

Students at largest university in Latin America joins campus protests



Activists gather in front of the rectory building of the Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM)

in Mexico City on May 2, 2024 (AFP)

Mexico City, May 21 (RHC)-- The protest strategy of setting up long-term encampments at universities, which began in the United States, continues to spread around the world, with students camping out for Palestine at the National Autonomous University of Mexico in the nation's capital.

The National Autonomous University of Mexico isn't likely to be the scene of massive student repression such as what was witnessed in the United States, but protesters are demanding their government place more pressure on Israel.

Carlotta Torres, a Mexican student organizer, said: "These camps are a response to the Western media's attempt to normalize the genocide that is taking place and their distorted views of Israel. Young people around the world are taking the lead and insisting that their societies talk about what is really happening in Gaza. So these encampments are mainly communications efforts."

Student protests have intensified in several countries across the world, including Canada, France, Mexico, and Australia, amid a crackdown on their counterparts in the United States and a mounting death toll from Israel's war on Gaza.

Another student organizer in Mexico City, Carlos Garcia, said: "It is easy to feel a sense of empathy and welcome and there's an open desire to learn, organize, and work towards a more humane future. The camp is calling for an end to the genocide, for the university to cut ties with Israeli institutions, and for the Mexican government to follow the example of Colombia, which broke diplomatic relations with Tel Aviv earlier this month."

The protesters said they fully support demonstrators in the United States and France, where police and university administrators have brutally and hypocritically torn down pro-Palestinian camps.

The Mexican students do not expect to be subjected to the same brutality and repression as protesters in the U.S. and plan to maintain the camp indefinitely, offering cultural and educational activities with just weeks to go before an election whereby Mexico is widely expected to elect a second consecutive left-wing president.

Mexico fully recognized Palestine last year, but many say their response to the historic massacres has been too lenient with Tel Aviv.

Aytor Halvan, a member of the faculty at National Autonomous University of Mexico, told reporters: "I hope that our new president takes a stronger stance against Israel, as that will be more in accord with the beliefs of the Mexican people. We have a lot of work to do to remind the Mexican people that the imperialism of the United States uses against Palestine isn't very different from the imperialism the U.S. uses in Latin America."

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