

# *UK police say pro-Palestine performances at Glastonbury subject to probe*

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The punk-rap duo Bob Vylan tackles a range of issues in its music, including racism, homophobia and the class divide, and has previously voiced support for Palestinians [File: Henry Nicholls/Reuters]

London, July 1 (RHC)-- British police have announced that the weekend performances by rap-punk duo Bob Vylan and the Irish-language band Kneecap at the Glastonbury Festival are subject to a criminal investigation after they led crowds in chants calling for “death” to the Israeli military and a “Free Palestine.”

Police on Monday said the performances at the United Kingdom’s largest summer music festival “have been recorded as a public order incident”.

Rapper Bobby Vylan, who until the weekend was relatively unknown, led crowds in chants of “free, free Palestine” and “death, death” to the Israeli military. The BBC said it regretted livestreaming the performance and it should have pulled it off the air.

British Prime Minister Keir Starmer and other UK politicians condemned the chants, saying there was no excuse for such “appalling hate speech.” Starmer added that the BBC must explain “how these scenes came to be broadcast”.

Ofcom, the broadcasting regulator, said it was “very concerned” about the BBC livestream and said the broadcaster “clearly has questions to answer.”

Meanwhile, the United States Department of State said it has revoked the visas for Bob Vylan to perform in the U.S. after its “hateful tirade at Glastonbury.” “Foreigners who glorify violence and hatred are not welcome visitors to our country,” US Deputy Secretary of State Christopher Landau said in a social media post.

Israel’s genocidal assault in Gaza has inflamed tensions around the world, triggering pro-Palestinian protests in many capitals and on college campuses. Israel and some of its supporters have described the protests as anti-Semitic while critics said Israel uses such descriptions to silence its opponents.

Bob Vylan, known for mixing grime and punk rock, tackles a range of issues in its lyrics, including racism, homophobia and the class divide, and has previously voiced support for Palestinians.

Its lead vocalist, who goes by the stage name Bobby Vylan, appeared to refer to the weekend performance in a post on Instagram, writing: “I said what I said.” “Teaching our children to speak up for the change they want and need is the only way that we make this world a better place,” he added.

The duo played Saturday afternoon right before Kneecap, whose set was not livestreamed by the BBC but still found a huge online audience via TikTok. It is another band that has drawn controversy previously over its strongly pro-Palestine stance.

Kneecap led a crowd of tens of thousands in chants of “Free Palestine” at the festival. It also aimed an expletive-laden chant at Starmer, who had said he didn’t think it was “appropriate” for Kneecap to play Glastonbury after one of its members was charged under the Terrorism Act.

Liam Og O hAnnaidh, who is also known as Liam O’Hanna and performs under the stage name Mo Chara, was charged with supporting a proscribed organisation for allegedly waving a Hezbollah flag at a concert in London last year.

Israel has faced sustained international opprobrium for the conduct of its war in Gaza. Weekly protests draw thousands of people around Europe and across the world in support of Palestinians.

Public pressure, in part, seemed to prompt the Israeli allies France, Canada and the UK to issue a sharply worded statement in May calling for Israel to stop its “egregious” military actions in Gaza and criticising Israel’s actions in the occupied West Bank.

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