

Defend the right to protest – Trade Union statement 15/07/25

On 15 July 2025, a total of twenty-two trade union general secretaries issued a joint statement expressing deep concern about erosion of the right to peaceful protest in the UK.

This follows a peaceful march for Palestine on January 18 in London, after which charges were brought against prominent activists, including former NEU executive member, Alex Kenny.

“We are deeply concerned that the Metropolitan Police are bringing charges against former NEU Executive member, Alex Kenny, and Sophie Bolt, CND Secretary, following the peaceful protest for Palestine in London on January 18th.

These charges follow the decision to prosecute Chris Nineham, Stop the War Coalition vice-chair, and Ben Jamal, Palestine Solidarity Campaign Director.

Alex Kenny is a long-standing, and widely respected, trade union activist who has organised peaceful demonstrations in London for decades.

He was chief steward for the NEU national strike demonstration in March 2023.

He has played a leading role in many demonstrations organised in the TUC region covering London and the south-east.

We believe these charges are an attack on our right to protest.

The right to protest is fundamental to trade unions and the wider movement.

The freedoms to organise, of assembly and of speech matter; we must defend them.

We call for the charges against Alex Kenny, Sophie Bolt, Chris Nineham and Ben Jamal to be dropped.’

Signed by the following Trade Union General Secretaries:

Paul Nowak – TUC
Christina McAnea – UNISON
Sharon Graham – Unite
Daniel Kebede – NEU
Matt Wrack – NASUWT
Fran Heathcote – PCS
Dave Ward – CWU
Jo Grady – UCU
Eddie Dempsey – RMT
Paul Fleming – Equity
Paul Whiteman – NAHT
Steve Gillan – POA
Steve Wright – FBU
Mick Whelan – ASLEF
Maryam Eslamdoust – TSSA
Sarah Woolley – BFAWU
Gawain Little – GFTU
Zita Holbourne – Artists Union
Daniel Garnham – Security Industry Federation
Brian Linn – Aegis
John McGowan – Social Workers Union
Julia Georgiou – NHBC Staff Association