**In New Filing, Mahmoud Khalil Urges Court to Protect His First Amendment Rights**

Mr. Khalil was unlawfully detained by ICE last week because of his pro-Palestine advocacy at Columbia University

**Case**: [Khalil v. Trump](https://www.aclu.org/cases/khalil-v-trump)

**Affiliate**: [ACLU of New York](https://www.aclu.org/affiliates/new-york)

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NEW YORK — In a fight to get recent Columbia graduate student Mahmoud Khalil back to his family, his legal team filed an amended habeas petition and complaint with the federal court in the Southern District of New York, challenging his detention by ICE. Last Saturday, the Trump administration illegally arrested and detained Mahmoud Khalil, a lawful permanent resident, in direct retaliation for his advocacy in support of Palestinian rights.

Secretary of State Marco Rubio invoked a vague and rarely-used provision of the Immigration and Nationality Act that says the government may deport people if there are “reasonable grounds” to believe their presence in the country “would have potentially serious adverse foreign policy consequences for the United States.” The White House has stated that it seeks to revoke Mr. Khalil’s green card because he organized group protests and served as the lead negotiator of the Gaza solidarity encampments at Columbia. He has not been charged with or accused of any crime, as the Trump administration has freely admitted.

A team of lawyers, including Amy Greer from Dratel & Lewis, the Center for Constitutional Rights, and CLEAR represented him in emergency filings over the weekend, resulting in a court order to ensure Mr. Khalil would not be deported as his case proceeded. Shortly after, the American Civil Liberties Union and New York Civil Liberties Union (NYCLU) joined his legal team. The amended petition argues that his detention violates his constitutional rights, including free speech and due process, and goes beyond the government’s legal authority.

The following are quotes from Mr. Khalil’s legal team:

**Amy Greer, associate attorney with Dratel & Lewis:**“Mahmoud Khalil’s arrest and detention is an escalation of the U.S. Government’s continual efforts to suppress the speech and association rights of student organizers seeking to hold the U.S. accountable for its facilitation of the genocide being exacted upon the people of Gaza and the Occupied West Bank. We the People should stand up against these repressive efforts and protect those rights so critical to the fabric of our nation that they were included in the *First*Amendment of our nation’s Constitution.”

**Ramzi Kassem, founding director of CLEAR:**“What happened to Mahmoud is nothing short of extraordinary, shocking, and outrageous. It should outrage anyone who believes that speech should be free in the United States of America. It simply cannot be the case that government agents can disappear Mahmoud or anyone else, at night, on the streets of New York City because the current U.S. government, the current administration dislikes what you have to say. We think it won’t fly in the federal court, it won’t fly in an immigration court, and it certainly won’t fly in the court of public opinion.”

**Brett Max Kaufman, senior staff attorney with ACLU’s Center for Democracy:**“This is a clear attempt by President Trump to make an example out of Mr. Khalil and silence dissent across the country. No matter what your views are on Israel & Palestine, we should all be terrified of a government incarcerating its residents for their political opinions.”

**Baher Azmy, legal director for the Center for Constitutional Rights:**“The Trump administration has been targeting Palestinian human rights activists from day one, smearing them with every tired and empty trope. Rather than engage with its own role in the genocide and suffering of Palestinians in Gaza, the administration is using the the government's full power to make an example of Mahmoud Khalil, a Palestinian student leader beloved in his campus community and known for his integrity. His arrest and attempted deportation for what is constitutionally protected speech is a replay of McCarthyist repression that is intolerable to a democracy.”

**Donna Lieberman, executive director of the New York Civil Liberties Union:**“With today’s filing, we are making it crystal clear that no president can arrest, detain, or deport anyone for disagreeing with the government. The Trump administration has selectively targeted Mr. Khalil, a student, husband, and father-to-be who has not been accused of a single crime, to send a message of just how far they will go to crack down on dissent. But we at the NYCLU and ACLU won’t stand for it — under the Constitution, the Trump administration has no basis to continue this cruel weaponization of Mr. Khalil’s life. The Court must release Mr. Khalil immediately and let him go home to his family in New York, where he belongs. Ideas are not illegal, and dissent is not grounds for deportation.”

The amended complaint can be found here: <https://www.aclu.org/cases/khalil-v-trump?document=Amended-Petition-for-Writ-of-Habeas-Corpus-and-Complaint>