



ELDH European Association of Lawyers for Democracy & World Human Rights

WITH LAWYERS
IN 22 COUNTRIES

EJDM Europäische Vereinigung von Juristinnen & Juristen für Demokratie und Menschenrechte in der Welt

EJDH Asociación Europea de los Juristas por la Democracia y los Derechos Humanos en el Mundo

EJDH Association Européenne des Juristes pour la Démocratie & les Droits de l'Homme

EGDU Associazione Europea delle Giuriste e dei Giuristi per la Democrazia e i diritti dell'Uomo nel Mondo

Equality Privacy Social Rights
No Racism Peace No Torture No War
Self-Determination of Peoples Democracy
Human Rights Rights of Migrants

Bologna, Düsseldorf, London, Vienna, 09 May 2023

No Criminalisation of Anti-Monarchists in UK

ELDH unequivocally condemns the arrests in London of anti-monarchist activists, hours before the coronation of King Charles III on Saturday 6 May.

Graham Smith, CEO of Republic, the leading anti-monarchist NGO, stated that as Republic prepared for a peaceful and lawful protest, he and a number of Republic's team were arrested and detained for the rest of the day, despite ongoing communication with the Metropolitan Police over the last few months over the nature of their demonstration.

The Met Police later confirmed 52 arrests had been made across the day, for charges varying from affray to public order offences.

ELDH is concerned with the Met Police's disruption of peaceful protest using new powers granted by the Public Order Act, which allows officers to prosecute protestors if they possess an object with the intention of using it to 'lock on'. ELDH continues to be alarmed by the crackdown on protest rights in the UK, following the passing of the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act in 2022.

The right to peacefully protest is a fundamental right that allows working people to hold the powerful to account. The UK Government has made attacks on civil liberties a fundamental part of their legislative agenda since their landslide election win in 2019, with the passing of increasingly authoritarian legislation not just on protest rights, but also curtailing the ability to launch civil actions against the British military for human rights abuses committed overseas, and further limiting the right to strike.

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ELDH considers that the arrest of anti-monarchist protestors was unlawful and without legal basis. On 8 May, the Metropolitan Police expressed 'regret' over the arrests on the day of the coronation in a statement, where they have admitted that the six protestors have been released with no further action being taken. Whilst ELDH welcomes the news that the protestors will not be charged, it is nonetheless highly concerning that the Police acted unlawfully to prevent the demonstrators from participating in a pre-planned protest despite ongoing communication with the organisers. The Police had stated before the arrests that they would have 'extremely low tolerance' for those seeking to 'undermine' the 'once in a lifetime event'.

ELDH condemns this authoritarian action by the British authorities and sends solidarity to anti-monarchist protestors in the UK who will continue to fight for a British republic and fully supports their right to assembly and protest. ELDH condemns the British authorities' disregard for peaceful protest (protected under international law) and the targeting of activists on tenuous charges.

ELDH calls on the British authorities to respect the right to assembly and to immediately cease their unlawful interference in this matter. And urges civil society organisations, including legal organisations, to stand for the right to protest to be protected in the UK and elsewhere.