NYU suspends 11 students over peaceful anti-war protest
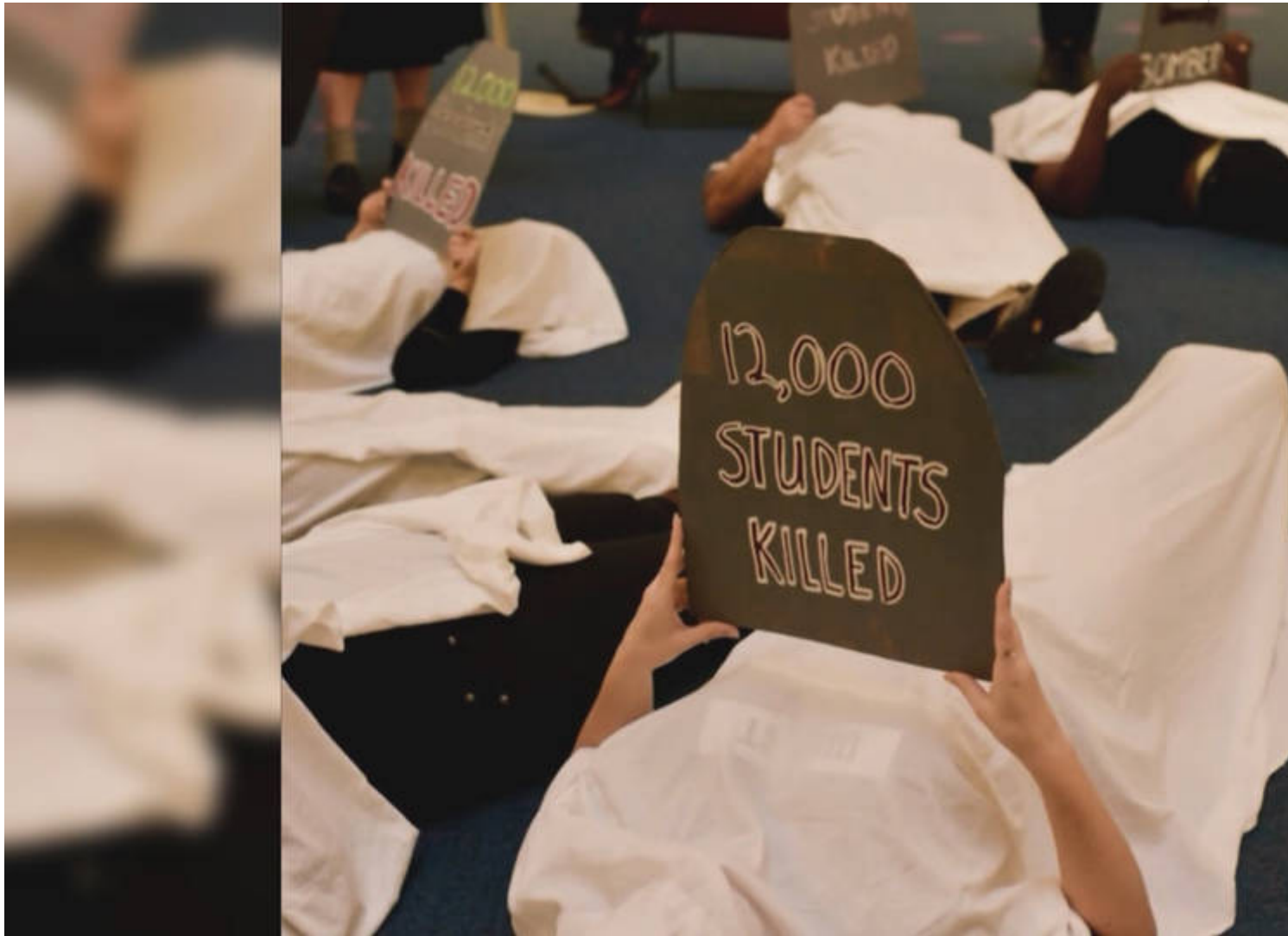
New York, January 12 (RHC)-- In New York City, 11 students have been suspended by New York University for one year for participating in nonviolent antiwar protests last month.

In a statement, NYU Faculty and Staff for Justice in Palestine called the suspensions "a draconian case of collective punishment."

Colleges and universities across the United States were centers of the pro-Palestine protest movement when classes began last year, sparking trends that spilled across international borders.

In April of last year, for instance, students in New York started to build "Gaza solidarity" encampments, erecting tents on campus lawns. Soon, schools in Canada, Mexico and the United Kingdom had established their own similar protest camps.

But the crackdown was swift. More than 3,000 U.S. students were arrested since the first encampment rose, and school administrators threatened some protest leaders with suspension and academic probation.

Donors, politicians and other groups also pressured universities to take strong action, accusing the protesters of anti-Semitism and fostering an unsafe learning environment.

Student protesters vehemently denied those allegations. Nevertheless, the criticism continued even after the spring semester ended in June, with many campuses emptying for the summer months.

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