

11 charged for anti-genocide protest at Cleveland's Case Western Reserve University

Logan Buchko
13 March 2025

A total of 11 people have now been arrested and charged for participating in a protest against the genocide in Gaza on Case Western Reserve University's (CWRU) campus in Cleveland, Ohio. According to reports, six of those detained are students enrolled at the university.

The protest on campus took place on November 8 of last year and involved red paint being splattered on sidewalks, windows and other permanent fixtures. Flyers denouncing the university's financial ties to Israel were also posted.

Cuyahoga County prosecutor Michael O'Malley issued the latest charges last month, estimating that \$400,000 in damages had been done. According to the official indictment, there were three counts issued: vandalism, possession of criminal tools, and breaking and entering. One student was also charged with telecommunications harassment in addition to the other three counts. A hearing date has not yet been announced.

Two of the three charges—possession of criminal tools and breaking and entering—were issued as felonies. According to the document, the criminal tools in question were paint and wheat paste.

CWRU's chapter of Students for Justice in Palestine stated that the county prosecutor's office and the university were "exaggerating the costs of the damages in order to enforce excessively high punishments."

The non-permanent paint and posters were easily removed by the university shortly after the protest. Further exemplifying the vindictiveness of the case, it has been reported that paperwork and legal information were withheld after the arrests, prolonging the time students and others were held in the Cuyahoga County Detention Facility, which is notorious for being one of the most brutal jails in the country.

In the last three arrests, the individuals are not accused of participating in any of the so-called vandalism but are charged as accessories for providing support, such as printing flyers.

The arrests have sparked outrage among CWRU students. Many have taken to social media to condemn the administration's actions, with many pointing out how the university allocates its funds. One individual noted, "God forbid they actually spend their money responsibly and support their students and faculty. Dorms are old and in need of renovation—flooding, leaks, heating issues, no A/C. Facility and staff are forced to resign due to lack of funds, etc. We see CWRU's priorities."

The lives of the students arrested at Case Western will be permanently changed if convicted. Not only do they face multiple years in jail, but they will also have to navigate education, employment, and housing as felons. Currently, all of the indicted students are prohibited from entering campus and continuing classes, in addition to being evicted from student housing.

Since the initiation of Israel's genocide against the Palestinians in Gaza in October 2023—made possible by the full backing of the Biden administration—the university has continually punished students who have voiced opposition. During a pro-Palestinian protest encampment erected in the spring of 2024, two dozen students were detained by police. As punishment for participating in the encampment, 53 students were barred from graduation ceremonies.

The targeted attacks against students at Case Western align with national trends taking place throughout the United States. Universities—often mouthpieces for the interests of both the Democratic and Republican parties—view opposition to the genocide on campuses as

a hindrance to their plans to expand war abroad.

This is the case under the Trump administration just as it was under the Biden administration. President Donald Trump, who openly invited Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to the White House as an honored guest, has declared his unconditional support for Israel's plans to continue the ethnic cleansing of Palestinians.

In an effort to silence opposition to the genocide, the Trump administration has stated its plans to "stop all illegal funding for any college, school, or university that allows illegal protests."

These serious threats have already begun to materialize. In addition to the cancellation of \$400 million in federal funding at Columbia University, the arrest and detention of Mahmoud Khalil, a recent graduate of Columbia and advocate for Palestine, is the most recent example.

Khalil, a legal permanent resident of the United States and green card holder, was seized in his apartment complex in New York City by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents due to his dissent toward the genocide. He was flown 1,300 miles away to a detention center in Louisiana without his wife or lawyer being informed of his whereabouts. As of this writing, his deportation status is being challenged in federal court.

In direct violation of the Constitution, Trump has openly vowed to detain and deport "anti-Semitic terrorists and sympathizers" without any formal legal procedures. Workers and young people must organize against the fascist President's dictatorial plans.

Students must take up a genuine struggle for the defense of democratic rights by joining the International Youth and Students for Social Equality (IYSSE). The way forward for students is to turn to the working class, the only revolutionary force in all of society. If you are interested in becoming involved, sign up below.



To contact the WSWS and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact