NJAC National Jewish Advocacy Center

NATIONAL JEWISH ADVOCACY CENTER
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October 26, 2026

VIA EMAIL

Jennifer L. Mnookin, President
Angela Olinto, Provost
Office of the General Counsel
Jim Glover, Vice Provost and Resolution Administrator
Title VI Coordinator, Office of Institutional Equity
Michelle Greenberg-Kobrin, Special Advisor and Jewish Life Liaison
David Greenwald and Jeh Johnson, Co-Chairs, Board of Trustees
Columbia University in the City of New York
535 West 116th Street
New York, NY 10027

Re: October 27, 2026 University-hosted event with Mahmoud Khalil; Columbia's Affirmation of Zero Tolerance; Resolution Agreement ¶¶ 12, 28, 29 and 33

Dear President Mnookin, Provost Olinto, and colleagues:

Tomorrow evening, two units of Columbia University will host, at a University facility, with University security at the door and University refreshments inside, the man Columbia barred from campus on public-safety grounds eleven months ago, a bar he is now suing the University to lift, and the most visible representative of the one organization Columbia has pledged in writing never to engage. This letter does not ask Columbia to silence an author or cancel a book. It asks Columbia to apply its own commitments to its own units, and to say on the record which of two incompatible positions it holds.

The facts are Columbia's. The Center for Palestine Studies, a unit of the Middle East Institute, and the Simon and June Li Center for Global Journalism at the Journalism School are presenting "No Land to Stand On," an evening with Mahmoud Khalil in conversation with the Center's co-director, Nadia Abu El-Haj, introduced by the Li Center's director, Azmat Khan, on Tuesday, October 27, 2026, from 6:10 to 8:00 p.m. The Center's own page, on a columbia.edu domain, restricts attendance to CUID holders, requires bags to be checked at the door, promises light refreshments and a book signing, and describes the government of the United States as "a lawless regime shredding basic rights."[1]

The commitment is also Columbia's. On July 15, 2025, under the heading "Affirmation of Zero Tolerance," the University announced that it "has not, and will not, recognize or meet with" the

[1]Center for Palestine Studies, Columbia University, "No Land to Stand On," https://palestine.mei.columbia.edu/events-fall-2026/no-land-to-stand-on (accessed Oct. 26, 2026).

group calling itself Columbia University Apartheid Divest, its representatives, or any affiliated organization, and that organizations which promote violence or encourage disruption of the academic mission are unwelcome on Columbia's campuses and will not be engaged.[2] On March 1, 2026, the University reaffirmed that policy, noted that it had conditioned every recognized student group's continued recognition, funding and space on compliance with it, and said that it stands by it.[3]

Mr. Khalil was CUAD's lead negotiator and public spokesman during the April 2024 encampment; he was the person the University dealt with when it dealt with CUAD.[4] According to published reporting of his immigration proceedings, an immigration judge found in September 2025 that he deliberately omitted his CUAD affiliation, among other information, from his application for permanent residence, and the Board of Immigration Appeals affirmed that ruling in April 2026.[5] If he is not a CUAD representative within the meaning of Columbia's pledge, the word has no referent.

Here is what Columbia has already decided about Mr. Khalil's presence on campus, in Columbia's own words and conduct. In November 2025, after a public safety review, the University declined to let him appear in person at Pulitzer Hall for a film screenning and recommended a different campus venue so that facilities and public safety staff could support thee event and limit disruption; the organizers put him on Zoom instead. The same month, the University denied his campus-access request to address a SIPA class, citing its ability to manage facilities and public safety on campus, and permitted only virtual participation. On November 5, 2025, he was denied a guest pass.[6] On

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[2]Claire Shipman, Acting President, "Our Additional Commitments to Combatting Antisemitism," Office of the President, Columbia University (July 15, 2025), https://president.columbia.edu/news/our-additional-commitments-combatting-antisemitism; "Affirmation of Zero Tolerance," https://president.columbia.edu/content/affirmation-zero-tolerance.

