

Man climbs Big Ben carrying Palestine flag and threatens to go even higher – live updates

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A barefoot man has climbed Big Ben draped in a Palestine flag this morning (Saturday, March 8). Police have shut Westminster Bridge in both directions while they deal with the incident.



Firefighters attempt to rescue the protester (Image: James Manning/PA Wire)

The man appears to be barefoot, dressed all in black, carrying a flag for Palestine, having climbed up there before 8am. At around 10am, three emergency personnel were lifted several metres up on a fire brigade aerial ladder platform with one person using a megaphone to speak to the man on the ledge, reports PA.

He appears to have injured his foot and is bleeding. In a video to Instagram, he threatens to climb higher if police 'weaponise horses' to control the crowds.

The incident kicked off a few hours before a pro-Palestine protest is due to begin outside the BBC offices in Portland Place at 1pm.

Pro-Palestinian protesters have gathered in Westminster. They are cheering him on and shouting 'free Palestine' in a video shared by the man himself.

Speaking to Sky News, Professor Anthony Glee, a security expert from Buckingham university, said: "I'm very surprised indeed that this could take place. It shouldn't take place. Parliament is the beating heart of our democracy; it needs to be treated as the sanctuary that it is. It's entirely unacceptable that a protester should climb Elizabeth Tower. He's obviously a danger to himself, he's a danger to the public, and he's also a danger to the many people trying to get him down. How he managed to escape one of the most surveilled places in Europe, possibly the world, I do not know."

He added that he would not be surprised if this were an 'inside job'. *My first thought also.*