

IN THE MATTER OF AN APPLICATION FOR DEPROSCRIPTION

BETWEEN:

CAGE INTERNATIONAL

Applicant

-and-

**SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME
DEPARTMENT**

Respondent

**SUBMISSIONS TO
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT
TO APPLY FOR THE DEPROSCRIPTION OF
HARAKAT AL-MUQAWWAMAH AL-ISLAMIYYAH**

Table of Contents

A. BACKGROUND	4
B. INTRODUCTION.....	4
C. UNIVERSITY DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS.....	8
<i>The University 6.....</i>	<i>8</i>
<i>Dr H.....</i>	<i>9</i>
<i>K and Z.....</i>	<i>10</i>
<i>M.....</i>	<i>10</i>
<i>International university students.....</i>	<i>11</i>
<i>Summary</i>	<i>12</i>
D. EMPLOYMENT DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS	12
<i>Ms L.....</i>	<i>12</i>
<i>Dr F.....</i>	<i>13</i>
<i>M2.....</i>	<i>14</i>
<i>A.....</i>	<i>14</i>
<i>S.....</i>	<i>15</i>
<i>L.....</i>	<i>15</i>
<i>H.....</i>	<i>16</i>
<i>Summary</i>	<i>16</i>
E. ARRESTS AND CRIMINAL INVESTIGATIONS UNDER S.12 TACT 2000.....	17
<i>V.....</i>	<i>17</i>
<i>Y.....</i>	<i>18</i>
<i>Q.....</i>	<i>18</i>
<i>Summary</i>	<i>19</i>
F. IMMIGRATION AND DEPORTATION PROCEEDINGS	19
<i>Dr A2.....</i>	<i>19</i>
<i>S2.....</i>	<i>20</i>
<i>Dr H2.....</i>	<i>21</i>
<i>Summary</i>	<i>21</i>
G. PREVENT REFERRALS ACROSS EDUCATIONAL AND PROFESSIONAL SETTINGS.....	22
<i>E.....</i>	<i>22</i>
<i>W.....</i>	<i>23</i>
<i>Primary School.....</i>	<i>24</i>
<i>Summary</i>	<i>24</i>

H. CHILD SAFEGUARDING CASES IN PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS.....	25
<i>K2</i>	25
<i>A3</i>	25
<i>P</i>	25
<i>Summary</i>	26
I. CONCLUSION.....	26

A. BACKGROUND

1. On Wednesday 9 April 2025, submissions were made by Riverway Law to the Secretary of State for the Home Department (hereinafter SSHD) to apply for the deproscription of Harakat al-Muqawwamah al-Islamiyyah (henceforth Hamas). CAGE International provided a brief expert report to that application addressing the arguments made under Grounds 2 and 3 of those submissions.
2. This submission presents details of individual cases reported to CAGE International that demonstrate the onerous and negative impact that the proscription continues to have on freedom of thought, speech and expression by individuals based in the United Kingdom. This application for deproscription is brought to alert the SSHD to individual cases of those affected by the proscription and should be considered separately to any other applications before the SSHD.

B. INTRODUCTION

3. This application presents an anonymised summary of the typologies of cases reported to CAGE International concerning individuals accused of “supporting” Hamas, who have been impacted by its proscription. In order to protect the identities of individuals concerned, some have been anonymised. Those who have consented to their cases being shared are named and identified within this application.
4. The cases reviewed primarily engage issues of freedom of speech and freedom of association, but the sanctions take the form of multitude mechanisms of repression of political speech. These include:
 - i. University disciplinary actions;
 - ii. Employment disciplinary actions;
 - iii. Arrests and Criminal Investigations under s.12 TACT 2000;
 - iv. Immigration and deportation proceedings;
 - v. Prevent referrals across educational and professional settings;
 - vi. Child safeguarding cases within schooling.

5. The data evidences a disturbing trend of conflating legitimate political expression with unlawful support for terrorism, facilitated by broad and indeterminate legal frameworks. The highlighted cases — ranging from university sanctions, workplace suspensions, criminal investigations, immigration penalties, and safeguarding interventions against minors — point to systemic suppression of pro-Palestinian advocacy and a consequential chilling impact on the free speech rights enshrined in law.
6. CAGE International maintains a critical stance on the use of terrorism legislation in the UK, advocating for its complete abolition. The organisation contends that such laws erode civil liberties, undermine the rule of law, and disproportionately target minority communities.
7. In the organisation's twenty-year review of TACT, it was found that 77% of those convicted of terror offences were Muslim, and the vast majority had not been involved in any violent crime. The convictions mostly related to 'pre-crime' offences, such as s.58 of TACT. These offences mostly related to the possession of material and other such non-violent offences.
8. There can be no doubt that the very definition of 'terrorism' is inherently political – contrast the treatment of armed militias in Ukraine who instrumentalise suicide operations and are deemed heroic, while those breaking out of a concentration camp under a settler colonial apartheid occupation are labelled terrorists. It is in such an environment that proscription laws intersect through the criminalisation of speech and freedom of expression.
9. According to Dr Sophie Haspeslagh in her book 'Proscribing Peace: How listing armed groups as terrorists hurts negotiations', UN Security Council Resolution 1373 provided an international framework after 11 September 2001 for armed groups to be labelled and proscribed as terrorist groups – often for political reasons, rather than for developing long-term peace. Ultimately, her work shows that like with Sinn Fein and the African National Congress, ultimately governments must negotiate those they once considered 'terrorist'. Dr Haspeslagh's work calls for a 'linguistic ceasefire':

"The idea of the 'linguistic ceasefire' goes some way towards explaining why certain conflicts remain stuck in the terrorism framing while others emerge from

it. The 'linguistic ceasefire' has three main components: (1) recognise the conflict; (2) drop the 'terrorist' label; and (3) uncouple the act and the actor."