[3]Office of Public Affairs, Columbia University, "University Reaffirms Zero Tolerance for Unaffiliated Group 'CUAD'" (Mar. 1, 2026), https://communications.news.columbia.edu/news/university-reaffirms-zero-tolerance-unaffiliated-group-cuad.

[4]Associated Press, "How Columbia University activist Mahmoud Khalil became a Trump administration symbol of campus protests" (republished at https://www.yahoo.com/news/columbia-university-activist-mahmoud-khalil-080000624.html); The Intercept, "Columbia Apologized to Mahmoud Khalil in May 2024 for One-Day Suspension" (Mar. 19, 2025), https://theintercept.com/2025/03/19/columbia-mahmoud-khalil-suspension-gaza-protests.

[5]Marlene Lenthang & Chloe Atkins, "Immigration judge orders Mahmoud Khalil to be deported to Algeria or Syria," NBC News (Sept. 17, 2025), https://www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/immigration-judge-orders-mahmoud-khalil-deported-algeria-syria-rcna232049 (quoting the immigration judge's finding that he "willfully misrepresented material fact(s)"); NPR, "Mahmoud Khalil ordered deported, but there's a long legal fight ahead" (Sept. 18, 2025), https://www.npr.org/2025/09/18/nx-s1-5545637/mahmoud-khalil-ordered-deported-but-theres-a-long-legal-fight-ahead (omitted information included his UNRWA work and his involvement in a pro-Palestinian activist group at Columbia); Columbia Daily Spectator, "Board of Immigration Appeals denies Khalil's appeal to deportation order, issues 'final' administrative removal order" (Apr. 9, 2026), https://www.columbiaspectator.com/news/2026/04/09/board-of-immigration-appeals-denies-khalils-appeal-to-deportation-order-issues-final-administrative-removal-order/.

[6]Office of Public Affairs, Columbia University, "Correcting Misinformation" (Nov. 20, 2025), https://communications.news.columbia.edu/news/correcting-misinformation; Jerusalem Post, "Columbia University denies campus access to activist Mahmoud Khalil over safety concerns" (Nov. 25, 2025),

September 14, 2026, Mr. Khalil and the SIPA Palestine Working Group sued the University, its Trustees and the SIPA dean in the Southern District of New York; the relief they seek includes restoration of his campus access, and the University's stated basis for the denial remains public safety.[7]

That leaves Columbia holding two positions at once. Either the public-safety determination underlying the November 2025 denials was sound, in which case a University center has scheduled a reckless event in a University building with the University's own officers at the door, or it was not sound, in which case Columbia owes its community the explanation it will soon owe a federal judge. Columbia cannot be both the defendant that cannot safely admit Mr. Khalil and the host that serves him refreshments. Which is it?

To be clear, an alumnus with a book is entitled to publish it, and a bookstore across Broadway hosted him on October 11 without any involvement of the University.[8] But Columbia did not promise zero tolerance for bookstores. It promised, to its own community and in the shadow of its agreement with the United States, that it would not engage CUAD or its representatives, and it has enforced that promise against every recognized student group as a condition of existence. A Center and a School are now doing what a student group would be defunded for doing. Run the substitution test: had the coalition's demands targeted any other protected group, no University center would be hosting its chief spokesman fifteen months after the University's pledge, and no one would be calling the objection censorship.

The Resolution Agreement turns this from a programming dispute into a compliance question. Paragraph 12 commits the Senior Vice Provost to a thorough review of the Center for Palestine Studies and the Middle East Institute, including "all aspects of leadership and curriculum," to ensure comprehensive and balanced offerings; the University reported that review as "In Progress" on October 1, 2026.[9] The Center's co-director is tomorrow's interlocutor. Paragraph 28 obligates

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https://www.jpost.com/diaspora/antisemitism/article-875187 (quoting Columbia Public Affairs); Emily Pickering, "Columbia denies Mahmoud Khalil, SIPA '24, campus access for planned events, citing security reasons," Columbia Daily Spectator (Nov. 20, 2025) (November 5 guest-pass denial).

