# Pro-Palestine protest disrupts Cambridge graduations despite court injunction



A pro-Palestine demonstration at Cambridge University on 23 May disrupted graduation ceremonies, marked by a protestor chaining himself to the gates of the Senate House. This individual, dressed in a boiler suit stained with red paint, secured himself using a padlock and zip-tie, chanting "Free Palestine" as graduates and guests gathered for the celebrations.

The protest drew attention not only for its dramatic theatrics but also for its broader implications, as around a dozen other demonstrators rallied outside, waving Palestinian flags and donning face masks. The situation turned tense when a man, identified as Jewish and wearing a Kippah, approached the gates and faced confrontation from one of the protestors, highlighting the complex intersection of identity and political activism present at such events.

This protest occurred in the context of a High Court injunction, granted earlier in March, prohibiting pro-Palestinian demonstrations on specific areas of the university campus until the end of July 2025. The university sought this injunction after previous protests, which had included encampments that disrupted graduation events, leading to relocations. Critics of the injunction, including human rights organisations, argue that it sets a troubling precedent for curtailing protest rights within educational institutions. Liberty, a prominent human rights group, condemned the action as a severe limitation on freedom of expression and assembly, asserting that such measures threaten the fundamental principles of free speech on campus.

In the wake of rising tensions surrounding the Israel-Palestine conflict, student-led groups such as 'Cambridge for Palestine' have called for the university to divest from companies regarded as complicit in the ongoing crisis. Their campaign gained traction after King’s College, part of the University of Cambridge, announced in May its decision to cease investments in arms firms, a move applauded by many advocates of Palestinian rights.

The university has since been approached for comment regarding these incidents and the ongoing implications of the injunction. As graduation ceremonies continue, the dialogue surrounding academic freedom, protest rights, and the university's obligations becomes increasingly critical, illustrating the multifaceted nature of contemporary activism on university campuses. The recent events in Cambridge echo a broader trend within higher education institutions, where student activism increasingly confronts administrative policies and legal frameworks aimed at moderating public dissent.

## Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.cambridge-news.co.uk/news/cambridge-news/gallery/pro-palestine-protester-padlocks-himself-31710724), [[4]](https://www.libertyhumanrights.org.uk/issue/cambridge-university-granted-extreme-protest-injunction/)
* Paragraph 2 – [[2]](https://www.cambridgeindependent.co.uk/news/four-month-protest-injunction-granted-to-university-of-cambr-9409707/), [[5]](https://www.newarab.com/news/uk-cambridge-slammed-chilling-ban-pro-gaza-protests)
* Paragraph 3 – [[3]](https://www.timeshighereducation.com/news/cambridge-granted-gaza-protest-injunction-protect-graduations), [[4]](https://www.libertyhumanrights.org.uk/issue/cambridge-university-granted-extreme-protest-injunction/), [[6]](https://www.icjpalestine.com/2025/03/03/high-court-rejects-bid-by-the-university-of-cambridge-for-a-long-term-injunction-on-palestine-protests/)
* Paragraph 4 – [[1]](https://www.cambridge-news.co.uk/news/cambridge-news/gallery/pro-palestine-protester-padlocks-himself-31710724), [[7]](https://elsc.support/news/cambridge-universitys-attempt-to-restrict-palestine-solidarity-protests-faces-legal-challenge-in-high-court/)

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.cambridge-news.co.uk/news/cambridge-news/gallery/pro-palestine-protester-padlocks-himself-31710724> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.cambridgeindependent.co.uk/news/four-month-protest-injunction-granted-to-university-of-cambr-9409707/> - The University of Cambridge was granted a four-month injunction by the High Court to prevent pro-Palestinian protests during graduation ceremonies. The injunction restricts access to Senate House Yard, Greenwich House, and the Old Schools until July 26, 2025. The university sought the injunction due to disruptions caused by previous protests, including encampments that forced the relocation of graduation events. Critics, including human rights organizations, have expressed concerns that the injunction sets a dangerous precedent for restricting protest rights on campus.
3. <https://www.timeshighereducation.com/news/cambridge-granted-gaza-protest-injunction-protect-graduations> - The High Court granted the University of Cambridge an injunction to prevent pro-Palestinian protests during graduation ceremonies. The injunction covers three key university sites and restricts access for 'persons unknown' until July 26, 2025. The university argued that there was a 'real and imminent' risk of further protests disrupting ceremonies. Human rights groups have criticized the injunction as an overreach that sets a dangerous precedent for limiting protest rights on campus.
4. <https://www.libertyhumanrights.org.uk/issue/cambridge-university-granted-extreme-protest-injunction/> - Liberty, a human rights organization, criticized the University of Cambridge's High Court injunction that restricts pro-Palestinian protests until July 26, 2025. The injunction affects key university sites and aims to prevent disruptions during graduation ceremonies. Liberty argues that the injunction severely restricts protest rights on campus and sets a dangerous precedent for limiting freedom of expression and assembly.
5. <https://www.newarab.com/news/uk-cambridge-slammed-chilling-ban-pro-gaza-protests> - The University of Cambridge faced criticism for obtaining a High Court injunction that effectively bans pro-Palestinian protests on its campus until July 26, 2025. Activists and rights groups condemned the ruling as a 'chilling' attack on free speech. The university sought the injunction after previous protests disrupted graduation ceremonies, including an encampment that forced the relocation of an event.
6. <https://www.icjpalestine.com/2025/03/03/high-court-rejects-bid-by-the-university-of-cambridge-for-a-long-term-injunction-on-palestine-protests/> - The High Court rejected the University of Cambridge's bid for a five-year injunction to ban all Palestine-related protests at four university sites until 2030. The court granted a limited injunction covering only the graduation ceremony on March 1, 2025. The university sought the injunction in response to previous protests by Cambridge for Palestine, including encampments and occupations that disrupted graduation events.
7. <https://elsc.support/news/cambridge-universitys-attempt-to-restrict-palestine-solidarity-protests-faces-legal-challenge-in-high-court/> - The European Legal Support Centre (ELSC) and Liberty intervened in the High Court hearing where the University of Cambridge sought an injunction against Palestine-related protests. The university aimed to restrict protests until July 2025, targeting 'persons unknown' and key protest sites. ELSC and Liberty argued that the injunction was an unlawful restriction on freedom of expression and assembly under the European Convention on Human Rights.