

# *U.S. judge blocks deportation of Columbia University campus protest leader Mahmoud Khalil*

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New York, March 12 (RHC)-- In New York City, a federal judge has blocked the deportation of Mahmoud Khalil, a recent Columbia graduate who was arrested over the weekend by immigration authorities for helping organize campus solidarity protests with Gaza last year.

Khalil is a permanent legal resident and has a green card. His wife is a U.S. citizen who is eight months pregnant. President Trump boasted of Khalil's arrest, posting on social media: "Following my previously signed Executive Orders, ICE proudly apprehended and detained Mahmoud Khalil, a Radical Foreign Pro-Hamas Student on the campus of Columbia University. This is the first arrest of many to come."

The case has triggered widespread outrage, with protests erupting Monday. Faculty of Columbia and Barnard were joined by rabbis and immigrant rights advocates for an emergency press conference.

On Monday, the news outlet Zeteo reported Mahmoud Khalil emailed Columbia one day before he was detained by ICE, asking for protection after he was targeted in a doxxing and smear campaign.

Khalil pleaded with Columbia administration: “I haven’t been able to sleep, fearing that ICE or a dangerous individual might come to my home. I urge you to intervene and provide the necessary protections to prevent further harm.”

Protests also took place in Lower Manhattan on Monday. An organizer for the Palestinian Youth Movement, Nas Issa, told reporters: “Columbia administrators have a responsibility to protect their students, to protect institutions of higher education that Trump and his administration are committed to systematically dismantling. And by making concessions to this right-wing agenda, they’re only laying the groundwork for further repression. And it’s not going to stop at Palestine, and we have very good reason to believe it won’t stop at green card holders. If they’re targeting undocumented immigrants, if they’re targeting student visas, if they’re targeting green card holders and legal residents, what’s to stop them from targeting citizens next?”

[ SOURCE: DEMOCRACY NOW ]

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