental threat to the democratic rights of the entire working class.

The genocide in Gaza is driven by the breakdown of the capitalist system. As in the 20th century, the imperialist powers are launching wars to seize colonies, markets and resources. And they are launching a war against the working class at home.

Kneecap have continued to denounce the genocide in Gaza and the complicity of the major imperialist powers. O'Hanna has stated: "I don't want to be 80, 90 years of age and my grandkids asking me about the Palestinian genocide? Me sitting there being like fuck, I didn't do enough. I don't wanna be on that side of history."

Defend Kneecap! End the witch-hunt and drop the charges! Arrest and charge the perpetrators of genocide! Retribution for the crimes of imperialism means building a world party to unite the working class in the struggle for socialism.



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