

NATIONAL DIRECT ACTION FOR LIBERATION

April 17, 2025 | 12pm PST, 1pm MST, 2pm CST, 3pm EST

Call for a synchronized national direct action on April 17, 2025

This April 17, we, a collective of academic workers, students, union members, and activists within multiple higher education associations and unions, trade unions, and other organizing spaces, call for a coordinated national direct action in protest of the ongoing genocide abroad and the escalating repression at home. As academic workers and students united with other labor sectors, we aim to take back public places and uplift the right to dissent and the right to collective organizing for liberation. We stand against the neoliberal and colonial logic of higher ed that represses speech and academic freedom in the US and that enables genocide, carceral tactics, and the long-running destruction of education and historical memory in Gaza and throughout Palestine.

We resist the attacks on gender, women, and sexuality studies, Black studies, Indigenous studies, ethnic studies, and Middle East studies departments and programs across the U.S. While attacks on fields that emerged from social movements are not new, their intensification during the genocide in Palestine highlights the interconnectedness of necropolitical practices of the U.S. empire around the world and at “home.” As those “in the university but not of the university,” we are aware of our complicity. We know that the universities in which we work and study were built on stolen Indigenous land and with capital extracted from slave labor. We are aware that our universities continue to profit from settler colonial violence, incarceration of Black, Indigenous, trans, and immigrant people, investments in weapons manufacturing companies, and investments in companies that enable the genocide in Palestine.

Threats of cuts and attacks on academic fields that have emerged from social movements and continue to insist on the indivisibility of justice are therefore attempts to silence demands for reparation, divestment, and meaningful change. These cuts point to the failure of attempts to fully assimilate and “professionalize” departments and programs through empty gestures of inclusion and diversity as tactics of the neoliberal management of dissent. While our protest is to mourn the death of over 65,000 Palestinians and the death of “academic freedom,” we know that liberal notions of freedom are not enough. Our fight for liberation is for a world that is livable for all of us. Because we love life, we fight for it to death.

For 18+ months, we have watched as encampments across the country were violently dismantled by the police in collaboration with university and college boards and administrators. Thousands of students, academic workers, and supportive community members were beaten and arrested – some still coping with injuries and/or facing felony charges. With Columbia leading the way, higher ed decision-makers in advance of the current US administrative crackdown embraced repressive tactics and militarized their campuses, adopted authoritarian disciplinary measures, weaponized false charges of antisemitism, enacted increasingly restrictive time-place-manner restrictions on acts of dissent and protest, attacked campus unions, threatened entire fields of study, and now openly collude with ICE in the abduction of

students. These escalatory restrictions on our extramural speech and academic freedom further undermine our rights to educate, organize, and speak out in solidarity with Palestinian human and political rights and liberation. As the genocide in Gaza and throughout Palestine accelerates and intensifies, the stakes of these abrogations of our rights could not be more dire.

We believe our liberation is mutual and intertwined. There can be no labor for genocide. Our resistance is not symbolic. An injury to one is an injury to all.

We recognize participants in each institution will assess capacity, risk, and precarity to determine their own level of action. We encourage coordination with all academic workers – faculty, staff, and students – and invite you and the groups with which you are affiliated to plan your action in a way that is consistent with your needs for physical safety and security of livelihood. While the actions that we pursue may vary, we affirm the power of a commitment to a timed, nation-wide direct action that unites US higher ed landscapes and builds on and toward cross-sector coalitions. Actions that you might want to consider include: wear black or red, read the manifesto, walk-out, walk-in, banner drop. [see below for action guide]

In commemoration of the beginning of the Columbia encampment on April 17, 2024 and in honor of Palestinian prisoners day, we envision April 17 as part of an arc of escalating actions for collective liberation in and beyond higher-ed. Our next major national direct action will take place on International Workers' Day, May 1, followed by Nakba Day, May the 15th.

Reach out to us at DayOfAction@proton.me; ask to join a cross-sector “national direct action” signal chat.

Register your April 17th action [here](#).

