# Harvard Students Walk Out of Graduation in Solidarity with Palestine



**Hundreds of Harvard Students Walk Out of Graduation in Protest Over Gaza**

On May 23, 2024, hundreds of Harvard University students walked out of their graduation ceremony to show solidarity with Palestine and protest the exclusion of 13 fellow students from the event. Clad in graduation robes, the students chanted "Free, free Palestine" and "Let them walk, let them walk," referencing their peers who were barred from the ceremony due to their involvement in recent protest encampments.

During her address, senior Shruthi Kumar criticized the university’s actions, stating, "This semester, our freedom of speech and our expressions of solidarity became punishable." Kumar acknowledged the 13 students who were not present to receive their diplomas and expressed disappointment in the lack of tolerance for civil disobedience on campus.

The commencement ceremony took place in Harvard Yard, which recently hosted a protest encampment in support of Gaza that was disbanded on May 14. Initially, the faculty reinstated the 13 students to the graduation list; however, Harvard's governing board later reversed this decision, citing violations of university policies.

Maria Ressa, the commencement speaker and Nobel Peace Prize laureate, addressed the situation, commenting on the importance of allowing protests to give voice to views and not silencing them.

Following the walkout, students reconvened at a Methodist church near Harvard Square, where they conducted a "people's commencement" and remembered those who had died in Gaza.

The incident is part of a broader wave of pro-Palestinian protests across U.S. college campuses in response to the ongoing conflict between Israel and Hamas. The protests have led to numerous arrests and prompted significant debate over free speech and civil rights on university grounds.