



# Speak Out Now

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## We Will NOT Be Silenced!

On April 2, the administration of Columbia University in New York City suspended four students who are active in the opposition to the ongoing genocide in Gaza, and evicted them from their university housing. In response, student activists set up a tent city in solidarity with the evicted students. Other students across the country have since joined the protest, setting up tent camps on their campuses.

Since then, the police were called in to break up the encampment at Columbia and 108 students were arrested. The scene has been repeated across the country, with increasing numbers of students setting up solidarity encampments. At school after school the police have been called in to break up the peaceful camps. But the resistance has increased at campuses, across the U.S., some in Canada, students at Sciences Po, in Paris, France have pitched their tents as well.

University officials have been joined by politicians, both Democrat and Republican, with President Biden and House Speaker, Mike Johnson, and Trump joining the attack on students' right to discuss and exercise their freedom of speech and assembly.

Their labeling of peaceful protests by students as being "anti-semitic" and openly supporting the assault on students' rights is not surprising. This attack on students justifies the role these politicians play in maintaining the system of oppression in the Middle East. Israel is imperialism's cop in the region, protecting the geopolitical and financial (oil) interests of the the large corporations. Both Biden and Johnson were instrumental in recently passing legislation that will send another \$26.3 billion of military aid to Israel. Biden went so far as to say it was a "good day for world peace".

Bombing and systematically starving people, denying them access to medical supplies, and bombing their hospitals, is NOT a path to "peace".

Increasing numbers of people, are becoming aware of the brutality of this system and the role of those who support and fuel this criminal assault on the Palestinian people. The U.N. and humanitarian organizations throughout the world have condemned

this genocidal war. We, who oppose this brutality, are standing with the world community.

We are witnessing a program of systemic genocide and it must be opposed. The claim of rampant anti-semitism is a cheap cover. And those who push it, know that. They don't want this movement to grow. Were the hundreds of Jewish anti-war protesters who were recently arrested for holding a Passover Seder near Senate majority leader Chuck Schumer's house anti-semitic? Of course not! They are caring human beings. Anti-Zionism is not anti-Semitism!

Those in positions of power don't want the continued exposure of the link of universities and colleges to Israel's war machine. In the same way Google has tried to silence opposition to its contracts with the Israeli government and military, by firing 28 of its employees who demonstrated their opposition.

Those who hold power have the armed force to break up encampments and demonstrations and even to try to silence our discussions. But they don't have the power to force us to accept the horrors the system they represent and defend imposes on the world.

In fact, they have achieved the opposite and provided an invaluable education to hundreds of thousands and maybe millions of people across this country. Those who control the universities and colleges have exposed the true goals of the education they want to provide – to indoctrinate young people to accept the realities of this system and be satisfied with the privileges they hope their education will confer. Those in power have demonstrated that the force they use to maintain their control around the world will be used here as well.

They have taught people who have become activated, the power of collective action. And they have reinforced the old saying that, *"If you don't stand for something – you will fall for anything."*

It is possible that the protests will ignite more thoughtful discussion in the larger population and lead to widening actions across the country, especially among workers who could exert their economic power and begin to pose a real challenge to this system.

# Israel Threatens to Drag the World Into its War

The Palestinians are being bombed and starved by Israel with the support of U.S., European and some governments in the Middle East. The horror they are raining down on the people trapped in Gaza is justified as a response to the October 7th attack by Hamas, the party that rules Gaza. Now, the stakes are even higher. On April 2nd, Israel's military attacked Iran, by bombing the Iranian consulate in Damascus, the capital of Syria, killing 13 people, including a general from the Iranian Quds Force, Iran's military intelligence.

Iran's government responded with a demonstration of force, firing 300 drones and missiles at Israel. Most of these were shot down by Israel, aided by Jordanian and U.S. military forces. For a week, the world watched and waited – would Israel launch a full scale attack in response and drag the world into a major war?

Finally, the Israeli military conducted a small, but significant, symbolic strike – attacking an Iranian military base near the city of Isfahan where Iran maintains a nuclear facility. For now, both Iran and Israel have signaled that they won't escalate the conflict further. However, these incidents show the danger of a wider war in the Middle East, always threatening to break loose.

Iran and Israel have been in what has been called a “shadow war” for decades. This war is rooted in the history of U.S. domination of the Middle East, and opposition to it by Iran and other states.

The state of Iran was founded in a revolution, in 1979. The population overthrew a ruthless regime, imposed on the Iranian people by the U.S., that had allowed foreign oil companies to exploit Iran's vast oil wealth. An Islamic political force seized power and became an oppressive elite, hijacking the revolution for their own interests. Under the Islamic Republic, Iran took control of its oil, and it has never been forgiven for this by European and U.S. corporations and their governments. Iran's military is one of the biggest in the Middle East, making it a powerful opponent of the U.S. and its ally, Israel.

The state of Israel is the most important military ally of the United States in the Middle East. It receives \$4 billion dollars in aid from the U.S. each year. About 16 percent of Israel's military budget is paid by the U.S. The bombs falling on Gaza, which have killed 34,000 people, are bought and paid for with U.S. tax dollars. Israel is also a nuclear power.

The conflict between Iran and Israel has played out throughout the region. Iran supports Hezbollah, a militant force and political party based in southern Lebanon, where Israel has waged war and seized territory. Iran supports Hamas in Gaza against Israel. Iran is allied with the Houthis in Yemen who have attacked U.S., European, and Israeli ships during Israel's war on Gaza.

The current hostility between Iran and Israel is a continuation of a war already being waged on the people of the region by the U.S. and its allies.

After Israel's attack on the Iranian consulate in Syria, and Iran's retaliation, France, Britain, and the United States declared their intention to defend Israel. Their muted criticisms of Israel's genocide were set aside as they declared support for the Israeli regime in this conflict with Iran.

With the crisis on hold for now, Israel has turned its attention back to its bloody work in Gaza. Israel's troops are beginning a new and more horrible slaughter in the city of Rafah, where half of Gaza's 2.3 million inhabitants are taking refuge. For weeks, they have been bombarding and raiding, preparing to carry out the threatened invasion. The population is on the brink of starvation, with famine imminent. The elderly people and children are dying while food deliveries and medicine are held up by Israel's army.

We cannot remain silent. Israel is committing genocide in Gaza. We cannot tolerate Israel's policies towards Iran, which also threaten to instigate a massive war.

We need to respond. We need to demand an end to U.S. support for Israel and its genocidal policies. We need to talk with our friends, family, co-workers and students. Together we need to break the silence, to state clearly that we will not tolerate this injustice. We need to say NO to their callous inhumanity and readiness to cause unimaginable destruction. The future is up to us.

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***We Need to Organize!***  
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