

After 48 hours, protesters at Columbia dismantle encampment — but promise more ‘attacks’ on the university

New York City police are investigating property damage related to the short-lived encampment



Pro-Palestinian activists protest outside Columbia University in New York City April 20. Photo by Leonardo Munoz/AFP via Getty Images

By [Rebecca Massel](#) June 3, 2024

Pro-Palestinian protesters Sunday night dismantled, seemingly voluntarily, the encampment they erected late Friday in the university’s main quadrangle.

The protesters had built the encampment — a smaller version of two others on campus this spring — during alumni weekend.

They [announced](#) on Instagram on Sunday that the tents were the completed first installment of its “Revolt for Rafah” campaign. And they promised future

actions to disrupt Columbia until it agrees, among other demands, to divest from Israeli companies, boycott Israeli universities and sever ties with the New York City Police Department.

We have “recommit[ted] to continue strategic, targeted attacks on all aspects of University life,” the group wrote on Instagram. The organization also asked students at other universities to make similar pledges to disrupt their campus programs until their institutions divest. Columbia is at the epicenter of the campus protest movement over Israel’s military campaign in Gaza. The protesters’ previous encampments this spring inspired dozens of others on campuses around the nation. Many of those, including Columbia’s, were forcibly dismantled and led to arrests.

University officials said Monday that police are investigating property damage associated with this weekend’s encampment, including a slogan spray-painted on an outside vendor’s tent used by the university for reunion weekend.

The protesters had spray-painted part of the tent with slogans, including “we’ll be back bitches” and “Divest from murder,” [according to the Columbia Daily Spectator](#), the student newspaper.

A short-lived encampment

On Friday night, protesters held a Shabbat service at the encampment, and planned other events for the weekend, including an “art build,” where they created a cardboard replica of a missile covered with photos of university leaders, [according to the Spectator](#). There was also a picket line outside of the gates of the university held by [Columbia University Alumni for Palestine](#).

Barnard, the women’s college affiliated with Columbia, located across the street from the Upper West Side campus, canceled its reunion this past weekend due to the protests, which were triggered by Hamas’ Oct. 7 attack on Israel. Israel’s military campaign has killed more than 35,000 Palestinians, according to Hamas Health Ministry.

Reunion weekend began as President Joe Biden unveiled what he dubbed an Israeli plan to end the war.

Over the course of the school year, thousands of donors to Columbia pledged to cease donating, some urging the university to more forcibly confront the

protesters and enforce its own rules. Others have demanded that Columbia divest from Israeli businesses.

Several Jewish billionaires publicly cut or paused ties with Columbia, including [Robert Kraft](#) and [Angelica Berrie](#), decrying rising antisemitism on campus and an insufficient university response. Through the “[One Dollar Pledge](#),” campaign, alumni committed to only donate \$1 to Columbia until the university “stand[s] on the right side of history, against hate.”

At the same time, over 2,200 alumni signed [a statement](#) pledging to withhold financial and other support to Columbia until the university divests from Israeli companies, drops charges against protesters and removes University President Minouche Shafik, among other demands.

Not just Columbia

Protesters at other colleges sought to draw attention to the war in Gaza during alumni reunions this weekend.

At Amherst College in Western Massachusetts, a conversation between President Michael Elliott and Chantal Kordula, a trustee, was disrupted on Saturday with chants of “Disclose divest, we will not stop, we will not rest,” according to an Amherst Alumni for Palestine Instagram [video](#).

Vassar College alumni protested during the college’s Reunion Parade with a banner reading “Class of Consciousness” and by calling on other alumni to withhold donations to the New York university, according to an Instagram [post](#).

More than 1,100 alumni signed a petition titled “No Donations Until Divestment” to Vassar College President Elizabeth Bradley, Vassar Alumni for Palestine wrote on their [Instagram](#).

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