10. While the organisation Hamas remains a proscribed organisation, there can be no effective debate or discussion about the long-term future of Palestine, as one of the main political actors in the region is criminalised by the decision of a former SSHD. Further, any advocacy for change is restricted within the UK as s.12 of the Terrorism Act 2000 creates offences for advocating any view that might be considered as support or an expression of support for such a banned organisation. As Dr Haspeslagh's work illustrates, while individual acts can be being terroristic in their criminality, to proscribe an entire political group as being a terrorist organisation inhibits pathways to peace.
11. Criminalisation of those expressing support for organisations that are proscribed terrorist organisations in the UK is entirely a political and subjective judgment by the executive. Hansard records show that while the group Mojahedin-e-Khalq (MEK), also known as the People's Mojahedin Organisation of Iran (PMOI), remained on the list of UK proscribed terrorist organisations, a number of statements were made inside Parliament in support of the group. This included Lord Alton of Liverpool and Lord Clarke of Hampstead in 2001, and later by Lord Carlile of Berriew in 2006. In January 2004, outside of the legal deproscription process, 220 members of parliament and 85 members of the House of Lords signed a statement calling for the removal of PMOI from the list of terrorist organisations in the US (Al Jazeera, 2004). Such a letter, outside of the formal process of deproscription, should have been considered a breach of s.12 of the Terrorism Act 2000 by the police, as they formally expressed support for a banned organisation.
12. Section 12 of TACT 2000 is susceptible to and is used entirely politically by the UK police and Crown Prosecution Service (CPS). It follows that rather than using such draconian measures to criminalise those expressing their views on a protracted conflict in a non-violent manner, the very system of proscription should be abolished. There are mechanisms within national and international law to hold war crimes committed by armed groups to account, but terrorism legislation is a blunt instrument to use against resistance groups, and those

¹ Haspeslagh S (2021) *Proscribing Peace: How listing armed groups as terrorists hurts negotiations*, Manchester University Press, p.6

who might express support for them, as it inhibits any pragmatic discussion on identifying pathways to peace.

13. Moreover, there is a wider use of counter-terrorism legislation and policy in the UK that has created an extensive chilling effect on Palestine activism. As evidenced by Professor Brendan Ciarán Browne, Dr Elia Weizman and Jennifer Matchain in their journal article *Unpacking the crackdown on Palestine solidarity activism in the UK in a post-7 October reality*:

*"in the aftermath of 7 October 2023, this climate of surveillance, suppression and criminalisation of expressions of solidarity with Palestine has increased dramatically...this clampdown has assumed a variety of forms, including 'narrative delegitimation', evident through statements made by politicians, amplified by a complicit UK media, referring to Palestine solidarity gatherings in derogatory terms, and by stigmatising solidarity protests as 'hate marches'. Accusations and allegations of antisemitism help to foster a sense of moral panic around this form of solidarity work. 'Narrative delegitimation' creates the climate that enables the use of more restrictive 'formal' means to manage public protest, including the Public Order Act, the UK's Prevent strategy, and other purported 'counterterrorism' measures. Unsurprisingly, this has a disproportional and detrimental effect on minorities and racialised communities in the UK, those who have already long been the target of these existing strategies, communities who are widely represented in the current solidarity protests with Palestine. The cumulative impact is an attempt to suppress and silence and the fomenting of an atmosphere of fear that ultimately leads to a 'chill effect.'"*²

14. They reference Suella Braverman's call in 2023 for the banning of chants such as 'From the river to the sea, Palestine will be free', and describe it as a spurious claim to assert that such chants were akin to glorifying terrorism:

"This proliferation of stigmatisation, evident through the use of a discourse of 'hate' and the subsequent construction of links to terrorism, has led to intense (and, as noted above, racialised) harassment of people engaged, with some activists arrested, or threatened with arrest, for taking part in Palestine solidarity work. Information gleaned from activists involved in organising 'on the street' protests reveals that often those attending would be subjected to enhanced

² Browne BC, Weizman E & Matchain J (2025) *Unpacking the crackdown on Palestine solidarity activism in the UK in a post-7 October reality*, Third World Quarterly, p.3

police scrutiny, with individuals targeted for wearing particular colours or symbols, those deemed to amount to 'evidence' of outward support (or membership) of Hamas. Rishi Sunak, the Prime Minister (PM) at the time, referred to Palestine solidarity marches as being the antithesis to 'British values', alleging that such protests were perpetuating antisemitism. In March 2024 he further alleged that extremist groups engaged in Palestine solidarity work in the UK were 'trying to tear us apart' condemning 'a shocking increase in extremist disruption and criminality. What started as protests on our streets has descended into intimidation, threats, and planned acts of. The speech followed hot on the heels of the government's publication of its new definition of 'extremism', one that was considered necessary in the 'aftermath of the terrorist attacks in Israel on 7th October 2023'. Sunak further claimed in February 2024 that 'Palestinian protests calling for the end of the conflict in Gaza are threatening to replace democracy with 'mob rule.'"³

15. What the work of Browne, Weizman and Matchain further considers is how criminalisation of communities operates in the UK, especially through policies such as Prevent that, "subsequently links Palestine solidarity protest with 'extremism.'" Of significance to the SSHD in the course of this application, is understanding how an environment has been created that silences, represses and ultimately criminalises pro-Palestinian sentiment.
16. These above academic studies underscore an urgent need for greater legal clarity, procedural safeguards, and proportional assessments when applying counter-terrorism legislation to expressions of political opinion, in order to preserve fundamental freedoms within democratic society. It is no doubt a difficult task but one which is essential in order to maintain the integrity and cohesion of the basic civil liberties framework that is highly regarded throughout the world.

