

Columbia Activists, Including Mahmoud Khalil, Serve as Hamas's 'Propaganda Arm in New York City,' Lawsuit States

The suit from families of Israeli hostages seeks damages from Khalil's campus group and others

[Adam Kredo](#) March 25, 2025

Mahmoud Khalil (Free Beacon)

Columbia University student groups and activists, including Mahmoud Khalil and the Columbia University Apartheid Divest (CUAD) organization he represents, serve as "Hamas' propaganda arm in New York City and on

the Columbia University campus" and should be held accountable "for aiding and abetting Hamas' continuing acts of international terrorism," according to a new lawsuit.

The families of October 7 victims and hostages filed [the suit](#) in federal court on Monday. It accuses well-known pro-Hamas activists and groups, including Students for Justice in Palestine (SJP) and American Muslims for Palestine (AMP), of leading Hamas's "U.S.-based in-house public relations firm." Khalil's CUAD, the suit states, is one of SJP and AMP's "most important partners," forming "the New York City branches of Hamas' American propaganda firm."

U.S. [intelligence](#) has long indicated that Hamas's patrons in Iran encouraged and funded anti-Israel campus protests in America. The suit, however, provides specific examples that point to coordination between Iran, Hamas, and U.S. protesters—and seeks to place Khalil, CUAD, SJP, and AMP on the hook for damages as a result.

The suit lists Khalil as a defendant both individually and as a leader of CUAD, the group behind the illegal encampment that plagued Columbia's campus last spring. In one example of coordination with Hamas, the suit outlines his role in an illegal March 5 [protest](#) that saw CUAD leaders storm Barnard's Milstein Library to demand amnesty for the expulsion of three students.

While inside the library, students disseminated a manifesto from Hamas's "Media Office" that outlines the terrorist organization's "narrative" on "Operation Al-Aqsa Flood," Hamas's name for the Oct. 7, 2023, terror attack on Israel. Though Khalil completed his Columbia coursework in December, he "served as the primary spokesperson and negotiator for CUAD's mob," according to the suit, the same role he took during the encampment.

"Khalil and the mob demanded the immediate reinstatement of the

expelled students, amnesty for all individuals disciplined for pro-Palestinian activities, and the abolition of Barnard's disciplinary procedures, which they deemed unjust," the suit states. "During the illegal occupation of Milstein Library, CUAD disseminated the 'Our Narrative' pamphlet from the Hamas Media Office." The pamphlet justifies October 7.

"The battle of the Palestinian people against occupation and colonialism," it reads, "did not start on Oct. 7, but started 105 years ago, including 30 years of British colonialism and 75 years of Zionist occupation."

Just four days after the protest, the Department of Homeland Security [detained Khalil](#) after Secretary of State Marco Rubio revoked his student

visa and green card. With the help of Ramzi Kassem, a lawyer best [known for defending al Qaeda terrorists](#), Khalil sued the Trump administration to end his detention and stop his deportation, arguing that the actions violate his First Amendment right to free speech.

The Monday lawsuit could undermine that argument. The federal government has broad authority to remove a non-citizen under anti-terrorism laws and has argued that Khalil is a threat to U.S. national security.

Arsen Ostrovsky, the CEO of the Israel-based International Legal Forum, which is representing the October 7 victims alongside lead counsel Mark Goldfeder of the National Jewish Advocacy Center, said the case "is not about free speech, but support for terror, pure and simple."

"Enough is enough," he said in a statement. "We must bring to justice not only the perpetrators of the Oct 7th massacre, but hold accountable all those who support, enable and collaborate with them in the United States, like Mr. Khalil and the defendants in this case."

In addition to Khalil, the suit provides an array of evidence linking pro-Hamas protesters on U.S. college campuses to Hamas and Iran.

Anti-Semitic organization Within Our Lifetime, for example, is included in the suit for its role as the lead organizer of a national "economic blockade" held in support of Hamas. The plans for that blockade, according to the suit, started not in the United States but in Iran.

In March 2024, Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps issued a secret directive instructing its allies to enact "an economic blockade across four continents in solidarity with Palestinians," according to the suit. From there, Within Our Lifetime and affiliated organizations, including SJP and AMP, began registering websites and creating social media accounts under the name of a "previously non-existent organization, A15 Action," to

build support for the blockade.

The groups carried out the blockade weeks later, just one month after the IRGC issued its memo. All three groups, the lawsuit alleges, "secretly and directly coordinated with Hamas' terror patron, the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps ('IRGC'), to institute a blockade of critical infrastructure and institutions in New York City to support Hamas."

In addition to Khalil, CUAD, and Within Our Lifetime, the suit targets Columbia's SJP and Jewish Voice for Peace chapters, both of which were suspended in November 2023 before reforming under the CUAD banner.

"The right to advocate and even to propagandize is broadly construed in the U.S., on college campuses and in a vast array of fora," said Goldfeder, the lead counsel. "It is not, however, unfettered and certainly does not encompass acts of violence, vandalism, physical intimidation, trespassing and breach of university rules that ensure student safety. Nor does it support the provision of material support for terror."

Published under: [anti-Israel](#), [Anti-Semitism](#), [Barnard](#), [Barnard College](#), [Columbia](#), [Columbia University](#), [Hamas](#), [Iran](#), [IRGC](#), [Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps](#), [Jewish Voice for Peace](#), [Lawsuit](#), [October 7](#), [Propaganda](#), [Protests](#), [Terror Attack](#), [Terrorism](#)