

# **Wave of arrests in Ireland as state tries to break water charges movement**

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**A prolonged revolt is happening in Ireland against the introduction of yet another austerity tax, this time as a charge on water. Across the country housing estates have seen conflict between residents, Garda and private security over the installation of water meters. Marches of tens of thousands have taken place.**

This week seizing on a minor incident 3 months ago when water charge campaigners sat in front of the Tanaistes (Deputy Prime Minister) car for two hours the Irish police (Garda) have mounted dawn raids against the houses of 21 water charge campaigners. The piece that follows is the Workers Solidarity Movement reportage of these raids as they happened over last week.

The enormous use of Garda resources in terms of a 3 month investigation and large squads of Garda arriving on people's doorsteps in the early morning reveal the highly political nature of these arrests. And these carried out in revenge for a minor protest against a deeply unpopular Labour party political.

Day 1: Shocking news this morning as we hear that Garda have arrested four anti-water tax protesters this morning in connection with the sit down protest three months ago that kept Joan Burton in her car for a couple of hours. The Jobstown 4 are Paul Murphy, Scott Matherson, Mick Murphy and Kieran Mahon.

The arrests were made just before 7am this morning when teams of Garda arrived at the homes of those targeted. Eirigi have described the arrest of Scott as follows

“At around 7am this morning up to a dozen Gardaí in five vehicles arrived at Scott Masterson's home. Scott was the only adult in the house getting his two young daughters ready for primary school and pre-school. When Scott's partner returned to the house, having earlier gone to work, there were eight Gardaí in the house along with Scott and the two children. Scott was then arrested and made to stand in handcuffs on a public road for a number of minutes before being transported to Tallaght Garda barracks.’

The Garda's pet journalist Paul Williams claimed on the news this morning this was the result of three months of 'investigation'

The enormous use of Garda resources in terms of a 3 month investigation and large squads of Garda arriving on people's doorsteps in the early morning reveal the highly political nature of these arrests. And these carried out in revenge for a minor protest against a deeply unpopular Labour party political.

## **Do they expect this repression will intimidate the mass movement against water charges?**

A protest has been called at Tallaght Garda station where some of those arrested were taken, Paul Murphy was taken to Terenure and Mick Murphy to Rathfarnham Garda station where a protest is ongoing. A solidarity protest has also been called outside Coolock Garda station.

Afternoon day 1: Over the last hour the 2 of the Jobstown 4 have been released from the various police stations they were taken to after this mornings dawn raids by squads of Garda. After being hauled off in the early morning, in once case on front of their young children, and

held for six hours they have been released without charge. Two more have yet to be released, Paul Murphy is to be detained until 7 this evening.

This is political policing at its crudest, designed to create headlines for the O'Brien owned media. The last bite we can hope of a rabid Labour Party about to join the PDs & Green Party in histories dustbin.

Protests are being called outside multiple Garda stations this evening, both those directly involved in this repression and other stations as well. The Garda as a force have been obeying orders for months to push around and intimidate local communities. This morning staged pantomime is just the latest stage.

We are already aware of protests to be held at Rathfarnham, Coolock (at 7) Garda stations as well as the Bridewell at 6. Please post details of other protests as a comment to this piece, indeed if you are not aware of one at you local Garda station we suggest you go ahead, call one and announce it here.

The following statement from Stoneybatter Against the Water Tax explains why they have called a protest

“This morning at 7am, four anti water charge activists were arrested at their homes in a sensational and extravagant manner.

In an age of austerity and cutbacks, to think that the Gardai have been putting so much resources into “investigating” these peaceful protests for a period of over three months nothing short of is disgraceful.

The events this morning stink of political policing. Instead of “defending the peace”, the Gardai have shown that they have simply become pawns in a game of shoving neo liberal IMF policy down our throats.

We will not stand for this! Join us at 6pm at the Bridewell Garda Station to demand an end to political policing.”

## **Who gets detained?**

Today seems a good moment to ask which is worse, spending a couple of hours in a luxury car or a lifetime trapped in the poverty of the Direct Provision system. A poverty that the Tánaiste bears direct responsibility for. Not only is she part of the government keeping thousands in such conditions but she is also responsible for the miserable maintenance rate of 19.10 a week which hasn't been increased in over a decade. Even the previous Minister for Justice compared aspects of the system to the prison camp system it is in reality — shortly before running it.

