

# VIDEO Report: Teenage girls in Rotherham violently assaulted by South Yorkshire police

“They just started hitting us, punching us, getting tasers out, batons”

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*Images of the minors involved in this case have been blurred to protect their anonymity*

Video footage of South Yorkshire police brutally attacking teenage girls in Rotherham, England, on Saturday night, has gone viral, provoking disgust and outrage.

The schoolgirls, aged 15-17, were leaving a house party in the working-class neighbourhood of Rawmarsh when police launched their unprovoked assault.

The girls, dressed in light summer clothes and sandals, had been celebrating the end of the school year. Video captured by neighbours shows police with batons and tasers drawn, attacking the girls, punching them and slamming them to the ground.

Within hours, the footage went viral, registering over 3 million views across TikTok, X, Facebook and Instagram.

One of the girls sustained a fractured wrist, another a deep laceration to her foot, which bled profusely. Others suffered painful punches and contusions to their face or necks. Police also used pepper spray.

A 17-year-old girl was handcuffed and taken away by police, kept in a cell on her own for several hours, and denied contact with her family.

Had it not been for neighbours and onlookers videoing the police riot and posting clips to social media, this assault would have passed largely unnoticed by the outside world.

## Police lies and cover-up

After reporters from the *World Socialist Web Site* visited Rawmarsh on Tuesday morning to speak with residents, parents organised a press conference that afternoon at the site of the attack.

Girls who sustained injuries were joined by their parents, who all confirmed that none of them had been asked by

police investigators for their account of the incident.

Speaking calmly and clearly, the girls described their horrific experience. One girl who had wanted to tell her side of the story became overwhelmed and collapsed.

Although there were others present on Saturday night, including adults, the police directed their attack against the five girls, all of whom are minors.

## Hayley

Hayley described how she and her friends had enjoyed Saturday night's party, without any incident. When it finished, they were waiting, “not doing anything, minding our own business”.

As she was ordering a taxi with her younger sister, “a lot of police officers showed up”.

One officer came over and started shouting. Hayley recalled, “So, I've put my arm in front of my little sister to protect her, and he's getting closer to my sister, and my sister's put her arm out to tell him to like stop getting in my personal space, and he's pushed her.”

When Hayley tried to defend her sister, the police responded with overwhelming violence. “They just started hitting us, punching us, getting tasers out, batons.”

“One of my friends got pepper-sprayed in the eyes when she was just shouting at the police officers.”

“One of the police officers violently punched me around my face. All my neck hurts from where he punched me. My doctor said I've got trauma to the neck from the injury.”

Hayley described how the police had cuffed her so tightly that she may have a fractured wrist.

After being taken away by police, “They kept me in a cell for 14 hours.” Despite repeatedly asking for her parents, officers “never came back to me.” She was given only a few

cups of water.

Hayley's mother died recently from cancer.

## Sienna

Sienna said she had come over to see what was happening "because I saw multiple of my friends being treated aggressively by the police."

"I saw them get a baton out and aim it towards the group of girls. So, I put my arms out and I said, 'Please stop, stop.' And then I got pushed to the ground."

She was slammed so hard that she suffered a deep cut to her foot, which became embedded with gravel, and she had to visit A&E.

"I've had to leave a mock exam today because I couldn't take it because of all the stuff that's coming with the incident—awful comments online, calling us really vile things for doing literally nothing but protect ourselves."

## Lilly

Lilly said, "They were shoving a lot of us around. I got shoved and the [officer] ended up punching me in the side of my eye. And I hadn't actually done anything wrong to them. I was just stood there trying to help my friends and get them away."

"I didn't actually realise what had happened because he punched me in the corner of my eye, but then when I got home, my eye had gone quite red, and now there's a little mark. But I keep getting headaches, and I think that might be because of the punch on my eye."

## State hostility

The actions of South Yorkshire Police are the latest in a long record of violent repression and savage anti-democratic measures against the working class.

During the 1984-85 national miners' strike, SYP led mass repression against pickets, culminating in "The Battle of Orgreave", a military-style assault that saw 95 miners arrested and charged with riot and violent disorder, offences which carried potential life sentences.

In 1989, SYP were directly responsible for the sequence of events that led to the deaths of 97 Liverpool fans at the Hillsborough football stadium in Sheffield. As at Orgreave, the police tried to cover up their responsibility for the disaster. This included lying to the media, doctoring evidence and slandering the victims.

Between 1997 and 2013, an estimated 1,400 children in Rotherham were subjected to horrific grooming, trafficking, and sexual abuse. The Jay Report (2014) and subsequent investigations concluded that SYP not only failed to stop the abuse; they actively ignored it, dismissed the victims, and allowed perpetrators to operate with near impunity. In July last year, five victims stated that they had been abused by police officers.

Such institutional police violence and repression are a product of capitalist society, reflecting the brutality of class relations in Britain, where the 50 richest families own more wealth than 34 million people and where young people are being denied any decent future.

Moreover, the police rampage in Rawmarsh is part of a broader crackdown on core democratic rights by the Labour government, which is seeking to criminalise protest, strikes, free speech and dissent against war and mass austerity. Less than a fortnight ago, four young people were collectively sentenced as "terrorists" to 26 years in prison for protesting the Gaza genocide.

Events in Rotherham have not only exposed the police's vicious actions but also the hostility of the entire political establishment towards the working class.

Despite footage of the police assault going viral and news reports by the BBC, the *Guardian* and elsewhere, not a single media outlet has spoken to the victims or their families. Neither social services, civil liberties groups, nor supposedly "left" politicians such as Jeremy Corbyn have spoken up for the girls or challenged the police violence and lies.

The *World Socialist Web Site* and the Socialist Equality Party will continue our investigation into last Saturday's events. We urge eyewitnesses, victims and their families to submit information and share their views about what happened.



To contact the WSWS and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

**[wsws.org/contact](https://wsws.org/contact)**