C. UNIVERSITY DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS

The University 6

17. FACTS: Six students from a university reposted a Middle East Eye article on the University's Palestinian Society Instagram story, which discussed the death

³ Ibid, p.8

of Ismail Haniyeh and referred to him as a martyr. The students simply reposted the articles without any additional commentary. The university reported them to the police for support of a terrorist organisation, namely Hamas.

The Police, after two weeks, informed the university that no further action would be taken. Despite this notification, the university Registrar personally requested a disciplinary investigation to be opened against the students, citing a Jewish Chronicle article that accused the Palestine Society of being supportive of Hamas. This escalation was undertaken in coordination with the Department of Education's Regional Prevent Duty Coordinator.

The 6 students were initially informed of the disciplinary proceedings in September 2024, and the case concluded in April 2025. The process, in line with university policy, should have lasted no more than 60 days but continued for more than 180 days. The students were subjected to numerous unexplained delays, a complete lack of transparency, and an unwillingness to provide clarification or explanation regarding the allegation.

18. IMPACT: The 6 students were at peril of being unable to attend their graduation or receive their graduation certificates, if the case was delayed any further than it had been. UN Special Rapporteur on the Rights to Freedom of Peaceful Assembly and Association, Gina Romero, condemned the University, and wrote them a letter in support. MP Jeremy Corbyn appeared in a video posted to the Palestine Society Instagram account in support of the students and their freedom of speech. The University eventually determined that there was no case to answer, and each of the 6 students had their cases dropped.

Dr H

19. FACTS: Dr H, a professor at a London university is a Palestinian originally from Gaza. She had numerous complaints filed against her by the President of the Israeli Society at the university, specifically by a student named P. P filed two complaints against Dr H, the first of which was ultimately dismissed. P then spread his story to multiple news sites, and the university as a result decided to pursue disciplinary action against Dr H. The substance of the complaint was that Dr H had used Hamas propaganda to indoctrinate her students, as reported by the Jewish Chronicle. In reality, Dr H had used her academic position to share diverse perspectives and ideas with the class.

20. IMPACT: Dr H has been undergoing a long and arduous disciplinary process with the university. A referral has been made, by P, to the police, the Home Office, and PREVENT. Dr H has had to face numerous challenges from P and those who support him, including protests being organised to call for the termination of her contract. She has received threats as a result of her being "doxed" (having personal or private materials published online) by the various news sites engaged by P.

K and Z

21. FACTS: K, the President of a Palestine Society at a prominent University, circulated the headline "*resistance fighters launch surprise attack against Israel*" as a part of a weekly digest to update their audience of Palestine related news. Another student, on seeing this, made a complaint to the University, citing his fear and distress, while simultaneously threatening K on social media with prosecution. K was also accused of disseminating "offensive material" by the complainant, referencing "Boycott Israeli Apartheid" stickers being distributed at a fundraising stall for Medical Aid for Palestinians.

K, and another member of the PalSoc leadership team, Z, were called into a preliminary investigation meeting, and asked about referring to Hamas fighters as "resistance fighters", and informed that they were being investigated for supporting a proscribed organisation, namely Hamas.

22. IMPACT: K and Z were subjected to a long disciplinary process which, as a result of the heavy emphasis placed on the discretion of the investigator, resulted in them being sanctioned. The students were therefore compelled to curtail their right to free speech for fear of another alleged breach of the codes of conduct and thereby face even greater sanction. This case is consistent with a clear pattern amongst UK universities unjustly penalising pro-Palestine protests, this process has effectively barred K and Z from any further activism due to the risk of expulsion.

M

23. FACTS: M is a non-British student of Palestinian descent studying law at a university in England. She attended a Pro-Palestine rally, during which she was asked by a news journalist from a well-known publication to give a comment. She said "...we are so full of pride. We are really, really full of joy of what happened," following the 7th October attack. Her comments went viral and attracted criticism from politicians like the then-Policing Minister Chris Philip MP who said, "appalled" that anyone had these "repugnant views."

She was reported to the authorities by UK Lawyers for Israel and the Campaign Against Antisemitism. UKLFI also reported her to her university.

M told the BBC that 15 of her relatives had been killed in Gaza and her comments were misinterpreted. She refuted the accusation that she praised a terrorist attack and said, "the death of any innocent civilian should not be condoned ever, and we don't condone it at all."

On 1st December 2023, her student visa was revoked on the basis that her presence in the UK was "not conducive to the public good" following her comments. The Home Office claimed that her presence was a national security threat.

She successfully appealed the decision, with the Judge stating the Home Office violated M's human rights and right to free speech by revoking her student visa.

The judge emphasised, M "is not an extremist" and added that she "had no clear knowledge of the role of Hamas at that stage and certainly had no intention of conveying support for Hamas or the terrorist atrocities against civilians committed in the 7 October attack."

24. IMPACT: M faced an onslaught of negative media attention and was publicly condemned by high-profile politicians. This put her at personal risk. Her comments were misinterpreted, and her comments were cynically framed by the media as celebrating the 7th October attack. The Home Office succumbed to external pressure instead of objectively applying the law and revoked her student visa causing distress and significant disruption to her education.

