

*U.S. pro-Palestinian protesters
resist order to clear MIT
encampment*



Cambridge, May 7 ((RHC)-- Pro-Palestinian protesters have clashed with the US police and re-entered an encampment of tents at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), after the university gave students a deadline to clear the area.

The demonstrators broke through police fencing around the encampment, linked arms and encircled tents on campus on Monday afternoon. They chanted slogans such as "Long live the intifada (uprising)," and "we are the intifada," as well as "we want 48" - referring to a time when the occupying Israeli regime did not exist.

It came after MIT President Sally Kornbluth ordered the protesters to leave the encampment, threatening those who stayed there with an immediate interim full suspension.

Baltasar Dinis, a first-year doctoral student in computer science, criticized MIT's threat of disciplinary actions, and said the school had not negotiated in good faith with the students who are protesting Israel's genocidal war on the Gaza Strip. "The oppression of free speech on campus is detrimental to the entire community," he said. "It's abhorrent that we cannot even do the minimum as an institution to stand against genocide."

Sam Ihns, a graduate student at MIT studying mechanical engineering and a member of MIT Jews for a Ceasefire, said the group has been at the encampment for the past two weeks calling for an end to the killing of thousands of Palestinians in Gaza.

"Specifically, our encampment is protesting MIT's direct research ties to the Israeli" ministry of military affairs, he said.

On nearby Massachusetts Avenue, another group of students sat on the street to block traffic. MIT said that no arrests were made by the police on campus on Monday.

The protesters have been asking MIT to divest from Israeli tied business, including research done for the Israeli military.

State Representatives Erika Uytendhoeven and Mike Connolly, who represent Somerville and Cambridge, praised the students for their organization and bravery. "I'm here really in solidarity with these protesters, and I'm hoping that the MIT administration will honor free speech and will honor the tradition of dissents in this country, in particular dissents to war, which is what really calls us here today," Connolly said.

Over the past few weeks, universities across the US have been the scene of pro-Palestine protests. The demonstrations began at Columbia University in New York City, where students set up an encampment demanding a permanent ceasefire in Israel's Gaza war and an end to US military assistance for the regime, as well as university divestment from companies profiting from the aggression.

The peaceful protest spread to at least two dozen universities across the U.S. In recent days, police and military forces have raided college campuses, clashed with pro-Palestinian students and professors, and arrested more than 2,000 of them.

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