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**Body**

More than 2,100 people have been arrested during pro-Palestinian protests on US college campuses

LOS ANGELES — Police have arrested more than 2,100 people during pro-Palestinian protests at college campuses across the United States in recent weeks, sometimes using riot gear, tactical vehicles and flash-bang devices to clear tent encampments and occupied buildings. One officer accidentally discharged his gun inside a Columbia University administration building while clearing out protesters camped inside, authorities disclosed Thursday.

No one was injured by the officer's mistake late Tuesday inside Hamilton Hall on the Columbia campus, the NYPD said Thursday. He was trying to use the flashlight attached to his gun at the time and instead fired a single round that struck a frame on the wall.

There were other officers but no students in the immediate vicinity, officials said. Body camera footage shows when the officer's gun went off, but the district attorney's office is conducting a review, a standard practice.

More than 100 people were taken into custody during the Columbia crackdown, just a fraction of the total arrests stemming from recent campus protests over the Israel-Hamas war. A tally by The Associated Press on Thursday found at least 50 incidents of arrests at 40 different U.S. colleges or universities since April 18.

Early Thursday, officers surged against a crowd of demonstrators at University of California, Los Angeles, ultimately taking at least 200 protesters into custody after hundreds defied orders to leave, some forming human chains as police fired flash-bangs to break up the crowds. Police tore apart a fortified encampment’s barricade of plywood, pallets, metal fences and dumpsters, then pulled down canopies and tents.

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Today's campus protests aren't nearly as big or violent as those last century — at least, not yet

In a way, the black-and-white Palestinian scarf draped over Hannah Sattler’s shoulders this week and the tie-dyed T-shirts of 1968 are woven from a common thread.

Like so many college students across the country protesting the Israel-Hamas war, Sattler feels the historic weight of the anti-Vietnam war demonstrations of the 1960s and 70s.

“They always talked about the ’68 protest as sort of a North Star,” Sattler, 27, a graduate student of international human rights policy at Columbia University, said of the campus organizers there.

“Even the choice to take over Hamilton Hall was always the plan from the start of the encampment,” she says. “Not only because it just made a lot of sense logistically, but it also has that ... strong historical connection with the 60s protests.”

Still, although it might be tempting to compare the nationwide campus protests to the anti-Vietnam War movement of a half century ago, Robert Cohen says that would be an overreaction.

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Jurors in Trump hush money trial hear recording of pivotal call on plan to buy affair story

NEW YORK (AP) — Jurors in the hush money trial of Donald Trump heard a recording Thursday of him discussing with his then-lawyer and personal fixer a plan to purchase the silence of a Playboy model who has said she had an affair with the former president.

A visibly irritated Trump leaned forward at the defense table, and jurors appeared riveted as prosecutors played the September 2016 recording that attorney Michael Cohen secretly made of himself briefing his celebrity client on a plan to buy Karen McDougal's story of an extramarital relationship.

Though the recording surfaced years ago, it is perhaps the most colorful piece of evidence presented to jurors so far to connect Trump to the hush money payments at the center of his criminal trial in Manhattan. It followed hours of testimony from a lawyer who negotiated the deal for McDougal's silence and admitted to being stunned that his hidden-hand efforts might have contributed to Trump's White House victory.

“What have we done?” attorney Keith Davidson texted the then-editor of the National Enquirer, which had buried stories of sexual encounters to prevent them surfacing in the final days of the bitterly contested presidential race. “Oh my god,” came the response from Dylan Howard.

“There was an understanding that our efforts may have in some way...our activities may have in some way assisted the presidential campaign of Donald Trump,” Davidson told jurors, though he acknowledged under cross-examination that he dealt directly with Cohen and never Trump.

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Here's what's on the table for Israel and Hamas in the latest cease-fire talks

CAIRO (AP) — Israel and Hamas appear to be seriously negotiating an end to the war in Gaza and the return of Israeli hostages. A leaked truce proposal hints at compromises by both sides after months of stalemated talks.

