

Colombia University professor forced to resign over support for pro-Palestinian activism

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Former Colombia University professor, Katherine Franke

New York, January 12 (RHC)-- A Columbia University professor has been forced to resign for backing pro-Palestinian activism at the seat of learning and protesting Israeli students' injurious attacks against pro-Palestinian campaigners.

Katherine Franke stepped down from teaching at the facility and faces the threat of her action being defined as "retirement" by the university's authorities, various American media outlets reported on Saturday.

She penned an extensive message, explaining her decision and the circumstances surrounding it. "The university administrators have created such a toxic and hostile environment for legitimate debate around the [Israeli regime's genocidal] war [against the Gaza Strip]...and Palestine that I can no longer teach or conduct research," she wrote.

The former professor regretted that the October 2023-present brutal military assault had resulted in "horrendous devastation in Gaza," besides claiming the lives of more than 46,500 Palestinians, mostly women and children.

She noted that the warfare had led to widespread protests across the world's academic communities. Amid the protests, "I have ardently defended students' right to peaceful protest on our campus and across the country," Franke underlined.

Her support for the campaigners, she said, was rooted in her "true belief that student engagement with the rights and dignity of Palestinians continued a celebrated tradition of student protest at Columbia University."

However, "the university has allowed its own disciplinary process to be weaponized against members of our community, including myself," Franke lamented. She also pointed to Israeli students' provocative acts of attacking the pro-Palestinian students with toxic chemical substances that had "caused such significant injuries that several students were hospitalized."

According to Franke, the attackers used to be enlisted with the Israeli military amid the latter's ongoing genocidal adventures, war crimes, and crimes against humanity across the West Asia region.

"I have been targeted for my support of pro-Palestinian protesters – by the president of Columbia University, several colleagues, university trustees, and outside actors. This has included an unjustified finding by the university that my public comments condemning attacks against student protesters violated university non-discrimination policy."

Franke's decision, described as sobering for the global academic community and condemnatory of the United States' unbridled military, political, and intelligence support for the Israeli atrocities, wound down her 25-year-long record of academic excellence.

She also underscored that "while the university may call this change in my status 'retirement,' it should be more accurately understood as a termination dressed up in more palatable terms."

"In exchange for my agreement to step down as an active member of the Columbia faculty, the university demanded that I surrender significant rights and privileges that are provided to all retired faculty as a matter of policy," the former professor stated.

"To describe my change in status with the university as a 'retirement' is both misleading and disingenuous," she reiterated.



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