International university students

25. FACTS: U, a student at a prominent international university, along with five other students, distributed a magazine with an obituary noting the death of the late Hamas leader Yahya Sinwar, which was later confiscated by University staff. The Dean of the university informed U and the five other students that "the University" deemed the magazine glorified Hamas, and that the police had informed the Dean that they were coming to pick up a copy.

Later that week, a meeting was held (between staff and counter terrorism police) in the university and U was named personally. The purpose of the meeting was supposed to be to raise awareness on UK counter terrorism laws, but became focused on U and why the magazine should not be distributed.

Ultimately no police action was taken, and the university did not pursue any further investigation into the matter.

26. IMPACT: The students were unfairly targeted despite not committing any criminal offence and faced serious repercussions to their visa status, as they were all international students. The chilling effect on their freedom of speech was significant, as no student in this group felt able to contribute to discussions around Palestine or even pass comment on the individual leaders within Hamas without inviting sanction and adverse investigation.

Summary

27. Across these cases, disciplinary measures were triggered not by direct incitement or engagement with terrorism but rather by expressions of solidarity with Palestine, often framed by university authorities and external political actors as indirect support for Hamas. The processes were frequently marred by lack of transparency, procedural failures, reputational harm, and a deeply disturbing chilling impact on their fundamental rights to free thought and expression. In some instances, immigration penalties compounded the impact and acted as a secondary layer of silencing of discussion and engagement around the topic of Palestine.

D.EMPLOYMENT DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS

Ms L

28. FACTS: Ms L is a teacher at a secondary school in England. Her husband was arrested under s12 TA 2000, in relation to content he posted about the ongoing genocide. These posts formed part of his wider activism and commentary on various social and humanitarian issues. Upon informing the school of her husband's arrest, Ms L was told that they had no concerns. Whilst initially appearing to be supportive of Ms L, the school subsequently invited her in for a formal meeting, during which they informed her that she had been made subject to a disciplinary investigation and would be suspended immediately, pending the outcome. This decision had been made due to her apparent posts on social media. She was asked if she thought her husband was a terrorist.

Ms. L was never formally investigated by police for any offence or involvement in her husband's case. The school was made fully aware of this fact, by the police. Despite this, they continued their investigation for almost a year, after which they allowed Ms L back to work, subject to a year-long sanction.

29. IMPACT: The criminalisation of Mrs L by the school and maligning of her character impacted Ms L's mental health and family life. She felt targeted and unduly criminalised by her employer and was reluctant and fearful about returning to work as a result.

The legislation in place under s.12 has been influencing internal disciplinary proceedings and procedures. Even though Ms L. was neither arrested nor charged with any offence, her personal and professional life has been significantly impacted. She has been unjustly targeted. This shows that the effect of the legislation does not remain limited to those arrested or investigated under it but also extends to their families and wider communities who are viewed through the lens of criminalisation by association.

Dr F

30. FACTS: Dr F, an NHS consultant and former MP candidate, was doxed by the website GnasherJew for alleged antisemitism, Holocaust denial, and expressing support for a proscribed organisation, namely Hamas. A complaint was submitted to the GMC by UKLFI and GnasherJew in February 2024, which was ultimately dismissed in April 2024. A further complaint was made to the GMC in August, which was dismissed once again. Finally, another complaint was submitted alongside articles from the Jewish Chronicle, the Telegraph, and GB News. Dr F was then subject to an 18 month suspension following the instigation of the GMC investigation, which remains ongoing.

Dr F showed considerable support, through her tweets, for the right of the Palestinian people to resist. She publicly called for the de-proscription of Hamas, and openly criticises Israel in her work.

31. Dr F has been suspended from her workplace since December 2024, pending the outcome of the GMC investigation. She has been repeatedly doxed, with a recent article naming her among other doctors and accusing them of antisemitism and the support of a proscribed organisation.

M2

32. FACTS: A healthcare professional in the NHS, M2, was reported to her Trust by her co-workers following a series of pro Palestine posts on her personal Instagram story. The posts ranged from articles about the ongoing genocide in Gaza, to pictures and videos of the destruction, to calls for an end to the bombings. A small number of M2's colleagues collated her posts over an extended period and compiled them into a lengthy report with added commentary that accused her of supporting Hamas, blood libel, and antisemitism. The NHS trust took no steps to perform due diligence, or seek independent interpretation of the posts and accepted all the accusations at face value.

33. IMPACT: M2 faced a year-long series of investigation meetings and reports. She was offered no support from senior management throughout this period. She no longer felt safe at work and soon discovered that no steps had been taken to ensure that the information about the investigation remained confidential: her colleagues were all made aware of M2's case in an unfavourable light, in her absence.

Following a decision being made on her case, and continuing after her appeal was successful, M2 was subject to intense scrutiny and micromanagement on her managed return. The impact on her personal and professional life has been immense.

A

34. FACTS: A is a teacher at a secondary school who is of Palestinian descent and regularly attended pro-Palestine protests. Having lost a number of family members who had been killed in Gaza, he began posting updates on social media, reposting from notable accounts online, to raise awareness about what was happening and advocating for the rights of Palestinians.

He was doxed by a well-known Zionist account who released his personal details and called for police to take action. The school suspended A immediately and reported him to the police. The police found no cause for concern at the time, however A's school continued his suspension pending investigation and citing his posts as potentially supporting the actions of a

proscribed terrorist group (namely Hamas). While they were initially sympathetic, an article in the Telegraph and accompanying public exposure prompted their decision to escalate the matter and subject A to disciplinary investigations.

Following repeated instances of doxing and calls for the police to take action, counter terrorism police then raided A's home, and he was interviewed to investigate the alleged support of a proscribed organisation, namely Hamas.

35. IMPACT: Following the school's investigation, he was dismissed for gross misconduct. He was also threatened with referrals to the Teaching Regulation Agency and the Disclosure and Barring Service. The stress of the investigation caused A severe anxiety and being the primary provider for his family, he was left unemployed and facing the very real prospect of facing severe difficulties finding future employment due to the public release of his personal information and the associated reputational damage. Added to this is the ongoing police investigation and the continued seizure of his belongings.

S

36. FACTS: S, retweeted a drawing of Yahya Sinwar with the caption "hero", without knowing who Yahya Sinwar was. S did not add any additional comments to his retweet. Days later, counter terrorism police raided S's home, and he was arrested under section 12 of the Terrorism Act 2000. He was immediately placed on suspension from work and stringent bail conditions.
37. IMPACT: S was immediately suspended from work. He has been denied the return of his phone since his arrest, and has been unable to access any banking or contact information.

L

38. FACTS: L, a British doctor at an NHS Foundation Trust, reposted the following tweet "Palestinians break into separation fence w/Israel, dozens of Israelis captured and brought into Gaza...In 2011, Israel released 1,027 prisoners for an Israeli soldier, many here see this as a rare chance for +550 Palestinians sentenced to life to be released in a similar deal" and commented "VIVAAAAA."

Elsewhere, in response to a tweet by David Lammy condemning the Hamas attack, she said "Israel has killed Palestinians indiscriminately for the past seven decades, so when you stand in solidarity with Israel you stand in solidarity with terrorism you stinking idiot."

The Daily Mail published an article about her. As a result, she was suspended from her hospital and referred to PREVENT after which the case was eventually closed.

39. IMPACT: L was harassed by the Daily Mail as they made repeated attempts to contact her workplace for a statement. The Daily Mail article, which published her name, photo and place of work, damaged her reputation by framing her as a "Hamas supporter." She said her comments were taken out of context to suit their editorial narrative. As a result, she faced disciplinary action at work and was referred to PREVENT.

H

40. H is a teacher at a primary school who had shared the details of Israeli arms factories in the UK and added the comment "we need to take action and apply pressure to shut these places down". H was accused by the school of inciting violence, and reported the matter to the police.

H was subsequently escorted from the school and told not to re-enter premises until further notice. H was then referred to Prevent, and the police and local authority were called.

41. IMPACT: H faced a sudden barring from employment, as well spending significant time engaging with union representative in order to have representation at "wellbeing meetings" at the school with HR.

Summary

42. From this line of cases, there is a persistent pattern whereby NHS employees, teachers, and even police officers were subjected to disciplinary or regulatory action for social media activities expressing solidarity with Palestine. Notably, institutions often acted pre-emptively upon external complaints, particularly media-generated ones, without thorough internal investigation or

proportionality assessment. The effects extended beyond employment loss to include lasting reputational damage, emotional distress, and financial hardship.

E. ARRESTS AND CRIMINAL INVESTIGATIONS UNDER S.12 TACT 2000

V

43. FACTS: An academic and author, who was vocal on twitter about his support for Palestine and the Palestinian right to resistance. He was doxed by the infamous website GnasherJew for his activism. GnasherJew claimed that V was supporting the proscribed group Hamas, and was a danger to British Jews. They tagged the police, urging them to arrest him for his apparent support of a proscribed organisation.

His home was raided and he was arrested under section 12 of the Terrorism Act 2000 for allegedly supporting a proscribed organisation, namely Hamas. His belongings were confiscated, including his laptop which he used to make a living as an author. He was placed under strict bail conditions that required him to live and sleep at his address, and not use social media. 11 months after his initial arrest, V was charged under section 12 of the Terrorism Act 2000.

44. IMPACT: V was repeatedly harassed by the police, who arrested him twice under the Public Order Act for crimes he did not commit. He has been notified of no further action for one of these offences, and is awaiting a response on the other, but was previously subject to harsh bail conditions, such as being prohibited from attending his local mosque.

The police have also doorstepped V on a number of occasions, choosing to request access to the building from one of his neighbours, rather than provide any sort of advanced notification of their arrival. These unexpected visits have caused V and his partner considerable distress.

The continuous bail extensions have also had a considerable impact on V's mental health. He has been traumatised by the repeated police harassment and the long uncertainty of his situation.

Y

45. FACTS: Y is a community activist, citizen-journalist and social media figure, who has been vocal about the genocide and previous Israeli attacks in Gaza. Since the start of the genocide in October 2023, Y began consistently posting updates on X, with a particular focus on the ever-increasing death toll and loss of humanitarian life, drawing attention to the indiscriminate targeting of civilians and the silence of world governments.

His home address was then raided by counter-terrorism (CT) police and he was arrested and charged for terrorist offences. Initially he was charged with reckless support for a terrorist organisation (namely Hamas), with further CT charges added later.

46. IMPACT: Y's family home was raided, with property belonging to his parents and other family members, also seized as part of the raid. He was made subject to onerous bail conditions which place huge restrictions on him so that his ability to continue speaking about the genocide is effectively muzzled, due to the risk of breaching his bail conditions with the threat of prison. These restrictions included bans on posting on social media and restrictions on travel within the UK.