National Day of Action Walk-Out, Walk-In + Banner Drop Protest

Rationale:

While there are a variety of ways to participate in the Day of Action, the option with the most potential to shift the national narrative entails as many schools as possible engaging in a single, unified action. For this reason, we recommend a “Walk-out” and/or a “Walk-in.” **We ask that you literally walk out of your classrooms and your meetings, regardless of exams or the significance of meetings.** If your campus is on a break or if you do not teach class at the time of the national action, we ask you to walk into your campus and join the action. A walkout/walk-in signals our power and gestures towards the possibility of future actions withholding labor.

This is the same action, the only essentially difference between them is the time of day when the event is conducted: A Walk-out is to be organized during the day, when campus activity is at its

heights, and a Walk-in is to be organized towards the end of the day, allowing those who are not teaching to still participate. These are relatively low risk actions, and we offer several variations of additional “actions within the action” that folks can undertake according to local circumstances and level of risk.

Unified action: While different campuses may choose to attach additional actions within their local actions based on capacity, risk, and spring break schedules, we ask that all campuses follow these low-risk actions:

1. Wear Black or Red
2. Walk-out or Walk-in + Banner Drop
3. Read the manifesto outloud and disseminate it via university lists and social media

The Ideal Walk Out Action:

At a designated time *12pm PST, 1pm MST, 2pm CST, 3pm EST* all participating faculty, staff, and students wearing black will walk out of class, cafeterias, libraries and common spaces. As they walk out, banner drops should occur from buildings near the designated meet-up site. The demonstration will stop at the President's/Central Admin offices.

Once at the agreed-upon destination, participants will:

- Hold a Reading of our Manifesto.
- Hold a Short (20 mins or less) Speak out from faculty and students impacted by the anti-semitism investigation budget cuts, cuts to DEI programs, dismissals of Black and POC faculty members, deportations of international students and the general climate of silencing and self-censorship. *Critical to ensure that we don't reveal crucial and important information about impacted people currently in lawsuits or detentions, but rather share how this new climate is impacting those willing to speak out personally.*
- Demand protection for vulnerable students and faculty at home and a cessation of arms to Israel abroad (Get specific: for local officials, no partnerships with Israel, for Congress/Senators, Support [Sen. Bernie Sander's Joint Resolution of Disapproval to Block Specific Weapons Sales to the Israeli Government](#)).

Menu of Additional “Actions within the Action” that can be attached to the Walkout:

- Higher risk version: Hold a die-in in front of an administrative building.
- Higher Risk, Higher Visibility: Where strategically useful and possible, reach out to student and community groups to meet up and march to a local political representative's office. Of special interest are the offices in the districts governed by politicians on the

[House Education and Workforce Subcommittee](#), who have been the principal architects of the current legislative push to defund universities. They are largely invisible, but since September 2023, have weaponized anti-semitism, while ignoring the rise of actual anti-semitism among the nation's Far Right. Alternatively, you may wish to target any Senator who may be able to vote on the [Joint Resolution of Disapproval to Block Specific Weapons Sales to the Israeli Government](#).

The Ideal Walk-In Action:

For campuses that are on break and where holding a mid-day walk-out/walk-in may not have as much of an impact, we recommend a Walk-In. Gather in front of your University administrative building at dusk, hold a candlelight vigil, read the manifesto & hold a short speakout.

Aesthetics and Visuals—Low Tech, Low budget, but Visually Coordinated.

Participating faculty should wear the same color shirts and keffiyehs (We suggest Black for mourning). To avoid the charge that we are “outside agitators” or “professional protestors,” the art and signs used that day should be low-budget and handmade with stencils, paint, poster boards, etc.

Slogans:

Free Mahmoud Khalil, Alireza Doroudi, Rumeysa Ozturk, Badar Khan Suri, Leeqa Kordia
From the River to the Sea, Palestine Will be Free
Stop the Genocide Abroad and the Repression at Home.
Free All Political Prisoners
Don't Comply With Fascism!
ICE Off Campus. ICE Out of Our Communities.
I am a Student/Teacher, NOT a Threat
University Pres: Don't Dox Me! Resist the Feds Data Grab!
Community Protection, Not Deportation
Education for Liberation Now!
Stop Campus Resegregation: Defend Diversity, Equity and Inclusion
We Will Teach Truth to Power