

Anti-genocide student protesters attacked by police at University of Washington in Seattle

Bryan Dyne
7 May 2025

On Monday at about 5 p.m. Pacific, dozens of protesters demonstrating against the US-backed Israeli genocide in Gaza occupied the Interdisciplinary Engineering Building on the University of Washington (UW) campus in Seattle. The protest was broken up by riot police and SWAT teams at 10:30 p.m. after someone set fire to a dumpster outside the building.

In total, 31 of the estimated 75 protesters were arrested early Tuesday morning and were charged with trespassing, property destruction, disorderly conduct and conspiracy to commit the previous three offenses. The UW administration also claims the protest caused \$1 million in damages.

The occupation was led by the group Students United for Palestinian Equality and Return (SUPER) UW, which has organized many previous protests at the university, especially against the administration's involvement with the Department of Defense and military contractors, such as Boeing. Among the demands of the group included that, "UW will no longer be complicit in genocide" and that, "our tuition money and our research not be used to fund and fuel genocide."

The demonstrators also renamed the building the Shaban al-Dalou Building in memory of a 19-year-old Gazan who was burned alive in an attack by the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) on October 14, 2024.

Shaban al-Dalou was a patient in the Al-Aqsa hospital receiving treatment after surviving the IDF's bombing of the Shuhada al-Aqsa mosque a week earlier. The hospital and its surroundings had been designated as a safe zone and was densely populated with patients and refugees. According to news reports, this was the seventh time that his family were forced to relocate as a result of Israeli's genocidal onslaught against the enclave.

At the time, even the typically pro-Israeli bourgeois press was forced to note the brutality of the attack on the hospital. The *Associated Press* reported that Shaban's father stated, "My son was being burned in front of me."

Shaban's younger brother, one of five siblings he was taking care of told the BBC, "I was screaming for someone to let me go, but in vain... My brother's leg was trapped and he couldn't free himself. I think you saw it in the video. He was raising his hand. That was my brother. He was my support in this world. ... I saw my brother burning in front of me, and my mother too. What more do you need, and you stay silent? You see us burning, and you stay silent."

Three days later, Shaban's younger brother, 11-year-old Abdul Rahman al-Dalou, died after succumbing to his own burns. Five days after that, their sister Farah al-Dalou also died from the burns she suffered as the result of Israel's bombing of a hospital.

Among the latest developments in the genocide is the declaration by Israeli Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich that, "Gaza will be entirely destroyed." It is part of a plan, approved by both the Biden and Trump administrations, to ethnically cleanse Gaza and repurpose the land on behalf of American and Israeli capitalism.

The crackdown on protests at UW comes amid a broader attack on the right to free speech by the Trump administration, particularly any opposition to the Gaza genocide. Among the highest profile attacks on democratic rights include the arrests and attempted deportations of Columbia graduate student Mahmoud Khalil and Tufts University Ph.D. student Rümeysa Öztürk, neither of whom has been accused of a crime. Their only "crime" is opposing the Gaza genocide.

Among the hundreds of others who have been

targeted for their activism against the Israeli assault include Cornell graduate student Momodou Taal, who was forced to flee the United States under threat of deportation for suing the Trump administration.

Campus administrators, including those closely tied to the Democratic Party, have collaborated closely with Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and other arms of Trump's gestapo to make these arrests. Many others have been arrested at Columbia, while the heads of the University of California Los Angeles recently sent police to break up a viewing of the pro-Palestinian documentary *The Encampments*, which was set to be viewed by 200 people. At least three arrests were made.

Trump's actions are an escalation of the precedent set under former President Joe Biden, who oversaw the arrest of thousands of protesters against the Gaza genocide since it began in October 2023. These include attacks on peaceful encampments and protests by police, as well as aiding and abetting fascist and pro-Zionist forces in attacks against pro-Palestinian protesters.

UW is no different, banning SUPER from its campus as of December 13, 2024, as part of the purported fight against "antisemitism." In reality, the ban was a response to the leading role the organization played in the encampment on the university's quad from April 29 to May 20 of last year.

SUPER has also organized numerous rallies against military contractor and aerospace giant Boeing, which has enormous ties to the university. The immediate reason for Monday's protest was the recent \$10 million donation for the engineering building by the airplane manufacturer. According to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, thousands of weapon systems made by Boeing have been sold to Israel over the past decade.

UW also enjoys a very close relationship with the US military, which stretches back to 1943. It hosts the Navy-sponsored Applied Physics Laboratory and has an Institute for National Security Education and Research sponsored by the Defense Intelligence Agency. The university works with the NSA, FBI, Homeland Security and numerous other state agencies and is one of the most militarized campuses in the United States.

And for all the supposed claims of fighting "antisemitism," the university has openly sided with

Ukraine in the US-NATO backed war against Russia. Amid claims of the "brutal invasion of Putin's force," no mention has ever been made of the instigation of the war by the US or the openly fascist and neo-Nazi forces operating inside the Ukrainian military and government.

The right-wing political orientation of the campus administration was also revealed when it forcefully protected an event Tuesday night using the right-wing anti-trans activists Riley Gaines and Olivia Krolczyk. Using the excuse of the anti-genocide protest, as well as the fact that they had been blocked from UW's campus by protests against them in January, Krolczyk and Gaines were permitted to bring private armed security onto campus. These guards were bolstered by campus and local police.

A successful fight against such forces, however, will not ultimately succeed through anarchist protest politics, which is aimed ultimately at pressuring the university administration. As was witnessed in the response to the protest and occupation on Monday, the state takes such opportunities to further develop its instruments of repression.

Students must instead turn to the working class, including Boeing workers, as part of a broad campaign to defend immigrants and democratic rights and put an end to the US facilitated genocide. Such efforts must be combined with the fight to build an international working class movement against dictatorship, fascism, genocide and war. Those interested in joining this fight should contact the International Youth and Students for Social Equality (IYSSE) today.



To contact the WSWS and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact