

More than half of U.S. states join campus movement



Gaza Solidarity Encampment / University of California - Berkeley

New York, May 20 (RHC)-- Ordinary people from all over the world are increasingly demanding that Israel be completely isolated. Students in the United States have taken action, through the encampment movement, in an attempt to force their universities to sever any links with the Zionist entity.

The student protests have spread and been repelled with excessive force being deployed by the authorities in response to these peaceful demonstrations.

On April 17th, at four in the morning, anti-genocide protesters boldly infiltrated the campus at Columbia University on New York's Upper West Side. They pitched protest tents and declared that the university must divest from Israel, ending its complicity in the genocide in Gaza

This was not the first student action over Gaza, as campuses all over the world have seen protests since the launch of Operation Al-Aqsa Storm, but the encampment lit a fuse that ignited action all over the US and indeed internationally, including Columbia.

Encampments sprang out at five university campuses in New York alone with protests at dozens of campuses and encampments on campuses at more than half of all U.S. states. The aim of all the protests is to demand divestment from the Zionist entity, including, through shared ownership and investments, research links to arms firms complicit in genocide, and links to Zionist universities in occupied Palestine.

At Columbia University in New York City, the NYPD were called in after only a day of protest. By the end of the month, an attempt to clear the students altogether led them to escalate the protest and to occupy the symbolically important Hamilton Hall.

This was the same building occupied by students protesting the Vietnam War in 1968, and those protesting the apartheid system in South Africa in 1985. The students immediately renamed it to Hind's Hall in commemoration of the young six-year-old Palestinian girl, Hind Rajab, who was murdered by the occupation forces alongside family members in a destroyed car in Gaza mere days after she had called emergency services begging to be rescued.

The escalation all over the U.S. has been met with vicious repression from the US police. The mayor of New York denounced 'outside agitators'; a slogan as old as it is transparently fictitious.

Over 1,700 protesters had been arrested by the first of May, including faculty members, on more than 30 U.S. campuses, with more than 500 in Manhattan alone. Universities have suspended or expelled students as divestment has been joined as a demand by amnesty for the protesters.

Tear gas has been fired on multiple campuses and young students have been tasered. More than 100 students have been injured, as have some journalists.

Snipers have been positioned on the roofs of campus buildings in Ohio pretentiously reminding us of the four dead in Ohio; unarmed students shot dead by state troopers at Kent State University in May 1970.

Observers say that the student movement is a bright shining light against genocide, a light that can be seen with the naked eye from Gaza. It will have many challenges to face, but its potential to force the issue of the genocide in Gaza and perhaps beyond is immense.

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