U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken this week praised Israel for offering what he described as significant concessions and saying “ the time is now ” for Hamas to seal the deal. Hamas leaders, meanwhile, say they are reviewing the proposal in a “positive spirit” and sending a team to Egypt in the coming days to continue the talks.

Here’s what we know so far about the current proposal, confirmed by Egyptian and Hamas officials who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss behind-the-scenes negotiations.

Israeli leaders are weighing whether to accept a deal that would delay or prevent their planned ground invasion of the southern Gaza city of Rafah — a scenario that falls short of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s pledges of “ total victory ” and the destruction of Hamas.

Hamas’ militant leaders must decide if giving up the hostages, the group’s biggest bargaining chip, is worth securing a long-term truce but not necessarily a permanent end to the war.

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United Methodists remove anti-gay language from their official teachings on societal issues

CHARLOTTE, N.C. (AP) — United Methodist delegates on Thursday removed a 52-year-old declaration from their official social teachings that deemed “the practice of homosexuality ... incompatible with Christian teaching” — part of a wider series of historic reversals of the denomination’s longstanding disapproval of LGBTQ activity.

The historic vote came as delegates also approved a new definition of marriage as a covenant between “two people of faith” while recognizing the couple may or may not involve a man and a woman. That replaces an exclusively heterosexual definition of marriage and followed a debate that exposed tensions between some U.S. and international delegates.

The 523-161 vote to approve a section of the church's Revised Social Principles took place at the General Conference of the United Methodist Church in the penultimate day of their 11-day legislative gathering in Charlotte.

It came a day after the General Conference removed its longstanding ban on "self-avowed practicing homosexuals” from being ordained or appointed as ministers. Step by step, delegates have been removing anti-LGBTQ language throughout their official documents.

But the marriage definition was approved only after debate and a compromise amendment — one of the few instances of open debate during this otherwise overwhelmingly progressive conference.

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Abortion is still consuming US ***politics*** and courts 2 years after a Supreme Court draft was leaked

Two years after a leaked draft of a U.S. Supreme Court opinion signaled that the nation's abortion landscape was about to shift dramatically, the issue is still consuming the nation's courts, legislatures and political campaigns — and changing the course of lives.

On Wednesday, a ban on abortion after the first six weeks of pregnancy, often before women realize they're pregnant, took effect in Florida, echoing laws in two other states. In Arizona, meanwhile, lawmakers voted to repeal a total ban on abortion dating back to 1864, decades before Arizona became a state — and the governor signed it a day later. Also this week, the Kansas Legislature increased funding for anti-abortion centers, while advocates in South Dakota submitted the required number of signatures for a ballot measure to enshrine abortion rights in the state constitution.

The status of abortion in states across the country has changed constantly, with lawmakers passing measures and courts ruling on challenges to them. Currently, 14 states are enforcing bans on abortion at all stages of pregnancy, with limited exceptions. Most Democratic-led states, meanwhile, have taken steps to preserve or expand access.

“Some of it’s exactly what we knew would happen,” said David Cohen, a professor at the Thomas R. Kline School of Law at Drexel University who studies abortion policy, “and others have been big surprises that have put, frankly, the anti-abortion movement on their heels.”

Although more than 20 states have begun enforcing abortion bans of varying degrees since the Supreme Court overturned Roe v. Wade in June 2022, studies have found that the number of monthly abortions nationally is about the same — or higher — than it was before the ruling. Asked to weigh in on the emotional debate, voters have supported the position favored by abortion rights advocates on all seven statewide ballot measures since then.

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Maui sues cell carriers over wildfire warning alerts that were never received during service outages

HONOLULU (AP) — Had emergency responders known about widespread cellphone outages during the height of last summer's deadly Maui wildfires, they would have used other methods to warn about the disaster, county officials said in a lawsuit.

Alerts the county sent to cellphones warning people to immediately evacuate were never received, unbeknownst to the county, the lawsuit said.

Maui officials failed to activate sirens that would have warned the entire population of the approaching flames. That has raised questions about whether everything was done to alert the public in a state that possesses an elaborate emergency warning system for a variety of dangers including wars, volcanoes, hurricanes and wildfires.

