

Drop all charges against students protesting Israeli troops at University of Michigan!

IYSSE at the University of Michigan

11 November 2025

The International Youth and Students for Social Equality (IYSSE), the youth section of the Socialist Equality Party (SEP), denounces the arrest of three pro-Palestinian protesters, and the violent suppression of a demonstration against the Gaza genocide at the University of Michigan (U-Mich) on October 22. We call on all students, workers and faculty at the university and beyond to mobilize in defense of those arrested and demand the dropping of all charges.

On October 22, approximately 300 demonstrators organized by the pro-Palestinian TAHIR Coalition gathered outside Rackham Graduate School to protest an event hosted by the U-Mich chapter of Students Supporting Israel (SSI), which featured two former members of the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) as speakers.

The meeting was part of the SSI's national "Triggered: Combat on College" tour, which has visited 20 college campuses this year. According to the SSI, the tour features "IDF reservists sharing firsthand stories from October 7th and beyond."

The meeting was a political provocation. The IDF is carrying out the most horrific war crimes of the 21st century in Gaza, killing at least 67,000 people and wounding some 200,000, mostly women and children. Major international organizations—including United Nations panels, Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, Physicians for Human Rights, Doctors Without Borders, Islamic Relief, Save the Children and CARE International—have called Israel's US-backed war a genocide.

The U-Mich administration provided a heavy police presence for the October 22 meeting despite the peaceful character of the protest. According to statements provided to the *Michigan Daily* by a protester, roughly a dozen University of Michigan

Police Department (UMPD) officers appeared "out of nowhere" to confront a section of the protest outside the Rackham building's north entrance, quickly grabbing and pinning protesters to the ground and threatening to use pepper spray.

Melissa Overton, deputy chief of police for the Division of Public Safety and Security (DPSS), said police arrested three protesters "not affiliated with the University of Michigan" on charges including resisting and obstructing police, attempting to disarm an officer, and disorderly conduct.

Dan Viderman, president of the U-Mich Students Supporting Israel chapter, slandered the protesters as antisemitic. He told the *Michigan Daily*: "They weren't there protesting Israel, they were there protesting Judaism... There were signs there that visibly made Jewish students uncomfortable. Quite frankly, they have been for the past two years as they've continued terrorizing our campus."

The charges against the protesters, who have been released from jail, are baseless attacks on free speech and political expression. The University of Michigan is providing a platform and protecting perpetrators of genocide, while attacking those who protest genocidal war crimes and mass murder.

The October 22 arrests are a continuation and escalation of the University of Michigan administration's assault on democratic rights. The administration brought disciplinary charges against 11 pro-Palestinian protesters in July and seven more in September.

Among the initial 11 charged were four protesters previously charged by Democratic Michigan Attorney General Dana Nessel for their participation in anti-genocide demonstrations between September 2024 and January 2025. Those charges were dropped in May.

In the aftermath of Trump's 2024 election, the university administration has worked to align itself with the fascist demands of the new administration to suppress any and all political opposition to both the foreign and domestic crimes of the ruling class. The establishment of the Office of Student Accountability (OSA) and the overhaul of the Statement of Student Rights and Responsibilities (SSRR) have given administrators sweeping powers to bypass due process and retroactively apply new disciplinary standards.

These bureaucratic tools are being weaponized to punish students for anti-war and anti-genocide activism under the guise of maintaining "safety" and "inclusivity." The administration's claim that protests are "disruptive" to campus life is a pretext for silencing opposition to US-backed atrocities abroad and suppressing the growing movement of students and workers who reject the university's complicity in war and repression.

The attack on democratic rights at the University of Michigan is not a purely campus issue. It is part of the Trump administration's erection of a presidential dictatorship, whose central target is the working class.

Trump is not acting as an isolated individual. He is the representative of the corporate-financial oligarchy that monopolizes the wealth of the country and controls both parties—the Democrats as well as the Republicans.

To protect their obscene fortunes and impose the crisis wracking the capitalist system on the backs of the working class and youth—by destroying what remains of social programs such as Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, food stamps, public health and education—the oligarchy is breaking with democratic forms of rule and turning to dictatorship and fascism.

The Trump administration and the ruling elite confront mounting opposition and growing support for a socialist alternative to the profit system, as seen in the No Kings protests and the election in New York, the home of Wall Street, of a Democrat who claims—falsely—to be a socialist. A critical front in their assault on democratic rights is the universities. Trump and company are seeking to turn them into bastions of their fascist ideology.

Students and workers at U-Mich who want to oppose the attack on the pro-Palestinian protesters cannot limit their opposition to appeals to the administration and the Board of Regents, a body composed of members of

both ruling class parties, predominantly Democrats, and the financial elite.

The opposition to the attack on democratic rights and the suppression of anti-war sentiment must be independent of the Democratic Party and all other representatives of US imperialism and its financial oligarchy. The Democrats are motivated solely by the need to keep a lid on the massive social opposition that is bubbling up across the country. As shown by their agreement to end the government shutdown on Trump's terms, they are not opponents of Trump, but his accomplices.

The IYSSE fights for the building of an independent anti-war movement led by the international working class and armed with socialist principles, which will spearhead the struggle against the source of war, genocide and dictatorship: the capitalist system.

The IYSSE supports the Socialist Equality Party's call for the building of rank-and-file committees in every workplace, neighborhood and school—linked through the International Workers Alliance of Rank-and-File Committees—to coordinate the growing struggles of workers and youth. Workers and students at U-Mich must take up this task and build their own campus committee uniting students, campus workers and faculty to demand an end to the attack on democratic rights and academic freedom, and the dismantling of the machinery of genocide and war.

The criminal mega-billionaire oligarchy must be expropriated and the major banks and corporations turned into public utilities operated under democratic workers' control, not for profit, but to satisfy social needs.

Those looking to build a leadership to oppose the attacks on democratic rights, fascist dictatorship, war and genocide should join the IYSSE and take up the fight for socialism.



To contact the WSWS and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:
wsws.org/contact