

افغانستان آزاد – آزاد افغانستان

AA-AA

چو کشور نباشد تن من مباد بدین بوم و بر زنده یک تن مباد
همه سر به سر تن به کشتن دهیم از آن به که کشور به دشمن دهیم

www.afgazad.com

afgazad@gmail.com

European Languages

زبانهای اروپایی

Robert Milkowski, A. Woodsen, Jacob Crosse
14.03.2025

Over 1,000 protest in Foley Square, New York City in defense of Mahmoud Khalil: “This is what happened in Nazi Germany”

Attend the IYSSE’s public meetings this week, “Free Mahmoud Khalil!”: Friday, March 14 at 6:30 p.m. at The Center (208 W 13th St., Room 310, New York City) and online Saturday with the Educators Rank-and-File Committee. [Click here to register for the online meeting.](#)



A section of the protest in Foley Square New York City, March 12, 2025

Over 1,000 people gathered outside a New York City court to protest the kidnapping of Mahmoud Khalil, a legal resident of the United States who was detained by Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents this past Saturday on orders from the Trump White House.

Khalil, a 30-year-old graduate student at Columbia University, has not been charged with a crime, yet he is currently incarcerated in a detention facility in Jena, Louisiana, over 1,000 miles from his home and pregnant wife, who is an American citizen.

His kidnapping has provoked mass anger and protests throughout the United States and internationally. On Wednesday, reporters with the *World Socialist Web Site* spoke to several residents, students and educators in Foley Square in New York where a court hearing concerning Khalil's arrest took place.

John, a worker, came to the rally to defend democratic rights and protest against the "fascist" and "lawless" Trump administration. He noted that while "a lot of things Trump says are stupid," workers needed to understand "this guy is dangerous and everything he does and doesn't do is dangerous, with COVID, how he handled it, it is just we have to take him and what he does seriously."

Rejecting Trump's attacks on immigrants, John noted, "Trump and a lot of other people use fear and lies to manipulate." He observed, "every one of us is an immigrant. If you are not a Native American, you are an immigrant. Your family came here for the same reason they are coming here right now.

"Instead of making it harder for them, we should find ways to make it easier for them to come instead of making it seem like they're the problem."

John said it was "important to protest," but noted that protests have "been going on for over a year with Gaza and the Palestinians and nothing's happened. They are now not getting any food at all."

"We have to pay attention," he said. "You know, our strongest documents as Americans say, 'We the people.' And that should tell you everything we need to know, that we control this government."

Even though Khalil's arrest was ordered by the Trump White House, John noted that there were "many reasons" why the Democratic Party was also at fault.

"They don't respond to Trump," he said. "A lot of them just act like there's no problem," and "on top of that [the Democrats] are not really doing anything [for] us ... not helping us, you know, with the minimum wage or anything like that."

A social justice worker at the rally with her friend told WSWS reporters, "All of us are entitled to free speech. What they have done to Mahmoud Khalil shows they can do that to anyone right now. He deserves all of our support.

"It is ridiculous the reasons they use to kidnap and detain him. You are allowed to speak out. A critique of Israel is not a critique of Jews or the Jewish religion. It is a critique of the state of Israel. This is not antisemitism in the least.

"They are also trying to equate all Palestinians with Hamas. They are not all Hamas. We are not all Democrats or Republicans in this country. It is a false equivalency.

“[Israel] is being allowed to continue the attacks in Gaza. It is genocide in Gaza, and America is complicit. The American government is complicit. Biden did the same thing. It feels like the American government is delaying so Israel can clear out Gaza. It is wrong. It is all wrong.”

A young aspiring New York firefighter told the WSWS he stopped by the protest because, “I have been supporting the movement” and “I have a lot of friends who really do support the Palestine movement.”

He admitted,

I couldn't tell you the straight up definition of fascism, but what I will tell you is that coming from the point of view of a kid that lives in the Bronx, who is a first generation immigrant, who doesn't have that much money, I feel like there's definitely an imbalance of where the money that our country makes goes and it definitely shouldn't be going to the people who already have money. It shouldn't be being fed straight to them, you know?

Another local resident said she came to the courthouse, “because I believe in free speech. It doesn't matter whether or not you agree with what's being said, there has to be free speech in this country. It's a First Amendment right.”

She warned, “Don't be complacent. Don't fool yourself. It's happening. This is what happened in Nazi Germany. Little by little. Little by little.”

Another protester told the WSWS, “As my sign says, we are all Mahmoud. They are trying to take away our rights to protest. And if they get away with this, it's going to be a symbol of their power. And they don't have it unless we cede it to them.”



A protester holds a sign in Foley Square that reads, "We are all Mahmoud."

Asked to comment on the role of the Democratic Party, she responded, “I’m disgusted.”

At a separate rally in defense of Khalil on Monday, WSWS reporters spoke with a professor who teaches at the City University of New York (CUNY).

She said, “It is ridiculous what happened with Khalil. It is an illegal kidnapping of a former Columbia student. There are more protests happening because the institutions are not serving us. They are serving the oligarchy.

“I am disappointed with the unions and the Democrats over genocide. They are part of the oligarchy. My students, many who are immigrants, are coming to class, but in education, in CUNY, we are always having to fight against an austerity budget. Schools like mine are understaffed. All oppressive political systems attack education, whether banning books or discrimination and segregation in education.”