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April 21, 2024

Dr. Minouche Shafik, President
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Ms. Claire Shipman, Co-Chair
The Trustees of Columbia University
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Mr. David Greenwald, Co-Chair
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Dear Dr. Shafik, Mr. Greenwald, and Ms. Shipman:

I am gravely concerned by the ongoing chaos at Columbia University caused by the radical, unlawful Gaza Solidarity Encampment, which has now entered its fifth day. The encampment and related activities have created a severe and pervasive hostile environment for Jewish students at Columbia. A Jewish chaplain at the University has recommended Jewish students depart campus due to the University's inability to guarantee their safety.¹ Multiple Jewish students have already sought shelter off-campus. **Columbia's continued failure to restore order and safety promptly to campus constitutes a major breach of the University's Title VI obligations, upon which federal financial assistance is contingent, and which must immediately be rectified.** If you do not rectify this danger, then the Committee will not hesitate in holding you accountable.

President Shafik took an important step on April 18 by authorizing the New York Police Department (NYPD) to clear the unlawful encampment and arrest the students who flagrantly continued to violate University rules despite repeated warnings. However, the encampment promptly reconstituted that same afternoon and has been allowed to continue unabated ever since. Agitators unaffiliated with the University have massed outside the campus walls, with

¹ Jake Tapper (@jaketapper), TWITTER, (Apr. 21, 2024, 9:56 AM), <https://twitter.com/jaketapper/status/178204573573682022>.

many infiltrating its grounds. There can be no doubt that the unrest poses an ongoing “clear and present danger” that demands immediate law enforcement and disciplinary action.

The encampment and related activities have resulted in widespread antisemitic harassment and intimidation, assaults, frequent celebration of terrorism, and major disruptions of Columbia’s learning environment. On the morning of April 21, Columbia’s Orthodox campus rabbi, Rabbi Elie Buechler, wrote “[t]he events of the last few days, especially last night, have made it clear that Columbia University Public Safety and the NYPD cannot guarantee Jewish students’ safety in the face of extreme antisemitism and anarchy,” “[i]t deeply pains me to say that I would strongly recommend you return home as soon as possible and remain home until the reality in and around campus has dramatically improved,” and “[n]o one should have to endure this level of hatred, let alone at school.”²

An April 19 open letter signed by over 100 Jewish Columbia students stated that “[t]hose of us living on and off campus cannot come and go from our homes to campus as we please without fear of being threatened, harassed, or assaulted.”³ The letter further requested the option for students to attend classes virtually, with at least one student being granted such accommodations. The Committee is aware of multiple Jewish students seeking shelter off-campus due to their well-founded fears regarding their physical safety and continuing to be subjected to what is clearly a hostile environment.

The reasons for this fear are documented through the many disturbing videos, photographs, and accounts from students that have emerged in recent days, including the following events and incidents, as well as numerous others:

- On the night of April 20, a protestor holding a sign saying “Al-Qasam’s [*sic*] next target” stood in front of a group of Jewish students who were holding Israeli flags and singing. The Al-Qassam Brigades are Hamas’ military component.⁴
- A Jewish student wearing a yarmulke was assaulted on campus on the night of April 20 when he attempted to recover an Israeli flag from a protestor who stole the flag and ran to a cheering crowd of anti-Israel protestors, who then attempted to burn it. When the Jewish student attempted to recover the flag, he was shoved, and the protestors screamed at him, “you’ve got blood on your hands!”⁵
- Protestors screamed “go back to Poland!” and “yehudim, yehudim [which translates to Jews, Jews]” at Jewish Columbia students trying to leave campus.⁶

² *Id.*

³ Open Letter from Jewish Students to President Minouche Shafik (Apr. 19, 2024), <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1diClJvdg-G2hSc4t29b9pFgrDMIpEFLYHKZLs0FpZyM>.

⁴ Gil Zussman (@gil_zussman), TWITTER (Apr. 20, 2024, 10:35 PM), https://twitter.com/gil_zussman/status/1781874441179353470.

⁵ David Lederer (@davidleder6), TWITTER (Apr. 21, 2024, 3:14 AM), <https://twitter.com/davidleder6/status/1781944543560044923>.

⁶ David Lederer (@davidleder6), TWITTER (Apr. 21, 2024, 3:29 AM), <https://x.com/Davidleder6/status/1781948249214996901>.

