

White House seeks extradition of American philanthropist and Palestinian supporter

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15 July 2026

The attempt by the Trump administration to extradite American philanthropist James “Fergie” Cox Chambers Jr. from Spain is part of the state-led campaign to criminalize support for the Palestinian people and attack basic democratic rights under the guise of “counterterrorism.”

Spanish police arrested Chambers on the island of Ibiza on July 10 after a “red notice” was issued by Interpol at the request of US authorities. Agents from Spain’s Comisaría General de Información (General Information Commissariat), a key department of the country’s intelligence and counterterrorism apparatus, carried out the operation.

Chambers was initially held in Ibiza and then transferred to Madrid, where he was brought before the Audiencia Nacional, Spain’s high court with jurisdiction over extradition cases. A duty judge ordered his imprisonment without bail, rejecting a request for conditional release and remanding him to preventive detention until a July 16 hearing that will decide on the US extradition demand.

The US indictment accuses Chambers of “international money laundering” and providing material support to foreign organizations designated as “terrorist.” US officials point to financial transfers from US bank accounts to Tunisia, where Chambers has resided since late 2023. His supporters say these transfers funded legal activities, including local investments and sponsorship of Club Africain, the Tunisian football club that recently won the national championship.

Family members and close associates have denounced the arrest as a politically motivated attack on his democratic rights, directly tied to his support for Palestine and his outspoken condemnation of Israel’s genocidal war on Gaza. His partner, actor Stella

Schnabel, stated that “Fergie is being imprisoned because he uses his wealth to support Palestine and people suffering genocide in Gaza,” explicitly connecting the case to the Trump administration’s drive to criminalize solidarity with Palestinians.

Chambers is an heir to Cox Enterprises, a vast US-based conglomerate in media, automotive and telecommunications headquartered in Atlanta. In mid-2023, after a political and personal break with his family, he received a payout of roughly \$250 million representing his share of the Cox fortune. This separation freed him from direct corporate control and enabled him to channel significant resources into social, artistic and explicitly political causes.

He is known as a left-wing activist and philanthropist who has committed substantial funds to Palestinian solidarity initiatives and other progressive campaigns. US prosecutors and Interpol documents, as reported by European media, explicitly link the extradition request to his “philanthropic work for the Palestinian cause,” attempting to recast solidarity as criminal financing of “terrorism.”

Chambers has publicly denounced the Israeli onslaught on Gaza as a genocide and called for using private wealth to break the blockade imposed by Washington and its allies on Palestinian civil society. According to sources close to him cited in Spanish and French reports, he has supported efforts to aid Palestinian communities, backed campaigns against Western arms sales to Israel, and defended direct actions aimed at exposing the role of US and European weapons manufacturers in the mass killing of civilians.

One of the most serious charges in the sealed US indictment is allegedly tied not to any violent act but to his transfer of money to Tunisia and his sponsorship of Club Africain, which the Trump Justice Department

claims as evidence of funding Palestinian resistance. Chambers and his supporters insist that this is a political fabrication designed to turn legitimate international solidarity—financial, cultural and athletic—into evidence of “terror support.”

The defense of James “Fergie” Cox Chambers is a matter of principle for the working class and all defenders of democratic rights, regardless of his personal wealth or elite family background. The key question is not his social origin but the precedent being set: a billionaire who uses his resources to oppose imperialist genocide and is then pursued internationally as a “terrorist financier” by the US state.

Attacks on Chambers are part of a broader assault on the right to political speech and association. If the government succeeds in extraditing and imprisoning him on fabricated charges, it will legitimize the use of anti-terror legislation to criminalize any substantial support for Palestinians or any movements resisting imperialist aggression.

This would further intimidate artists, students, workers and intellectuals who wish to donate, organize or speak out against war crimes in Gaza and beyond. Moreover, the international dimension of the case—Interpol red notice, Spanish custody and possible extradition—demonstrates the integration of European judicial systems into Washington’s global campaign to suppress pro-Palestinian activism.

While the Spanish government of Pedro Sánchez has publicly criticized Israel’s actions in Gaza and clashed with the Trump administration for refusing to allow the US to use air bases in Spain to conduct the war against Iran, its security apparatus is now detaining a US citizen whose alleged “crime” is using his fortune to aid the very population being massacred.

Chambers’ arrest is part of a systematic pattern during Trump’s second term of targeting pro-Palestinian activists, especially students and non-citizens, through immigration, criminal and financial law. Since early 2025, the administration has wielded deportation proceedings, detention and surveillance as tools to chill outspoken public opposition to Israel’s war on Gaza.

Hundreds of students had their visas revoked and were detained or threatened after participating in protests denouncing Israel, including Columbia University graduate students Mohsen Mahdawi and

Mahmoud Khalil. Mahdawi was pulled into detention during a naturalization appointment and later ordered deported by an immigration judge, while a federal court found that the Department of Homeland Security and the State Department “acted in concert” to misuse their powers to target non-citizen pro-Palestinian activists simply for their political speech.

Khalil, another Columbia graduate, spent months in immigration custody including around the time of his child’s birth and now faces renewed deportation proceedings after a federal appeals court ruled that a lower court lacked jurisdiction to order his release.

Similar repression has forced students like Tufts University’s Rümeysa Öztürk and Cornell’s Momodou Taal to leave the United States under pressure from the security state, while activists such as Leqaa Kordia have endured a year-long incarceration in ICE prisons for their participation in campus protests.

According to *Mother Jones*, newly unsealed documents show that federal authorities explicitly monitored and punished student speech critical of Israel, confirming that deportations and arrests were not incidental but designed to silence dissent and create a climate of fear. The attempt to extradite Chambers extends this campaign to high-profile US citizens, signaling that no one is immune from retaliation if they use significant resources to challenge the US-Israeli war policy.

The international workers’ movement must respond by demanding the immediate release of James “Fergie” Cox Chambers from Spanish custody, the rejection of the US extradition request and the dropping of all charges against him. Linked to this, the deportation and criminal cases against pro-Palestinian students and activists in the US must be opposed through a unified struggle that connects the defense of democratic rights with the fight against imperialist war and genocide.



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