

# FBI raids homes of pro-Palestinian protesters across southeastern Michigan

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In a major escalation of state repression against anti-war and pro-Palestinian activists, Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) agents joined Michigan State Police and local police in coordinated raids on the homes of University of Michigan (U-M) pro-Palestinian activists in Ann Arbor, Ypsilanti and Canton Township on the morning of Wednesday, April 23.

The raids, which began around 8:00 a.m., resulted in the confiscation of electronic devices, the detention and questioning of at least six activists, and the seizure of personal belongings—all under the direction of Michigan Attorney General Dana Nessel, a Democrat.

In September of 2024, during the Biden administration, Nessel filed criminal charges against nine U-M students and alumni for participating in an anti-Gaza genocide encampment on the campus, which was broken up by police last May.

Police broke down the door of at least one of the three raided residences and initially refused to show warrants for the assault. In Ann Arbor, FBI agents, Michigan State Police and local police in unmarked vehicles raided the residence of two pro-Palestinian activists, confiscated electronics, and briefly detained the occupants before releasing them later that day.

In Ypsilanti, officers from the Michigan Attorney General's office, Plymouth Police Department and FBI raided another residence, detaining four individuals and seizing personal property. Those detained were brought out on the porch in handcuffs before officers released them roughly 15 minutes later.

The FBI and Canton Police raided a third residence, confiscating items but detaining no one.

The Graduate Employees Organization (GEO), an affiliate of the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) and bargaining agent for graduate workers at U-M, said in a post on X that one of its members was targeted in

the raids.

The pro-Palestinian Tahrir coalition at U-M posted an alert early in the morning informing its supporters of the raids in Ypsilanti and Canton and urging them to go to the scenes and protest the attacks. At both locations crowds gathered while the raids were underway and denounced the police-state operations. Some protesters demanded to know if the FBI and police were planning to ship the residents to El Salvador.

The Michigan Attorney General's office, the Detroit FBI, and local police have to this point refused to give any serious explanation for the raids or tell the media the nature of the supposed investigation that prompted them and what, if any, charges are being prepared against the activists.

According to the Michigan Attorney General's office, the raids involved the execution of search warrants against multiple individuals across several jurisdictions. No arrests were made, and all those briefly detained were released.

A spokesperson for the Michigan Attorney General's office, Danny Wimmer, told MLive and the *Ann Arbor News*, "We're not discussing the nature of the investigation at this time." He added that Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) was not involved in the warrants and that all subjects were believed to be American citizens.

FBI spokesperson Jordan Hall confirmed the agency's presence in Ypsilanti, but would say only that the agency was conducting "law enforcement activities."

The Ypsilanti Police Department confirmed in a post on social media that it was aware of the FBI presence and said immigration enforcement was not on the scene. The department was there for crowd control, it said. The Michigan State Police did not respond to a

request for comment.

The raids come amid an intensifying crackdown on pro-Palestinian activism at U-M and across the United States. Over the past year, campus protests demanding an end to US support for Israel's war on Gaza have faced mounting repression, including mass arrests, felony charges, university bans and the suspension of student organizations.

The U-M administration banned the local chapter of Students for Justice in Palestine (SJP), called Students Allied for Freedom and Equality (SAFE). The administration suspended its club status for two years—depriving it of access to campus facilities—a first in the university's history.

The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) has filed suit against the university for banning activists from campus, arguing that these actions constitute a grave violation of free speech and the right to protest.

These latest raids echo the notorious FBI operations of the past, such as the 2010 coordinated raids on anti-war and international solidarity activists in Minneapolis, Chicago and Michigan, carried out under the pretext of investigating "material support for terrorism." These raids occurred under the Democratic Obama administration. In those instances, no arrests were made, but agents seized computers, cell phones and documents and issued grand jury subpoenas in an attempt to intimidate and silence political dissent.

The current raids in Michigan are part of a broader campaign by both Democratic and Republican administrations to criminalize opposition to US imperialist policy in the Middle East and to suppress the growing movement against the genocide in Gaza. The Biden administration, and now the Trump administration, have presided over the escalation of police state measures against students, workers and all those who dare to challenge the status quo.

The *World Socialist Web Site* and the International Youth and Students for Social Equality (IYSSE) at U-M unequivocally condemn the FBI and police raids on the homes of pro-Palestinian activists in Michigan. These actions are a direct assault on democratic rights, aimed at intimidating and silencing opposition to US and Israeli war crimes. The working class, students, and all defenders of democratic rights must stand in solidarity with those targeted, demand an immediate end to the repression, and fight for the unconditional

right to protest and organize against imperialist war and oppression.



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