

## The Gaza War and Student Demonstrations: A Brief

The war began on October 7, 2023, when Hamas attacked Israel killing about 1,200 people, including more than 300 soldiers, and 252 people were taken as hostages. It is believed that 133 are still in captivity. The attack has prompted an unprecedented and massive military retaliation from Israeli forces. In the nearly eight-month Israeli war in Gaza, more than 34,844 Palestinians have been killed and 78,404 have been wounded. The majority of the dead are women and children. The tally includes at least 28 deaths on May 1, 2024. Israel estimates 263 soldiers have been killed and 1,592 wounded since the launch of its military operation in Gaza. The military offensive has devastated much of the coastal enclave and caused a humanitarian crisis.<sup>1</sup>

On May 7, 2024, Israel seized the Rafah crossing between Gaza and Egypt, forcing its closure. The facility was the main terminal for entry of food, medicine, and other supplies essential for the survival of Gaza's population of 2.3 million Palestinians. The seizure came despite weeks of calls that the U.S., different nations, and international bodies hoped would deter a big offensive in the Rafah area, which Israel says is Hamas's last stronghold.

Meanwhile, America's rift with Israel is widening over the issue of the Rafah attack. The Biden administration's "intensive public and private campaign to forestall Israel's assault on Rafah has become its toughest test to date with its Middle East ally".<sup>2</sup> President Biden on May 6, 2024, warned Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu against a full-scale assault on Rafah city.<sup>3</sup>

Biden urged Netanyahu not to launch an offensive in Rafah, the White House said. The leaders' call occurred before Hamas announced it had accepted a ceasefire proposal. Biden told Netanyahu he still believes reaching a ceasefire with Hamas is the best way to protect the lives of Israeli hostages held in Gaza. Biden also met King Abdullah II of Jordan at the White House on May 6, 2024, to discuss the war and hostage talks. Jordan's embassy in Washington said in a posting on the social media site X following the leaders' meeting that Abdullah warned that an Israeli operation on Rafah "threatens to lead to a new massacre."<sup>4</sup>

Today, the U.S. has signaled "optimism" for the Gaza cease-fire as Israel moves into Rafah<sup>5</sup> At the moment ceasefire negotiations are taking place in Cairo. Delegations from Hamas, Israel, the US, Egypt, and Qatar participating in the talks beginning on May 7, 2024. All five have reacted positively to the resumption of negotiations. Meetings are expected to continue on May 8, 2024. The US believes the remaining differences between Israel and Hamas can be bridged in negotiations over the latest ceasefire proposal, as talks resume in Cairo on May 8, 2024.

Meanwhile, International efforts to mediate a ceasefire between Hamas and Israel continue. On May 8, 2024, Israel said that it “sees no sign of a breakthrough in Egyptian-mediated talks on a truce with Hamas.”<sup>6</sup>

Notwithstanding Israel’s stance and official doubts, several very recent developments indicate a breakthrough in a ceasefire in Gaza is yet achievable.

Most importantly, the very recent Israeli attack on eastern Rafah did not appear to be the start of the full-scale invasion of the city that Israel has repeatedly promised.<sup>7</sup>

another very important development is the seemingly slight shift in the policy of the Biden administration which had been giving blind support to Israel all through the Gaza war.

Meanwhile, there is now a serious rift over the major Rafah offensive between the Biden administration and the Netanyahu government. The US in the first week of May had paused a bomb shipment for Israel over concerns it was going ahead with a major ground operation in Rafah, southern Gaza. This is “a sign of the growing rift between Washington and Jerusalem over the war.”<sup>8</sup>

Israel has not “fully addressed” US concerns over the humanitarian needs of civilians in Rafah, a US official said.<sup>9</sup>

Egypt has proposed to Hamas a comprehensive framework for a ceasefire and prisoner exchange agreement between it and Israel.

The first stage of the proposed agreement entails a 40-day temporary ceasefire, with the possibility of extension, and the release of all civilian Israeli hostages held in the Gaza Strip. Stage two is the matter of conclusion of prisoner exchange and reconstruction efforts. The third and final stage of the agreement involves completing the reconstruction process and exchanging the bodies of individuals killed during the conflict. The proposed agreement identifies Qatar, Egypt, and the United States as guarantors responsible for overseeing the implementation of the ceasefire, prisoner exchange, and reconstruction efforts outlined in the agreement.<sup>10</sup>

The proposal is certainly doable, and it is now primarily the responsibility of the US to get it somehow approved by Israel, and Hamas will surely follow. France and Saudi Arabia need to get involved, as it has some leverage in the whole matter of operationalizing the Hamas-Israel agreement. At least, it can help in footing the bill for the reconstruction of Gaza.

Meanwhile, doubts have grown over the fate of a Gaza truce plan that, as the week began, had raised hopes of an end to nearly seven months of war between Israel and Palestinian Hamas militants.

Critics in Israel have accused Netanyahu of seeking to prolong the war. The coalition he leads includes religious and ultra-nationalist parties which fiercely oppose any end to hostilities. A deal might lead these allies to quit government, threatening Netanyahu's grip on power.

Global public opinion matters, especially global youth, and will certainly shape politics in some manner. Israel is already bowing to growing outside public pressure and has made a concerted effort in recent days to show it's stepping up aid distribution in Gaza. There's pressure for a cease-fire, too, from college campuses across the US, which is Israel's most important ally and benefactor, and also parallel protests taking shape on European university campuses. The anti-war demonstrations have not gone unnoticed by displaced Palestinian students in Rafah, whose education came to an abrupt halt on October 7.

Meanwhile, what has changed the political landscape wasn't at all expected. In a perplexing and surprising development, an unprecedented and surprising wave of student demonstrations and encampments are underway at US universities, and elsewhere, in protest over the war in Gaza. Protesting students are also calling for their universities to divest from arms firms that supply to Israel and in some cases sever links with universities in Israel.<sup>11</sup>

Pro-Palestinian demonstrations and sit-ins are spreading at universities across the United States and on several campuses around the world.

Columbia University in New York, one of the most prestigious universities in the US, has emerged as the center for student activism since Israel's war on Gaza began more

On April 19, more than 100 protesters were arrested on the campus as police cleared an encampment set up by students.

On April 22, Columbia administrators announced that classes would be held in hybrid mode until the end of the spring semester.

Students maintain a protest encampment in support of Palestinians on April 26, 2024, at Columbia University in New York during the war on Gaza.

Large-scale protests on university grounds have spilled over to at least 50 other campuses around the world, including Yale University, Virginia Tech, University of Texas at Austin, University of California at Berkeley, American University, Arizona State University, Indiana University Bloomington, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Michigan State University

East Lansing Campus, Morehouse College, New York University, Ohio State University, Rice University, Roosevelt University, School of the Art Institute of Chicago, Stanford University, Swarthmore College, Temple University, The City College of New York, The New School, Tufts University, University of California Berkeley, University of California Los Angeles, University of Chicago, University of Colorado, University of Connecticut, University of Maryland Baltimore County, University of Michigan Ann Arbor University of Southern California in Los Angeles, University of Texas Arlington, University of Texas Austin, University of Texas Dallas, Washington University, and George Washington University

At least 900 students and faculty members have been arrested in the US over the past 10 days as protesters continue to demand a ceasefire in Gaza and divestment from companies enabling Israel's nearly seven-month war on Gaza. The protests have grown violent as law enforcement agencies have tried to remove students and faculty from encampments and protest sites.

Several students have been suspended, put on probation, and, in rare cases, expelled from their colleges. The protesting students received threats were subjected to abuse and received no protection from their institutions.

Some universities have had to cancel graduation ceremonies while others have seen their buildings, quadrangles, and courtyards occupied by the protesters and in some cases by encampments.<sup>12</sup>

College protests continue in the US. Clashes and arrests have occurred at UCLA and Columbia University. Meanwhile, campus demonstrations are intensifying across the US. Despite the pressure, the protests remain active and seemingly grow by the day.

By May 2, 2024, protests over the Israel-Hamas war have reached boiling point at US universities, leading to the arrests of hundreds of protesters on campuses across the country. Police have been involved in clashes with pro-Palestinian protesters who have set up encampments on dozens of campuses.<sup>13</sup>

The message from the students in encampments has been simple: they want their universities to stop doing business with Israel - or any companies that support its ongoing war in Gaza. The demand has its roots in the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions movement, a decades-old campaign against Israel's policies toward the Palestinians.

But the specifics vary from each set of protesters at different universities. Among them are these key demands:

Be more transparent about what money is received from Israel and what it's used for.

Stop investing college endowments with money managers who profit from Israeli companies or contractors.

Stop doing business with military weapons manufacturers that are supplying arms to Israel. Stop accepting research money from Israel for projects that aid the country's military efforts.

As of April 30, there had also been protests at the following universities:

Massachusetts Institute of Technology, McGill University, Michigan State University, Northwestern University, Portland State University, Princeton University, Purdue University, Rice University, Swarthmore College, The New School, Arizona State University, Auraria Campus, Brown University, California State University, Sacramento, City College of New York, Barnard College, Cornell University, Emory University, University of New Mexico, University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill, University of Pennsylvania, University of Pittsburgh, University of Rochester, University of Utah, Vanderbilt University, Virginia Tech, Washington State University, Fashion Institute of Technology, George Washington University, Harvard University, Indiana University Bloomington Institute of Political Studies, Tufts University, Tulane University, University of Alberta, University of California Berkeley, University of Connecticut, University of Denver, University of Florida, University of Georgia, University of Maryland, University of Michigan, University of Minnesota Twin Cities,

A small handful of occupations and protests have sprung up at UK universities, which included the following as of May 1, 024:

Warwick University, University of Leeds, University College London

What about other protests around the world?

There have been occupations and sit-ins at universities from France to New Zealand, including the following:

France: Paris Institute of Political Studies (Sciences Po), Sorbonne University

Italy: Sapienza University, Rome

New Zealand: University of Auckland

Australia: University of Melbourne, University of Sydney, University of Queensland, Australian National University in Canberra

Canada: McGill University, Concordia University, University of British Columbia, Vancouver

The unprecedented student demonstrations and the seriousness of the situation in Gaza are surely going to have an impact.

James J Zogby, in his insightful article “The impact of the student protests on Biden’s re-election,” published in the Washington Watch, published April 30, 2024, maintained that:<sup>14</sup>

Meanwhile, university student protests against US support for Israel’s war in Gaza have spread like wildfire. Last count, there have been sustained demonstrations on over 200 campuses. More recently, students have taken to establishing protest encampments in the center of some campuses. This began last week at Columbia University in New York. Ten days later there were encampments at almost four dozen universities. What’s been most striking is not only the way this effort has spread, but also the amazing diversity of the students involved in the demonstrations. There are Arab American students, to be sure, who’ve been joined by fellow students of every race and creed.

