WSN

Protesters gather outside NYU Langone hospital condemning termination of labor nurse

Demonstrators called on the medical center to issue an official apology to Hesen Jabr, who was terminated last month after she spoke about the suffering of women "during the current genocide in Gaza."

Mikaylah Du, Under the Arch Editor

Around 100 protesters gathered outside NYU Langone Health's Tisch Hospital on Friday afternoon to demand that the medical center formally apologize to labor nurse Hesen Jabr, who was terminated in late May after she spoke about the suffering of women during the war in Gaza in her acceptance speech for a compassionate care award.

The group, which formed across the street from the hospital's main entrance, called on NYU Langone to "acknowledge and condemn Israel's genocide in Gaza," dedicate resources to rebuilding health infrastructure in Gaza and divest from companies with ties to Israel, according to flyers posted around the hospital. At the protest, organized by the group Healthcare Workers f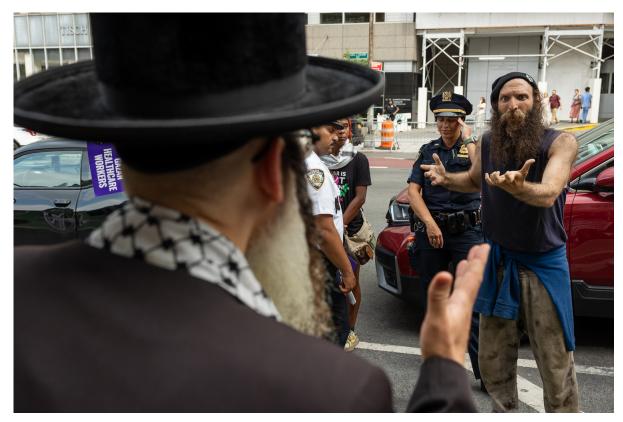or Palestine, demonstrators chanted "over 40,000 dead, but they're firing us instead" and carried signs reading "NYU is complicit in genocide" before turning their focus to a series of speakers including Jabr, a rabbi and other organizers.

Jason Alpert-Wisnia

Around 100 protesters gathered in support of Hesen Jabr. (Jason Alpert-Wisnia for WSN)

"I'm not the first and I won't be the last until we stay banded together and Palestine is free," Jabr said in a speech at the rally. "Institutions like NYU silence its employees for speaking out about what's right."

As Jabr spoke, a pro-Israeli counterprotester approached the demonstration and started shouting. The counterprotester punched a member of the group who allegedly waved a flag in front of them, and was zip-tied and escorted away by police soon after. A New York City Police Department officer on the scene could not confirm details of the incident.

Around a dozen NYPD officers were stationed on each side of the road, using barricades to limit

A counterprotester started shouting in front of the demonstrators at the rally. (Jason Alpert-Wisnia for WSN)

demonstrators to the sidewalk.

"We stand with health care workers who will risk their job to speak out against genocide," one unidentified speaker said at the protest. "We stand side by side with Hesen for fighting for her community, for standing up for Palestinians and against NYU."

NYU Langone has faced scrutiny in the last few weeks from pro-Palestinian groups on campus — including The NYU Palestine Solidarity Coalition and Alumni for Justice in Palestine — after Jabr's firing was announced last month. Jabr, who said women in Gaza are "going through unimaginable losses" in her speech, said administrators told her she "ruined the ceremony" before terminating her on May 22, Jabr's first day at the hospital after receiving the award.

More recently, Healthcare Workers for Palestine said in an Instagram post that NYU Langone also contacted them about "unlawfully" using its logo in a post titled "Confronting Zionism in Healthcare." According to a screenshot from the post, NYU Langone administration claimed the group's usage of the medical center's logo "incorrectly implies we are supporting these activities when we are not."

The demonstration came one day after NYU Langone CEO Robert Grossman and chair of the medical center's board of trustees Kenneth Langone announced they would retire next year. This past academic year, staff at the medical center have been penalized for workplace tensions over the war in Gaza. In November, NYU Langone removed a physician from his residency program after reposting a message in support of Palestinian resistance on social media. The same month, the former director of NYU Langone's Perlmutter Cancer Center was terminated after making social media posts related to the war, which some have called "racist" and "anti-Arab."

An NYU Langone spokesperson and Healthcare Workers for Palestine did not respond to multiple requests for comment.

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