Victims of last year's police-abetted Zionist assault on student encampment file lawsuit against UCLA administration

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On March 19 a group of 35 students, faculty, journalists and community members initiated a lawsuit against leading officials of the University of California Los Angeles (UCLA) college system over their refusal to protect them from violent Zionist thugs and local police agencies that assaulted pro-Palestinian protesters during the 2024 spring semester.

At a press conference on Thursday March 20 announcing the lawsuit, Thomas Harvey, one of the lawyers representing the plaintiffs, explained the reasoning for carrying this case forward.

"I don't believe that many people fully understand the extent of the violence that was inflicted upon [the plaintiffs], both by the counter-protesters and by the police," Harvey said.

"People were beaten with 2-by-4s. People were shot in the chest. People had their fingers blown off. They sought serious medical treatment that they continue to seek today."

Harvey stated that there were multiple police agencies several feet away who watched and stood by while the Zionist attack occurred.

The lawsuit cites UCLA officials' irresponsible sanctioning of a violent Zionist counter protest 30 feet away from the Palestinian solidarity encampment. Plaintiffs allege university officials repeatedly ignored reports detailing numerous acts of violence perpetrated against them by counter protesters after the encampment was established on April 25, 2024.

Twenty individuals have been identified by name in the lawsuit for participating in the violent mob attack against the pro-Palestinian encampment between the night of April 30 through the early hours of May 1, 2024. The plaintiffs are hoping to reveal the identities of more individuals in an effort to expand the lawsuit to all those who participated, aided or abetted in the violent mob attack.

The University of California Police Department, Los Angeles Police Department and California Highway Patrol have been named as defendants in the suit for spearheading a violent sweep of the Palestinian solidarity encampment on May 1, 2024 and the violent crackdown of a memorial march on June 10, 2024, both occurring on UCLA campus.

The 86-page suit lays out in horrifying and precise detail the violence perpetrated against the plaintiffs by Zionist thugs and local police and the complicity of the UCLA administration in these attacks.

In the lawsuit, plaintiffs detailed the joint police-Zionist assault. Plaintiffs who previously experienced this type of violence first-hand while living in Palestine recalled similar actions from the Israeli military who regularly participate and back illegal, Zionist settler attacks on Palestinians and their property.

According to the text of the suit:

> Mob members violently assaulted protesters wearing keffiyehs, hijabs, and other symbols of pro-Palestinian viewpoints, in some instances breaking their bones, sexually assaulting them, burning their eyes with chemical munitions, punching them, hitting them with metal rods, poles, and boards, and hurling incendiary devices into the peaceful encampment.

The suit continues:

> After this hate-filled mob attack ended, and while many protesters were still seeking medical attention for their injuries, the encampment's peaceful demonstrators faced a phalanx of militarized police on May 1, 2024…Police hurled flashbangs, shot powerful kinetic impact projectiles at peoples' heads and faces, and used excessive physical force against and falsely arrested students, faculty, and concerned community members. Protesters were dragged, beaten, and body slammed by cops during this hours-long raid on the encampment. Over 200 pro-Palestinian protesters were arrested, with many reporting invasive searches, false arrests, and public humiliation during their arrest and detention.
>
> On June 10, 2024, pro-Palestinian protesters were once again attacked by militarized police forces, falsely arrested, beaten, shot with less lethal munitions, and had their civil rights violated.

Others recalled the pain and suffering they have had to endure since the attacks last year. Thistle Boosinger, a taiko drum

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instructor, alleged her hand was broken by Isaac Bokhoor, a Beverly Hills resident and co-owner of Angel City Jewelers. In the suit, she alleged Bokhoor used a metal rod to repeatedly strike Boosinger's hand during the May 1 attack. After three painful and unsuccessful surgeries to restore mobility in Boosinger's hand, she is still unable to play drums or teach music which has caused her significant emotional distress and loss of income.

As of today, police and local prosecutors have refused to arrest or press charges against Bokhoor despite video evidence linking him to this violent assault and battery with a deadly weapon.