Q

47. FACTS: Q, a young man with young children, was arrested on suspicion of promoting a terrorist organisation, namely Hamas, after he allegedly uploaded videos said to be of Hamas to his social media page. He was placed on conditional bail, having to surrender his passport and stay off social media except for the reason of education. He was later charged under section 12 of the Terrorism Act due to a series of images he published that raised suspicion that he was supporting the proscribed organisation, Hamas.

48. IMPACT: He was advised by his legal representative to plead guilty, with the reasoning that there was no defence for what he was accused of. Q felt like he was being drastically punished for what he had posted, and was very worried about the potential consequences both immediately and in the long term.

Summary

49. These cases illustrate a broad and aggressive application of terrorism legislation to expressions of political solidarity with Palestine. Schedule 7 stops, section 12 arrests, and subsequent bail conditions were employed even in cases lacking direct advocacy of violence. Many individuals, including academics, professionals, and young activists, faced extensive personal and professional disruption absent formal charges or convictions.
50. The procedural reliance on sweeping statutory powers raises significant concerns regarding proportionality, evidentiary thresholds, and human rights protections.

F. IMMIGRATION AND DEPORTATION PROCEEDINGS

Dr A2

51. FACTS: Dr A2, an academic based in the UK, was travelling back from a holiday in mid-2024 when he was stopped under Schedule 7 of the Terrorism Act. He was questioned for 6 hours on his opinions on the ongoing genocide, and his views on proscribed groups, namely Hamas and Hezbollah. He was also asked extensively about geopolitics, but could not answer many of these given his capacity as a researcher in AI and robotics. There were no further criminal investigations. However, a few weeks later, Dr A2 received a letter from the Home Office that his visa had been revoked due to him being “not conducive to the public good on the grounds of national security”.

With the help of legal representation, Dr A2 was able to seek reasoning from the Home Office regarding why his visa had been revoked. The Home Office reverted, stating that it was because he had shared a document on a WhatsApp group chat, titled “Our Narrative - Operation Al Aqsa Flood” published by Hamas’ media office, which is readily available online from numerous news sources including Haaretz, Al Jazeera English, and The Times of Israel.

The Home Office stated that, by sharing the document, his actions more than likely constituted a terrorism offence. They further claimed that he therefore

posed a threat to national security due to him more than likely being a Hamas supporter with an extremist mindset, who shared the document to radicalise others.

For these reasons, the Secretary of State determined that Dr A2 was not conducive to the public good on the grounds of national security and unacceptable behaviour, and was therefore obligated to cancel his leave to remain under Immigration Rule 9.3.2.

Dr A2 lodged a judicial review in order to challenge the decision to revoke his leave to remain. This is ongoing.

52. IMPACT: He had been living in the UK for 4 years with his wife and two young children, but were forced to leave the UK as they all had their visas revoked. These devastating consequences on an entire family resulted from a private post on a WhatsApp group that only came to light due to a schedule 7 interview. The resultant psychological and financial harm has damaged the entire family and led to an academic being prevented in contributing to the advancement of knowledge in the UK in his specialist field. He has had to crowd fund for the remainder of his legal fees in order to continue to challenge the decision made by the Home Office, and he has been struggling to find work once again after having been forced to leave his job in the UK.

S2

53. FACTS: S2, a newly married resident of Dublin to a British wife, together chose to live outside the UK. S2 travelled by ferry to Wales for a week-long visit to the UK to move his new wife's belongings from London to Dublin. On entering the UK, he was stopped under Schedule 7 of the Terrorism Act, questioned for a number of hours and had his phone and laptop taken. On the way out of the UK, S2 was again stopped by terrorism police. This time, he was arrested and detained under Section 12(c) of the Terrorism Act 2000. He was extensively questioned about the situation in Palestine, and Hamas due to memes he had on his phone. Over two years on, the police investigation is still ongoing with no resolution for S2.

54. IMPACT: On entry S2's passport was confiscated, and he was required to provide police with his phone number, email address, and current residence address. He was also asked to return to the same police station in future, in

keeping with his bail conditions. He continues to be very anxious about the ongoing police investigation and the electronic devices have not been returned incurring an additional financial cost.

Dr H2

55. FACTS: Dr H2, a non-British NHS doctor, reposted footage of music festivalgoers running from Hamas and commented "if it was your home, you would stay and fight [smiling face emoji]." In a second post she said, "Israel was never a country. They illegally occupied Palestine. Would u support Russia invading Ukraine? Israel kill Palestinians everyday, didn't see anyone caring. Also, there are no civilians in Israel."

Following these posts, she was referred to the Home Office, who moved to revoke her temporary right to remain. In a letter sent to Dr H2 explaining the decision, she was told the then-Home Secretary James Cleverly was "satisfied that [her] continued presence in the UK would not be conducive to the public good."

56. IMPACT: Dr H2 faced a deportation order as a result of her posts. She appealed the decision arguing that it breaches her ECHR right to free speech and family life. The judge overturned the decision, citing that while her comments amount to "expressions of support and justification for, and indeed glorification, of Hamas terrorist violence... [the immediate cancellation of her leave to remain] ...was not reasonable or proportionate" under ECHR and common law.

The judge went on to say "It is clearly possible to imagine far more egregious posts having been posted by persons not subject to immigration control on that day. The posts, read overall, did include protected expressions of political opinion."

Although the judge blocked the deportation order, he rejected her appeal against the refusal to grant her indefinite leave to remain, making her future in the UK uncertain.

Summary

57. The immigration-related cases reveal a pattern wherein political expression perceived as sympathetic to Palestinian resistance to state oppression or critical

of Israel has been employed as the basis for severe immigration sanctions. These sanctions, including visa revocations and deportation orders, were said to be justified under the broad public order and national security grounds, yet were often overturned or challenged successfully upon judicial scrutiny, suggesting an overreach inconsistent with human rights obligations under domestic and international law.

G. PREVENT REFERRALS ACROSS EDUCATIONAL AND PROFESSIONAL SETTINGS

E

58. FACTS: E, a year 11 student in a school in England, was on a school trip when he had a one-to-one conversation with one of his history teachers. He asked the teacher about her views on the ongoing situation in Palestine, to which she responded that Hamas are terrorists. E disagreed, responding that the reason that Hamas operated at all was due to the 75 years of oppression that Palestine had suffered. The teacher, visibly agitated, ended the conversation by insisting that they agree to stop talking.

The teacher later referred E to the school's safeguarding team, and to Prevent. The safeguarding team reiterated that Hamas is considered a terrorist group and, when E questioned whether Israel's actions meant it was acceptable that Hamas was labelled and such, another staff member got involved. This staff member questioned him further, using hypotheticals about the EDL and making reference to the bombing of mosques. After further questioning regarding which news sites E read, and what his views were on Jews, E left.

E was later informed by the safeguarding lead that he was at risk of radicalisation. He pushed back, denying this resolutely. His mother, was informed that a Prevent meeting would take place, the school citing the example of Shamima Begum. During the meeting, it was suggested that the necessity of the Prevent investigation stemmed from E expressing support for Hamas on two occasions.

59. IMPACT: Another teacher informed E that she felt uncomfortable, and that, as a result, he would no longer be permitted to attend her classes.

E's family were concerned about the implications of some of the comparisons made, and were worried about the fact that there are now classes that E, a student about to take his GCSEs, is unable to attend. Being unable to attend those classes will be detrimental and has had a lifelong impact. The school's unwillingness to engage in meaningful conversation with a child under their care means they ultimately failed in their duty to that child. This case is a clear example of slavish application of legislation with poorly trained and aggressive staff who failed to strike a balance in the protection of free speech, and caused irreparable damage to a minor.

W

60. FACTS: W, a 9-year-old who attended a primary school affiliated with a mosque, was reported to the safeguarding team for putting a Palestine sticker on his notebook.

One of W's teachers found a sticker on Ws friend's book that read "Boycott Israel - End Apartheid". The friend was asked, by the Muslim teacher, where he got the sticker from, and he identified W. Later that day, the teacher issued a safeguarding letter to the parents.

When asked, the school said they could not escalate the matter, nor would they report it to the authorities. The receptionist at the school said that a note had been made "so it does not escalate to extremism". The receptionist phoned W's mother and informed her that W was feeling unwell and asked that he be taken home.

In the meantime, a teacher had taken W into a room to question him about what his father does.

61. IMPACT: W was crying, and very scared that he would be arrested. He has been traumatised by the whole experience. The entire class was demoralised by this, and W's parents considered removing him from the school altogether as they were concerned that he was not being protected and cared for and instead the school immediately approached the conversation from a viewpoint of criminalising a child.

Primary School

62. FACTS: The parents of an eight-year-old boy, who is of Palestinian descent and whose relatives in Gaza had been killed, received a letter reprimanding them for allowing him to wear colours of the Palestinian flag to Children in Need day. The letter warned parents from making “overt demonstrations of political belief” so the school could remain “apolitical.”

However, his father explained that his son wearing Palestinian colours was not a political statement but simply an expression of grief over his lost relatives and an assertion of his heritage and national identity.

When his son then returned to school on the Monday with a Palestinian flag sewn into his coat, he was isolated from his classmates until Thursday. He was also not allowed back to school the following day.

The academy trust in charge of the school denied all allegations of misconduct and claimed to formally refer the school to the relevant safeguarding authorities.

63. IMPACT: The father of the boy reported to news websites, that his son felt “criminalised” and not welcome at school. He was scared to return to school, therefore his education was also disrupted. After the incident, parents began protesting and in response the school called the police. The school also sent a formal letter threatening a PREVENT referral for “extremist comments.”

Summary

64. The cases demonstrate an expansive and often indiscriminate application of the Prevent Strategy against expressions of pro-Palestinian sentiment within educational and professional contexts. Individuals ranging from primary school pupils to healthcare professionals were subjected to Prevent referrals based on expressions that, in many cases, amounted to political opinion rather than any credible indication of extremism, with those in positions of authority otherising and in some cases pre-emptively criminalising young people. This trend reflects the problematic conflation of political speech with extremism, leading to disproportionate and often damaging interventions that impact education, employment, and mental health – in some of the examples above, of children who the state ought to be supporting and protecting.

H.CHILD SAFEGUARDING CASES IN PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS

K2

65. FACTS: K2, a student at a school in London, posted a screenshot on snapchat of an article titled "World reacts to Hamas Attack". To this, he added the caption "just about time". A girl he knew informed him that she would get him beaten up for posting that, and that she would "snitch" on only him, and not anyone else who shared that post. The school put K2 in isolation, and sanctioned him, shockingly describing his actions as "an act of terrorism". The school claimed that K2 had confirmed with them that he had meant that it was about time that Palestine fought back, but K2 denied ever saying this.

66. IMPACT: K2 was kept off school until a decision was taken to remove his isolation sanction, as the school informed his mother that if he were to come to school, he would be immediately placed in isolation.