The leadership of the protesting students has been disciplined and eloquent in their demands for a ceasefire and an end to the genocide in Gaza. Many have also called on their universities to divest funds from entities contributing to the Israeli war effort. The protesters were peaceful, though purposefully disruptive. At times they’ve occupied central locations on campus. They’ve also chanted, as demonstrators won’t do. Yet, as noted by respected observers who’ve visited the protest sites, the protests have been peaceful and orderly...What’s been ignored is that in most of the encampments, a disproportionately large number of the protesters are Jewish students. ...With the ire of the students directed not only at Israel’s genocidal behaviors in Gaza but also at how the Biden administration has enabled this war to continue, the way these campus protests are playing out does not bode well for the President during this election year.... Through it all, the Biden White House has demonstrated only limited concern, apparently convinced that they’ll weather this storm and still defeat Donald Trump in November. They dismiss polls showing the President losing support among young and “minority” voters. This is a dangerous miscalculation. As primary elections in several states have demonstrated, there is a hemorrhaging of support for the President’s reelection. And as repression against student demonstrators continues, that opposition is solidifying. Should the war continue for several more months and the scene at this summer’s Democratic Convention in Chicago be as ugly as it was in 1968, many young voters will be hard-pressed to vote for Mr. Biden. They won’t vote for Mr. Trump. Most likely they’ll either vote for a third party or not vote at all.

By May 1, 2024, protesters had assembled across a minimum of 30 US universities in the past month, frequently setting up tent encampments to voice their dissent against the escalating death toll resulting from Israel's conflict in the Gaza Strip. 15

Student protests are escalating in the US. The surge in protests across US campuses followed heightened tensions after Hamas attacked southern Israel on October 7 and the extended Israeli military campaign in Gaza, resulting in significant Palestinian casualties. Students have rallied or set up tent encampments at dozens of schools across the US in recent days, expressing opposition to Israel's war in Gaza and demanding schools divest from companies that support Israel's government. Many of the schools have called in police to quell the protests.16

In a surprising development, student protests have been common across US campuses since the October 7 Hamas attack on southern Israel, and throughout the nearly eight-month Israeli war in Gaza.17

However, the latest surge in demonstrations began nearly two weeks ago amid outrage over Columbia University President Manouchehr Shafik's testimony to a US congressional committee, in which critics alleged she kowtowed to lawmakers while sidelining students at the university.

Among an array of demands, several protest movements have called for their schools to divest from Israel or weapons manufacturers related to the war. They have accused administrators across the country of weaponizing public safety and disingenuous claims of "antisemitism" to crack down on protests.18

The most recent bout of arrests also included 14 protesters at Tulane University in New Orleans, as well as arrests at the University of South Florida and the University of Wisconsin, Madison.

But the White House appeared to back the crackdown on the protesters on May 1, 2024, linking the demonstrations to anti-Semitism.

"They should not be able to disturb or disrupt the academic experience that students have," White House spokeswoman Karine Jean-Pierre told reporters.

"It is important that students and communities feel safe here. And at the same time, we are going to be forceful here and continue to underscore how anti-Semitism is hateful speech."19

Asked about pro-Israel protesters' attack on the student encampment at UCLA, Jean-Pierre declined to comment on the specifics. She said the White House rejects all forms of violence "broadly."

In Los Angeles, Mayor Karen Bass called the UCLA violence "absolutely abhorrent and inexcusable."

Meanwhile, the Jewish Voice for Peace (JVP) group condemned both the NYPD and Columbia University's actions.

Stefanie Fox, the group's executive director said, the school was on the wrong side of history once again as it was "in its oppression of the student anti-war movement of 1968, and wrong again in its oppression of the student movement against South African apartheid in 1985".<sup>20</sup>

After hundreds of arrests across American universities, tensions have been further escalated. Students are refusing to capitulate and end the stir over Israel's military actions in Gaza, with incidents of arrests in New York and clashes in California. In New York City, approximately 282 arrests were recorded by the NYPD at Columbia University and the City College of New York from very early May 1, 2024. This crackdown coincided with the clearance of students who had occupied Columbia University's Hamilton Hall since April 30.<sup>21</sup>

Once a symbol of activism during South Africa's anti-apartheid struggle, Hamilton Hall was dubbed "Hind's Hall" in memory of six-year-old Hind Rajab, tragically killed with her family by Israeli forces in Gaza. Many of those behind the protest were claimed to be "outside agitators" with no association with the university, according to New York City Mayor Eric Adams. Adams stated that young protesters "are being influenced by those who are professionals at radicalizing our children".<sup>22</sup>

Deputy Commissioner of Operations emphasized Columbia University's request for police assistance in reclaiming their campus for the NYPD, Kaz Daughtry, who stated that the police were "dispersing the unlawful encampment and persons barricaded inside of university buildings and restoring order."<sup>23</sup> Meanwhile, tensions soared at the University of California Los Angeles (UCLA) as pro-Israel counter-protesters clashed with pro-Palestine demonstrators. Witnesses reported attempts to dismantle the pro-Palestine encampment, leading to violence with objects being hurled and sticks wielded. In response to escalating violence at UCLA, intervention was made by the Los Angeles Police Department at the



university's request, addressing multiple incidents of aggression within the encampment. 24 Despite the turmoil, pro-Palestine demonstrators at UCLA remained steadfast, with their resilience highlighted by reporter Rob Reynolds amid adversity. Arrests extended beyond New York, with 14 protesters being detained at Tulane University in New Orleans, alongside arrests at the University of South Florida and the University of Wisconsin, Madison, as per media reports. The violence at UCLA was denounced as abhorrent and inexcusable by Los Angeles Mayor Karen Bass. The police crackdown at Columbia University was defended by New York City Mayor Eric Adams, attributing the protests to individuals unaffiliated with the institution. 25

These protests have “presented a dilemma for university administrators as they navigate between upholding free speech rights and addressing concerns of criminal behavior, anti-Semitic rhetoric, and hate speech.”26

