

The Letter To Glastonbury

The controversy surrounding Irish rap trio Kneecap's slot at Glastonbury Festival 2025 has escalated into a high-profile censorship dispute. A "private and confidential" letter– signed by dozens of industry insiders – was sent to Glastonbury organisers urging them to drop Kneecap from the lineup faroutmagazine.co.uk. This secret letter, allegedly coordinated by powerful agents, accused the group of "propagating hate" and implored the festival to "question the wisdom" of booking them theguardian.com presstv.ir. The existence of the letter was leaked in early June 2025, sparking public outcry over backroom censorship and prompting solidarity from fellow artists ra.co faroutmagazine.co.uk. Meanwhile, multiple politicians and organisations – particularly those aligned with pro-Israel or Zionist interests – openly called for Kneecap's removal, citing the band's provocative pro-Palestine statements and alleged glorification of violence algemeiner.com.

This report compiles all available details on the secret letter and its signatories, examines how it leaked, and maps the network of industry, political and financial connections driving the campaign against Kneecap. It also explores the broader context of music industry censorship and attempts to silence political musicians.

Timeline of Events and Leaks

To understand the situation, it is useful to outline a timeline of Kneecap's Glastonbury booking and the ensuing backlash:

Date (2024–25)	Event
Late 2024	Kneecap gain notoriety for onstage slogans supporting Palestine and Irish republicanism. Videos emerge of members shouting "Up Hezbollah, up Hamas" and "The only good Tory is a dead Tory" during shows theguardian.com algemeiner.com . Jewish watchdog groups (e.g. Campaign Against Antisemitism) report

	<p>the band to UK police for alleged terror incitement itv.com jewishnews.co.uk.</p>
April 2025	<p>Glastonbury 2025 lineup announced, including Kneecap on the West Holts stage (28 June). At Coachella in April, Kneecap's set features "Fuck Israel, Free Palestine" visuals and genocide accusations against Israel theguardian.com. This sparks international backlash: their US agent drops them, Fox News likens their act to Nazi rhetoric, and some summer festival slots are cancelled theguardian.com. Kneecap apologises for any perceived encouragement of violence (clarifying they don't support Hamas/Hezbollah) but denounces the "smear campaign" against them theguardian.com.</p>
30 April 2025	<p>The Board of Deputies of British Jews (BoD) sends an official letter to Glastonbury founder Michael Eavis urging the immediate removal of Kneecap from the lineup presstv.ir. (This BoD letter was made public, signalling the start of an organised campaign by UK Jewish/Zionist groups to "cancel" the band).</p>
Early May 2025	<p>A confidential email signed by 30+ music industry figures is sent to Emily Eavis and other Glasto organisers, lobbying for Kneecap's ban algemeiner.com. Signatories include top agents and executives (details in next section). Around the same time, UK politicians weigh in: e.g. Kemi Badenoch (a senior Tory minister) calls for Kneecap's removal, and Sir Keir Starmer (Opposition Leader) opines Kneecap's appearance is "not appropriate" algemeiner.com thejc.com. The Daily Mail breaks news of the private email, and Kneecap's lawyers (Phoenix Law) respond on 21 May with a legal letter to the signatories, threatening to sue for defamation and "concerted pressure" to deplatform the band algemeiner.com jewishnews.co.uk. Kneecap demand an "immediate and unequivocal apology" from those behind the secret letter algemeiner.com jewishnews.co.uk.</p>

Mid-Late May 2025	<p>Police and political pressure: On 18 May, one Kneecap member (Liam Óg Ó hAinle, a.k.a. Mo Chara) is interviewed and later charged under the Terrorism Act for allegedly displaying a Hezbollah flag on stage ra.co thejc.com. NI Minister Gordon Lyons urges cutting any public funding to Kneecap, calling their acts “glorification of terrorism” algemeiner.com.</p> <p>Meanwhile, Israeli officials join the fray: on 28 May, Israel’s Culture Minister Miki Zohar tells media that anyone “calling to destroy Israel or...make terror actions...should not be participating in events” like Glastonbury algemeiner.com (although he claims Israel “doesn’t support boycotts” in principle algemeiner.com). Several summer festival slots are cancelled: Kneecap are dropped from at least two German festivals (Hurricane and Southside) and the Eden Project concert in England algemeiner.com. (Others like London’s Wide Awake festival go ahead and even defend the band’s right to perform algemeiner.com.)</p>
Early June 2025	<p>Leak of the secret letter: On 10 June, BBC DJ Toddla T – a producer of Kneecap’s album – publishes a statement exposing the “private & confidential” letter and its signatories ra.co. He decries it as a “coordinated attempt by 30 members of the musical elite...to silence...three working-class artists from Belfast”, accusing the signers of helping “enable genocide” by trying to muzzle pro-Gaza voices ra.co. Toddla T challenges them: “If those individuals truly believe Kneecap shouldn’t perform, why not say so publicly?” hotpress.com. His revelation galvanises public attention. That week, Love Music Hate Racism also speaks out, saying anyone trying to silence Kneecap “is on the wrong side of history” ra.co. Reports confirm the letter was signed by top agents from major live music agencies, sent by a “very systemically powerful” music agent faroutmagazine.co.uk theguardian.com. Importantly, however, the full text and list of signatories were not officially released by Glastonbury or</p>

	<p>mainstream media – they came to light only through leaks and independent journalists.</p>
Mid June 2025	<p>Industry backlash to the backlash: Over 100 artists and music figures sign an open letter in support of Kneecap, condemning attempts to censor them faroutmagazine.co.uk. Notable signatories include Massive Attack, Bicep, Annie Mac, Paul Weller, Primal Scream and Toddla T ra.co.theguardian.com. Even guitarist Johnny Marr (co-founder of The Smiths) issues a public statement defending Kneecap's right to speak out: "Oppression fears artistic expression...I stand with...musicians who call for...a free Palestine." thenationalnews.com. In an interview, Kneecap members say the leak "vindicated" them, forcing their would-be censors into the light: "The fact that the letter was leaked changes things...I hope these people regret it" faroutmagazine.co.uk theguardian.com. Glastonbury co-organiser Emily Eavis affirms that the festival remains a platform for all: "everyone is welcome here", despite the pressure theguardian.com.</p>
Late June 2025	<p>Glastonbury goes ahead: Kneecap are set to play their 4pm slot on 28 June at the West Holts Stage ra.co. The BBC, however, quietly adjusts its TV scheduling – the live broadcast on BBC Two is slated to begin only at 5pm, omitting Kneecap's performance thejc.com. (The band is also absent from the BBC's online stage schedule, suggesting a deliberate choice not to televise their set thejc.com.)</p> <p>By festival time, the censorship campaign appears to have failed to remove the band, but succeeded in drawing massive attention to Kneecap's message. Sir Michael Eavis (Glastonbury founder) pointedly remarked: "People that don't agree with the politics of the event can go somewhere else." thejc.com</p>

The “Secret” Letter – Content and Partial Leaks

The crux of the controversy is the private letter/email sent to Glastonbury’s organisers asking for Kneecap’s removal. While the full letter was not officially published, significant portions were leaked via activists and media. The Guardian reported that the letter urged Glastonbury to “question the wisdom of continuing to have [Kneecap] on the lineup” theguardian.com. According to those who obtained it, the email was marked “Private and Confidential” and was framed as raising the organisers’ “awareness” about Kneecap presstv.ir. The signatories professed support for free expression in principle– “whilst we all support free speech”– but argued that Kneecap’s content had “drifted into...hateful rhetoric ”and therefore should not be protected by free speech presstv.ir. The letter accused the band of “propagating hate” and essentially equated anti-Israel statements with antisemitism, stating that “the silence of our allies has sadly at times been a contributory factor to...anti-Israel rhetoric [becoming] a proxy for antisemitism.” presstv.ir.

In one passage, the authors insist they “cannot accept [free speech] when it...denies Israel’s right to exist” presstv.ir revealing the political impetus behind the complaint. Crucially, the letter stops short of openly demanding a ban (perhaps to avoid overt censorship language); instead it heavily implies that keeping Kneecap on the bill would be irresponsible. By couching their plea in terms of “awareness” and concern, the writers attempted to pressure Glastonbury management behind closed doors, without alerting public opinion. Indeed, Kneecap’s team noted the letter “was shared among over 30 recipients and later leaked” to the band jewishnews.co.uk, indicating it was meant to remain an inside correspondence. The organisers did not cave or make any public statement about the letter and once it leaked, its secretive nature arguably backfired. “That the letter wasn’t published publicly is a form of vindication, ”Kneecap’s Móglaí Bap (Naoise Ó Cairealláin) said, noting how it proved these industry figures knew they were acting against the festival’s ethos theguardian.com faroutmagazine.co.uk.