Major cellular carriers were negligent in failing to properly inform Maui police of widespread service outages, county officials said in the lawsuit filed Wednesday in state court against Verizon Wireless, T-Mobile USA, Spectrum Mobile and AT&T.

“We continue to stand with the Maui community as it heals from the tragic fires, but these claims are baseless,” T-Mobile said in a statement Thursday. “T-Mobile broadcasted wireless emergency alerts to customers while sites remained operational, promptly sent required outage notifications, and quickly contacted state and local emergency agencies and services.”

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I-95 in Connecticut will close for days after fiery crash damages bridge, governor says

HARTFORD, Conn. (AP) — The major traffic artery linking New England with New York will be closed in Connecticut for days after a tanker fire damaged a bridge over Interstate 95, Gov. Ned Lamont said Thursday.

The tanker truck filled with gasoline burst into flames in a three-vehicle crash Thursday on I-95 in southwest Connecticut, closing the East Coast’s main north-south highway and causing major traffic jams. While Lamont said there were no serious injuries in the 5:30 a.m. accident in Norwalk, the crash caused damage to the bridge above it.

“The heat from the burning fuel compromised some of the bridge, so that bridge is going to have to come down and that demolition is going to start first thing tomorrow morning,” Lamont said at a briefing Thursday evening in Hartford.

He said the hope is to reopen the interstate by Monday morning.

Norwalk Mayor Harry Rilling said his city's schools will be closed on Friday. It's unclear whether they'll reopen Monday. He urged local employers to consider allowing employees to work from home on Friday, if possible, or use the MetroNorth commuter rail. Additional trains are being added to the rail line, officials said.

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Faceless people, invisible hands: New Army video aims to lure recruits for psychological operations

FORT LIBERTY, N.C. (AP) — The video is unsettling, with haunting images of faceless people, fire and soldiers. The voiceover is a cascade of recognizable historical voices as the screen pulses cryptic messages touting the power of words, ideas and “invisible hands.”

Hints of its origin are tucked into frames as they flash by: PSYWAR. The Army’s psychological warfare soldiers are using their brand of mental combat to bring in what the service needs: recruits. And if you find the video intriguing, you may be the Army’s target audience as it works to enlist soldiers to join its Special Operations Command.

Released in the early morning hours Thursday, the video is the second provocative recruiting ad that, in itself, exemplifies the kind of work the psyop soldiers do to influence public opinion and wage the war of words overseas. Called “Ghost in the Machine 2,” it is coming out two years after the inaugural video was quietly posted on the unit’s YouTube site and generated a firestorm of online chatter.

“It’s a recruiting video,” said the Army major who created it, speaking with The Associated Press before the release. “Someone who watches it and thinks, wow, that was effective, how was it constructed — that’s the kind of creative mindset we’re looking for."

The soldier, a member of the 8th Psychological Operations Group based at Fort Liberty, North Carolina, also made the first video. He asked that his name not be used to protect his identity, as is common among special forces troops.

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Senators want limits on the government's use of facial recognition technology for airport screening

WASHINGTON (AP) — A bipartisan group of senators is pushing for restrictions on the use of facial recognition technology by the Transportation Security Administration, saying they are concerned about travelers' privacy and civil liberties.

In a letter on Thursday, the group of 14 lawmakers called on Senate leaders to use the upcoming reauthorization of the Federal Aviation Administration as a vehicle to limit TSA's use of the technology so Congress can put in place some oversight.

"This technology poses significant threats to our privacy and civil liberties, and Congress should prohibit TSA’s development and deployment of facial recognition tools until rigorous congressional oversight occurs," the senators wrote.

The effort, led by Sens. Jeff Merkley, D-Ore., John Kennedy, R-La., and Roger Marshall, R-Kan., "would halt facial recognition technology at security checkpoints, which has proven to improve security effectiveness, efficiency, and the passenger experience,” TSA said in a statement.

The technology is currently in use at 84 airports around the country and is planned to expand in the coming years to the roughly 430 covered by TSA.

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