

Police tear-gas students and make dozens of arrests on U.S. college campuses



Protests at University of Arizona / Tucson

Washington, May 11 (RHC)-- Police tear-gassed anti-war demonstrators and arrested dozens of students after clearing their encampments at colleges and several universities across the United States.

On Friday, police dismantled encampments at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and the University of Pennsylvania. Pennsylvania police officers in riot gear entered the campus around daybreak and arrested 33 protesters with the assistance of Philadelphia Police at the Gaza Solidarity Encampment.

In Cambridge, Massachusetts, police in riot gear arrived at MIT around before dawn, encircled the camp and gave protesters about 15 minutes to leave. At least ten students were arrested, the university's president said.

In the meantime, protesters outside the camp began chanting for an end to the genocide in Gaza but were quickly dispersed by police officers.

At the University of Arizona in Tucson, campus police in riot gear fired tear gas at protesters late Thursday. Two people were arrested, a university spokesperson said.

Police also arrested 13 people at New Mexico State University in Las Cruces.

Protesters at the University of Wisconsin-Madison agreed Friday to permanently dismantle their two-week-old encampment, in return for the opportunity to connect with "decision-makers" who control university investments by July 1st. The university agreed to increase support for scholars and students affected by wars in Gaza.

At Harvard University, where protesters remain camped on Harvard Yard, at least twenty students were on involuntary leaves of absence for their involvement in the ongoing pro-Palestine encampment on Friday morning.

The decision to place the students on involuntary leave comes just hours after protesters said they rejected an offer from the interim Harvard president to end the encampment. Students placed on involuntary leave will not be able to finish exams, stay in Harvard housing, and "must cease to be present on campus until reinstated," Harvard spokesperson Jason A. Newton wrote in an emailed statement on Friday.

The encampment has remained in the center of Harvard Yard since April 24th.

Since mid-April, students have been demonstrating against Israel's war on Gaza at about 140 colleges in the United States. The demonstrators are demanding their universities cut direct or indirect financial ties with US weapons manufacturers and Israeli institutions. Many also want their universities to end academic relationships with the regime's institutions.

On Friday morning, an affiliated college of Columbia University in New York announced that it fully divested from Israel.

The School Union Theological Seminary (UTS) said the Union's Board of Trustees voted Thursday to divest from "companies profiting from" the regime's genocidal war against Palestinians in the Gaza Strip.

Columbia Students for Justice in Palestine (SJP) — a student group organizing around human rights for Palestinians — described the move as the beginning of the domino effect and called on students to "remain steadfast and refuse to capitulate in our demand for divestment."

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