So far, no official source has published the entire letter or an official list of its signatories. However, nearly the full text and names did circulate on social media

and forums in mid-June, thanks to leaks. For example, the independent outlet Press TV obtained the email and even displayed snippets on air presstv.ir.

On Reddit, users shared what they claimed was the full letter and signatory list. And investigative journalist David Miller (host of “Palestine Declassified”) posted a detailed thread unmasking the signatories one by one, including their industry roles and pro-Israel affiliation threadreaderapp.com. These unofficial leaks mean that the letter’s contents are effectively public(at least in part), albeit via secondary channels.

In summary, the letter has been partially leaked but not formally released: we know its general thrust and some exact quotes (as above), and we know it had about 34–35 signatories presstv.ir. We also know Glastonbury ignored its demands. What remains confidential (at least in mainstream discourse) are the identities of all who signed – though investigative research has brought many of those names to light, as we will see next.

Likely Signatories: Industry Figures and Affiliations

According to BBC’s Toddla T, the anti-Kneecap letter was signed by around 30 “music industry individuals” with “systemic influence ra.co essentially, members of the music business establishment. The Guardian likewise described the signers as “music industry heavyweights”, notably “top agents from major live music agencies.” theguardian.com

In other words, this was a coordinated effort by powerful insiders (agents, promoters, managers, executives and allied figures) leveraging their clout. Many of these individuals have known ties to political or ideological advocacy, particularly pro-Israel lobbying in arts and media. The table below summarises key figures reported to be signatories, along with their industry roles and relevant affiliations/motivations:

Signatory (Role)	Industry Affiliation	Relevant Connections / Motivations
David Levy (Agent)	Partner at WME (William Morris Endeavor) agency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advisory board member of pro-Israel lobby group Creative Community for Peace (CCfP). • Levy publicly signed CCfP's October 2023 "Israel Under Attack" open letter supporting Israel. • Likely organiser of the Glasto letter via CCfP's network (CCfP works to align entertainment industry with pro-Israel causes).
Mike Greek (Agent)	Co-head of CAA Music (Creative Artists Agency).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Senior agent representing global stars. CAA colleagues have included outspoken pro-Israel voices. • Likely motivated to protect industry image and avoid platforming what he sees as extremist rhetoric. (His presence confirms major agencies were involved, matching reports)
Brian Message (Manager)	Partner at ATC Management; co-manager for Radiohead, Nick Cave, PJ Harvey, Johnny Marr, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has a history opposing cultural boycotts of Israel: his clients Radiohead and Nick Cave famously defied the BDS movement by performing in Israel, dismissing protesters' criticisms. • Likely sees Kneecap's stance as antithetical to his artists' stance. Potentially signed due to personal pro-Israel leanings and to support his artists' views.

<p>Paul Samuels (Exec)</p>	<p>Vice President of Atlantic Records UK; co-founder of Love Music Hate Racism.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A prominent industry veteran with anti-racism credentials, but privately a supporter of Zionist causes. In 2024, Samuels was outed on social media for his pro-Israel sympathies—his Instagram showed an Israeli flag and that he followed StandWithUs (an Israeli advocacy group)• He reportedly signed the anti-Kneecap letter despite the irony of an LMHR founder aligning with a censorship effort.• Motivation: staunch opposition to Kneecap’s anti-Israel messaging, viewing it as hate.
<p>Raye Cosbert (Promoter)</p>	<p>Director at Metropolis Music (a Live Nation UK company); longtime promoter (worked with Amy Winehouse, Coldplay, Massive Attack, etc.).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Represents the live music promoters’ stake. May be concerned about show safety and brand image (Kneecap’s shows have attracted controversy and police attention). As a Live Nation affiliate, could also be sensitive to any sponsor or media backlash. Signed on likely due to industry pressure and a belief that Kneecap’s act crosses a line.
<p>Toby Harris (Label owner)</p>	<p>Founder of 100% Records (UK independent label)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• His label’s roster intriguingly includes Matisyahu(an American-Jewish reggae artist who himself was embroiled in a 2015 boycott