- Numerous unauthorized individuals, including ones explicitly banned from campus, have been documented at the encampment:
 - Within our Lifetime organizer Nerdeen Kiswani, who was banned from campus for speaking in support of terrorism at “Resistance 101,” was recorded on campus leading chants of “there is only one solution, Intifada revolution.”⁷
 - Shellyne Rodriguez, who was fired from faculty positions at CUNY Hunter College and the School of Visual arts after threatening a *New York Post* reporter with a machete, was photographed on campus at the protests.⁸
 - The Committee has received photographs documenting a student openly participating in the encampment – though that student had been suspended for involvement with the terrorist-associated “Resistance 101” event and who also has defied an eviction order from Columbia.
 - Pro-Hamas Columbia visiting professor Mohamed Abdou, who President Shafik promised was being terminated, was also photographed at the encampment.⁹
- Instagram posts show anti-Israel student groups coordinating the receipt of packages from unauthorized individuals in what appears to be an effort to shuttle items from outsiders to protesters.¹⁰
- According to a Jewish Columbia student, “Other pro-Palestinian protestors circling around the main gates and entrance to campus claimed to be with Hamas. One said ‘I am Hamas’ on video.”¹¹
- Mobs of protestors both outside and inside Columbia’s gates repeatedly screamed, “tear down the gates,” and various hateful chants in English and Arabic as individuals unaffiliated with the university climbed the University’s gates.¹²
- A protestor immediately outside Columbia’s gates shouted at two Jewish students, “Never forget the 7th of October. That will happen not one more time, not five more times, not

⁷ Eden Yadegar (@edenyadegar), TWITTER (Apr. 21, 2024, 12:37 AM), <https://twitter.com/edenyadegar/status/1781905099138224289>.

⁸ *Video: Ex-prof who pulled machete on Post reporter spotted at Columbia*, New York Post (Apr. 19, 2024, 4:29 PM), <https://nypost.com/video/ex-prof-who-pulled-machete-on-post-reporter-spotted-at-columbia/>.

⁹ V24_Investigations (@v24investigates), TWITTER (Apr. 19, 2024, 1:54 PM), <https://x.com/v24investigates/status/1781380762727592191>.

¹⁰ Columbia Jewish Alumni Assoc. (@CU_JewishAlumni), TWITTER (Apr. 20, 2024, 10:14 AM), https://twitter.com/cu_jewishalumni/status/1781687822946361415.

¹¹ E-mail from Columbia student to Committee staff, (Apr. 18, 2024, 11:48 AM).

¹² Stu (@thestustustudio), TWITTER (Apr. 20, 2024, 10:14 PM), <https://twitter.com/thestustustudio/status/1781868976890433656>; LAWYERGONEROGUE (@lawyergonerogue), TWITTER (Apr. 20, 2024, 10:01 PM), <https://x.com/lawyergonerogue/status/1781865744118305270>; LAWYERGONEROGUE (@lawyergonerogue), TWITTER (Apr. 19, 2024, 11:52 PM), <https://twitter.com/lawyergonerogue/status/1781531266711687442>.

10...100...1000...10,000...The 7th of October is going to be every day for you.”¹³

- Arab-Israeli journalist Yoseph Haddad was punched in the face, shoved, and told to kill himself by protestors immediately outside Columbia’s gates. Haddad was preparing to enter campus to deliver a lecture to the student group Students Supporting Israel, which was cancelled as a result of Haddad being assaulted.¹⁴
- There are multiple instances of protestors throwing liquids at Jewish Columbia students.
 - Video shows Jewish Columbia students being splashed with water by a protestor on Columbia’s campus on the night of April 20.¹⁵
 - According to a Jewish Columbia student, on the afternoon of April 17, “A photographer wearing a ‘bring them home necklace’ had coffee thrown at him by a protester while simply standing there” and “two students had fake blood thrown at them by a pro-Palestinian protester.”¹⁶
- According to a Jewish student, “While in their Barnard dorm, two students were threatened by protestors. A group of about 4 people put their middle fingers up and started aggressively screaming ‘we know where you live now’ and ‘you killed half our family.’ They continued to yell ‘come out pussy,’ and wrote ‘intifada’ in chalk on the street under their room.”¹⁷
- A Jewish Columbia student reported that on the evening of April 17, an NYPD officer told a visibly Jewish student he should avoid walking through campus.

[Within our Lifetime] protestors could be seen pushing the barricade further into the sidewalk towards the wall. Police saw this and did nothing, which is what I believe they were told to do. Shortly after, I witnessed a Jewish student wearing a kippah asking a police officer if he could pass through the area with the growing barricades. He stated he was just trying to get home. The police officer told him ‘you really shouldn’t walk through there,’ and instructed him to go around and cross the street. The police officer was nice, and I believe looking out for this man’s safety. It’s just unfortunate that it is recognized that being/looking Jewish is enough to be told to change our route.¹⁸

¹³ Jonas Du (@jonasydu), TWITTER (Apr. 19, 2024, 11:52 PM), <https://twitter.com/jonasydu/status/1781178975147917797>.

