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USA

MAHMOUD KHALIL RELEASED FROM IMMIGRATION DETENTION

On June 20, 2025, a U.S. federal judge ordered the release of Palestinian activist Mahmoud Khalil from immigration detention. Mahmoud had been held for over three months after being arrested on March 8, following his involvement in peaceful protests at Columbia University. While his legal battle is far from over, this decision means he can now be with his family and continue his fight for justice outside of detention.

NO FURTHER ACTION IS REQUESTED. MANY THANKS TO ALL WHO SENT APPEALS.

Mahmoud Khalil is a Palestinian activist, a recent graduate of Columbia University, and a lawful U.S. permanent resident. He was a visible organizer in the Gaza Solidarity Encampment on campus, speaking to the media and negotiating with university officials. On March 8, immigration agents arrested him at his university apartment. They claimed his residency had been revoked and threatened to detain his pregnant wife. At the time, she was expecting their first child, born in April.

After his arrest, Mahmoud was first held in New Jersey, then transferred to a detention center in Louisiana without notifying his lawyer or wife. U.S. immigration authorities justified their actions using a rarely applied law, arguing that his presence posed “serious foreign policy consequences.” An immigration judge agreed and denied his asylum claim. Mahmoud has appealed that decision.

On June 11, a federal judge in New Jersey found that holding Mahmoud on “foreign policy” grounds was likely unconstitutional. The government then tried to justify his continued detention by accusing him of failing to disclose information in his residency application — claims he and his legal team deny. On June 20, the judge called this argument “highly unusual” and ordered Mahmoud’s release on bail with conditions.

Mahmoud was released later that day. However, the government has already appealed the decision and still seeks to deport him. As his legal fight continues, Mahmoud remains committed to speaking out for Gaza and standing up for his rights and those of others.

Mahmoud expressed his thanks, saying:

"Your messages have kept me going. Still the fight is far from over, the genocide is still happening in Gaza, Israel is still waging a full war against Palestine. The U.S. government is funding this genocide, and Columbia University is investing in this genocide. This is why I was protesting, this is why I will continue protesting with every one of you, not only if they threaten me with detention. Even if they would kill me, I would still speak up for Gaza."