

Democrats back Trump's frame-up of anti-genocide protesters at the University of Michigan

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19 June 2026

The International Youth and Students for Social Equality (IYSSE) at the University of Michigan is holding a meeting on Thursday, June 25 at 6:00 pm to demand the dropping of all charges against anti-genocide protesters and to mobilize students and workers in opposition to the attack on democratic rights. The meeting will be held at the Ann Arbor Public Library Downtown Branch, 343 South Fifth Ave, Ann Arbor, Michigan, 3rd Floor Community Room #1. We urge all students and workers to attend. For more information, contact the IYSSE

at contact.iysse.umich@gmail.com or <https://x.com/iysseum>

On June 10, the FBI, in collaboration with state and local law enforcement, carried out raids across southeast Michigan, Illinois and Wisconsin, unsealing an indictment against eight individuals who participated in protests demanding that the University of Michigan divest from companies linked to Israel's genocide in Gaza. Seven of the eight were arrested in the raids.

Paige Feyock, Zainab Hakim, Colin Weger, Jonathan Zou, Ahmet Korkaya, and Alexander Sepulveda pleaded not guilty and have been released on bond. Mariam Odeh is scheduled for arraignment July 1, and the date has not been set for Amatullah Hakim, currently in India on a work study program.

The indictment inflates acts of petty vandalism into a federal conspiracy by treating the defendants' use of the internet and social media to communicate and coordinate as a predicate for federal jurisdiction. Under this theory, any online discussion of political action satisfies the "interstate commerce" requirement needed to transform local misdemeanors into federal felonies.

All eight face charges of "conspiracy to transmit threats," which carry a potential five-year prison sentence. In addition, Feyock and Z. Hakim are charged with witness tampering, which carries a 20-year sentence, for meeting at a coffee shop and urging a fellow student not to cooperate with a university disciplinary process. Sepulveda is also charged with "destruction of property," and faces five years in prison for erasing the contents of his phone and computer storage.

The Department of Justice is systematically constructing a pseudo-legal framework for criminalizing opposition to the

Trump administration's war policies and police-state operations. The method is to treat any coordination among protesters using encrypted messaging or social media as evidence of a criminal enterprise.

The U-Mich indictments constitute one front in a national campaign waged under National Security Presidential Memorandum-7 (NSPM-7), the fascistic memorandum issued by Trump on September 25, 2025 that names "anti-Americanism, anti-capitalism and anti-Christianity" as "common threads animating" domestic terrorism. NSPM-7 was issued three days after an executive order designating Antifa as a "domestic terrorist organization."

Six days after the raids in Michigan, on June 16, the Justice Department indicted 15 anti-ICE protesters in Minneapolis on federal felony conspiracy charges, with US Attorney Daniel Rosen invoking NSPM-7 at his press conference. Meanwhile, the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and Customs and Border Protection (CBP) agents who murdered Renée Nicole Good and Alex Pretti in January remain uncharged.

Democratic Minnesota Governor Tim Walz and Democratic Minneapolis Mayor Jacob Frey have remained silent on the charges against the Minnesota 15. Walz and Attorney General Keith Ellison did not respond to email messages from the Associated Press seeking comment on the federal indictment.

The only prominent Minnesota Democrat to comment was Representative Ilhan Omar, who wrote on X: "While the killers of Renée Good and Alex Pretti walk free, the DOJ is busy bringing bogus charges against protesters." This is true, but Omar's party paved the way for the Republicans to add an additional \$70 billion in funding for the immigration Gestapo without any restraints on its operations.

On June 23, eight North Texas activists, and on July 1 one more, will face sentencing after being convicted of "material support for terrorism," a charge previously reserved for alleged jihadist networks, for a protest at the Prairieland ICE detention center. The government's case rested on the claim that wearing black clothing constituted "support" for a shooting carried out by a single individual. Eight face a range of sentences from 10 to 50 years, with the shooter facing life in prison.

Similar methods are at work in the witch-hunt against Chinese researchers at U-Mich. Five Chinese biologists were charged with conspiracy and smuggling over routine customs paperwork violations involving harmless biological materials. The government claimed “agroterrorism,” subjected researchers to indefinite detention, and deported them. On March 19, post-doctoral engineer Danhao Wang took his own life after interrogation by federal agents.