¹⁴ Collin Anderson, *Arab-Israeli Journalist Assaulted at Columbia University, Forced To Cancel Speech*, WASHINGTON FREE BEACON (Apr. 19, 2024), <https://freebeacon.com/campus/arab-israeli-journalist-assaulted-at-columbia-university-forced-to-cancel-speech>.

¹⁵ David Lederer (@davidleder6), TWITTER (Apr. 21, 2024, 3:14 AM), <https://twitter.com/davidleder6/status/1781944543560044923>.

¹⁶ E-mail from Columbia student to Committee staff, (Apr. 18, 2024, 11:48 AM).

¹⁷ Open Letter from Jewish Students to President Minouche Shafik (Apr. 19, 2024), <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1diClJvdg-G2hSc4t29b9pFgrDMIpEFLYHKZLs0FpZyM>.

¹⁸ Email from Columbia student to Committee staff (Apr. 18, 2024, 1:27 PM).

- A protestor standing immediately outside Columbia’s gates led a crowd in Arabic chants glorifying terrorism and encouraging students to become terrorist “martyrs.” He explained in English that the chant translated to “mother of the shahid, mother of the martyr, I wish my mother was in your place.”¹⁹
- A Jewish Columbia student reported the following April 17 incident to the Committee, “I was walking on the street where [Within our Lifetime] protesters had a designated barricade to stay behind. I was walking home, wearing my Star of David necklace, and a hostage tag. A woman began screaming at me, looking me in the eye, calling me a Zionist and a murderer. She did this while banging what appeared to be a pot on the barricade making an unbearably loud noise. Eventually a cop told her to stop and she began accusing us of ‘killing her people.’ The last part of this interaction was caught on video where the people who were behind me started filming her. She yelled at them saying ‘We are Hamas.’”²⁰
- Protestors have continuously shouted threatening and pro-terror slogans including, “We don’t want no Zionists here,” “Intifada,” “From the river to the sea, Palestine is Arab,” “There is no god but Allah, and the martyr is Allah’s beloved!,” “Brick by brick, wall by wall, Israel will fall,” “U.S imperialists, number one terrorists,” “Who runs Columbia? We run Columbia,” “We don’t want two states, we want all of it,” “Settlers, settlers go back home, Palestine is ours alone,” “1, 2, 3, 4, open up the prison doors. 5, 6, 7, 8, end the settler Zionist state,” “Israel go to hell!,” and “[r]esistance is justified when people are occupied.”²¹
- The Committee is aware of multiple instances of classes and exams being cancelled or postponed.
- According to a Columbia student who captured the incident on video, a protestor shouted at a police officer named Ahmed, “Traitor to his people! Traitor! Get the fuck out of here, have some shame. Don’t fucking show your face here again you piece of shit. Your mom is a whore.”²²
- Jewish Columbia students report that the noise caused by the protests have led to repeated disruptions and prevented students from sleeping. A Jewish Columbia student reported to the Committee, “many of us who [live] right next to the campus couldn't sleep due to screams of Intifada until 1AM.”²³ Another student similarly reported, “On campus, students and allegedly faculty continued to protest and chant late into the night. Typically,

¹⁹ Tovy (@dreamexecute), INSTAGRAM, <https://www.instagram.com/reel/C6BY8OfNteB/>.

²⁰ Email from Columbia student to Committee staff (Apr. 18, 2024, 1:27 PM).

²¹ Shelley G (@ShelleyGldschmt), TWITTER (Apr. 20, 2024, 4:41 PM), https://x.com/gil_zussman/status/1781823573478314438?s=46; @LawyerGoneRogue, TWITTER (Apr. 19, 2024, 11:52 PM), <https://x.com/lawyergonerogue/status/1781531266711687442>.

²² Kassy Akiva (@KassyDillon), TWITTER (Apr. 19, 2024, 8:41 AM), <https://twitter.com/kassydillon/status/1781302095955517482?s=46>.

²³ Email from Columbia student to Committee staff (Apr. 18, 2024, 9:49 AM).

