



Police enter an encampment on the UCLA campus in Los Angeles, US, on May 2, 2024.  
● JAE C. HONG/AP

Zionism is the surge of this student revolution across American campuses and its potential spread to universities elsewhere, including Europe, where other Israeli allies exist. On Friday, German police broke up a pro-Palestinian demonstration at Humboldt University, arresting several protesters and university students. The group had staged a sit-in in front of the university's main building in central Berlin, shouting slogans such as "Free Gaza", "Israel is a fascist state," and "Germany, stop arms shipments to Israel".

In what is perhaps the most significant student movement since the anti-Vietnam campus protests of the late 1960s, the conflict between pro-Palestinian students and university administrators in the US has revealed an entire subset of conflicts. The widespread movement across American campuses and its potential global impact signal a significant shift in public opinion on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

These protests show that the Israeli violence in the Gaza conflict has undermined Netanyahu's major accomplishment of controlling public opinion. The explosion of this recent uprising may eventually lead to the overthrow of the apartheid Israeli cabinet. Demonstrators have vowed to continue until their demands for US educational bodies to disentangle from companies profiting from the conflict are met.

### Peaceful movement

Israel has always thrived on victimhood narratives and relied on stories like the Holocaust and antisemitism throughout its decades-old existence. While Israel's actions in Gaza have tarnished its image as a victim, the Palestine cause has become a current issue within the United States and a focal point of political conflict between generations in the struggle to revive the values of justice and freedom and to halt genocidal wars and racism in all its forms.

Meanwhile, some Jewish students have expressed concerns that the protests have crossed into antisemitism, leaving them apprehensive about stepping foot on campus. US President Joe Biden has also joined congressional voices on both sides of the aisle, calling the protests antisemitic.

Rejecting the accusation, students at the protest have said some counter-protesters attempted to instigate hate speech but insisted their event was peaceful and was aimed at drawing attention to the "genocide" in Gaza and the complicity of their universities in the war.

### US to be freed from Zionism

The other main cause for Zionism concern could be that this revolution has started in prestigious American universities such as Columbia University in New York — the city that is a stronghold of the Zionist lobby — and

Harvard University in Boston. This suggests that the future generations of the US may not be influenced by Zionism like their fathers and ancestors were.

The protests at Columbia have been organized by Columbia University Apartheid Divest (CUAD), which describes itself as a coalition of more than 100 student groups. Founded in 2016, it unsuccessfully sought to end investments by Columbia University in weapons manufacturers and other companies that support Israel's occupation of Palestinian territories.

Students of Columbia University, including those of Jewish, Muslim, and Palestinian descent, reactivated the coalition and its divestment demands after Hamas' deadly attack on Israel on October 7 and Israel's over-the-top response in the Gaza enclave controlled by Hamas.

According to British journalist and editor Abdel Bari Atwan, "These students who are subjected to suppression and detention by the US government are not from the ordinary class of the American society; rather, they are the children of congressmen, senators, businessmen, and the ruling political class in the country. In fact, these students will be the new leaders of the US."

Now, this phenomenal wave of protests in solidarity with Palestinians and against Israel's devastating war on Gaza is expanding across the globe, proving that Zionism is in process of decline.



A pro-Palestine rally is held at the steps of Lowe Library on the grounds of Columbia University in New York City, US, on April 22, 2024.  
● DAVID DEE DELGADO/GETTY IMAGES

## World Press Photo of the Year

# Cropping history, reality



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Scholar

### PERSPECTIVE

Inas Abu Maamar wears a plain blue garment and a mustard brown headscarf decorated with a pattern of raised knots. Her arms cradle the shroud covering a small, slumping body, nestled on her lap. Her head and face are bowed into the crook of her left arm. It is as though Abu Maamar is willing the body of her five-year-old niece, Saly, back to life, so that she would

be able to sit one more time on her aunt's lap.

