

Trump threatens to arrest and deport pro-Palestine students for protests



Washington, March 5 (RHC)-- U.S. President Donald Trump has threatened to halt federal funding for any college or university that allows "illegal protests" to take place, saying he would punish students who participate in the demonstrations.

Trump made the warning in a post on his social media platform Truth Social on Tuesday, after pro-Palestinian protesters gathered outside the campus of Columbia University in New York City.

“All Federal Funding will STOP for any College, School, or University that allows illegal protests,” he said. The president went on to say that “agitators” will either be imprisoned or permanently sent back to the country from which they came, adding that “American students will be permanently expelled or, depending on the crime, arrested.”

He didn’t specifically mention pro-Palestine protests in his post, but Trump has previously threatened to deport any student who took part in protests against Israel’s genocide of Palestinians in the Gaza Strip.

In late January, Trump signed an executive order, pledging to deport foreign students who have participated in pro-Palestinian protests. He claimed that pro-Palestinian campus protests had unleashed an “unprecedented wave of vile anti-Semitic discrimination, vandalism, and violence against our citizens, especially in our schools and on our campuses.”

Rights groups and legal scholars say the order violates constitutional free speech rights.

The latest development came almost a week after Leo Terrell, head of the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) task force on anti-Semitism, said student protesters who took part in pro-Palestine protests could face years in prison.

The announcement came as students at Columbia University began fresh pro-Palestinian protests after two students were expelled for their anti-genocide activism.

Trump's threats also coincided with former Israeli prime minister Naftali Bennett's scheduled speeches at Columbia and Harvard amid student protests. More than 200 pro-Palestinian, anti-Israel protesters gathered in front of Columbia University in New York to demonstrate against Bennett.

“The decision to host a man with such a violent and openly discriminatory record sends a message that the university values some voices over others,” a spokesperson for Columbia Palestine Solidarity Coalition — one of the groups taking part in the protest — said in a statement.

Meanwhile, the federal government on Monday said it was considering ending contracts it has with Columbia worth over \$50 million, blaming it for failing to protect its Jewish students from ongoing anti-Semitism the protests.

The decision to imprison anti-Israel students comes despite the fact that Trump had declared his intention to "stop all government censorship" and "bring back free speech to America" during his inauguration speech.

During the previous academic year, US universities and colleges emerged as a focal point for student-led pro-Palestinian protests, igniting a significant wave of demonstrations at universities throughout the world, where hundreds of students called on their universities to divest from companies that have ties to the Israeli regime.

In the spring, after pro-Palestinian students set up tents at Columbia University and school officials brought in city police to clear the demonstration, similar encampments began to emerge at colleges nationwide.

Protests erupted at prominent universities such as Harvard, Yale, MIT, and the University of California, frequently intensifying into clashes between opposing groups’ factions and increasing tensions within the campus environment.

U.S. police arrested more than 3,000 students, professors, and faculty members after accusing the involved activists of “anti-Semitism” and “terrorism,” and school administrators threatened some protest

leaders with suspension and academic probation.

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