

UK Labour Government Restricts Civil Liberties Across Multiple Fronts



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The UK Labour government claims to be "for the working people." Its policies have included expanded surveillance, curtailing of protests rights, and restrictions on jury trials.

Details. The government invested £115 million in the [largest-scale rollout](#) of facial recognition technology for police, despite cameras being [more likely](#) to misidentify Black people. Facial scans are now required to access many "adult websites", with some phone updates [locking](#) in "child-mode" without biometric verification.

- ▶ A [mandatory digital ID programme](#) was announced and [then walked back](#) to a voluntary scheme after public pressure, though the infrastructure remains in place.
- ▶ Labour has not repealed the Conservative [Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022](#) or the [Public Order Act 2023](#), which criminalised previously legal protest tactics and granted police sweeping new powers over demonstrations. Labour's [Crime and Policing Bill 2025](#) goes further, proposing to [ban](#) face coverings at protests and on 16 May, the Met [deployed facial recognition at a protest for the first time](#).
- ▶ Labour expanded the use of anti-terrorism powers against protest movements. Palestine Action was [proscribed](#) as a terrorist organisation – the first domestic [adventurist group](#) to receive this designation – with over [2,000 arrests](#) made in connection with related peaceful support demonstrations.
- ▶ The government has proposed major reductions in jury trials by [expanding](#) the use of judge-only courts for lower and mid-level offences.
- ▶ Labour [continued](#) to enforce strict immigration policies, including increased raids, arrests, and deportations, politically [justifying](#) the anti-immigration rhetoric of the far-right. On 16 May 2026, authorities [permitted](#) a large [billionaire funded](#) far-right [Tommy Robinson](#) rally in London.

Context. British capitalism is characterised by [slow economic growth](#), stagnant [wages](#), [weak investment](#), [insecure employment](#), and [deteriorating](#) public services, intensified by a [rising](#) cost of living and [worsening](#) housing affordability. These worsening conditions are producing political shifts unlike anything seen in a century.

- ▶ Labour and the Conservatives are [losing](#) their historic dominance. [Polls](#) in May show Labour and the Conservatives both stuck at around 19–20%, while Reform UK has been leading at 27%. The Green Party is polling at about 14%, and the Liberal Democrats around 12%, which is relatively strong compared to their usual levels.
- ▶ Following a [disastrous performance](#) in the 2026 local election, Labour Prime Minister, Keir Starmer [claimed](#) to be "on the side of working people", while announcing policies aimed at defending British capital.

Important to Know. Faced with a deepening economic [crisis](#) and political unrest, the British ruling class has responded by increasing fascisation. Greater pressure will continue to be exerted on the domestic workforce while simultaneously [expanding militarisation](#) to stabilise the system and maintain profits.

- ▶ Labour's constantly shifting positions reflect the contradictions of managing capitalism in crisis. It defended the two-child benefit cap – pushing 300,000 children into poverty at a rate of 100 per day – before dropping it under public pressure. Under the guise of “getting people into work”, It proposed cutting disability benefit payments for 370,000 people by £4,500 a year, then partially retreated after a rebellion by over 100 of its own MPs.
- ▶ Before Labour, the Conservative government had already moved in the same direction, as evidenced by the [Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022](#) and the [Public Order Act 2023](#).
- ▶ Starmer claimed that "only Labour can stop the populist right", yet the 2026 local elections saw Reform UK make significant progress while both Labour and the Conservatives experienced a sharp decline. These populist right-wing forces will intensify the current trend through further reductions in workers' rights, including attacks on [protections](#) such as those set out in the [Equality Act](#).

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