

Second anti-genocide student protester at Columbia arrested by Trump's immigration police

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On Friday, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) announced that it had arrested a second student at Columbia University for speaking out and protesting against the ongoing US-backed Israeli genocide in Gaza, which has officially killed over 47,000 Palestinians, the majority being women and children.

The agency said that Leqaa Korida, a Palestinian from the West Bank, was arrested by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) after allegedly overstaying her F-1 student visa. DHS claims that the visa was terminated on January 26, 2022 and that Korida had been arrested while participating in the April 2024 protests at Columbia university.

The latest arrest follows last Saturday's kidnapping of Mahmoud Khalil, a 30-year-old graduate student at Columbia and green card holder. Khalil was taken by DHS thugs who quickly whisked him over 1,300 miles away to a private detention facility in Louisiana, separating him from his American wife who is eight months pregnant with their child.

On April 17, 2024, students at Columbia University established the "Gaza Solidarity Encampment," which called on the university to divest from companies linked to the Israeli government and military. The encampment movement spread to over 120 universities in the US and internationally, with thousands of students and teachers participating in the protests.

In the subsequent weeks, hundreds of students peacefully occupied Columbia's Hamilton Hall, renaming it Hind's Hall in honor of six-year-old Hind Rijab, one of the thousands of children murdered by the Israeli military in the last 18 months of carnage.

Despite the overwhelmingly peaceful character of the

student protest, the New York Police Department, under orders from the Biden administration and former cop Mayor Eric Adams, conducted mass raids on the encampment, arresting hundreds of students. This crackdown was extended to encampments across the country.

In the same statement announcing Korida's arrest, the DHS announced that it had revoked the visa of another student at Columbia, Ranjani Srinivasan, a citizen of India, for being "involved in activities supporting Hamas [sic], a terrorist organization."

The DHS has provided zero evidence that Srinivasan was in contact with or provided any material support to Hamas. According to the agency, after having his visa revoked the student used the Customs and Border Protection (CBP) Home App to "self-deport" on March 11. Ginning up fascists and Zionists, Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem posted footage obtained from an airport security camera allegedly showing Srinivasan leaving the country.

Noem captioned the footage: "When you advocate for violence and terrorism that privilege should be revoked and you should not be in this country. I'm glad to see one of the Columbia University terrorist sympathizers use the CBP Home app to self deport."

On Friday, lawyers with the American Civil Liberties Union, which is representing Khalil, released video footage from the arrest last week. In the video, plain-clothed DHS thugs refuse to provide their names, agency or a warrant to Khalil or his wife.

The government agents put Khalil in handcuffs despite the fact he obeyed all their commands and posed no threat to the agents. In the video, Khalil's wife repeatedly asks for the agents to identify

themselves, only to be told, “We don’t provide names.”

Khalil is still incarcerated at an immigrant detention center in Jena, Louisiana while his case continues to be heard by US District Judge Jesse Furman in New York. Furman has temporarily barred Khalil’s deportation pending further court action slated to take place next week.

Khalil’s kidnapping and ongoing detention have provoked mass outrage in the United States and internationally.

On Friday, hundreds of students and community members protested on the Columbia campus calling for Khalil’s release and an end to US support for Israel.

In Ann Arbor, Michigan over 100 protesters marched to the home of University of Michigan President Santa Ono and demanded the college stop cooperating with immigration police.

Underscoring that the recent attacks against immigrants and the First Amendment are part of a concerted effort by the Trump administration, and ruling class as a whole, to suppress and criminalize any opposition to US foreign policy and war crimes, in an extraordinary press conference Friday, Trump’s Deputy Attorney General Todd Blanche claimed that students protesting against the genocide may have violated federal “terrorism” laws and that the Department of Justice would pursue investigations against students and schools.

Under the guise of combating “antisemitism,” Blanche claimed that the Trump administration, full of fascists and neo-Nazis, would “no longer stand by while universities tolerate and facilitate antisemitism and support of terrorism on their campuses.”

Blanche hailed the kidnapping of Khalil, boasting that the DoJ’s recent actions at Columbia University “are part of the administration’s mission to end antisemitism in this country.”

He accused Columbia of “harboring and concealing illegal aliens on campus” and promised an “ongoing investigation” into the university’s “handling of earlier incidents,” which he said may have “violated civil rights laws” and “included terrorism crimes.”

In a statement to the *Guardian* on Friday, Daniel Levy, spokesperson for Betar US, a far-right Zionist organization, confirmed that the organization had

submitted “thousands of names” of students and faculty to the Trump administration for possible deportation for the “crime” of participating in protests against the Israeli genocide.

In opposition to the Trump administration’s attacks on free speech—which have gone virtually unmentioned by the Democratic Party—on Saturday, teachers and students with the Educators Rank-and-File Committee will be holding an online meeting aimed at organizing the working class in defense of democratic rights.

All those eager to fight for free speech and against fascism should attend Saturday’s online meeting, titled, “Free Mahmoud Kahlil!” Click here to register for the online meeting.



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