

Palestine Action hunger strikers in imminent danger of death as Labour government still refuses to meet

Paul Bond
7 January 2026

Three young pro-Palestinian political prisoners have been placed in a life-threatening situation by the Labour government after more than two months on hunger strike. The risk of starving to death is acute and imminent.

On Monday, Teuta Hoxha, aged 29, became the fifth of eight Palestine Action (PA)-affiliated prisoners to pause her strike. Prisoners for Palestine, a collective representing all those detained under charges related to pro-Palestinian activity, reported that Hoxha required “urgent medical care in hospital,” and that HMP (His Majesty’s Prison) Peterborough was denying her proper treatment.

Heba Muraisi, the first of the prisoners to begin the hunger strike, has now passed 66 days without food. Aged 20, she is reported to be struggling to breathe and speak and has described her condition as “deteriorating.” Other symptoms, like muscle spasms, may indicate neurological damage.

Death usually occurs between 60 to 70 days without food but could come sooner, depending on the health of the individual and their circumstances.

Kamran Ahmed (59 days) and Lewie Chiaramello (45 days) also remain on hunger strike. Chiaramello is diabetic and refusing food every other day. Amu Gib (49 days), Qesser Zuhrah (48 days) and Jon Cink (38 days) paused their strikes on December 23, saying they would resume them in the new year. Umer Khalid ended his action after 13 days.

None of the protestors has been found guilty of anything, or even gone to trial. All have been detained on remand for more than a year, despite a standard pre-trial custody limit of six months. Zuhrah has been held for 16 months. Ahmed and Muraisi both have trial

dates in June 2026. By that point, Muraisi, who has currently been detained for 410 days, will have been held without trial for nearly two years. Gib is not scheduled for court until 2027.

The hunger strikers are on remand ahead of trials for their alleged involvement in an August 2024 Palestine Action protest of Elbit—in Filton, near Bristol. Some are accused of involvement in a June 2025 protest at the Brize Norton Royal Air Force base in Oxfordshire, where two military supply planes were daubed with red paint.

They are demanding immediate bail, the right to a fair trial, an end to censorship of their communications, the de-proscription of Palestine Action and the closing of all UK sites run by Israel’s biggest weapons manufacturer Elbit.

All have suffered ill treatment. Ahmed, who has been hospitalised five times, has described being “cuffed the entire time.” Prisoners for Palestine say Hoxha needed hospitalisation to prevent refeeding syndrome, which occurs when nutrition is restarted too quickly, and is potentially fatal. They accused HMP Peterborough of “refusing medical treatment, which is required to prevent death in extreme cases of starvation.”

The hunger strikers have also been subject to unjustified blocks on communication with the outside world. Muraisi was moved to New Hall prison in Wakefield, 188 miles from her family. Her daily telephone calls with her mother have been periodically cut off, with the prison citing security reasons. She has said she will not end her hunger strike unless authorities agree to move her back to Bronzefield prison, where she was held previously.

This treatment follows the court’s arbitrary and

unjust claim that the charges against those arrested for PA protests have a “terrorist connection.” This claimed “terrorist connection” stems from the government’s proscription last July of PA as an alleged terrorist organisation—a move designed to intimidate and criminalise all anti-genocide protest.

More than 2,700 people were arrested in just four months under the Terrorism Act 2000 for peacefully protesting the banning of Palestine Action: a deepening of the Starmer government’s repression of protests opposing Israel’s genocide in Gaza, which have been subjected to strict conditions.

The government is proving itself quite content to let the clock run down and see these prisoners die. Muraisi’s case is all the more striking as she has relatives in Rafah, in Gaza. The Labour government’s support for the genocidal destruction of the Palestinians in the Middle East is extended to their supporters and relatives in Britain, too.

Meanwhile, it issues blithe assurances that all protocols are being observed. Lord Timpson, minister of state for prisons, insisted that there are “longstanding procedures in place to ensure prisoner safety” for hunger strikers. He called “claims that hospital care is being refused... entirely misleading,” before reasserting the repressive action being taken against these protesters: “These prisoners are charged with serious offences.”

The healthcare company contracted by New Hall prison was criticised by Gartree prison’s Independent Monitoring Board (IMB) last summer for presiding over a 75 percent increase in healthcare complaints in its first year there.

Refusing to intervene, Timpson told the media on December 18, “Remand decisions are for independent judges, and lawyers can make representations to the court on behalf of their clients.”

Home Secretary David Lammy has likewise refused to meet with family representatives. He has ignored requests from MPs of his own party to do so. Even House of Commons speaker Sir Lindsay Hoyle—a former Labour MP—called it “totally unacceptable” that Lammy did not so much as reply to a request from Labour MP John McDonnell.

One of Wakefield’s Labour MPs, Jon Trickett, has been refused permission to visit Muraisi in prison. Protesters supporting the hunger strikers have regularly

been pepper sprayed by police.

The government has also stonewalled open letters of concern from independent lawyers and medical practitioners, and even an intervention by a United Nations panel of experts who raised “serious questions about compliance with international human rights law and standards, including obligations to protect life and prevent cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment.”

This hunger strike is the largest since the 1981 hunger strike by Irish Republicans at Long Kesh prison, in protest at the Conservative government’s revocation of Special Category Status for political prisoners of war. The Tories’ refusal to back down saw 10 prisoners starve to death. These included Bobby Sands, elected to the House of Commons during his strike, who died after 66 days—a milestone reached by Muraisi on Tuesday. Other hunger strikers died between 46 and 61 days.

The PA hunger strikers are now commemorated on Belfast’s republican murals, with the slogan “Blessed are those who hunger for justice.”

In 1981, the Thatcher government made hypocritical noises of regret at the “loss of life through all forms of violence” and spoke of bringing in “humane changes in the prison regime.” Starmer’s government refuses even this fig leaf.

Workers and young people in Britain and internationally must demand the immediate release of the hunger strikers and all those held without charge for peaceful protest and the withdrawal of the proscription on Palestine Action. We repeat our call: “A counteroffensive in defence of democratic and social rights and against war and genocide cannot be left to the heroic self-sacrifice of a few. Their cause is the cause of the entire working class and student youth, which must be mobilised in their defence.”



To contact the WSWS and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact