

## **Resolution Title: Support the Stansted 15**

### **Resolution Date: 12 February 2019**

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This Branch notes that on the 28th of March 2017, 15 people took direct action at Stansted Airport. They peacefully 'locked on' around a charter plane to prevent the unlawful (in many cases) and violent deportation of some 60 people to Nigeria and Ghana.

The Stansted action was the first time a deportation flight has been grounded in the UK by people taking action against the immigration system. People who would have been forced onto the flight were able to stay in the UK because of the action, as it gave them time to have their applications heard. People across the UK are standing together to stop the Home Office breaking up families and tearing communities apart.

The response to a Freedom of Information request confirmed that as a result of the 15's principled direct action, 11 of the 60 people meant to be deported that night remain in the country. Initially, they were charged with the offence of 'Aggravated Trespass' which carries a maximum prison sentence of 3 months, plus offences contrary to Stansted by-laws that are only punishable by fines.

Four months later however, those charges were changed to 'Endangerment of an Aerodrome', contrary to section 1(2)(b) of the Aviation and Maritime Security Act 1990. This is a much more serious charge carrying a maximum penalty of life imprisonment and requires the consent of the Attorney General to be used. They were found guilty of this offence at Chelmsford Crown Court in October 2018. Although the 15 were only sentenced to light, community service sentences, primarily as a result of a high-profile campaign, the fact remains that they have been found guilty of a serious criminal offence. The 15 will therefore continue to campaign and appeal against the charge, and have called on the labour movement for support and publicity.

This is an unprecedented attack on protestors. Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch who have both expressed concern about the nature of these charges. This legislation was brought into effect in relation to terrorism. This decision has huge consequences for them, as well as protests more widely.

#### **This Branch agrees:**

- To publicise the case of the Stansted 15 through our network of branch members.
- To provide a donation and other support in discussion with the Stansted 15.
- To forward the motion through Unite's structures via the Regional Committee.

#### **Further information:**

<https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/uk-mass-deportation-protesters-charged-terrorism-offences-chelmsfordcourt-dangerous-precedent-a8257211.html>

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<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2018/mar/16/anti-deportation-activists-trial-facing-potential-lifetimesentences-stansted>

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