Columbia safety shuts down any noise complaints after 11 or 11:30 pm. They did nothing of the sort last night.”²⁴

- According to a Jewish student, “One man who alleged to be a Columbia administrator and had a Barnard ID threatened a group of Jewish students that he was issuing a disciplinary warning to them for standing nearby and that they had to disperse. He said he showed the pro-Palestinian students the same warning when asked by the Jewish students, but was later revealed to have been a part of the pro-Palestinian protest.”²⁵
- On Friday, April 19, the eve of the Jewish Sabbath, the suspended student group Jewish Voice for Peace displayed a banner with a picture of President Shafik and the message “SHABBAT SHALOM, MOTHERFUCKER.”²⁶
- On the night of Saturday, April 20, Jihadists openly chanted for terrorism on the streets of New York: “Al-Qassam you make us proud! Take another soldier out!” “We say justice, you say how? Burn Tel Aviv to the ground!” and “ Hamas we love you. We support your rockets too!”²⁷
- On the night of April 20, a protestor delivered the following speech on the Columbia campus: “We are here today because on October 7 the Palestinian resistance in Gaza broke through the walls of their open air prison, shattering the illusion of the invincibility of their occupiers. [Cheers from the crowd.] By setting up this encampment in the heart of the Zionist stronghold of Columbia University, we intend to do the same.”²⁸

This situation is unacceptable, and it is imperative that Columbia’s leaders restore order and safety without further delay, in line with their commitments before the Committee at its April 17 hearing.

- In her testimony, President Shafik stated, “Safety is paramount and the University will take the necessary steps, no matter how unpopular, to secure Columbia’s campus and apply rules around protest, harassment, and discrimination consistently and fairly to everyone” and that antisemitism “has no place on our campus.”²⁹

²⁴ E-mail from Columbia student to Committee staff (Apr. 18, 2024, 11:48 AM).

²⁵ E-mail from Columbia student to Committee staff (Apr. 18, 2024, 11:48 AM).

²⁶ BC/CU Jewish Voice for Peace (@JVPColumbia), TWITTER (Apr. 19, 2024, 8:08 PM), <https://x.com/JVPColumbia/status/1781475097179484308>; *Jewish Voice for Peace (JVP): What You Need To Know*, ANTI-DEFAMATION LEAGUE, <https://www.adl.org/resources/blog/jewish-voice-peace-jvp-what-you-need-know> (The Anti-Defamation League calls the national organization of Jewish Voice for Peace “a radical anti-Israel and anti-Zionist activist group” that “does not represent the mainstream Jewish community” and has “expressed explicit support for terror against Israel or even overt antisemitism.”).

²⁷ Israel War Room (@israelwarroom), TWITTER (Apr. 21, 2024, 2:29 AM), <https://twitter.com/israelwarroom/status/1781933305501212872>.

²⁸ Eyal Yakoby (@EYakoby), TWITTER (Apr. 21, 2024, 11:04AM), <https://twitter.com/EYakoby/status/1782062777302925433>.

²⁹ Minouche Shafik, Statement Before the Committee on Education and the Workforce (Apr. 17, 2024), https://edworkforce.house.gov/uploadedfiles/shafik_final.pdf.

- Board of Trustees Co-Chair Claire Shipman testified, “The primary concern of the Board was—and is—student safety” and “we are committed to ensuring the safety of all our students, faculty, and staff.”³⁰
- Board of Trustees Co-Chair David Greenwald similarly testified, “we have prioritized the safety of our students, faculty, and staff. That is our paramount concern.”³¹

Columbia is failing to deliver on these commitments, as Jewish students are being harassed, assaulted, threatened, and intimidated to the point where they are departing campus for safer environments. The students, faculty, and staff responsible for this mayhem, including members of the groups Students for Justice in Palestine, Jewish Voice for Peace, Columbia University Apartheid Divest, and Faculty and Staff for Justice in Palestine, repeatedly and flagrantly have violated multiple University rules, and in many cases, federal law. The University must decisively hold them accountable in a manner commensurate with the severity of their offenses, including expulsion and termination of employment.

This is a pivotal moment and a test of Columbia’s leaders. I call on you to rise to meet the needs of the moment and your legal obligations through immediate and decisive action and honor your commitments to Congress. In the event you do not, the Committee will not hesitate in holding you accountable.

Sincerely,



Virginia Foxx
Chairwoman
Committee on Education and the Workforce

³⁰ Claire Shipman, Statement Before the Committee on Education and the Workforce (Apr. 17, 2024), https://edworkforce.house.gov/uploadedfiles/shipman_final.pdf.

³¹ David Greewald, Statement Before the Committee on Education and the Workforce (Apr. 17, 2024), https://edworkforce.house.gov/uploadedfiles/greewald_final.pdf.