

Over 80,000 sign petition against NYU Langone's termination of a pro-Palestinian resident physician

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Over 80,000 people have signed a petition protesting the termination of resident physician Dr. Zaki Masoud by New York University's Langone Winthrop Hospital for expressing pro-Palestinian views. The university hospital "removed" Masoud "from service" for expressing support for the struggle of the Palestinian population of Gaza against the imperialist-backed genocide being carried out by Israel.

The termination of Dr. Masoud from the residency program at NYU Langone must be opposed by students, young people and workers as a fundamental assault on freedom of speech. It is only the latest incident in a broader effort by the major imperialist powers to criminalize and intimidate any criticism of or opposition to the assault on Gaza.

New York University (NYU), which is closely tied to Wall Street and the US military and security agencies, is, once again, standing at the forefront of the assault on democratic rights, in defense of the interests of US imperialism.

Last month, Dr. Masoud, widely recognized as a committed and caring medical resident at the NYU Langone Winthrop Hospital on Long Island, posted to his Instagram story a short statement on the conflict in the Middle East:

It's time to be bold with your words. Don't hesitate to openly state your support of Palestinian resistance. Be loud and proud you're on the side of justice. No more walking on eggshells, afraid of what people will think. Let them call it terrorism. Extremism. Barbarianism. We call it liberation. Decolonization. Resistance. Revolution.

On October 27, the inevitable right-wing attacks began. Dr. Masoud's Instagram post, as well as images of his personal Instagram and LinkedIn pages, were shared on X (formerly Twitter) by the organization StopAntisemitism,

infamous for its doxing of individuals hostile to the crimes of the Israeli government.

In its post attacking Dr. Masoud, the organization libeled him as a supporter of rape, torture, child murder and terrorism, and demanded that "Jewish patients, specifically Israeli ones, must be kept away from this man." The organization tagged NYU Langone's X page in its post. It appears that Dr. Masoud deleted his Instagram account not long after this tweet, most likely due to the barrage of attacks and threats from the far-right internet trolls backing the Zionist genocide.

Four hours later, NYU Langone's X page replied directly to the slanderous tweet, effectively endorsing it. The hospital wrote, "This individual has been removed from service and a process leading to termination has commenced. We will not tolerate reprehensible statements condoning hatred or violence, which have no place at our institution. All employees are held to this high standard." A week earlier, on October 20, the hospital evidently considered Dr. Masoud as meeting its "high standard" when he received recognition in his residency newsletter and was honored with an "Outstanding Patient Care Recognition" segment for his exceptional patient care at the hospital.

Since then, an online petition opposing the unjust termination of Dr. Masoud and demanding his immediate reinstatement has gathered over 80,000 signatures as of this writing, about 50,000 of which were collected within just a day. Dozens of people have recorded video statements denouncing the vicious effort to destroy his career.

The petition states, "We, the undersigned, are deeply concerned about the unjust termination of Dr. Zaki Masoud, a medical resident at NYU Langone Winthrop Hospital. Dr. Masoud, a compassionate individual dedicated to caring for others, has been an asset to the medical community and has exhibited exemplary qualities throughout his tenure."

It continues, "The termination process initiated against Dr. Masoud is alarming and appears to be rooted in

discriminatory practices. Dr. Masoud, a Palestinian, was subjected to termination due to his support for Palestine, an expression of his heritage and identity. It is essential to recognize that expressing solidarity with Palestine does not signify any form of hatred towards the Jewish community and does not equate to anti-Semitism.”

In conclusion, the petition calls on “NYU Langone to reinstate Dr. Zaki Masoud immediately. We call upon the administration to uphold the values of justice, equality, and respect for diversity. Dr. Masoud must be treated justly, without prejudice or discrimination based on his ethnic background or personal beliefs.”

Comments on the petition indicate the mass opposition to the relentless propaganda campaign being waged by the imperialist governments and media against the Palestinians and their supporters. Commenter Ismael wrote, “This is wrong. Trying to raise awareness on genocide and human rights should not cost you your job, that has nothing to do with it.”

Another commenter wrote, “Being pro-Palestine and anti-genocide is not antisemitic. This is dishonorable behavior from NYU. Perhaps we should reassess if your hospital is a safe place for us!” Many expressed, above all, opposition to the assault on democratic rights, with one writing, “Palestinians and pro-Palestinians are not second-class citizens and have the right to free speech without it affecting their livelihood.” Hundreds of comments with hundreds of likes express similar sentiments.

NYU has not responded to the petition and appears to be proceeding with the termination of Dr. Masoud. In a stark contrast to the treatment of Dr. Masoud, NYU Langone took no action for an entire month in response to a series of openly racist social media posts by Dr. Benjamin Neel. Dr. Neel had voiced open support for the genocidal actions of the Netanyahu government and demonization of the Palestinian people. On X, Dr. Neel retweeted several cartoons with flagrantly racist depictions of Palestinians as rapists and murders, slandering their supporters as terrorist apologists.

Dr. Neel has also openly celebrated the genocidal violence against the civilian population of Gaza, reposting a tweet by Zionist media pundit Emily Schrader, which compared the Palestinians to the Nazis and called for mass extermination: “You don’t have a ceasefire with Hitler...You wipe out Hitler. Think people.” Only after the public outcry over Dr. Masoud’s termination was Dr. Neel suspended from his role as director of the Laura and Isaac Perlmutter Cancer Center.

Dr. Masoud joins dozens of other principled, left-wing students, faculty and workers around subjected to a the state-backed witchhunt being carried out in every major country against those opposed to the genocide in Gaza.

At NYU and all the major university campuses, an intense atmosphere of intimidation is being whipped up. Last month NYU law student Ryna Workman was blacklisted, doxed and removed from their position as president of the university’s Student Bar Association for issuing a principled statement on the rights of the population of Gaza to resist oppression.

According to reports from students and staff, Dr. Masoud is only one of several people at NYU Langone who has faced backlash for expressing anti-genocide views on the conflict. A Palestinian teacher in New York City has also come under attack for speaking out against the genocide.

Students at Harvard, Columbia University, Dartmouth College and various other university campuses and high schools have faced intimidation, death threats, physical violence and even arrest for publicly opposing genocide. Workers internationally have been fired and harassed for expressing opposition to the Israeli state’s aggression.

Last Thursday, the US Senate passed a resolution by unanimous consent, slandering pro-Palestinian students for “expressing solidarity with terrorists” and promoting “antisemitism.” The resolution was supported by every Democrat and Republican. It specifically named student organizations at Harvard University, Workman at New York University and various university chapters of the Students for Justice in Palestine.

But despite these attempts to intimidate opposition, the protests have only grown. The critical task now is to fuse these mass protests with the development of a movement in the working class. This is the social class that can stop the weapons and arms deliveries, end the genocide and war, and defend democratic rights.



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