The photograph, taken by Reuters photographer Mohammed Salem on October 17, 2023, was recently awarded the prestigious World Press Photo of the Year by World Press Photo Foundation (WPP), an independent, non-profit organisation based in Amsterdam, Netherlands. The jury noted that Salem's 2024 winning image — which was given the title, "A Palestinian Woman Embraces the Body of Her Niece" — was "composed with care and respect, offering at once a metaphorical and literal glimpse into unimaginable loss".



Inas Abu Maamar embraces the body of her five-year-old niece, Saly, who was killed in an Israeli air raid, at Nasser Hospital in Khan Younis in the southern Gaza Strip, on October 17, 2023.  
● MOHAMMED SALEM/REUTERS



Reuters photographer Mohammed Salem won the 2024 World Press Photo of the Year award for this image.  
● MOHAMMED SALEM/REUTERS

Salem took the photograph at Nasser Hospital in Khan Younis. There, he found families had gathered to search for the bodies of loved ones killed in Israeli bombardment on civilian homes, as families have done since Israel began its genocidal assault on Gaza on October 7.

Why did this particular photograph of a mourning woman and a lifeless child captivate audiences around the world? What drew the members of WPP's jury to this photograph — rather than other photographs that Salem took of the same woman mourning the deceased child?

### Cropping out context

Prestigious awards for photography and the juries that determine what is worthy of exceptional praise tend to favour images that hint at layered, if limited in what layers are permitted, narratives, allowing viewers to engage with just enough complexity. Juries often reward images that provide easy entry for those perceived to be the dominant group of viewers.

In another photograph that Salem took of Abu Maamar, in which her face is visible, her mouth is open in a naked expression of distress. This image gives her an individual identity; her grief is a screaming, uncontainable horror.

A plastic chair can be seen to the left of her, white body bags piled up on it. The leg and shoe of a man wearing all blue — a medical professional, perhaps — stands to the far side, the unidentified witness to her grief, perhaps to thousands of such griefs.

The body bags would have alluded to genocide. Audiences would not be able to reduce the narrative to a singular loss, to an isolated, ahistorical moment of Orientalised grieving.

But in this "winning" frame, Abu Maamar's face cannot be seen, her personhood is subsumed, passive, and accepting of divine dictates. Her emotions would be too powerful, her grief too inelegant in its lack of containment, should they be seen by the public.

As long as the suffering is tidy, and coded through Western art historical references to innumerable paintings and sculptures of Mary grieving the death of her son, Jesus, viewers may project a range of narratives onto the woman. This way of framing her does not provoke fear of another's rage — it is not an unwordable, uncontained, roaring suffering. Rather, it is a safe, consumable display of grief and suffering.

WPP's selection for World Press Photo of the Year was cropped to remove any contextual

material that surrounds Abu Maamar and her niece. The photograph is also cropped, in more metaphorical terms, of the conditions and history that led to this specific child's death and this living relative's unbearable suffering. The materiality of that history — and the millions displaced and starving under siege, the tens of thousands dead and the many underbombed buildings without even the dignity of being shrouded and buried — is strategically made absent.

Such cropping reinforces the reproduction of a particular type of liberal politics and a specific methodology of framing "conflict" essential to liberal ways of grieving. It allows one to continue to insist on "both sides" of the argument, and situate oneself in a location where it is possible to mourn and — unconsciously, perhaps — celebrate one's ability to feel sympathy, without having to truly recognise the genocidal horror playing out in real-time. To recognise it would mean that one would be forced to act.

Cropped images aid the continuation of cropped politics. This dynamic is especially evident in the power imbalance between an army supported by the US and equipped with billions worth of weaponry and armed groups without such support; "those without" are people that the geopolitical West regards as an "Oriental other".

Demanding the elimination of context has been essential to Israel's justification of genocide in Gaza. Excising the context — including any reference to 75 years of dispossession, occupation, imprisonment without trial, torture, daily brutality, and slow genocide — has, in turn, shaped the narrative.

That has been apparent in US media across print, TV, and radio. Mainstream media outlets announce, repetitively, at the beginning or end of reports, that "Israel began its bombardment of [Gaza] in response to the attack by the militant group Hamas on October 7." It is as though Israel's violent exercise of power began on October 7, and only because of a provocation by a Palestinian party.

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