[7]Inside Higher Ed, "Khalil Accuses Columbia of Discrimination in New Lawsuit" (Sept. 15, 2026), https://www.insidehighered.com/news/students/free-speech/2026/09/15/khalil-accuses-columbia-discrimination-new-lawsuit; PBS NewsHour/Associated Press (Sept. 14, 2026), https://www.pbs.org/newshour/nation/mahmoud-khalil-lawsuit-says-columbia-university-failed-to-protect-pro-palestinian-activists; Reuters (via Al-Monitor) (Sept. 14, 2026), https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2026/09/mahmoud-khalil-sues-columbia-alleged-failure-protect-pro-palestinian-students. Complaint, *Khalil v. Columbia Univ. in the City of N.Y.*, No. 1:26-cv-07977 (S.D.N.Y. filed Sept. 14, 2026).

[8]Columbia Daily Spectator, "'This change happens at Columbia': Mahmoud Khalil, SIPA '24, discusses his new memoir 'No Land to Stand On' at Book Culture" (Oct. 11, 2026), https://www.columbiaspectator.com/arts-and-culture/2026/10/11/this-change-happens-at-columbia-mahmoud-khalil-sipa-24-discusses-his-new-memoir-no-land-to-stand-on-at-book-culture/.

[9]Columbia University, Semi-Annual Report, Columbia University Resolution Agreement (Oct. 1, 2026), at 2, 8–10 (reproducing Resolution Agreement ¶ 12 and reporting its status as "In Progress"), https://www.columbia.edu/content/sites/www.columbia.edu.content/files/content/RA/Columbia-University-Resolution-Agreement-Semi-Annual-Report-October-2026.pdf.

Columbia to apply University rules and policies "without regard to identity or ideology."[10] Paragraph 29 obligates even-handed implementation of the University's Title VI policies.[11] The University's October 1 report to the Monitor describes new economics courses and visiting appointments under Paragraph 12; it says nothing about the programming of the Center under review. Within four weeks of filing that report, the Center scheduled this event.

Accordingly, the National Jewish Advocacy Center requests the following:

1. By 12:00 p.m. on October 27, 2026, written confirmation of whether the University has rescinded the public-safety determination underlying its November 2025 denials of Mr. Khalil's campus access, and if so, who made that decision, when, and on what review. If no such rescission has occurred, the University should apply its November 2025 precedent and move the event off campus or to a virtual format.

2. A written statement of how University hosting of the event is consistent with the Affirmation of Zero Tolerance and with Paragraphs 12, 28 and 29 of the Resolution Agreement.

3. Preservation of all documents and communications concerning the event, including any public safety review, among the Center for Palestine Studies, the Middle East Institute, the Li Center, the Journalism School, Public Safety, University Events, the Office of the Provost, the Office of the General Counsel and the Office of the President.

4. Confirmation that the event, and the programming of both presenting units, has been referred to the Senior Vice Provost's Paragraph 12 review and to the Resolution Administrator.

We are copying the Resolution Monitor, and members of the Columbia community will be reporting this matter under Paragraph 33 of the Agreement, with the protections that Paragraph 32 guarantees them.[12] The pledge was Columbia's. So is the explanation.

Sincerely,

Mark Goldfeder
CEO, National Jewish Advocacy Center
Law Professor, Touro Law School

cc: Charles J. Cooper, Esq., Resolution Monitor

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[10] Id. at 40 (reproducing Resolution Agreement ¶ 28).

[11] Id. at 41 (reproducing Resolution Agreement ¶ 29).

[12] Id. at 47–48 (reproducing Resolution Agreement ¶¶ 32–33); Columbia University, "Federal Resolution Agreement" (reporting page naming Charles J. Cooper as Resolution Monitor and Jim Glover as Resolution Administrator), https://www.columbia.edu/content/federal-resolution-agreement.