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GWU Students Defy University; Continue Gaza Protest

April 26, 2024



The GWU administration had given the students until 7 p.m. Thursday to vacate the yard. They refused and were continuing their protest on Friday, reports Joe Lauria.



The protest at GWU. (Joe Lauria)

By [Joe Lauria](#)
in Washington, D.C.

Special to Consortium News



Hundreds of students at George Washington University (GWU) in Washington D.C. are defying a university curfew and the fear of police intervention to continue their anti-genocide protest on Friday.

The protesters, who have set up a tent encampment in the university yard, were joined by at least one thousand students from other Washington area campuses and other supporters to protect them on Thursday night.

The GWU administration had given the students until 7 p.m. to vacate the yard. They refused and were continuing their protest on Friday. [[Watch this live feed of the protest on X from Reuters.](#)]

Campus police at Columbia University in New York; Yale University in New Haven, Connecticut; the University of Texas at Austin; Emory University in Atlanta and the University of Southern California in Los

Angeles have since last week broken up similar encampments, arrested students and faculty for exercising their rights to speak out against the ongoing genocide in Gaza and refused to allow many of them back on campus.

At Princeton University in New Jersey on Thursday, Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist Chris Hedges was stopped by campus police from reading a poem to the children of Gaza.

The harsher the tactics against the protests, the larger the protests are growing, drawing comparisons to American campus anti-war protests during the Vietnam War era.



At GWU on Thursday night. (Joe Lauria)

Another comparison was drawn, to anti-Jewish protests on German university campuses in the 1930s, by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in one of the most brazen and cynical speeches a foreign leader could make about protected American speech.

In the midst of his government perpetrating a genocide he demanded a harder crackdown on U.S. university students, whom he called “anti-semitic mobs.” He falsely said they called for the “annihilation” of Israel. “It’s unconscionable, it has to be stopped,” he said to an audience that includes U.S. authorities who believe him and act on his words.

“Netanyahu had the audacity to call this student uprising ‘horrific,’” said one student at GWU. “What is horrific is the mass grave discovered with over 342 bodies that had been mutilated beyond recognition. That’s horrific. Children were buried [at al Shifa Hospital] with their hands behind their back. That’s horrific. Patients with catheters still inside their bodies. That is horrific.”

Please watch this powerful 57 min. film (and its ending) of GWU students protesting against genocide in Gaza, including an interview with Medea Benjamin, co-founder of Code Pink; fiery speeches and a condemnation of Netanyahu’s remarks as the students awaited the police. As of 3 p.m. on Friday EDT, the protest was still going.

“What kind of system do we live in where an institution can call the police on you for opposing genocide, but there’s no authority you can call on an institution that supports genocide?” activist Sean Blackman asked the crowd.

(Reporting and camera: Joe Lauria. Editor: Cathy Vogan.)

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