

Columbia University students in New York City criticize brutality against pro-Palestinian protests



New York, March 6 (RHC)-- Students at U.S. Columbia University have strongly criticized the administration's handling of pro-Palestinian demonstrations, accusing it of betraying its commitment to student safety and free speech.

In a public letter issued on Thursday, the Student Government Association (SGA) of Barnard College accused the administration of breaking a longstanding commitment made by the college's president, asserting that the institution had pledged never to invite the New York Police Department (NYPD) onto campus.

The SGA highlighted distressing images and videos of fellow students being "brutalized and silenced" while participating in peaceful protests, particularly condemning the presence of the NYPD police on campus.

On Wednesday afternoon, New York police evacuated the Barnard College library, where pro-Palestine protesters were holding a sit-in in response to the expulsion of three pro-Palestine active students, citing a bomb threat.

The police deployment "blatantly violates a precedent that was meant to protect our students," the letter stated, labeling the administration's choice to engage law enforcement as an act of "cowardice."

"Barnard has found itself on the wrong side of their 'line in the sand,'" the SGA wrote.

The letter outlines specific demands from the student body, including amnesty for all students involved in a recent sit-in at the Milstein Library (referred to as the Dr. Hussam Abu Safiya Liberated Zone), a call for good-faith negotiations between senior staff and student protestors, and a restructuring of the disciplinary process to incorporate shared governance among students, faculty, and administration.

"The administration's hypocrisy is overwhelmingly evident," the SGA declared, adding, "Your response to student actions shapes Barnard's legacy."

U.S. police violence

Footage revealed showed police entering the building wearing helmets and carrying zip ties and then later clearing and detaining protesters and others from the lawn outside the building.

The police later confirmed on X that the bomb threat had been "investigated and cleared," with a spokesperson noting that approximately nine individuals were taken into custody during the demonstration.

Videos shared widely on social media also showed protesters inside the building chanting, playing drums and hanging Palestinian flags on walls.

The group Columbia Students for Justice in Palestine characterized the bomb threat as "manufactured by Barnard administrators" to disperse the protest. They pointed out in posts on X that police returned detained students to the library while the investigation was still ongoing.

This comes as pro-Palestine students had held a protest rally in front of Columbia University on Thursday night to denounce a speech by former Israeli prime minister Naftali Bennett, calling on the university administration to immediately cancel the event organized for "war criminals."

In the latest act, 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 signed an executive order in late January, pledging to deport foreign students who have participated in pro-Palestinian protests

Meanwhile, Leo Terrell, head of the US Department of Justice (DOJ) task force on anti-Semitism, said last week student protesters who took part in pro-Palestine protests could face years in prison.

<https://www.radiohc.cu/en/noticias/internacionales/378125-columbia-university-students-in-new-york-city-criticize-brutality-against-pro-palestinian-protests>



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