

Two more pro-Palestine UK political prisoners hospitalised while Starmer government refused to act

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Two pro-Palestine political prisoners on hunger strike, Amu Gib and Kamran Ahmed, were hospitalised over the weekend.

The strike now involves five people: Amu Gib, Kamran Ahmed, Heba Muraisi, Teuta Hoxha and Lewie Chiaramello. Chiaramello is eating every other day due to his diabetes. According to a letter to the government submitted by lawyers for the protesters on Monday, Qesser Zuhrah, the joint-first of eight to begin the hunger strike on November 2, ended her protest after 48 days. Qesser was taken to hospital seriously ill last week.

The hunger strikers are demanding immediate bail, the right to a fair trial, an end to censorship of their communications, the de-proscription of Palestine Action (PA) and the closing of all UK sites run by Israeli arms manufacturer Elbit.

This is the largest coordinated hunger strike in the UK since the 1981 Irish republican hunger strike, in which Sinn Fein MP Bobby Sands and nine other prisoners of the British state in Northern Ireland in 1981 starved to death.

With the remaining hunger strikers in acute danger of death, the Labour government has washed its hands of their fate. Despite none of the strikers having been found guilty of anything, Justice Minister David Lammy has refused all calls to meet with their lawyers or family representatives.

A lawyers' letter was submitted giving the government until 14:00 GMT on Tuesday (December 23) to respond to a threat to go to the High Court over Lammy's refusal.

After being held for many months already, some of the hunger strikers are facing more than a year on remand ahead of their trial as part of the Filton 24 case for involvement in an August 2024 Palestine Action (PA) protest of Elbit—Israel's biggest weapons manufacturer—in

Filton, near Bristol. Three are accused of involvement in a June 2025 protest at the Brize Norton Royal Air Force base in Oxfordshire, in which two military supply planes were daubed with red paint. None of the charges the hunger strikers face—which they all deny—relate to injury or damage to a person.

The latest of the hospitalisations mean that seven of the eight prisoners have been taken to hospital at some point since the strike began, with several admitted multiple times.

On Saturday, Amu Gib, who is being held at HMP Bronzefield in Surrey, was taken to hospital after having to be provided with a wheelchair the previous day. Gib, aged 30, is now on day 52 of a hunger strike.

In a *Guardian* column published last Friday, Gib said the protest began on November 2 to coincide with the anniversary of the Balfour Declaration. Named after the British Foreign Secretary Lord Arthur James Balfour, it set out a proposal to establish a homeland in rural Palestine for Jews—who formed around 3-5 percent of the population before 1914—when the territory was part of the Ottoman Empire.

The other hunger striker hospitalised is 28-year-old Kamran Ahmed; one of the Filton 24. Ahmed is on day 44 of refusing food and is being held at Pentonville prison in London. The two are the latest of eight prisoners admitted to hospital since the hunger strike action began.

Speaking to Al Jazeera on Friday, Kamran's sister Alam raised the alarm about his dire condition. "It's day 42 [of Ahmed's hunger strike], and at this point, there's significant risk of organ damage... We know that he's rapidly been losing weight in the last few days, losing up to half a kilogram (1.1lbs) a day."

Al Jazeera noted that Ahmed's last recorded weight was just 60kg (132lbs). Describing his weight loss, the news

agency reported, “When Al Jazeera first interviewed Alam on December 12, Ahmed, who is 180cm, weighed 64kg (141lbs), having entered prison at a healthy 74kg (163lbs). On Thursday [December 18], Alam told journalists at a news conference in London that he weighed 61.5kg (136lbs).”

Alam noted that her brother’s speech was slurred in a call with the family on Friday, and that he is thought to be suffering from high ketone levels and chest pains: “Honestly, I don’t know how he’s going to come out of this one.” His trial is not scheduled until June 2026.

Teuta Hoxha is being held at HMP Peterborough. Her sister Rahma told Sky News of the severe danger Teuta is in—one of many pleas and warning made to the Labour government and Prison Service authorities which are falling on deaf ears. The broadcaster stated, “her sister told Sky News she suffers from continuous headaches, mobility issues, and can no longer stand for prayer.”

Rahma said, “I know that she’s already instructed the doctors on what to do if she collapses and she’s instructed them on what to do if she passes away”, adding. “She’s only 29—she’s not even 30 yet and nobody should be thinking about that.” Teuta, said Rahma, had “been on remand for over a year (November 19, 2024), her trial’s not until April next year and bail keeps getting denied.”

Despite a standard pre-trial custody limit of six months, all the hunger strikers will have spent more than a year in prison before trial. At least one—Amu Gib—is not set to be tried until 2027 despite having already been on remand for over five-and-a-half months (172 days).

Two—Amu and Heba Muraisi—have now passed 50 days on hunger strike, with death due to lack of food usually occurring after 60-70 days. Depending on the individual involved, their health and the circumstances of the captivity, this can be much sooner. Martin Hurson, an Irish Republican Army (IRA) prisoner in Long Kesh prison, died after 46 days of his hunger strike in 1981.

Protesters demanding that the hunger strikers receive immediate medical attention and be released on bail have faced weeks of stonewalling and obstruction by the authorities. A number of National Health Service (NHS) doctors have warned about the imminent danger to the life of the hunger strikers.

The *Middle East Eye* reported Monday that Olivia Brandon, an Accident and Emergency doctor at a London hospital, “says she was ‘strangled’ by police officers at a protest” outside Bronzefield prison, “demanding an ambulance for a critically ill Palestine Action-linked prisoner on hunger strike.”

The news organisation was told by Brandon “that she was dragged by the hood of her coat by police, causing her airways to become restricted and resulting in her losing consciousness.

“She also reported that another doctor, Ayo Moiett, who had been repeatedly demanding that Bronzefield prison call an ambulance for prisoner Qesser Zuhrah, was arrested by two police officers after he declined to attend a ‘voluntary interview’ following allegations that he had assaulted a prison officer.”

The proscription of Palestine Action is currently being ruled on by the High Court in a judicial review, following a successful legal challenge by the group’s founder Huda Ammori.

More than 2,700 arrests have been made since the banning of the direct action group in July—mainly of people holding a sign reading: “I support Palestine Action. I Oppose Genocide”. Arrests continue to be made, including that on Tuesday in London of Swedish activist Greta Thunberg. Thunberg was arrested while peacefully protesting outside Aspen, a company which supplies insurance to Elbit Systems. Her sign read, “I support Palestine Action Prisoners”. I Oppose Genocide”.

At the news of the latest hospitalisations, prisons minister in Labour’s genocide-supporting government, Lord Timpson, could not have been more blasé in telling the media: “Hunger strikes are not a new issue for our prisons. Over the last five years, we’ve averaged over 200 a year and we have long-standing procedures in place to ensure prisoner safety”.

He declared, “Remand decisions are for independent judges, and lawyers can make representations to the court on behalf of their clients. Ministers will not meet with them.”



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