

The Securitisation of Solidarity: Terrorism Frameworks, State Complicity, and the Repression of Palestine Activism in Europe and Britain

Wednesday 3 June 2026 13:15 (1h 30m)

We have witnessed an escalating and systematic use of counterterrorism and extremism frameworks by European governments, particularly in the UK, to suppress and criminalise Palestine solidarity (especially) since October 2023. This widespread repression is not incidental but constitutes a deliberate strategy to silence opposition to the Israeli genocide and safeguard Western states' deep-seated political, military, and economic complicity in the Israeli settler-colonial and ethno-nationalist project. These Europe-wide counterterrorism measures, however, do not constitute an exceptional state of violence, but a normalised and continuous practice of racialised government.

The core mechanism of this practice is the weaponisation of vague counterterrorism legislation, e.g., Terrorism Act 2000 and the Prevent strategy in Britain, Germany's Associations Act, and France's dissolution powers, to target solidarity with anti-colonial resistance. These measures leverage legal mechanisms that are historically reminiscent of colonial emergency laws used to maintain imperial dominance and racial hierarchies.

Specifically in Britain, this repression has manifested through the proscription of groups like Palestine Action, exploiting the Terrorism Act 2000's expansive definition to criminalise property damage as 'terrorism'. The UK context further reveals a pattern of repression orchestrated through close coordination between British authorities and a transnational network of Zionist lobby groups (e.g., UK Lawyers for Israel, Elbit Systems) and Israeli state ministries.

The panel seeks to deconstruct the architecture of repression to analyse how domestic counterterrorism measures function as an extension of geopolitical interests. This process involves the racialised conflation of Palestine solidarity - and Arabs and Muslims more broadly - with inherent 'terrorism' or 'extremism', thereby justifying pre-criminal surveillance (e.g., Prevent referrals in UK schools and universities) and administrative repression (lawfare, injunctions, and weaponised bureaucracy in universities).

Track Classification: Critical Studies on Terrorism Working Group