# Oppose the visa revocations at George Mason University! Mobilize the working class in defense of democratic rights!

**International Youth and Students for Social Equality at George Mason University**
**22 April 2025**

On April 15, George Mason University (GMU) announced that it had learned of the decision by the US government to revoke and terminate the visas of 15 international students at GMU. According to the official statement by the administration at George Mason, no justification was given by the government as to why the aforementioned students were selected to have their visas revoked.

"To date, these terminations have occurred without involvement of or prior notice to the university," the statement signed by university president Gregory Washington read.

The university administration stated it is in contact with the 15 students to "provide them with support and additional external resources…to see what options they may have to complete their coursework." According to federal laws, an international student is no longer "in status" for enrollment at a university without an active visa. In other words, if a student's visa is revoked, it is effectively an expulsion from the university and the country.

The International Youth and Students for Social Equality at George Mason University denounces the attack on international students enrolled at GMU and elsewhere. It represents an attack on all students as well as on our education. We demand that all international students whose visas have been revoked be reinstated immediately. Likewise, students and faculty should reject the university's attempts to downplay the moves to deport students.

The claim that the administration at GMU knew nothing of these students' visa revocations strains believability. University leaders are on record bragging about their close ties to both the state and military apparatus. The school also touts its various "capabilities" in spying on and intimidating students. To monitor student activity, the university employs its own SWAT team, routinely deploys police at student gatherings, and uses other heavy-handed activities coordinated by "a cross-functional team of university officials."

In fact, a January 31 statement by George Mason Provost James Antony pledged that George Mason University would cooperate with Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). "[George Mason University] maintain[s] excellent partnerships with federal and state law enforcement agencies," the statement read. Antony's statement went so far as to concede that the school had "proactively reached out to, and received guidance directly from, the office of the Virginia Secretary of Public Safety & Homeland Security as well as senior ICE officials."

Amazingly, after all of that, Antony could still assert, in the same statement, that undocumented students and staff are "safe" from ICE.

In response to Antony's statement and to the revocation of student visas across the country, the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) at George Mason in March drafted a petition titled, "Resolution on Protecting Undocumented Students," calling on the university to prohibit ICE from detaining or deporting students and faculty at the campus. The petition states that GMU's cooperation with ICE is "instilling fear and uncertainty among vulnerable community members and undermining Mason's declared commitment to their protection."

Announcing further cooperation with the Trump administration, GMU President Gregory Washington in

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March pledged to work with the Education Department's Office of Civil Rights to combat "antisemitism" on campus. Out of the mouths of American politicians and university presidents, claims of "antisemitism" are used to slander public opposition to the genocide in Gaza or to Zionism.

Even before this pledge, the university had already demonstrated the lengths it would go to in attacking the democratic rights of students. In November of last year, GMU worked with local and federal law enforcement to raid the homes of two students, Jena and Noor Chanaa, who belonged to the university's chapter of Students for Justice in Palestine.

Despite no arrests or charges being brought forward, Jena and Noor were then issued criminal trespass notices by the university, effectively expelling them. As a result of their expulsion, Jena and Noor had to create a GoFundMe to cover legal fees.

The student visa revocations and the crackdown on democratic rights at George Mason form part of the escalating attacks against the entire population directed by the Trump White House.

At a March 28 press conference, Secretary of State Marco Rubio stated that international students are "visitors to the country… If they're taking activities that are counter to our foreign—to our national interest, to our foreign policy—we'll revoke the visa."

At the same press conference, Rubio was asked if the revocations are related to pro-Palestine protests, to which he replied, "there's a lot of them now, because I've gone through every one of them…[and signed off on] every single one."

In this context, President Washington's pledge in March to work with the Trump administration and crack down on "antisemitism," along with cooperating with ICE, demonstrates the willingness of the administration to crack down on democratic rights.

Across the country, over 1600 students have had their visas revoked by the Trump administration, according to *Inside Higher Ed*. These revocations have occurred on higher-education campuses in nearly every state, affecting campuses from Cal State Long Beach to multiple universities across Michigan and now GMU.

It has become undeniable that students are targeted for visa revocation based on their political activism. The Department of Homeland Security announced this month in a press release that it will screen and log social media activity of individuals, particularly immigrants and international students applying for visas, based on their political activism and "antisemitic" activity.

It is necessary to issue a warning: The attacks will not be limited to immigrants and international students, but will be extended to all students and to the entire working class. As the IYSSE stressed in an April 9 statement: "The turn of the capitalist oligarchy to dictatorship is inseparable from its war on the working class, expressed in the slashing of social programs, the mass firing of federal workers, the elimination of basic regulatory protections, and the escalation of war and repression to enforce the interests of the financial elite."

There is massive opposition emerging against Trump and the policies of the ruling class. Recent protests, such as the nationwide April 5 and April 19 demonstrations, refute the claim by the Democratic Party and the media that Trump is a colossus who cannot be stopped. Lacking in these protests, however, is a political program and principled perspective. Opposition to the Trump administration and the attacks on democratic rights must be extended to their root cause: the capitalist system.

Students and youth must come to understand that the only way out of the descent into capitalist barbarism is through a turn to the working class, the only social force capable of liberating society from the stranglehold of the capitalist financial oligarchy, genocide and war.

Students wanting to fight for this should make the decision to join the IYSSE!

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