

# Protesters boo as monarch crowned with dozens reportedly arrested

## UK police drew condemnation after arrests

### International Desk

Antimonarchy protesters booed the moment King Charles III was crowned in Westminster Abbey, London, before launching into a chant of "Not My King". It came after a man with an unused megaphone has been arrested in St James's Park, with police claiming it could "scare the horses," news.sky.com reported. UK police drew condemnation after arresting leading members of the anti-monarchy group Republic as they prepared to protest along the route of a procession for the coronation of King. The protest organizer was taken away from a few hundred protesters who had gathered among the crowds lining the procession route in central London. Republic had said it would mount the biggest protest against a British monarch in modern history. Protesters wore yellow t-shirts to stand out and held up signs saying "Not My King".

The detention was the latest in a series of arrests in the hours leading up to the King's coronation, with members of Just Stop Oil (JSO), Animal Rising (AR) and Republic being arrested.

### "Totalitarian crackdown"

Human rights organizations have accused officers of being heavy-handed in their approach and one campaign group called it a "totalitarian crackdown". Officers from London's Metropolitan Police force detained six organizers from the pressure group and seized hundreds of their placards, Republic said, just hours ahead of the crowning. The detentions also prompted immediate criticism from Human Rights Watch, which called the arrests "incredibly alarming". "Peaceful protests allow individuals to hold those in power to account – something the UK government seems increasingly averse to," the rights organiza-

tion's UK Director, Yasmine Ahmed, said in a statement. London police had warned they would take action if protesters tried to "obstruct the enjoyment and celebration" of the day, and they formed a ring around the group.

Protests also took place in Glasgow in Scotland and Cardiff in Wales, with signs held up saying: "Abolish the monarchy, feed the people." On social media, many contrasted the cost-of-living crisis in Britain with the pomp and pageantry on display at the coronation, Reuters reported.

### Activists hope of last monarch

Although the protesters were in a minority compared with the tens of thousands gathered on London's streets to support the king, polls suggest support for the monarchy is declining and is weakest among young people. With the crown passing from Queen Elizabeth to her less popular son, republican activists hope



Charles will be the last British monarch to be crowned. "It has a hereditary billionaire individual born into wealth and privilege who basically symbolises the inequality of wealth and power in our society," said lawmaker Clive Lewis, who was among the anti-monarchy protesters. In London, protesters demanded an elected head of state. They say that the royal family has no place in a

modern constitutional democracy and is staggeringly expensive to maintain. Most of the anti-monarchy protesters on Saturday had congregated in Trafalgar Square next to the bronze statue of King Charles I, who was beheaded in 1649, leading to a short-lived republic. Some held up signs saying "privatise them" and "abolish the monarchy, not the right to protest".



Protesters wave "Not My King" signs near to the 'King's Procession', a journey of two kilometres from Buckingham Palace to Westminster Abbey in central London on May 6, 2023.  
● JUSTIN TALLIS/POOL VIA REUTERS

## UN chief urges renewed effort to end DRC violence

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres on Saturday urged African leaders to redouble efforts to bring peace to the eastern Democratic Republic of Congo, where violent armed groups have terrorised civilians for decades. Guterres addressed a high-level meeting in Burundi of African nations that signed a UN-brokered accord in 2013 to promote stability and security in the mineral-rich but conflict-racked nation, AFP reported. He said the agreement forged a decade ago marked a turning point for cooperation in the often-turbulent region, but "the current crisis underscores how far we have to go". "Despite our collective efforts, more than 100 armed groups – Congolese and for-

eign – still operate today and thus threaten the stability of the entire Great Lakes region," Guterres told the gathering of presidents and other senior leaders in Bujumbura. "It is time for the violence to stop. I reiterate my call to all armed groups -- lay down your arms, immediately." Armed groups have plagued much of eastern DRC for three decades, a legacy of regional wars that flared in the 1990s and 2000s. One militia, the M23, has captured swathes of territory in North Kivu since taking up arms in late 2021 after years of dormancy. Guterres said the resurgence of M23 had displaced hundreds of thousands of people, and called on all parties to respect

pledges made in Nairobi and Luanda last year to end that conflict. An East African regional military force has taken over some areas previously occupied by the M23 since December. The DRC accuses its smaller central African neighbour Rwanda of supporting the M23, an assessment backed by US and French officials as well as UN experts. But Rwanda has repeatedly denied supporting the Tutsi-led rebels, who are still present in North Kivu and occasionally clash with rival militias. Both Rwanda and DRC are signatories to the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework signed in Addis Ababa in 2013 and backed by the UN and African Union that was eventually endorsed by 13 nations.



Guterres said "constant and sincere" dialogue was the only path to compromise and a lasting peace for the volatile region. "I therefore encourage the signatory countries... to redouble their efforts," he said. Guterres also met with Burundian President Evariste Ndayishimiye on his arrival in the country on Friday.

## Legacy of colonial era under challenge



● AARON CHOWN/REUTERS

By Seyyed Jalal Sadatian  
Iranian former diplomat in Britain

### EXCLUSIVE

King Charles III was crowned on Saturday amid anti-monarchy protests and arrests. The protests are not a new phenomenon; launched decades ago, anti-monarchism is growing in Britain. The monarchy in Britain has been a symbol of an ancient era, as well

as the country's dominance over different parts of the world. The saying, "The Empire on which the sun never sets" has been used to explain the vastness of the British Empire. As the British sovereign, the king is also the head of state of 14 other countries. These realms, which include Australia, Canada, Jamaica, Papua New Guinea, and New Zealand, represent a minority of the Commonwealth Nations: Most of the 56 members are republics and have gained independence. Their binding ties with the empire are fading. However, some of these countries such as Canada, Australia, and New Zealand still have stronger ties. Queen Elizabeth's portrait still on their banknotes is a sign of the strong bond. Gradually, however, the power and influence of Britain in the world has decreased. While some British movements try to link the power and greatness of Britain to the monarchy, some others relate the

recent problems to the monarchy. They object to the high costs of court management, as well as the high costs of various royal ceremonies, including the Saturday coronation ceremony. The monarchy is more aligned with the spirit and policies of the Conservative Party. A few years ago, when Britain left the EU under the Conservatives, it was estimated that the country lost around £800 billion in the exit alone. In addition, there were other losses, such as the aggravation of unemployment and the imposition of customs duties on goods. Britain and the Conservatives have faced many challenges over the past few years, to the point where several prime ministers were forced to resign, and domestic protests over the economic situation have increased. At the same time, tendencies to protest in other Commonwealth nations such as Canada and Australia have become more intense in the past few years.

The lavish and costly coronation ceremony of the new king could be seen by royalists as a sign of continued British power and that the monarchy is still a symbol of Britain's greatness. Charles III, 74, who has been waiting for this day for many years, probably wants to create a double prestige for himself and the kingdom by holding such a grand ceremony in order to present his supportive role in the UK and other Commonwealth nations. This is while conditions have changed both in the world and the UK. Protesters to the monarchy have managed to make their protests heard better and have challenged the justifications for the costly continuation of the monarchy in Britain. The bad governance of the Conservatives has also paved the ground for intensifying the protests. Therefore, significant parts of British society are not interested in the monarchy as a legacy of the British colonial era.

### NEWS IN BRIEF

#### Poland summons Russian envoy



AP – The Polish Foreign Ministry summoned the Russian ambassador in protest after a former Russian official suggested that it would be acceptable to assassinate Poland's ambassador to Russia. Pavel Astakhov, Russia's children's ombudsman from 2009 to 2016, spoke on a television program hosted. He was being interviewed after Polish authorities took over a school building in Warsaw on Saturday that was serving the children of Russian diplomats and the military.

#### 54 dead after ethnic clashes in India



● PTI  
AFP – The death toll after ethnic clashes in India's remote northeast rose to 54 on Saturday, with fresh violence overnight despite authorities rushing in troops to restore order. Thousands of soldiers were sent to Manipur state after a protest march by a tribal group turned violent on Wednesday.

#### Record-setting sentence handed over attacking police



AP – A Kentucky man with a long criminal record was sentenced Friday to a record-setting 14 years in prison for attacking police officers with pepper spray and a chair as he stormed the U.S. Capitol with his wife. Peter Schwartz's prison sentence is the longest so far among hundreds of Capitol riot cases. The judge who sentenced Schwartz also handed down the previous longest sentence – 10 years – to a retired New York Police Department officer who assaulted a police officer outside the Capitol on Jan. 6, 2021.