

Nearly 3,000 protesters arrested in US as crackdown on anti-genocide encampments continues internationally

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10 May 2024

In response to ongoing student-led protests against the US-backed Israeli genocide in Gaza, police departments across North America conducted violent, and, in many cases, tear gas-filled raids of anti-genocide encampments Thursday night and Friday.

In addition to arrest, many students are facing suspension from their university for participating in demonstrations calling for an end to the mass murder of Palestinians and for their university to divest from war profiteers.

Since the initial arrest of 108 students in the Gaza Solidarity Encampment at Columbia University on April 18, police in the United States have arrested over 2,800 people, according to the AP, and over 2,900, according to a tracker maintained by *The Appeal*.

Violent police sweeps of peaceful encampments are not confined to the US, however. On Thursday night, multiple people were arrested at the University of Calgary's Gaza encampment in Alberta, Canada after riot police deployed "non-lethal munitions" and tear gas on a crowd of less than 200.

Justifying police actions in a press conference Friday, Alberta Premier Danielle Smith declared that "we have laws in the province, and you cannot block critical infrastructure, and in this case, it's private property."

Using the same smear employed by President Joe Biden and other war criminals complicit in genocide, the far-right demagogue Smith hissed:

I don't want to speculate, but I have seen some of the slogans that are, have been waved around, and there should be no room for antisemitism and no room for hate crimes.

genocide encampment at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) in Cambridge. MIT campus police, assisted by the Massachusetts State Police, arrested at least 10 people, the *New York Times* reported. At least nine more people were arrested the night before while protesting inside a parking garage on campus.

In line with other universities, an unspecified number of MIT students have been suspended for participating in protests against the genocide in Gaza. Prahlad Iyengar, a graduate student at MIT, said he had lost his housing and income after being suspended from the college.

"I don't know what comes next," Iyengar told the *Times*. "I have friends and a community, and I can find a place, but there are people affected who are housing-and food-insecure, some with children."

MIT president Sally Kornbluth, alongside Claudine Gay of Harvard and Elizabeth Magill of the University of Pennsylvania, testified before Congress on the alleged rise of "antisemitism" on colleges in the wake of the Hamas assault on October 7. While Gay and Magill resigned in the wake of their testimony, Kornbluth has remained as president. Presaging the police raid, on May 6 Kornbluth wrote that she "must now take action to bring closure to a situation that has disrupted our campus for more that two weeks."

Following the police sweep, MIT graduate student Baltasar Dinis told 7NEWS:

[T]he people in Gaza... are being exterminated by the Israeli regime... And we want to end MIT's complicity with this regime. It's shameful that MIT turns, in the cover of darkness, against its students with a very militarized police force completely disproportionate to the action, to the number of students that are here.

At around 4:00 a.m. Friday morning, police swept the anti-

While it has yet to be swept as of this writing, the only other encampment currently remaining in Cambridge and the greater Boston area is the Harvard encampment. Seeking to pressure encampment organizers to disband, on Friday the university began suspending students involved in the protest.

The Harvard Palestine Solidarity Committee reported Friday that the suspensions were “effective immediately.” The committee added, “Students are now at risk of degree withholding, eviction, food insecurity, and deportation.”

Elizabeth Ross, a fifth-year doctoral student at Harvard, told WGBH that she was placed on “involuntary leave” Friday morning for her role in the encampment. Asked by WGBH if she was fearful of police repression on campus, Ross replied, “We’re really just focused on the genocide.”

On Friday, dozens of riot police arrested 33 anti-genocide protesters at the University of Pennsylvania just before 6 a.m. Speaking to WHYY, Penn alum Zoe Sturges, who was at the encampment Friday morning, said the arrest of students was “disgusting.”

“I mean, to see cops in full riot gear with night sticks on a college campus. It’s a dark sight to see,” she said.

At least six UPenn students have been placed on “mandatory leave” from the university for participating in the encampment.

At the University of Arizona’s Gaza encampment Thursday evening at least two professors were arrested by police. The encampment in Tucson, organized by the Students Against Apartheid, was the second one established at the university, after the first encampment was violently swept by the cops on May 1.

As was the case last week, despite encountering no violence from protesters, police assaulted the encampment and liberally deployed “less-lethal” munitions. On-the-ground reporters for the *Arizona Daily Star* documented police using tear gas and rubber bullets against the crowd of over 100 people, mostly students, some of whom were wearing gas masks and using their plywood signs to protect themselves. Signs carried by protesters read:

“All Eyes on Rafah,”

“Tucson P.D., KKK, IDF, You’re all the same,”

“Free Gaza,” and

“Free Palestine.”

It’s unclear how many people, including students and faculty, were arrested in the police rampage. Nevertheless, the University of Arizona issued a statement on Friday fully backing the police. It read:

University President Robert C. Robbins has initiated a zero-tolerance approach to enforcing its campus policy....

The mass arrests and attacks on students have not stopped anti-genocide encampments and anti-war protests from forming. An analysis by the Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED) found that “pro-Palestine demonstrations involving students in the United States... nearly tripled” in April compared to March.

Student protests since October, ACLED observed, have remained peaceful 99 percent of the time, with the only notable exception being the Zionist/fascist assault on the UCLA encampment on April 30 to May 1. Of the over 700 student-led protests tracked by ACLED, “over 90% have shown support for Palestine.”

Despite police violence, protests calling for an end to the war in Gaza, including in Israel, continued this week. In solidarity with other encampments, on Thursday, students and faculty at the University of Haifa in Israel held a protest in favor of a ceasefire and end to the war. One demonstrator held a sign that read “Stop the genocide.”

Dozens of students at New York University staged an anti-genocide protest at the Bobst Library on Friday. As of this writing, students were continuing to protest inside and outside the library.



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