	.	<p>controversy) and Izabo (an Israeli band).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Likely signs from a pro-Israel standpoint or to defend artists' interests. • Possibly connected to pro-Israel donor circles (the Harris family trust, linked to Toby's family, is a multimillion-pound charity).
Ronnie Harris (Accountant)	Partner at Harris & Trotter accountancy; a celebrity accountant ("accountant to the stars").	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An unusual signatory from the finance side of music/entertainment. Trustee of several charities – one family trust endowed with £4m. • His involvement suggests wealthy music industry patrons/backers were also engaged in the anti-Kneecap effort. • Possibly driven by personal convictions (as a pro-Israel Jewish community figure) and by clients worried about Kneecap's message.
Debbie (Debby) Lee (Producer)	Veteran music promoter & TV producer (organiser of major London club nights in the 1990s; now in film/TV).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Known to post strident pro-Israel content on social media – e.g. amplifying unverified claims about Hamas atrocities. • Likely a signatory due to genuine ideological outrage at Kneecap's statements. Represents the crossover of music, media and propaganda – using her influence to push back against what she views as anti-Israel "lies".

Table: Known or likely signatories of the anti-Kneecap letter, with affiliations and possible motivations. Sources based on leaked information.

In addition to the above, leaks indicate the signatory list included other notable figures: for example:

- Nick Myers (co-founder of Fast Friends, a music talent firm), \
- Leo Pearlman (Fulwell 73 Productions co-founder, active in music/film, and reportedly a donor to pro-Israel causes),
- Andrew Gould (music executive with past political campaigning experience), and
- Neil Blair (a lawyer-turned-agent, known for representing J.K. Rowling)

all identified as having added their names. These names underscore that the effort reached beyond just agents into the broader entertainment business elite. It was truly a who's-who of industry power players, many with personal or professional stakes in pro-Israel advocacy.

What emerges is a picture of a covert lobbying bloc within the music and entertainment sector. Far from being random, this group has interlinked interests: some are directly involved with organisations like Creative Community for Peace (CCfP) and its parent pro-Israel network (StandWithUs), which aim to counter pro-Palestinian sentiment in arts. (Notably, David Levy's leadership in CCfP ties the Glastonbury letter to an organised Zionist influence campaign in entertainment.) Others have been active in censorship or propaganda efforts in the past (for instance, by opposing cultural boycotts or promoting Israel's narratives in media). Many signatories also move in the same social circles – high-end industry events, charity boards, and political fundraisers – pointing to financial and political connections behind the scenes. A prime example is Paul Samuels, whose involvement shows how even anti-racist initiatives can be co-opted by those who draw a line when it comes to Israel. As Press TV observed, “one can—apparently—believe in the racist ideology of Zionism and still pose as an anti-racist”. Similarly, manager Brian Message's presence suggests continuity with past anti-BDS lobbying in the music world (recalling how Radiohead's team fought back against boycott activists in 2017).

In short, the signatories' identities have been partially exposed through leaks, revealing a coalition of influential agents, promoters, executives, and financiers with a shared motive: to shield Israel from public criticism on a prominent cultural platform. The letter itself may not have been intended for public eyes, but its architects' profiles speak volumes about the intersection of the music industry and political advocacy.

Zionist Organizations, Lobby Groups and Donor Influence

From the start, the campaign against Kneecap's Glastonbury slot has been openly and tacitly supported by Zionist and pro-Israel organizations in the UK. These groups normally concerned with fighting antisemitism or boosting Israel's image took an active role in trying to deplatform a musical act— a notable escalation into cultural censorship. Key players include:

- **Board of Deputies of British Jews (BoD):** The BoD, Britain's main Jewish community representative body, wrote directly to Glastonbury's organisers urging Kneecap's removal. In their April 30 letter (which was made public on BoD's site and social media), they presumably cited the band's "antisemitic" slogans and support for proscribed groups as unacceptable. The BoD's intervention shows formal communal backing for the censorship effort. It is unusual for the BoD to involve itself in festival bookings, underscoring how Kneecap's Palestine advocacy was viewed as a red line.
- **Campaign Against Antisemitism (CAA):** This activist watchdog group not only helped trigger the police investigation into Kneecap (by reporting the aforementioned video clips to authorities itv.com jewishnews.co.uk), but also rallied public pressure on venues. CAA publicly celebrated when Kneecap was charged ("the law must be enforced") and urged festivals (including Glasto) to cancel performances theguardian.com itv.com.
- On social media, CAA amplified voices like a Holocaust survivor Henry Schachter BEM, who wrote an impassioned letter comparing Kneecap's rhetoric to 1930s fascism x.com. The Jewish Chronicle noted that letters to

Glastonbury organisers came from figures including this survivor and CAA-affiliated activists algemeiner.com. The CAA essentially acted as a lobbying group in the cultural sphere, coordinating petitions and media campaigns to “not let the pressure up on Kneecap” antisemitism.org.

- **Creative Community for Peace (CCfP):** Though not a household name in Britain, CCfP’s fingerprints are evident via signatories like David Levy. CCfP is a Los Angeles-based entertainment industry advocacy group that counters the cultural boycott of Israel, working closely with artists and moguls to condemn “antisemitic” speech. Press investigations revealed that CCfP is actually a front for StandWithUs– an Israeli government-aligned lobby – under the umbrella of the Israel Emergency Alliancen on-profit. During the Gaza war (Oct 2023), CCfP circulated an “Israel Under Attack” open letter signed by hundreds of entertainment figures (Levy among them). The secret Glastonbury letter appears to be an extension of this network into the UK festival circuit. Levy being the first signatory and other signers having StandWithUs ties strongly suggests CCfP or its associates covertly organized the email campaign. In other words, a well-resourced pro-Israel lobby group operating within the music industry took the battle to Glastonbury’s inbox.
- **Donors and Political Influencers:** Some individuals in the letter and in the public campaign straddle the line between industry and politics. For instance, Ronnie Harris’s involvement hints at the role of wealthy donors; his family trust’s charitable giving (which faced an HMRC dispute) raises questions about whether any donations or financial pressure were wielded against Glastonbury or its partners. Furthermore, political lobbying groups like Conservative Friends of Israel or Labour Friends of Israel undoubtedly had an interest – Kemi Badenoch and Keir Starmer, who spoke out, are both prominent in their parties’ pro-Israel circles (Starmer in particular has been very cautious to distance Labour from anything resembling antisemitism). While there is no evidence of direct party donor interference in the festival, the broad political chorus against Kneecap suggests a climate created by lobbying: many MPs were likely lobbied by constituents or advocacy groups

to make statements. We see multiple MPs across parties (from Tory Chris Philp to Labour's Lucy Powell and even Irish Taoiseach Micheál Martin) condemning Kneecap or urging Glastonbury to act algemeiner.com. This rare bipartisan agreement stems from successful framing of the issue as one of "extremism" rather than artistic freedom. It is also worth noting the Israeli government's own role. While Minister Miki Zohar claimed Israel doesn't generally support cultural boycotts, he essentially endorsed excluding Kneecap by equating their speech to terror incitement. Additionally, an Israeli Embassy or affiliated diplomats may have quietly pressed their case: it would not be unprecedented, as Israeli embassies have a history of intervening in local cultural controversies (sometimes revealed in leaked emails or documentaries). In this case we have no direct proof of embassy lobbying; however, Israel's supporters in the UK clearly took up the mantle.

In sum, Zionist organizations and lobby groups provided both the overt and covert muscle behind the Kneecap cancellation drive. The Board of Deputies and CAA gave it public legitimacy and media visibility (with references to "community concerns" and hate speech). CCfP/StandWithUs and industry allies provided the behind-the-scenes coordination, harnessing influential insiders to apply pressure without publicly exposing themselves. And sympathetic politicians amplified the message from the corridors of power, in some cases likely influenced by donors or party alignments that are strongly pro-Israel. This multifaceted push exemplifies how cultural boycotts (ironically) can be orchestrated by the same forces that usually oppose boycotts of Israel – a point not lost on observers. Indeed, Press TV called it "cancel culture weaponised" by the Zionist lobby, noting the hypocrisy that those rallying behind Israel's cause were engaging in the very cancel tactics they often decry.