Perhaps tomorrow morning the Garda will launch a dawn raid on the Tánaiste's expensive house in Cabra and bring her in for a few hours questioning about the thousands of Asylum Seekers she keeps in detention not just for an hour or two but for years.

Day 2: News is coming in of at least 2 and possibly 4 additional dawn arrests this morning in conjunction with the Jobstown protest three months ago. We don't yet have many details but Tallaght says NO reports that:

“Just had it confirmed that the young lad, who has just turned 16 a week ago, had approx 10 garda at his house arriving in 3 cars — they heavily banged on the door

and bullied their way into the house, went up stairs as he got dressed and took him out..

This is absolutely scandalous. This lad done nothing on the day that deserved anything like this treatment, in fact he is a kid that so many are proud, a fantastic kid who is standing up for his future and for people today!”

and

“Got a call just now to say my brother-in-law has been arrested on a charge of “Wrongful Detention” in connection with the Joan Burton fiasco in Jobstown. I assume he is being detained in Tallaght garda station. I will be heading down there shortly. This fascist bullshit has to be seen for what it is, blatant tyranny. Any who can show support, please come along. Bring your flags and placards.”

There is a protest in progress outside Tallaght Garda station. It’s worth noting that last night the Garda had their tame journalists publishing articles in several Irish papers predicting a total of 20–40 intended arrests.

Day 3: Like clockwork the state repression of the anti water charges movement continues this morning with additional arrests being reported in Tallaght. In one case no less than 8 police turned up in the early morning to arrest a 14 year old boy.

We are not sure yet on numbers (update: 4 arrested) but presumably there will have once more been four attempted arrests continuing the pattern set the previous two mornings. This is the calculated and deliberate intimidation of an entire community in punishment for a Labour Party minister spending two hours in a car on the one hand. And on the other it is designed to scare all those across the country who have opposed government policies into silence.

## **Will you be silenced?**

A protest has been called for 6.30 Thursday evening outside the Department of Justice on Stephen’s Green. Let’s make sure it is a massive and angry one that tells the state Enough!

Day 4: Day 4 of dawn Garda raids against water charge campaigners is underway. First reports indicates that once more squads of Garda arrived at four houses, two of those arrested are under 18, one of those arrested in a 15 year old. This deliberate attempt to terrorise a community makes it all the more important that everyone comes to the Department of Justice, Stephen’s Green at 6.30 this evening for a loud angry protest. Update — there have been 5 arrests this morning, the total of those arrested so far is 17, no one arrested on a previous day has been charged to date. All 5 have been released without charge, as expected, with a file sent to the DPP.

17 people in total have now been dragged from their homes in the early hours of the morning in an act of calculated political revenge that at the very least must have received a nod and a wink from the cabinet. There is no way any senior Garda would risk their career in such an unprecedented act of naked political repression against a community unless they understood this was what was desired. Few had illusions in the Labour Party before they were in power but those on the left who were members were tolerated as naive optimists. Those days are over, anyone still in that party has chosen a side against the working class.

The pattern of arrests confirms that this repression is designed as a piece of political theatre to frighten people back in line. All the politicians arrested to date were arrested on the first day, that sort of selection demonstrates that this isn't about justice or about people sitting in front of a car but a calculated attempt to divide a movement. The state hopes that the arrests will frighten 'middle Ireland' away from the radicals, that's why it's essential that people mobilise to defend all those arrested.

In addition to tonight's demonstration Tallaght says No have decided to march on Saturday from An Cosan in Jobstown at 1:30pm to converge on Tallaght Garda Station. They say they want to show our sheer disappointment with corruption in government and the policing system! We urge you to take part in both demonstrations, tonight and on Saturday.

Day 5: Disgracefully we have news of further dawn raids by cops attacking the anti water charge movement this morning with three arrests already reported, we presume the news of others will arrive shortly.

Two of the arrests we have heard of are a couple, their daughter is reporting they have been taken to Tallaght garda station. Another 18 year old has been arrested also.

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