While university administrators claim their attempts to stifle free speech and squash anti-genocide protests are done in the name of combating "antisemitism" Dr. Aaron Palmer, an assistant adjunct math professor at UCLA, who is Jewish, claims he was physically attacked by police during a June 10 march memorializing the 46,000 Palestinians killed by the Israeli-led genocide on campus.

Dr. Palmer was among over 200 protesters illegally kettled by police during the march, preventing them with a safe means to evacuate the area when ordered to do so and resulting in their arrests. Palmer reports that he was zipped tied so tightly that he had red marks on his wrists 24-hours after being arrested. Police refused to loosen the restraint on one of his wrists despite him complaining about the pain.

Catherine Hamilton, a journalist with UCLA's student newspaper, the *Daily Bruin*, testified that UCLA Media Relations had promised all student journalists 24-hour access to Haines Hall for their safety due to ongoing threats of violence on campus.

When seeking safety at Haines Hall during the May 1 Zionist mob attack, Hamilton was denied access by UCLA's private security even after repeated attempts to contact UCLA Media Relations for over three hours. This resulted in Hamilton being repeatedly beaten and maced by Nouri Mehdizadeh and a small mob under his command while UCLA's private security watched.

Hamilton claims she has been repeatedly threatened and even assaulted by Mehdizadeh since April 27, with UCLA officials ignoring Hamilton's numerous reports of this abuse.

Mehdizadeh has not been arrested or charged with a crime despite video evidence show him tearing down encampment barricades. There is also photo evidence of Mehdizadeh holding up a message that read, "ENJOY TONIGHT," before the May 1 attack, indicating that he had foreknowledge of the assault and may have been an accomplice in preparing the attack.

This is only a small sample of the violence that plaintiffs have reported in their lawsuit. Plaintiffs state that they continue to suffer long lasting physical and psychological damage impairing their ability to work or finish their degrees, affecting them financially and academically. These include ongoing health issues such as PTSD, panic attacks, permanent scarring and loss of function and mobility to their limbs, fingers and other body parts.

The plaintiffs hope that the lawsuit will renew calls for UCLA to divest, disclose and boycott all investments with companies and institutions enabling the genocide in Gaza, the implementation of an immediate ceasefire in Palestine and policy changes from UCLA to keep cops off of campus.

While workers everywhere should support and lend assistance to this lawsuit and their supporters, it must be stated that the fight against Zionist mob violence and the defense of freedom of speech on college campuses cannot successfully be waged in the courts alone.

The courts are not "unbiased" arbitrators that remedy conflicts between workers and representatives of the ruling class, but are extensions of the pro-capitalist state.

These pro-capitalist institutions, which make up the bulwark of bourgeois rule, cannot be depended upon to defend workers from violent, pro-Zionist thugs in a convoluted process which will take months or even years to play out.

Only the working class, mobilized on the basis of a revolutionary socialist program against the main cause of fascist violence, the capitalist system, can put an end to these attacks on workers and students alike.

As Eric Lee, lawyer for persecuted Cornell University student Momodou Taal who has sued the Trump administration for his anti-democratic executive orders, stated during the first day of his client's court appearance: "...the First Amendment, if it's going to be protected, it's not just going to be protected by the lawyers in the courts, ultimately it's going to have to be protected by the American population."

Lee warned against appealing to Democrats, "That's not the social force to which we're appealing to. All the old talk of 'Abolish ICE,' that's just for the midterms, it's just a bunch of lies. If democracy is going to be defended, it's not going to come from the Democratic Party. It's going to come from you, and it's going to come from working people in this country who are about to realize what's coming."

This is especially true when it comes to leading Democrats such as Los Angeles Mayor Karen Bass and Governor Gavin Newsom who both supported the violent police raids against anti-genocide protesters on May 1 and June 10.

Only by initiating a complete break from the Democratic Party, who are enablers of pro-Zionist violence domestically and abroad, can a genuine struggle in defense of students and workers be waged.

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