As pro-Palestinian protests continue to rock universities across the United States, the Biden administration, whose backing of Israel has sparked ire among many demonstrators, is also wrestling with finding a delicate balance on the issue.27

White House spokeswoman Karine Jean-Pierre on May 1, 2024, condemned “a small percentage of students” who have been disruptive after a night of clashes and arrests on several campuses. “Students have the right to feel safe. They have the right to learn and to do this without disruption. And they have a right to feel safe on campus,” Jean-Pierre told reporters, adding: “We are going to be forceful here and continue to underscore how anti-Semitism is hateful speech.”28

She also acknowledged the war in Gaza was “painful” and “assured that Biden supported the right to peaceful protest.”29

Law enforcement officers massed by the hundreds on the campus of the University of California at Los Angeles after darkness fell on May 1, 2024, in preparation to clear out a pro-Palestinian protest camp attacked the night before by pro-Israel supporters. UCLA had canceled classes for the day following a violent clash on May 1, 2024, between the encampment's occupants and a group of masked counter-demonstrators who mounted an assault on the tent city with sticks and poles. The occupants of the outdoor protest camp, set up last week, had remained otherwise largely peaceful before the melee, which university officials blamed on “instigators,” vowing an investigation.30

The May 2, 2024 raid also came a day after police in New York City arrested pro-Palestinian activists who occupied a building at Columbia University and removed a tent city from the campus of the Ivy League school. Police arrested a total of about 300 people at Columbia

and City College of New York, Mayor Eric Adams said. Many of those arrested were charged with trespassing and criminal mischief.<sup>31</sup>

The clashes at UCLA and in New York were part of the biggest outpouring of US student activism since the anti-racism rallies and marches of 2020. The protests follow the 7 October attack on southern Israel by Hamas militants from the Gaza Strip and the ensuing Israeli offensive on the Palestinian enclave. Students have rallied or set up tent encampments at dozens of schools across the US in recent days, expressing opposition to Israel's war in Gaza and demanding schools divest from companies that support Israel's government. Many of the schools have called in police to quell the protests.<sup>32</sup>

An article entitled “As student protests shake US campuses, Biden mum,” published in *Inquirer*, on May 2, 2024, aptly argued that:<sup>33</sup>

What does Joe Biden have to say about the rowdy student protests against Israel's war with Hamas in Gaza that have rocked American college campuses in recent weeks? Almost nothing. The US president has so far avoided the contentious subject as it is likely to complicate his reelection campaign...Biden's reluctance to weigh in on the biggest and most prolonged unrest to rock US campuses since the Vietnam War protests of the 1960s and 70s has not gone unnoticed by Trump...The protests put Biden in a difficult spot because, for his coalition of voters from 2020, he relied heavily on young people in addition to Muslims and Arab Americans,” said Alex Keena, who teaches political science at Virginia Commonwealth University. James Zogby, president of the Arab American Institute, said the White House is “apparently convinced that they'll weather this storm and still defeat Donald Trump in November.” He added: “This is a dangerous miscalculation.” Since the start of the war in Gaza, which was triggered by the unprecedented attack by Hamas on Israel on October 7, Biden has faced criticism for his unconditional support for Israel. When Biden travels, he is often met by demonstrators chanting “Genocidal Joe” and demanding a ceasefire. A Harvard University poll published last month showed Biden was more popular with Americans under 30 than his rival, with 45 percent of respondents intending to vote for Biden and 37 percent for Trump. But the eight-point difference is much smaller compared to a similar poll four years ago when Biden led by 23 points. Biden could still win back the hearts of some young voters if a ceasefire agreement coupled with the release of hostages held in Gaza is reached between Hamas and Israel...Washington has been pushing for a ceasefire deal for weeks. US Secretary of State Antony Blinken, who was in Israel Wednesday on his seventh Middle East crisis tour since the war broke out, said “Hamas needs to say, ‘yes’ and needs to get this done.” If the agreement falls through and

campus unrest continues, that will cloud the Democratic National Convention in August in Chicago, where Biden will be officially nominated for president.

Fawaz Turki, in his excellent article entitled “Student protests in the US against Israel’s Gaza War Evoke the spirit of ‘68” published in Gulf News, May 2, 2024, convincingly has argued that:<sup>34</sup>

Since I was active in the Vietnam anti-war movement in the late 1960s and early 1970s, it may not seem surprising that news — not to mention striking images — of the pro-Palestinian student protests on campuses across the US represent for me, old geezer that I now am, not only a nostalgia for the absolutes of yore but also a time of reflection on the dynamic and relevance of student protests in social life. The round-the-clock tent encampments erected by students on quads and lawns at dozens of campuses across the country, all the way from Northeastern University in Boston to Arizona State University in Tempe, 2,500 miles away, are now a common sight — and headline news. These nationwide demonstrations, held by students to express their opposition to Israel’s genocidal war in Gaza, seem to have come out of left field soon after April 18 — all erupting, to everyone’s surprise, seemingly simultaneously and as if in lockstep. However, there was no steady hand at the helm directing them by any central body of student leaders. If you have wondered, as I have, how to explain the psychodynamics of this phenomenon, Omar Wasan, a professor at UC-Berkeley, who studies protest movements, has an answer. He was quoted in the New York Times on Sunday as saying that how protest movements spread is anchored in what is known in sociology as the “ovation model.” In a theatre, he theorized, “if some people in the front start to stand up,” to give a standing ovation, then other people start to stand up too, followed by a cascade throughout the auditorium. Well, we know that in this case the academic ovation was started by Columbia University, which was, as it were, the first academic institution in the front of the auditorium to stand up on that day in April. And I tell you, everything about this Ivy League university — which traditionally has required its students to encounter what it calls “cornerstone ideas and theories from across literature, philosophy, history, science, and the arts” — makes it the most likely place for that metaphoric ovation to begin. You see, Columbia has a storied history in protest folklore, a history that an old geezer like myself with a good memory can recall vividly...That was 1968, or if you wish, as called the era, the “Sixties”, and I tell you that no string of words can recapture the inner excitement and the passionate adventure of spirit unleashed by the student anti-war movement at the time, one that Columbia helped, single-handedly, to unleash across the country. Light show right now from the Columbia encampment at Columbia University outside of Hind’s Hall. Long live Hind’s Hall, every

fascist state will fall! Look, you, and I know that the idealistic dreams of those students were not realized then, have not been realized since, and will not likely ever be realized in the America of our time. But some defeats are as important as victories. Just as, say, the Paris Commune of 1871 — crushed in blood after barely seventy days — has lived on in historical and popular memory, the student uprisings in 1968 still represent a hope that, even if students' dreams (for human rights, racial justice, social equity, and a moral foreign policy) were not fulfilled, what they did was worth doing. Its memory would go on to teach and inspire. That is what happened in April 1968, almost exactly 56 years ago to the day, has bequeathed this new generation of students. It's a legacy they are replicating on their campuses across the country, however harsh police crackdowns on them will become. I say all the power to you, kids, rock on.

Pro-Palestine protests in US universities have intensified with violence reported on campuses and over 300 being arrested. In recent days, students have rallied or set up encampments at dozens of universities expressing opposition to Israel's war in Gaza and demanding institutes divest from companies that support Israel's government.<sup>35</sup>

On May 2, 2024, UCLA pro-Palestine protests continue after a stand-off with riot police. Law enforcement officers in riot gear massed by the hundreds on the campus of the University of California at Los Angeles after darkness fell on May 2, 2024, in preparation to clear out a pro-Palestinian protest camp attacked the night before by pro-Israel supporters. The chaotic scenes at UCLA came just hours after New York police burst into a building occupied by anti-war protesters at Columbia University on Tuesday night, arresting over 300 protesters. Some of the activists on the UCLA campus were seen donning hard hats, goggles, and respirator masks in anticipation of the raid a day after the university declared the encampment unlawful, while others chanted "We're not leaving."<sup>36</sup>

Hundreds of police personnel gathered on the campus of the University of California at Los Angeles on May 2, 2024, while bracing to clear out a pro-Palestinian protest camp that was attacked the night before by pro-Israel supporters. Live television footage showed police in tactical gear filing onto the UCLA campus adjacent to a complex of tents occupied by crowds of demonstrators. There was an anticipation of the raid a day after the university declared the encampment unlawful.<sup>37</sup>

A second night of violence has been unleashed on the University of California Los Angeles (UCLA) as police have begun to descend on a pro-Palestine encampment.

Students have been fortifying their barricades in preparation for another night of conflict as they attempt to hold their ground as a sign of protest. Those within the walls of the

encampment are wearing helmets, and goggles and prepping medical aid – with student doctors reportedly on-site to Hellos Angeles Police have reportedly made a dispersal announcement to protestors in the encampment – thought to be in the hundreds. ‘You risk serious injury,’ one announcement reportedly said. ret hose within the walls of the encampment were heard chanting ‘We’re not leaving!’ and ‘Shame on you LAPD’ in response to the dispersal order, which threatened those inside with arrest. Earlier reports appeared to show snipers on surrounding buildings near the encampment as being in Royce Hall, next to the square where protestors are gathered. The protests on the UCLA campus have been going on for weeks.<sup>38</sup>

Student protests are also happening in Britain. Scores of Pro-Palestine students have also gathered in protest on university lawns across Britain to take a stand against Israel's war in Gaza following violent demonstrations at campuses in the US. Tents have been pitched outside university buildings by protestors who are calling on their universities to divest from Israel in response to its military operation in the Gaza Strip.

Students from the University of Manchester (UOM) have filled Brunswick Park with banners, plaques, and Palestinian flags to call for the university to 'end its partnership with systems which support Israel'.

One banner read: 'UOM blood on your hands', while another said: 'UOM supports Israeli Genocide.'

In Bristol, hand-painted banners were erected between tents, emblazoned with messages of defiance as students lobbied their university to cut ties with arms companies and back calls for a ceasefire as the war rages on in the Levant.<sup>39</sup>

Large crowds have also been forming in Newcastle, as students say their protest will 'highlight the institution's investment strategy and its complicity in the Israeli military's war crimes in Gaza and the West Bank'.

Elsewhere, several students walked out of lectures at Sheffield University yesterday to take part in the demonstration and are refusing to leave until the universities meet their demands.

Leeds students also announced plans to camp 'indefinitely' outside their student union, occupying land opposite the building and pledging to remain until the university, in their view, is 'no longer complicit in the oppression of the Palestinian people'.<sup>40</sup>

Meanwhile, doubts grew on May 2, 2024, over the fate of a Gaza truce plan that, as the week began, had raised hopes of an end to nearly seven months of war between Israel and

Palestinian Hamas militants. Senior Hamas official Osama Hamdan said that the movement's position on the truce proposal was "negative" for the time being.

The group's aim remains an "end to this war", senior Hamas official Suhail al-Hindi said. The Hamas goal is at odds with the stated position of Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.<sup>41</sup>

Regardless of whether a truce is reached, Netanyahu vows to send Israeli troops into Rafah against Hamas fighters there. The Biden administration "reiterated their opposition to such an operation without a plan to protect the civilians."

