# Cambridge University secures injunction against pro-Palestine protests until July 2024



The University of Cambridge has successfully obtained a High Court injunction that prohibits pro-Palestine protests from taking place on parts of its campus until the end of July 2024. This decision is a response to disturbances caused by similar protests during graduation ceremonies in the previous year, which affected over 1,600 students.

On Wednesday, the university sought a four-month injunction after an earlier attempt for a five-year blocking order was dismissed by a judge. The High Court ruling was delivered by Mr Justice Soole, who articulated that there was an "imminent and real risk of a recurrence" of direct action on campus and a "strong probability that this will otherwise occur" if the injunction was not granted. He noted, "I am satisfied that there is a compelling need for the granting of an injunction."

Myriam Stacey KC, representing the university, argued that the sought injunction was not aimed at prohibiting lawful protest but rather at preventing disruption to graduation events. She highlighted previous instances where pro-Palestine protests had forced the relocation of ceremonies, asserting that the university aimed to protect sensitive, confidential information contained within its premises. Stacey stressed that "it is the activity we are seeking to stop, not the viewpoint."

The European Legal Support Centre (ELSC) opposed the university's application for the injunction, describing it as a "disproportionate infringement" on the protesters' human rights. Owen Greenhall, representing the ELSC, highlighted that the university's actions appeared to discriminate against the "race and/or political belief" of those involved in pro-Palestine protests while allowing other demonstrations, thereby setting a "dangerous precedent" for freedoms of expression on campus. He stated that an injunction was "not necessary" and could "chill" political expression at the university.

In light of the ruling, a spokesperson for Cambridge University issued a statement welcoming the decision. They insisted that the actions taken were focused on ensuring students could graduate without interruption and maintaining operational integrity within the university. The spokesperson reiterated that the university regularly accommodates protests, including a recent rally, while specific sites were subject to the injunction to prevent significant disruption.

The decision has received criticism from activists, with the group 'Cambridge for Palestine' condemning the ruling as "a violent move to criminalise and police our movement." Anna Ost, a senior legal officer at ELSC, emphasised the importance of resisting attempts to curtail protests advocating for Palestinian liberation. She added that the university's push for this injunction was an attempt to silence dissent rather than addressing its investments or affiliations related to the Palestine issue.

The implications of this ruling have sparked significant discourse regarding the balance between maintaining order at academic institutions and upholding the rights of individuals to express their political views. The injunction will remain in effect until July 26, 2024, coinciding with the university's final graduation ceremony of the academic year.

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

## References

* <https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/un-condemns-cambridge-university-seeking-ban-pro-palestine-protests> - This article discusses Cambridge University's attempt to ban pro-Palestine protests and the UN's stance on freedom of assembly, which relates to the university's efforts to restrict protests.
* <https://www.libertyhumanrights.org.uk/issue/cambridge-university-granted-extreme-protest-injunction/> - This article provides details on the High Court injunction granted to Cambridge University to restrict protests, highlighting concerns about freedom of expression.
* <https://www.noahwire.com> - This is the source of the original article discussing the University of Cambridge's successful injunction against pro-Palestine protests.
* <https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/un-condemns-cambridge-university-seeking-ban-pro-palestine-protests> - This article further elaborates on the context of pro-Palestine protests at Cambridge University and the legal challenges involved.
* <https://www.libertyhumanrights.org.uk/issue/cambridge-university-granted-extreme-protest-injunction/> - This article provides additional insights into the legal implications of the injunction and its impact on freedom of expression.
* <https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/un-condemns-cambridge-university-seeking-ban-pro-palestine-protests> - This article discusses the broader implications of the injunction on political expression and human rights.