

FROM: NO CCTV
Press Release
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



Attn: News Desks

-- BEGINS --

**Protest Against Facial Recognition
Newcastle upon Tyne, Saturday 2nd May**

No CCTV will be mounting a protest against police use of facial recognition technology in Newcastle upon Tyne on Saturday 2nd May.

The protest marks the start of a series of protests at cities across the country, against the deployment of facial recognition and AI tracking tools with the power to identify everyone on Britain's streets.

This is in response to the the recent High Court ruling on facial recognition (R (Thompson and Carlo) v Commissioner of Police for the Metropolis [1].)

Home Secretary Shabana Mahmood said in a recent speech [2] that her ultimate vision was to:

"achieve by means of AI and technology what Jeremy Bentham tried to do with his Panopticon. That is that the eyes of the state can be upon you at all times ..."

Of further concern is the disclosure that photographs of every citizen from the database of national ID documents had been released to police for facial recognition purposes [3].

The above should be viewed in the context of other developments: -

- The use of CCTV identification of individuals in crowds for later arrest (at their homes) at recent protests against migrant hotels and previously after mass looting in 2010 [4]
- Mass-arrest of non-violent protestors (e.g. opposing genocide)
- The adoption of fierce anti-protest laws, including new powers in the Crime and Policing Bill that the UN Special Rapporteur on Rights to Peaceful Freedom of Assembly and Association said she had not encountered anything resembling them [5].

Spokesman for No-CCTV, Nathan Allonby said:

"The adoption of widespread CCTV appears to have been a total failure in controlling crime - an unprecedented explosion of all categories of crime has occurred despite a five-fold increase in CCTV cameras. Despite investment in coordination, access to images, analytical software, recognition tools, etc., the percentage of crimes solved has plunged."

"CCTV surveillance seems ineffective at controlling crime but highly effective at impacting freedom and civil rights. After nearly three decades of experience, we cannot see benefits to outweigh the significant negative impacts."

"The new surveillance measures represent a radical alteration of the relationship between citizens and the state. This has not been debated and barely acknowledged in parliament."

"Why are we deploying on British streets tools of control developed in authoritarian states like Israel and China?"

"Rising crime represents a social problem. There is no technological fix to social and political problems - facial recognition is not going to be the 'magic bullet' that fixes a broken society and loss of trust between the public and the police."

No-CCTV will be adopting a new style of pop-up protests that fall outside the threshold of controls under new anti-protest laws. We will not be asking our supporters to travel to the epicentre of the most heavily surveilled city in the world (London).

Protests will take place around the UK highlighting different aspects of the surveillance issue and that this is an "everywhere" issue.

No-CCTV is a UK national organisation affiliated to the International Working Group on Video Surveillance (IWGVS) formed through the Brussels Freedom Not Fear meetings

Contacts

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References:

[1] <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cq59x4vv954o>

[2] <https://www.thenational.scot/news/25780001.shabana-mahmood-proposes-ai-panopticon-system-state-surveillance/>
<https://boingboing.net/2026/01/26/panopticon.html>

[3] <https://bigbrotherwatch.org.uk/press-releases/passport-searches/>

[4] <https://www.globalresearch.ca/britain-s-police-state-london-arrests-based-on-cctv-identification-britain-adopts-chinese-model-of-policing-protest/22478>

[5] <https://tribunemag.co.uk/2026/04/protest-is-not-a-privilege/>

Background Information:

Year	Estimated UK public-space CCTV cameras
2000	100,000–150,000
2010	250,000–350,000
2020s	500,000–750,000

Crime type	2000 level	Today (2023/24)
Violence	~600k	~2.1 million

Sexual offences	~31k	~200k
Shoplifting	~280k	~430k
Overall detection rate	~30%	~11%
Violence detection rate	~50%	~6%
Sexual offences detection rate	~30%	~3%
Shoplifting detection rate	~35%	~12%

The PANOPTICON was proposed as a model prison by Jeremy Bentham (1748-1832). The Panopticon ("all-seeing") functioned as a round-the-clock surveillance machine. Its design ensured that no prisoner could ever see the 'inspector' who conducted surveillance from the privileged central location within the radial configuration. The prisoner could never know when he was being surveilled.

NOTES TO EDITORS:

1. No CCTV campaigns against the excessive use of surveillance cameras. Their homepage is at www.no-cctv.org.uk. For further information contact Nathan Allonby nathan.alloby@no-cctv.org.uk

2. This press release may be downloaded from <http://www.no-cctv.org.uk/press/>