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken has urged the Islamist movement to accept the truce plan. "Hamas needs to say yes and needs to get this done," Blinken said on May 1, 2024, while in Israel on his latest Middle East mission.<sup>42</sup>

In early April there had also been initial optimism over a possible truce deal, only to have Israel and Hamas later accuse each other of undermining negotiations.

Talks on a potential deal to pause the bloodiest-ever Gaza war have been held in Cairo involving US, Egyptian, and Qatari mediators. Hamas wants a permanent ceasefire baked into it and Israel's withdrawal from Gaza remained a likely point of contention.<sup>43</sup>

Global public opinion matters, especially global youth, and will certainly shape politics in some manner. Israel is already bowing to growing outside public pressure and has made a concerted effort in recent days to show it's stepping up aid distribution in Gaza. There's pressure for a cease-fire, too, from college campuses across the US, which is Israel's most important ally and benefactor, and also parallel protests taking shape on European university campuses. The anti-war demonstrations have not gone unnoticed by displaced Palestinian students in Rafah, whose education came to an abrupt halt on October 7.

Meanwhile, the Palestinians continue to suffer from Israeli brutal offensives. The US isn't doing enough to stop Israel from destroying what remains of Gaza. Today, the humanitarian situation there is terrible. Israel must be stopped from invading Rafah as it would be indeed catastrophic. Israel's plans to eliminate Hamas must be scuttled by the Biden administration as it isn't doable. Hamas is much more than a military force. It is an idea of resistance in the popular Arab mind that cannot be ended now. Global public opinion has turned against Israel and is now calling for an end to the Gaza war. Therefore, there must be an immediate ceasefire in Gaza. The world leadership must now move on to a two-state solution to the decades-old conflict. Only the US can force Israel to move in that direction. No one else has the leverage on Israel. As expected, the Biden administration is still playing politics with the whole Palestinian-Israeli conflict issue. That is most tragic and unfortunate but remains a hard reality, nonetheless. However, given the domestic pressure on the Biden

administration because of the current and massive student demonstrations in the US may yet become enough significant political pressure to somehow turn the tide and affect the outcome of the Gaza war situation. The new globalist student movement is a product of new global political forces unleashed by global media, especially social media, 24/7 news, and global networking because of the Internet's global expansion, the like of which hasn't been seen before. The Biden and the Netanyahu administrations are clueless about the power of this new phenomenon. They are grounded in old knowledge and decadent brick-and-mortar establishments and think tanks feeding them constantly. They will soon learn at their peril. The world is changing right before our eyes, an Israeli-Palestinian peace deal may be realized, sooner than later.

The wave of student protests is unprecedented and is largely due to the global media coverage of the Gaza war, and the power of the new social media increasingly used by youth in the developed world.

US colleges have been using law enforcement, academic suspensions, and expulsions to quell student demonstrations since Hamas' October 7, attack on Israel. The war has further fueled deeply held views of students and faculty on all sides.

In early May 2024, students across the US rallied or set up tents at dozens of universities to protest the months-long war in Gaza and call on President Joe Biden, who has supported Israel, to do more to stop the bloodshed in Gaza. While demands have varied among schools and even within protest movements, students demonstrating across the US have called on institutions to divest from companies and other entities that they say support or benefit from Israel's war in Gaza.

They also demand their schools divest from companies that support Israel's government, such as the arms suppliers. More than 2,000 people have been arrested nationwide as students continue protests calling for a ceasefire in Gaza. Campus protests have emerged as a new political flashpoint during a hotly contested and deeply divisive US election year.<sup>44</sup>

But similar demonstrations have spread in some form to campuses in Britain, France, Australia, and elsewhere, and in early May students waved Palestinian flags and chanted anti-war slogans during a ceremony at the University of Michigan. The student protests have been most intense in American universities. Meanwhile, American activism also "highlighted the lack of protest in support of Palestinians in the Arab world."<sup>45</sup>

Earlier, police had arrested at least 25 pro-Palestinian protesters and cleared an encampment at the University of Virginia (UVA) as campuses across the United States

brace for more turmoil during graduation ceremonies. Tensions flared at UVA's campus in Charlottesville, where protests had been largely peaceful until Saturday morning, when police officers in riot gear were seen in a video moving on an encampment on the campus's lawn, cuffing some demonstrators with zip ties and using what appeared to be chemical spray. The UVA said in a statement that protesters had violated several university policies, including setting up tents and using amplified sound.

UVA President Jim Ryan wrote in a message that officials had learned that "individuals unaffiliated with the university" who presented "some safety concerns" had joined the protesters on the campus. It was not immediately clear how many of those arrested were UVA students.<sup>46</sup>

A pro-Palestinian protest at the University of Mississippi was met by a larger crowd of counter-protesters singing the national anthem and carrying US flags.<sup>47</sup>

Police have begun to clear a pro-Palestinian tent encampment at George Washington University in Washington DC, hours after dozens of protesters left the site and marched to President Ellen Granberg's home, reports the Associated Press (AP).

GW Hatchet, the university's student-run newspaper said officers gave a third and final warning to demonstrators at about 3.30 am (EDT) on Wednesday that all who remained at the encampment would be arrested.<sup>48</sup>

According to event organizers, nearly 30 people were arrested as police used pepper spray to contain the crowd.

