

Trump administration revokes US visas for Bob Vylan over anti-genocide chants at Glastonbury

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30 June 2025

Over the weekend, the Glastonbury music festival in England revealed the powerful and growing artistic and mass opposition to the ongoing genocide in Gaza. Millions are outraged about the 20-month ethnic cleansing and starvation campaign carried out by the Israeli government with the full support of the United States and all the imperialist powers.

The best efforts of the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) to censor resistance to this historic war crime, by refusing to broadcast the performance of Irish-based rap group Kneecap, failed miserably. Numerous artists at the concert spoke out in defense of the Palestinians' right to exist and condemned the Israeli government, and a veritable sea of Palestinian flags was visible to any BBC viewer.

One of the more powerful performances Saturday came from the British punk duo Bob Vylan. The band is unabashedly left-wing, with many songs focusing on inequality, joblessness, police repression and anti-imperialism.

During his set, frontman Bobby Vylan led the crowd in chants of "Free, Free Palestine" and "Death, Death to the IDF." The slogans were raised the day after *Haaretz* published a damning exposé based on interviews with Israeli soldiers stationed near so-called "humanitarian zones" in Gaza.

These distribution points coordinated by the US and Israeli governments are in fact daily killing fields. Soldiers admitted they were ordered to fire live rounds into crowds of starving civilians to "disperse" them.

One Israeli soldier told *Haaretz*, "I felt like, like, like a Nazi ... it looked exactly like we were actually the Nazis and they were the Jews."

Vylan's performance and calls for the defeat of the IDF were met with overwhelming support from the festival crowd and quickly went viral online. On Instagram, Bob

Vylan's followers have more than doubled in less than 24 hours.

But the predictable backlash from the political establishment and Zionist organizations was immediate and vicious.

As Vylan's performance went viral online, the Zionist-doxxing group "StopAntisemitism" demanded on X that the Trump administration ban Bob Vylan from entering the US. Recently elected Florida Republican Representative Randy Fine, a fanatical supporter of Israeli war crimes, responded to the post, "On it."

Last year, Fine responded to the murder of 26-year-old Turkish American citizen Aysenur Ezgi Eygi by the IDF in the West Bank with more calls for murder. "Throw rocks, get shot. One less #MuslimTerror ist. #FireAway"

Leo Terrell, the chair of Trump's Department of Justice "Task Force on Combating Antisemitism," amplified StopAntisemitism's post with the reply "Noted!" and tagged Donald Trump and Secretary of State Marco Rubio.

In an interview with *Jewish Insider* published over the weekend, Terrell declared:

We understand that Mr. Vylan is planning to travel to the United States as part of the Inertia Tour. In response, Mr. Terrell's Task Force will be reaching out to the U.S. Department of State on Monday to determine what measures are available ... to prevent the promotion of violent antisemitic rhetoric in the United States.

On Monday, Deputy Secretary of State Christopher Landau announced that the State Department had revoked the group's visas. In a post on X, Landau wrote:

The @StateDept has revoked the US visas for the members of the Bob Vylan band in light of their hateful tirade at Glastonbury, including leading the crowd in death chants. Foreigners who glorify violence and hatred are not welcome visitors to our country.

The banning of Bob Vylan is an attack on the democratic rights of the entire working class and youth. The government and ruling elite are terrified of the growing global opposition to genocide, repression and war. The chants that rang out at Glastonbury express the sentiments of millions.

Adding to the censorship campaign, Bob Vylan was reportedly dropped by their talent agency shortly after the visa revocation.

The campaign to label any opposition to the Israeli onslaught as “antisemitism” is an ideological weapon of war. It is not being used to protect Jews but to suppress mass opposition to imperialist war crimes. Would it have been “anti-German” to call for the defeat of the SS in 1944? Or to wish for the destruction of the Wehrmacht as it laid siege to Stalingrad?

Bob Vylan, who has never killed anyone and is not accused of any crime, is barred from entering the United States. Meanwhile, it was reported by multiple outlets on Monday that Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu—a man named in a warrant by the International Criminal Court for genocide—is scheduled to be received in Washington next Monday with full honors by aspiring dictator Trump and the US political establishment.

In the America of 2025, chanting against a genocidal army gets you banished. Carrying out genocide on behalf of the US government gets you a red carpet.

Netanyahu, unlike Bob Vylan, does not merely chant slogans—He is the head of a state that has translated genocidal ideology into genocidal action. He has referred to Palestinians as “the children of darkness” and invoked the Biblical command to destroy “Amalek,” stating Israel must “remember what Amalek did” and “not forget.”

These are not metaphorical flourishes. They are political directives backed by the machinery of state power: the bombing of hospitals and refugee camps, the destruction of water and sanitation infrastructure, the starvation of children.

Bob Vylan’s banning is not an isolated incident but part of an ongoing crackdown. As WSWs previously documented, a growing number of artists, musicians, scientists and others have faced threats, harassment, detention, or outright bans from entering the US under Trump’s fascist border regime.

In a powerful statement opposing Vylan’s visa revocation and the noxious “antisemitism” slander, the Jewish punk

artist Grandson, whose upcoming US tour features Bob Vylan, wrote:

Censorship of art is a tactic of control. They blame artists and activists and not those responsible for the conditions we rage against. ... As a Jewish artist I am deeply offended by the conflation of criticism against a military force known for their indiscriminate violence with antisemitism. The Israeli government has done more to exacerbate antisemitism this past 2 years than any statements by artists advocating for Palestinian freedom and solidarity.

In another statement, the UK group Lambrini Girls explained:

All good for bands to be political as long as it’s digestible and commodifiable. When it’s actually NEEDED and warranted and pushing against the true status quo—then time after time again, historically it’s proven that mass media and the government will villainise artists. ... It’s why oppressive regimes often target artists, musicians, and writers FIRST.

The decision to ban Bob Vylan does not reflect the power or confidence of the American government or the other imperialist regimes backing genocide. On the contrary, it reveals their profound political weakness and fear. These governments understand that the official narrative cannot withstand scrutiny. They are terrified that any genuine expression of opposition could become the spark that ignites a mass anti-war, anti-capitalist and socialist movement.

The conflation of anti-Zionism with antisemitism—a lie pushed by both the Biden and Trump administrations—is being used to criminalize opposition to imperialist policy. Meanwhile, the real antisemites and fascists, who now dominate the Republican Party and sections of the state, are welcomed into power.



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