

Pro-Israel professor who harassed pro-Palestinian students forced to leave Columbia University



Shai Davidai is denied access to campus grounds during a pro-Israel rally at Columbia University in New York City, on April 22, 2024. (Photo by AFP)

New York, July 14 (RHC)-- A Columbia University assistant professor, who had harassed pro-Palestinian students and staff, departed the institution under a “mutual agreement” and will not resume teaching at the Ivy League school, according to a university official.

The departure of Shai Davidai, a non-tenured assistant professor at Columbia Business School whose radical pro-Israel activism and repeated harassment of pro-Palestinian students made him a target of outrage and criticism, came to pass on July 8.

His campus access had been restricted earlier following the “intimidation and harassment” of students and employees. Columbia Business School Dean Costis Maglaras confirmed Davidai’s departure in an email to faculty, stating that he officially exited on Tuesday.

“Assistant Professor of Business Shai Davidai has decided to depart Columbia, effective July 8, 2025,” the spokesperson wrote in an email to Middle East Eye.

“Davidai has chosen, by mutual agreement with the University, not to return to teaching at Columbia. The University thanks him for his service and wishes him the best in his future endeavors.”

Davidai said in a post on X on Friday that he left the university because he did not trust “its so-called leadership to confront the anti-Jewish, anti-Israel, and anti-American hate festering on campus.”

He has been a vocal critic of Columbia and other universities for their response to pro-Palestinian protest encampments on U.S. campuses against the occupying regime’s genocidal war in the besieged Gaza Strip since October 2023.

Davidai’s behavior and his public confrontations with students and staff drew widespread concern on campus. The vociferously pro-Israel professor was filmed vilifying Columbia’s Chief Operating Officer, Cas Holloway, and comparing university leadership to Nazi officials.

In April, Columbia disabled his campus access card after further complaints of aggressive behavior and online harassment, with reports saying he was assigned office space off-campus and ordered to undergo employee conduct training.

More than 13,000 students signed a petition asking for him to be fired because he used his “personal social media accounts to target, harass, and bully students, including Palestinian students who have lost family members in Gaza.”

Pro-Palestine Columbia students Mohsen Mahdawi and Mahmoud Khalil, who were detained without charge by US authorities, said Davidai had targeted them online and advocated for their deportation.

U.S. President Donald Trump has begun following through on a threat to deport all non-citizen university activists with ties to the pro-Palestine protests, which rocked the US last spring, with students staging daily protests on college campuses across the country for weeks.

And U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio recently said that Washington had revoked at least 300 foreign students’ visas.

Trump officials have accused these students of being “adversarial to the foreign policy and national security interests” of the US over their condemnation of Israel’s 21-month-long genocidal war on

Palestinians in the besieged Gaza Strip, where more than 57,700 Palestinians have been killed so far.

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