

Anti-Israel activist Mahmoud Khalil released following judge's order

The Columbia University student was arrested in March and has been held at a Louisiana immigration detention center since March

Anti-Israel activist Mahmoud Khalil was released on bail from an immigration detention center on Friday following an [order by a judge](#).

Khalil, a Columbia University graduate student, left a federal facility in Louisiana before 7 p.m. on Friday and is expected to head to New York, where his wife and baby live. He must notify the Department of Homeland Security within 48 hours of his address after arriving in New York.

U.S. District Judge Michael Farbiarz in his Friday order said it would be "highly, highly unusual" to hold a legal U.S. resident who doesn't appear to be a flight risk and isn't accused of violent offenses.

"Petitioner is not a flight risk and the evidence presented is that he is not a danger to the community," Farbiarz said. "Period, full stop."

Khalil's attorneys said in a letter to the court before the judge's ruling that his imprisonment at the detention center in Jena, Louisiana, was an "exceedingly

rare" decision on the part of the government and amounted to unconstitutional retaliation.

Khalil was arrested in March at Columbia over his pro-Palestinian activism on campus, and an [immigration judge ruled](#) he could be removed from the country based on a memo from Secretary of State Marco Rubio that said his campus protests were at odds with U.S. foreign policy interests.

Rubio cited an obscure provision of the Immigration and Nationality Act to justify his finding, and Farbiarz later enjoined the secretary from using that determination to deport Khalil.

But the [Department of Homeland Security](#) (DHS) also added a second reason for keeping Khalil detained and attempting to deport him. The DHS said Khalil allegedly omitted key information from his green card application about groups with which he was affiliated, including the Columbia University Apartheid Divest.

Khalil's case has become a lightning rod for anti-Israel protesters and immigration rights advocates. They have argued the Trump administration is retaliating against him for opposing the Israeli government and chilling free speech of those who oppose Israel's offensive in the Gaza Strip and conflict with Iran.

Khalil must surrender his passport but will be given his green card and will be allowed to travel to New York, Michigan, where he has family, New Jersey and Louisiana for court appearances, and Washington, D.C. for lobbying.

The Trump administration is appealing the preliminary injunction and Khalil's release to the 3rd Circuit Court of Appeals.