Mayor Muriel Bowser and Washington DC's Metropolitan police department (MPD) chief Pamela Smith are set to testify about the District's handling of the protest at a House committee on oversight and accountability hearing on Wednesday afternoon, reports the AP.<sup>49</sup>

In early May colleges and universities are holding graduation ceremonies this weekend as pro-Palestinian protests continue on campuses across the US. In Los Angeles, police cleared out a protest encampment at USC but did not make any arrests Sunday morning, according to the school. The university has called off its main commencement ceremony, citing security concerns.<sup>50</sup>

At the University of Virginia, police took down tents and cleared out protesters Saturday after declaring an unlawful assembly near the center of campus. UVA said 25 people were arrested for trespassing. At the University of Michigan, banners with opposing messages flew overhead and some protesters were removed during the school's main graduation



ceremony on Saturday. A smaller ceremony held Friday at the school was also interrupted.<sup>51</sup>

The University of Southern California (USC) has seen major protests against Israel's war in Gaza over the past several weeks. The prestigious school's president has times. On May 5, 2024, police cleared the protest encampment at the University of Southern California without making any arrests. Joel Curran, the school's senior vice president of communications, said the Los Angeles Police Department provided security as the encampment was cleared "peacefully."<sup>52</sup>

On May 9, 2024, the president of the University of Southern California was censured by the school's academic senate after weeks of turmoil on campus.<sup>53</sup>

Emma Tucker in Her article "Police Tactics at Campus Protests Reveal Disparities and Lessons Learned post-George Floyd" published in CNN on May 5, 2024 argued that:<sup>54</sup>

As universities and colleges across the US turn to police to clear their campuses of protests over Israel's assault on Gaza, the response by law enforcement is under heightened scrutiny after thousands were arrested since mid-April...The wide range of police tactics seen on campuses nationwide reveal the disparities between police agencies in their training and understanding of the generally accepted best practices in dealing with protests and crowd control issues, law enforcement experts told CNN. Still, the experts said, police were largely measured in their approach and showed restraint in using force – a direct result of lessons learned during the widespread protests after the police killing of George Floyd nearly four years ago. Those protests were bigger, fiercer, and more sustained than prior demonstrations.

Meanwhile, at Columbia University dozens of protesters entered the university's Hamilton Hall and barricaded themselves inside before the institution asked for the New York City Police Department's assistance. A total of 282 people were arrested at the pro-Palestinian protests at Columbia as well as The City College of New York, according to the NYPD.<sup>55</sup>

At least 25 people were arrested at the University of Virginia following protesters' multiple university police violations and subsequent violent conduct." The students had posted a statement on Instagram calling for the university to divest from Israel.<sup>56</sup>

Approximately 50 people were arrested outside the Art Institute of Chicago during a demonstration. Police have cleared out pro-Palestinian protesters and taken down tents near the center of the University of Virginia's (UVA) campus. Earlier, a group called UVA

Encampment for Gaza posted a statement on Instagram calling for the university to divest from Israel.<sup>57</sup>

Pro-Palestinian protests that have fanned across US universities for weeks are now more muted after a series of clashes with police, and mass arrests. Joe Biden delivered his most extensive remarks on the protests and directed to restore order, drawing a line between what he called peaceful and violent protests, repeating his support for Israel, and dismissing calls for the National Guard to intervene at universities.<sup>58</sup>

Aaron Zitner, Stephen Kalin, Tarini Parti, and Sabrina Siddiqui, “For Biden, College Protests Mean Few Good Options, Lots of Risks”, Wall Street Journal, May 2, 2024, aptly said that:<sup>59</sup>

President Biden’s fragile bid for a second term is under new threat from the powerful combination of two conflicts he has little direct control over Israel’s war with Hamas and the deepening rift in the U.S. over America’s role in it. The two crises, unfolding thousands of miles from each other, are merging to crystallize a wider set of divisions in U.S. society that are challenging Biden’s already shaky political standing. Americans had already been debating the limits of free speech on campus, the balance between protest and public order, and the U.S. alliance with an obstinate Israeli government.

Kim Bellware, College students are protesting schools’ ties to Israel. Here’s why,” The Washington Post, May 4, 2024. College students are protesting schools’ ties to Israel. Here’s why. (msn.com) explained that:<sup>60</sup>

Students have largely demonstrated in a show of solidarity with Palestinians displaced or killed in the Israel-Hamas conflict. Protesters, especially at wealthy schools such as Yale and Columbia, have also demanded that their university endowments divest from military weapons manufacturers and defense contractors with ties to Israel. The protesters have largely demanded that universities stop their endowments from supporting Israeli-linked companies or institutions. Such divestment can be complicated when a university’s financial relationship with a targeted company is not direct but through an investment in an index fund. Some schools, such as New York University, have balked at recent calls to change their investments, The Washington Post reported, but there is precedent. Columbia, the University of California system, and Yale have committed to divesting from assets tied to contentious issues including fossil fuels, prison holdings, and tobacco sales. At Cornell University and other schools, students have identified ties to specific companies, such as the weapons manufacturers Lockheed Martin and Raytheon....While divestment is the major demand of student protests across the country, students are also calling for changes that are specific to their campus communities’ particular relationships

to Israel, weapons manufacturing, and issues like militarization and occupation that are viewed as relevant themes to Palestinian freedom.

Meanwhile, student protests demanding that universities sever ties with Israel over the Gaza war have spread across Europe, sparking clashes and arrests as new demonstrations broke out in the Netherlands, Germany, France, Switzerland, and Austria.

Students at various European universities, inspired by ongoing demonstrations at US campuses, have been occupying halls and facilities, demanding an end to partnerships with Israeli institutions because Israel assaulted Gaza.<sup>61</sup>

The protests spread to Europe, the French protests, much smaller in scale than those seen in the US, began at elite political science faculties, but have spread to other universities in recent days. The government in France – which is home to the largest Jewish population outside Israel and the US, and to Europe’s largest Muslim population – has said it would be extremely firm and stop any blockades and sit-ins. Some university heads have called in police to clear buildings.<sup>62</sup> The protests are happening against the backdrop of the European elections, with the government minister for higher education accusing the leftwing party France Unbowed (La France Insoumise) and its leader, Jean-Luc Mélenchon, of stoking the protests for its electoral gains. The party said the protesting students were the “honor” of France. <sup>63</sup>

Dutch police said 169 people had been arrested on Monday evening when they broke up an encampment at the University of Amsterdam. Police were filmed baton-charging protesters and smashing up their tents after they refused to leave the campus.