A3

67. FACTS: A3, a school student, said "Free Palestine" to his friends during a conversation in class. He was immediately taken aside by the teacher and asked whether he "supports Hamas".

68. IMPACT: The support for Palestine is often conflated with support for a proscribed organisation, and therefore the threat of further escalation is weaponised against even young students. The level of fear instilled in young students in their formative years during school is especially problematic; this student did not feel able to challenge the way in which staff isolated him.

P

69. FACTS: A 9-year-old boy wore a Palestine badge to his primary school in north London. On seeing this, a teacher shouted at him immediately, claiming that the badge, which read "victory to the intifada", was wrong and showing support to terrorists. The school had a history of not allowing students to make Palestine flags at home and bring them to protests or school, and issued warnings to those who tried.

70. IMPACT: P's mother was forced to teach P at home, as the incident left him feeling unsafe at school. They looked for alternative schools to send him to, as he remained too scared to go back. She tried to take legal action against the school, who denied anything had happened, despite an extensive chronology of events and witnesses from the school who would testify to the repression against the students' freedom of expression.

Summary

71. The cases reveal a disturbing pattern of heightened scrutiny and punitive safeguarding responses towards minors expressing support for Palestine. Innocuous or age-appropriate expressions — such as wearing a badge, stating “Free Palestine,” or sharing political news — are routinely treated as indicators of extremist sympathies. This reactionary safeguarding culture has caused serious emotional trauma, fostered distrust in educational institutions, and chilled freedom of expression among young children in what should be a nurturing environment channelling their effective learning.

I. CONCLUSION

72. The snapshot of evidence presented in the various case studies underscores a systematic and disturbing curtailment of the right to freedom of expression within the United Kingdom. Expressions of solidarity with the Palestinian cause — whether articulated through social media posts, academic discourse, student activism, or peaceful protest — are being consistently reframed as tacit or explicit support for terrorism. This recharacterisation has been facilitated by expansive and indeterminate legal frameworks, most notably the Terrorism Act 2000, and operationalised through institutions such as universities, employers, immigration authorities, law enforcement, and safeguarding bodies.

73. The chilling effect on political speech is stark. Individuals expressing legitimate political opinions have been subjected to university disciplinary measures, employment sanctions, immigration penalties, and safeguarding interventions. These measures have frequently lacked transparency, proportionality, and due process, raising serious concerns under Articles 9 and 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR), which safeguard freedom of thought, conscience, and expression. Indeed, the jurisprudence of the European Court of

Human Rights has repeatedly emphasised that freedom of expression constitutes one of the essential foundations of a democratic society, particularly where it concerns political speech and matters of public interest.⁴

74. Moreover, the expansive interpretation of “support” for a proscribed organisation, under section 12 of the Terrorism Act 2000, has led to the punishment of expressions that are, at most, symbolic acts of political solidarity or critical engagement with foreign policy. Fionnuala Ní Aoláin, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms while countering terrorism has noted that counter-terrorism measures must not unduly infringe upon civic space or suppress dissenting voices.⁵
75. The deployment of Prevent in educational and professional settings further exemplifies this overreach. Prevent referrals have often functioned to stigmatise and isolate those expressing views critical of Israeli state policy or sympathetic to Palestinian resistance, in contravention of the principle that educational institutions should remain bastions of intellectual freedom.⁶
76. The cases of immigration sanctions based on political expression — such as visa revocations and deportation proceedings — also reveal an alarming trend. The misinterpretation of conduct “not conducive to the public good” has enabled the ultra-cautious officials to exercise disproportionate power without sufficient judicial oversight, thereby undermining the procedural safeguards embedded within both domestic common law traditions and international human rights law.
77. Finally, the extension of these repressive measures to children and young people, as seen through safeguarding interventions in schools, represents a particularly egregious breach of the United Kingdom’s obligations under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), particularly Article 13, which guarantees the right to freedom of expression.
78. In sum, the examples above demonstrate that the current counter-terrorism and proscription frameworks are being employed in ways that dangerously conflate political expression with support for terrorism, thereby eroding foundational democratic freedoms and curtailing freedom of thought and expression. The

⁴ *Handyside v. United Kingdom* (1976) 1 EHRR 737

⁵ UNESCO Recommendation concerning the Status of Higher-Education Teaching Personnel, 1997

⁶ A/HRC/40/52, 2019

systematic suppression of pro-Palestinian speech does not merely harm the individuals targeted; it threatens the broader principles of open debate and political freedom upon which a democratic society must be based. At the heart of this attack on free speech lies the fact that Hamas is a proscribed entity. As a result of this single decision, pro-Palestinian sentiment can easily be classed as support for a proscribed group irrespective of the facts and intentions of the individual targeted. The proscription decision has led to widespread abuse and the case studies illustrate how unjust and oppressive measures are being taken against innocent individuals. These case studies are the tip of an iceberg that is continuing to grow as the horrors of the war crimes and genocide in Gaza unfold. The position of international bodies, jurists, allied governments and public opinion is now aligned with the various decisions of the International Court of Justice that Israeli actions in Gaza amount to war crimes and a plausible genocide. Urgent reforms are therefore necessary to reassert the primacy of human rights protections within counter-terrorism policy and practice, ensuring that the right to freedom of expression — especially political expression — remains robustly protected.

79. For the reasons stated above, CAGE International calls on the SSHD to reverse the former SSHD, Priti Patel's decision to proscribe Harakat al-Muqawwamah al-Islamiyyah (Hamas) and urgently review the impact of its proscription on the curtailment of fundamental individual rights as highlighted in the cases above.