# Police Clash with Pro-Palestinian Protesters at US Universities Amid Ongoing Conflicts



On Friday, May 31, 2024, police in riot gear approached pro-Palestinian protesters at the University of California, Santa Cruz. The commencement of police action followed a week of demonstrations that blocked the main entrance to the campus, prompting the university to switch to remote learning.

For several days, protesters, including graduate student workers who were already on strike for unfair labor practices tied to the University's handling of pro-Palestinian actions, engaged in demonstrations. Videos showed officers with batons a few feet from arm-linked demonstrators. Some protesters wore helmets, goggles, and keffiyehs.

On Thursday, university officials had urged the protesters to clear access to the campus and adhere to community values and codes of conduct, stressing that blocking instructional access does not constitute free speech. Meanwhile, pro-Palestinian protests have ignited across various U.S. and European universities, with demands to sever ties with Israel and end its military actions in Gaza, which protesters term as genocide.

Incidentally, police also intervened at Wayne State University in Detroit on Thursday, dismantling a pro-Palestinian encampment and making at least 12 arrests. Additionally, some MIT graduates disrupted a commencement ceremony in Cambridge by walking out in solidarity with Gaza, wearing symbolic keffiyehs and chanting “free, free Palestine.” The demonstrators included graduates like David Berkinsky and Eesha Banerjee, who expressed their grievances against MIT’s research ties with the Israeli Ministry of Defense.

These actions form part of a larger trend of escalating university protests in response to the ongoing Israel-Hamas conflict, shedding light on the intersection of academic labor rights and international political activism.