



# Trump order cracks down on antisemitism and could deport foreign student protesters

UPDATED JANUARY 30, 2025 · 1:55 PM ET ⓘ

By  
Tovia Smith



People dance and wave large Israeli flags during a rally against campus antisemitism at George Washington University in May 2024 in Washington, D.C.

*Andrew Hamik/Getty Images*

An [executive order](#) signed Wednesday by President Trump outlines a broad federal crackdown on "the explosion of antisemitism" in the U.S., especially on college campuses, and says he will cancel visas of foreign students who are " Hamas sympathizers" and deport "pro-jihadist" protesters.

"We put you on notice: come 2025, we will find you, and will deport you," read [a White House fact sheet](#) about the order posted online Thursday.

The order cites "an unprecedented wave of vile anti-Semitic discrimination, vandalism and violence" and states that U.S. policy "shall be" to use "all available and appropriate legal tools to prosecute, remove, or otherwise hold to account the perpetrators of unlawful anti-Semitic harassment and violence." It also directs all U.S. department and agency heads to come up with new means they could employ to combat antisemitism within 60 days.



#### NATIONAL SECURITY

### Trump says the U.S. will send the 'worst criminal illegal aliens' to Guantánamo Bay

The order also lays out how some student protests could be considered a violation of existing federal law that bars individuals from supporting terrorism, and it directs government officials to encourage schools to monitor and report any such activities by foreign students so they can be investigated and possibly deported.

Current immigration law — cited in the order — authorizes the deportation of a noncitizen who "endorses or espouses terrorist activity or persuades others to endorse or espouse terrorist activity or support a terrorist organization." The U.S. government considers Hamas a [terrorist organization](#).

Trump's order was welcomed by students who've been reporting an alarming spike in antisemitism since Oct. 7, 2023, when Hamas led the attack on Israel that triggered the current war.

Cornell University junior Amanda Silberstein says she has been physically assaulted and harassed online and in person and feels unsafe on campus. But now, she says she feels some relief that "universities that have turned a blind eye to the harassment and assault of Jewish students can no longer ignore their basic responsibility to protect all students equally."

"No other minority group is expected to tolerate constant threats and intimidation without recourse, yet Jewish students have been treated as the exception," she said. "For far too long, Jew hatred festered under the guise of activism."

But critics immediately denounced the move as an overreach and as unconstitutional.

"The revocation of student visas should not be used to punish and filter out ideas disfavored by the federal government," said Sarah McLaughlin, a senior scholar with the Foundation for Individual Rights and Expression. "Students who commit crimes — including vandalism, threats or violence — must face consequences, and those consequences may include the loss of a visa." But McLaughlin said students must *not* be punished "for protest or expression otherwise protected by the First Amendment."



NATIONAL

## Trump's immigration orders are a blueprint for sweeping policy changes

The Council on American-Islamic Relations called the executive order an "attempt to smear" the diverse group of student protesters, who "like the college students who once protested segregation, the Vietnam war, and apartheid South Africa [...] deserve our country's thanks."

Many campuses do not have a clearly stated definition of what crosses the line into antisemitism, and many student protesters have complained that their anti-Israel demonstrations have been unfairly conflated with antisemitism.

But many Jewish students reject that notion, saying what they've experienced has clearly veered into the realm of violence and harassment.

"I do think universities should be a place where the First Amendment is sacred and where students can have hard conversations about any issue," says University of Pennsylvania senior Noah Rubin.

However, he says, extremists have made it clear that "they're not here for conversation at all. Many of them have strict policies, actually, *not* to engage in conversation at all. This is not a First Amendment issue. It's a question of violence and intimidation and harassment."

antisemitism

president trump

campus protests

oct. 7 hamas attack



READ & LISTEN

[Home](#)

[News](#)

[Culture](#)

[Music](#)

## Podcasts & Shows

CONNECT

**Newsletters**

**Facebook**

**Instagram**

**Press**

**Public Editor**

**Corrections**

**Contact & Help**

ABOUT NPR

**Overview**

**Diversity**

**NPR Network**

**Accessibility**

**Ethics**

**Finances**

GET INVOLVED

**Support Public Radio**

**Sponsor NPR**

**NPR Careers**

**NPR Shop**

**NPR Events**

**NPR Extra**

---

terms of use

privacy

your privacy choices

text only