

Pro-Palestine activists used sledgehammers in action at Israel-linked firm, UK court told

Interesting that one of the newspaper reports that emphasises that the defendant who hit a policewoman on the back with his sledgehammer (other reports just say 'hammer' which could be a little tool you tap tacks into a picture frame with, not a mighty demolition beastie) while she was felled on the floor from a previous blow BROKE HER SPINE! is the [Guardian](#), left wing and generally supportive of Palestine. Additional reporting from [The Times of Israel](#) , [Jewish News](#) and The [Daily Mail](#)

Six pro-Palestinian activists armed with sledgehammers attacked an Israeli-linked defence firm, with one striking a female police officer twice with his weapon, a court has heard.



📹 Pro-Palestine activists armed with sledgehammer attacked an Israeli-linked defence firm.
Photograph: X

Opening the trial at Woolwich crown court on Tuesday, the prosecutor, Deanna Heer KC, said the defendants were involved in a “meticulously organised” operation by Palestine Action at the Elbit Systems factory in Filton, near Bristol, on 6 August last year.

Charlotte Head, 29, Samuel Corner, 23, Leona Kamio, 30, Fatema Zainab Rajwani, 21, Zoe Rogers, 22, and Jordan Devlin, 31, are accused of aggravated burglary, criminal damage and violent disorder. Corner is also charged with causing police officer Kate Evans grievous bodily harm. They deny the charges.

Heer said a van driven by Head and carrying the other defendants, all wearing red jumpsuits, crashed through the fence surrounding the site, followed by people on foot wearing black jumpsuits shouting: “Free Palestine.”

She said those in black jumpsuits threw fireworks at security guards, lit flares and cracked whips in an attempt to overwhelm them while the defendants' job was "to cause as much damage as possible and obtain information about the company (Elbit)".

The prosecutor said the defendants were all armed with sledgehammers, which were intended to be used to damage property but that they were also carried as weapons "to be used if necessary to threaten and damage people".

She told the court: "The evidence demonstrates that all of these defendants used them for that purpose, to threaten or to attack the security guards and to lend support to one another as they did so."

"When the police arrived, as the defendants knew they would, Samuel Corner attacked them, going so far as to strike a female officer across the back with his sledgehammer while she was on the floor, facing away from him."

She said Corner hit PC Kate Evans twice while she was on all fours trying to apprehend Rogers. She was immediately terrified that her spine had been damaged and when she tried, she was unable to get up

Evans, who "screamed in pain after the first of the blows", suffered a fractured lumbar spine and could only return to work after three months, and on reduced duties, because she was still in pain, the court was told. *She could have ended up paralysed.*

"Fortunately, Sgt Evans was wearing a stab vest which may have absorbed the force of the impacts. Nevertheless she screamed in pain as she felt the force of the blows."

The jury was shown footage of 6 August taken by police body-worn cameras as well as GoPro cameras worn by those involved in the action. Heer said that at one point Head and Zainab

Rajwani grinned at the camera and said: "You've been 'Pal Action'd'."

A security guard, Angelo Volante, was threatened with a sledgehammer, and described how he had been whipped by another of the six accused, and threatened with a saw by a third. He retreated, subsequently returning accompanied by police officers.

As he got close to Mr Volante, Mr Shaw (*another security guard who came to help his colleague*) ran across and tackled him to the ground, striking him across the back of the legs with his brolly. 'As Mr Shaw tried to detain this particular member of the black team, this masked intruder said to Mr Shore: "We come in peace".

'The group then aggressively drove Shaw and Volante back cracking whips and throwing fireworks, screaming at them to "F**k off" until Volante managed to grab a whip from one of them which he used in self-defence. . . "As a result of this encounter, Nigel Shaw suffered a 4cm laceration to his head and abrasions to his back, shoulders and knees. Caps on several of his front teeth, it seems, were also knocked out during the melee. In subsequent footage of the activities that followed, he appears, as you will see, apparently disorientated with blood pouring down his face."

'Eventually, the black team turned and left, retreating across the car park'

A group of around two dozen protesters, holding banners and Palestinian flags, gathered at the gates leading to Woolwich Crown Court, with their shouts of "Free Palestine" audible inside the courtroom ahead of the start of the trial. The six sat in a line in the dock and exchanged glances, waves and smiles with relatives and friends in the public gallery, some of whom wore Palestinian keffiyeh scarves.



Supporters of alleged Palestine Action activists accused of breaking into Israeli-based defense firm Elbit Systems' site in Bristol in August 2024 hold placards outside Woolwich Crown Court in south east London on November 17, 2025, where the activists are due to stand trial. (Ben STANSALL / AFP)

The Filton 24 refers to those on remand for at least a year since being arrested for targeting the Filton site in Bristol. The trial is expected to last 10 weeks.

In July, during a [Parliamentary debate](#) on the proposed proscription of Palestine Action alongside two other groups, MPs including Zarah Sultana and Kim Johnson described Palestine Action as “non-violent”, despite the Security Minister, Dan Jarvis, having previously told those present that “the group’s own materials state that it is not non-violent, and that is echoed in the actions of its members, who have committed atrocious attacks.”