

**Secretary Kristi Noem**

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Dear Secretary Noem,

On the evening of March 8th, Department of Homeland Security (DHS) agents stopped Mahmoud Khalil, a Palestinian student activist and recent graduate student at Columbia University, as he was walking home from an Iftar celebration with his 8-months pregnant wife and unlawfully arrested and detained him.

Mr. Khalil is a legal permanent resident and was informed by federal officials that his immigration paperwork was being revoked. Mahmoud Khalil has not been charged with a crime. He was actively involved in the protests and encampments at Columbia University in support of Palestinian rights and against the ongoing genocide in the occupied Gaza Strip.

**No one should be ripped away from their family and sent to detention just for exercising their right to protest, and no one should be deported for speaking out for human rights.**

Mr. Khalil's arrest and ongoing arbitrary detention are the latest attack on human rights by the Trump administration. The rights to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly are human rights, not grounds for deportation.

Targeting peaceful protesters and threatening their immigration status for the content of their protest, such as advocating for the human rights of Palestinians, is a violation of human rights. This targeting sends a chilling message to people across this country, on and off campuses, that anyone exercising their rights will be subject to repression, detention, and possible deportation. And for the immigrant communities already living in fear throughout the U.S., they are now only further pushed into the shadows with fear that they could be deported for speaking out.

**Mahmoud Khalil should be released immediately. I implore you to rescind your order revoking his lawful permanent residency status and leverage your power to ensure that the Trump administration respect Mr. Khalil's human rights, including his right to due process, and free him from ICE custody so he can return to his home in New York with his family.**

Sincerely,