

Columbia University expels students, revokes degrees over pro-Palestine protests

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Demonstrators hold their ground near a main gate at Columbia University in New York, the United States, on April 30, 2024, as New York City police officers move to clear the area after a

building was taken over by pro-Palestinian protesters earlier in the day. (Photo by AP)

New York, March 14 (RHC)-- Columbia University has expelled and suspended students for occupying a campus building during last spring's pro-Palestinian protests, and has also temporarily revoked the diplomas of some graduates involved.

The university confirmed in a campus-wide email that a judicial board issued a range of sanctions against students who occupied Hamilton Hall in April 2024 to protest the Israeli genocidal war on Gaza.

Columbia did not disclose the exact number of students affected, stating that sanctions were determined based on "the severity of behaviors."

The crackdown comes as President Donald Trump administration strips over \$400 million in federal funding from the university, citing failure to address alleged anti-Semitism at the campus.

Last Saturday, Mahmoud Khalil, a well-known Palestinian campus activist, was detained by federal immigration authorities and is facing deportation. Trump has said the arrest would be the "first of many" such detentions.

The protests at Columbia were a part of a larger movement against Israel's bloody onslaught in Gaza, and students set up a tent encampment that quickly spread to other campuses in the United States.

Most protests, however, were peaceful until April 30, 2024, when a group of activists barricaded themselves inside Hamilton Hall, locking the doors with broken furniture and padlocks.

At the request of university leaders, hundreds of New York police stormed onto campus the following night, arresting dozens of people.

Back in June, the Manhattan district attorney's office said it would not pursue criminal charges for 31 of the 46 people initially arrested on trespassing charges inside the administration building.

But the students still faced disciplinary hearings and possible expulsion from the university.

On Thursday, Khalil and seven students identified by pseudonyms filed a lawsuit seeking to block a Congressional committee from obtaining disciplinary records of students involved in campus protests at Columbia and Barnard College, a women's institution affiliated with Columbia.

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