# Pro-Palestinian Encampment Sparks UCLA Protest Showdown and Congressional Inquiry



Pro-Palestinian protesters initiated a new encampment at UCLA's Kerckhoff patio on Thursday, May 23, 2024. This follows a previous encampment that was violently attacked by counterprotesters and dismantled by police weeks earlier. The Los Angeles Police Department issued a citywide tactical alert, while UCLA police and private security monitored the site. As a result, access to several campus buildings was blocked, and classes were moved online.

UCLA’s Chancellor Gene Block testified before a congressional hearing on antisemitism the same day. This hearing investigated the university's handling of prior protests. Student Dana Kopel criticized the inquiry, claiming it aimed to suppress student protests. Jewish students previously expressed feeling intimidated by the encampment.

In early May, more than 200 protesters were arrested during the dismantling of the initial encampment. In response to the ongoing protests, the academic workers' union announced plans to expand their strike to include UCLA and UC Davis. Union demands include protection for free speech, amnesty for protesters, and divestment from companies profiting from the conflict in Gaza. UCLA has sought a court injunction to halt the strike, asserting the need to address violations of university policies equally.

In a related incident, students at Oxford University occupied an administrative building on Wellington Square, resulting in clashes with police and 16 arrests. Thames Valley Police used force to remove protesters, which has been documented and circulated on social media.