Violent England fans an embarrassment to the team and not welcome, says FA

By The Guardian

The Football Association has condemned the [England](https://www.theguardian.com/football/england) supporters who caused mayhem on the streets of Porto on Wednesday night as “an embarrassment to the team” – and says they are not welcome in football.

Two England fans were arrested after being baton-charged by police after hurling bottles at local supporters and police in a packed fan zone in Liberdade Square, and another was later arrested as more violence broke out.

With 18,000 England fans expected in Guimarães to see [Gareth Southgate’s side play the Netherlands](https://www.theguardian.com/football/2019/jun/05/raheem-sterling-england-captain-netherlands-nations-league-gareth-southgate) in the Nations League semi-finals the likelihood of more trouble is high, and the FA is warning fans to behave.

“The FA strongly condemns the scenes witnessed in Porto overnight,” a spokesman said. “Anyone responsible for these disturbances cannot be seen as true England supporters and are not welcome in football.

UK police also condemned what they called “completely unacceptable” behaviour from fans which included smashing a car window, forcing roads to be closed to traffic and singing songs such as “Fuck the Pope and the IRA” and “10 German Bombers”.

The most serious incident – which was witnessed by the Guardian –occurred in the large fan zone in Liberdade Square in central Porto after Cristiano Ronaldo had put Portugal one-up in [their Nations League semi-final against Switzerland](https://www.theguardian.com/football/2019/jun/05/portugal-switzerland-nations-league-semi-final-match-report).

A Portugal supporter threw a drink in the air to celebrate after which several drunken England fans retaliated by hurling bottles at the locals and then the police.

As dozens of panicked locals – including many parents with children – ran to take cover in the nearby McDonald’s, riot police armed with shields and batons moved in. Shortly afterwards they charged at hundreds of England fans, causing them to flee.

Several England fans said they had been unfairly targeted by police having turned up to watch the match. One supporter showed the Guardian a large welt on his back, which he said had been caused by a police baton.

“I was just watching the match with my mates when it all kicked off,” he said. “Someone came at me from the side and whacked me. It’s going to be sore tomorrow.”

Another England fan in his early-20s had a different view of the police charges. “That was great,” he said.

The trouble followed several minor incidents of antisocial behaviour on Monday and Tuesday as thousands of fans England gathered in Portugal.

The Guardian witnessed one Portuguese driver protest to police after a bottle was thrown at his car, smashing his front window, near Ryan’s Irish pub.

Shortly afterwards dozens of other England fans, singing “Ten German Bombers”, also blocked traffic, causing police to close one side of the road to traffic.

“The behaviour we are witnessing is incredibly disappointing and again I would point fans towards the recent video [from the FA: ‘Don’t be that idiot’](https://www.theguardian.com/football/2019/may/29/fa-england-nations-league-portugal),” he added. “The behaviour of a small number of the England fans out here continues to tarnish the reputation of the genuine fans who are simply trying to enjoy the football.”