The *World Socialist Web Site* and the IYSSE demand the dropping of charges against the U-Mich Eight, the Minnesota fifteen, the Prairieland defendants, and all those facing political persecution for opposing war and dictatorship.

The prosecution of the U-Mich Eight is the culmination of a bipartisan campaign that began under Biden, was advanced by Michigan Attorney General Dana Nessel through failed state-level prosecutions, and was driven by a university administration dominated by Democratic appointees. The Democratic Party, from its Michigan state leadership to its “progressive” luminaries, has responded to the U-Mich Eight indictment with a mixture of endorsement, equivocation, and silence. It demonstrates a combination of cowardice and complicity.

Governor Gretchen Whitmer, who has met with Trump and gone out of her way to adopt a collaborative posture in regard to the Trump administration, has said nothing about the U-Mich Eight. The FBI credited the Michigan State Police and the Michigan Intelligence Operations Center, under the purview of Attorney General Nessel, for providing logistical assistance in the investigation.

State Party Chair Curtis Hertel declared, “We are appalled by the details of this indictment and the hateful, anti-Semitic threats that took place.” Former chair Lon Johnson filed a formal request to investigate and potentially expel five of the indicted individuals who had recently become registered Democrats, stating, “I worked in the 2006 West Bank elections, and I’m seeing some of the same Hamas-like intimidation tactics here.”

Representative Haley Stevens, running for US Senate, issued a formal statement on June 11 that could have been drafted by the Department of Justice. “The allegations in this indictment are serious and deeply troubling,” she declared, adding that “freedom of expression is a core value, but it is not a license for criminal conduct.” She concluded by condemning “political violence and antisemitism.”

Representative Debbie Dingell, whose district includes Ann Arbor, noted that she had been denied an FBI briefing and stated, “I am going to do everything that I can to protect people’s freedom of speech on all sides. But some of the things I read in that indictment are deeply concerning and can never be condoned.”

These statements by Hertel, Johnson, Stevens and Dingell accept as good coin allegations by a government that has systematically attacked constitutionally protected speech and

activity and defended the murder of anti-ICE protesters.

Representative Rashida Tlaib, member of the Democratic Socialists of America (DSA) and the only Palestinian-American in Congress, could not bring herself to denounce the prosecution. She acknowledged that constituents felt the charges were “politically motivated” and noted the “extensive targeting” by 17 law enforcement agencies. But she also described the indictment as containing “serious allegations” and framed her concern as a request for “answers from the Trump administration.”

Abdul El-Sayed, a DSA-backed Democratic candidate for US Senate, has said nothing. Defendant Mariam Odeh, former president of Students Allied for Freedom and Equality (SAFE), the U-Mich chapter of Students for Justice in Palestine, worked as an employee of his campaign between February and April of this year.

Amir Makled, a Democratic nominee for the U-M Board of Regents and a civil rights attorney who previously represented pro-Palestinian protesters, has also remained silent.

Yousef Rabhi, a DSA member and former state representative now running for mayor of Ann Arbor, has maintained public silence despite a long history of appearing at demonstrations. Dave Zeglen, a DSA member, U-Mich lecturer, and candidate for Ann Arbor City Council who describes himself as a “long-time pro-Palestine organizer,” has said nothing.

The silence extends to the national level. The Democratic leadership in Congress, Hakeem Jeffries and Chuck Schumer, have been silent. Neither Senator Bernie Sanders, nor Representative and DSA member Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, nor New York mayor and DSA member Zohran Mamdani has issued any statement on the Michigan indictment. *Jacobin*, the unofficial organ of the DSA, has not published an article on the U-Mich Eight.

The defense of the U-Mich Eight cannot be left to the Democratic Party or the university, which are active collaborators in the crackdown. It cannot be entrusted to the courts, which are instruments of the same class forces driving the prosecution. It requires the independent political mobilization of the working class, the only social force capable of ending war and dismantling the capitalist state, on the basis of a socialist program.



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Socialist Equality Party visit:

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