

# Every year, 12,000 people are arrested in the United Kingdom for expressing their opinions

## Restrictions on freedom of expression are increasing in Europe

by the editorial team Hungary/"Unser Mitteleuropa"

*(CH-S) Reports that do not fit into the mainstream are hardly heard in our media. This is in line with increasing censorship in the EU/UK. Particularly in the UK, as a bastion of Western-style representative democracy, restrictions on freedom of expression are taking on alarming proportions, as reported by "editorial team Hungary".*

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According to published statistics, around 12,000 people are imprisoned every year under Section 127 of the Communications Act 2003 and Section 1 of the *Malicious Communications Act* 1988, as reported by "The Times".<sup>1</sup>

The interrogations were carried out based on suspicious online posts and comments, which were then classified as threatening or offensive. The laws criminalise harassment through the sending of "seriously offensive" electronically transmitted messages or the sharing of content that is deemed to be "indecent, obscene or threatening".

In 2023 alone, 37 police authorities made 12,183 arrests, or about 33 per day. According to "The Times", this was an increase of 58% compared to 2019, when there were only 7,734 arrests.

At the same time, convictions halved. Despite out-of-court settlements, the most frequently cited reason was "difficulties in proving the case", especially when the victims refused to participate in the proceedings.

The statistics sparked public outrage, with civil rights groups accusing the authorities of excessive control of the internet and undermining freedom of expression through the application of "vague" communication laws.

"The Times" highlighted a particularly disturbing case:

*Maxie Allen and Rosalind Levine* were arrested on 29 January. Their crime: in a private *WhatsApp* group for parents they had expressed concerns about their daughter's school admission process.

Six uniformed police officers then stormed their home and arrested them in front of their



*The feeling of living in a police state ... The British police force has changed – the friendly bobby is a thing of the past. (Picture ma)*

youngest child and dragged them to a police station. The couple were interrogated on suspicion of harassment, malicious communication and harassment on school grounds after the school claimed they had "defamed" the head teacher. They were fingerprinted, searched and locked in a cell for eight hours.

"It was hard to shake off the feeling of living in a police state," Allen told the "Daily Mail". She was appalled because her messages "did not contain any offensive language or threats," but were merely written in a "slightly sarcastic" tone.

Source: <https://www.unser-mittleuropa.com/164563>, 10 April 2025

(Translation "Swiss Standpoint")

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.thetimes.com/uk/crime/article/police-make-30-arrests-a-day-for-offensive-online-messages-zb-v886tqf?region=global>