Before the police intervention, violence also erupted briefly when a small group of counter-protesters wielding flares stormed the main protest.

Several hundred protesters calling for a ceasefire resumed the demonstration on Tuesday evening around the university campus, erecting barriers to access routes amid a heavy police presence.

About 50 demonstrators were also protesting on Tuesday outside the library at Utrecht University and a few dozen at the Technical University of Delft.

In the eastern German city of Leipzig, the university said in a statement that 50 to 60 people occupied a lecture hall on Tuesday afternoon, waving banners that read: “University occupation against genocide”. Protesters barricaded the lecture hall doors from the inside

and erected tents in the courtyard, according to the university. The university called in the police in the afternoon and filed a criminal complaint. A pro-Israeli counter-protest also took place in the area, involving about 40 people. Criminal proceedings have been initiated against 13 people who were in the lecture hall on suspicion of trespassing. No arrests have been made so far.

Earlier, at Berlin's Free University, police cleared a demonstration after up to 80 people erected a protest camp in a courtyard of the campus. The protesters, some of whom wore the keffiyeh scarf that has long been a symbol of the Palestinian cause, sat in front of tents and waved banners. They later tried to enter rooms, and lecture halls, and occupy them, according to the university, which said it then called in the police to clear the protest.

The university said property was damaged while classes in some buildings were suspended for the day. Berlin police said they made some arrests for incitement to hatred and trespassing.

In Paris, police on May 7, 2024, twice intervened at Paris's prestigious Sciences Po university to disperse about 20 students who had barricaded themselves in the university's main hall. Police moved in to allow other students to take their exams and made two arrests, according to Paris prosecutors. The university said the exams were able to proceed without incident.<sup>64</sup>

Police have intervened several times over the past week at Sciences Po, where protesters are demanding the university reveal its partnerships with Israeli institutions. Thirteen students are on a hunger strike, according to the university. At the nearby Sorbonne University building, police moved on Tuesday evening to eject about a hundred students who had occupied an amphitheater for two hours to protest about Gaza, police sources said.<sup>65</sup>

In Switzerland, protests on May 7, 2024, spread to three universities in Lausanne Geneva, and Zurich.

The University of Lausanne said in a statement that it "considers that there is no reason to cease these relations" with Israeli universities, as protesters demand. In Austria, dozens of protesters have been camped on the campus of Vienna University, putting up tents and stringing up banners. More than 100 students were also occupying Ghent University, in Belgium, in both a climate and a Gaza protest that they want to prolong until Wednesday.<sup>66</sup>

Encampments have also been set up and protests have taken place at universities in other European countries over the past weeks including Ireland, Finland, Denmark, Italy, Spain, and the UK.

Clashes also broke out between police and protesters during a pro-Palestinian rally in central Athens on Tuesday. More than 300 people carrying Palestinian flags and banners reading “Hands off Rafah!” rallied outside the parliament building in the Greek capital.<sup>67</sup>

Campus protests by pro-Palestinian activists have further spread across Europe, as some called for a break of ties with Israel over the war in Gaza. Student protests demanding that universities sever ties with Israel over the Gaza war have spread across Europe, sparking clashes and arrests as new demonstrations broke out in the Netherlands, Germany, France, Switzerland, and Austria.<sup>68</sup>

On May 9, 2024, students against the war in Gaza began taking down the camp after Trinity College Dublin said it would divest from three Israeli companies.<sup>69</sup>

German police broke up a protest by several hundred people who had occupied a courtyard at Berlin’s Free University. Protesters also occupied a university building in Amsterdam hours after police detained 169 people at a different campus location. Elsewhere in Europe, some student camps have been allowed to stay in places like the lawns of Cambridge. In recent days, students have held protests or set up encampments in Finland, Denmark, Italy, Spain, France, and Britain.<sup>70</sup>

Meanwhile, the Palestinians continue to suffer from Israeli brutal offensives. The US isn’t doing enough to stop Israel from destroying what remains of Gaza. Today, the humanitarian situation there is terrible. Israel must be stopped from invading Rafah as it would be indeed catastrophic. Israel’s plans to eliminate Hamas must be scuttled by the Biden administration as it isn’t doable. Hamas is much more than a military force. It is an idea of resistance in the popular Arab mind that cannot be ended now. Global public opinion has turned against Israel and is now calling for an end to the Gaza war. Therefore, there must be an immediate ceasefire in Gaza. The world leadership must now move on to a two-state solution to the decades-old conflict. Only the US can force Israel to move in that direction. No one else has the leverage on Israel. As expected, the Biden administration is still playing politics with the whole Palestinian-Israeli conflict issue. That is most tragic and unfortunate but remains a hard reality, nonetheless. However, given the domestic pressure on the Biden administration because of the current and massive student demonstrations in the US may yet become enough significant political pressure to somehow turn the tide and affect the outcome of the Gaza war situation. The new globalist student movement is a product of new global political forces unleashed by global media, especially social media, 24/7 news, and global networking because of the Internet's global expansion, the like of which hasn’t been seen before. The Biden and the Netanyahu administrations are clueless about the power of this new phenomenon. They are grounded in old knowledge and decadent brick-and-mortar establishments and think tanks feeding them constantly. They will soon learn

at their peril. The world is changing right before our eyes, an Israeli-Palestinian peace deal may be realized, sooner than later.

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