

# The Delray Democrat

## First They Came for Mahmoud Khalil<sup>1</sup>

*June Sandra Neal*

Donald Trump's recent illegal arrests and deportations of certain non-citizens should be a call to action by all who cherish our Constitutional freedoms. After all, who's next? That's the lesson in Pastor Martin Niemoller's famous 1946 essay, where he confesses that each time the Nazis came for Hitler's perceived enemies, he said nothing. "Then they came for me, and there was no one left to speak out." This is the danger of indifference and inaction when others are persecuted, such as Mahmoud Khalil.

**March 8, 2025.** Agents from the Immigration and Customs Enforcement agency (ICE) arrested Khalil, a Columbia University graduate student and a legal permanent resident. It's believed he was arrested only because he'd become a well-known figure in the Palestinian solidarity protests at Columbia University, although we can't be sure since Khalil was denied his legal right to a hearing. He's being held in the Central Louisiana ICE Processing Center (CLIPC), a jail with a reputation for human rights abuses. A federal judge has barred his deportation while his lawyers fight for his release. Sadly, Khalil's case is only one of many, but his popularity, and the government's blatant disregard for his rights, has made international headlines.

**March 13, 2025.** Department of Homeland Security agents executed search warrants at two Columbia University residences, allegedly because of student support of Hamas. They found nothing.

The U. S. State Department designated Hamas a terrorist organization in 1997. But the search warrants and arrests did not rise from charges that these people were active in the organization but because they support the Palestinian cause, which Trump says is [anti-Semitic](#).

**March 25, 2025.** Rumeysa Ozturk, a Turkish PhD student at Tufts University, was abducted off the street in Sommerville, Massachusetts by masked ICE agents and taken to CLIPC. She says the arrest was because of an op-ed she wrote for the Tufts Daily newspaper expressing support for the Palestinians in the war with Israel. In an exercise more evocative of Rube Goldberg than serious government policy, Ozturk was moved to five different locations, initially preventing her lawyers from reaching her. The government also revoked her visa. She remains in custody at the time of this writing. See Papiere Bitte, page 3, for a chilling video of her kidnapping.

The search of the student residences had a broader purpose; it was a warning to the university that Trump is serious about usurping Columbia's right to govern itself. As the [Guardian](#) reported, "The Trump administration sent a [letter](#) to Columbia outlining changes it wants the university to meet before it will discuss lifting last week's cancellation of [\\$400m](#) in federal funding to the school. The demands include abolishing the university judicial board, an internal disciplinary body; formalizing the college's definition of antisemitism; banning masks "intended to conceal identity

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<sup>1</sup> [The Delray Democrat](#), April 2025, page 11.

or intimidate” on campus, often used by protesters; and granting full law enforcement authority to public safety officers. **The letter also demands the placement of Columbia’s Middle East, south Asian and African studies department under academic receivership (when a department or program is taken over by outside administrators) for at least five years.”**

**March 27, 2025.** At a press conference, “Secretary of State [Marco Rubio](#) said that the State Department revoked about 300 student visas and was continuing to take away visas every day.”

### **America Now Has Thought Police.**

Donald Trump is a narcissistic, immoral sociopath who has spent his life breaking and evading the law. As president, he seeks revenge against anyone who has stood up to him. Others are targets simply because they are Democrats. And others only because they are expedient scapegoats, members of subsets—even absent any political activity—Moslems, the LGBTQ community, the arts world, and academia.

According to [Ballotpedia](#), as of April 3, 2025, Trump “had signed 111 [executive orders](#), 29 [proclamations](#), and 27 [memoranda](#)” since taking office in January, 2025. That’s the most since Harry Truman issued 139 in all of 1945. Some of the documents simply feed Trump’s insatiable ego, such as [creating a task force](#) to oversee the 2026 FIFA World Cup competition in America and appointing himself chairman. But most expand his presidential powers, allowing him to wreak vengeance against perceived enemies.

**February 5, 2025.** Attorney General Pam Bondi announced the creation of a [Weaponization Working Group](#) to investigate—anyone Trump targets. One probe accused Manhattan district attorney, Alvin Bragg, of “federal cooperation with the weaponization.” In 2023, Bragg charged Trump with falsifying business records to commit tax fraud, violation of federal campaign finance laws, and illegally attempting to influence the 2016 U.S. presidential election. Bragg also filed state criminal charges against Trump for falsifying business records to disguise a payment to an adult film star. Bragg won a 34-felony count conviction, but Judge Juan Merchan granted Trump, president-elect at the time, an “unconditional discharge,” acknowledging Trump’s a convicted felon, but ordering no fines or jail time.

**February 25, 2025.** Trump issued a memorandum to block security clearances and all federal government work for the law firm of Covington and Burling, the attorneys representing Special Counsel Jack Smith who was investigating Trump for his role in the January 6 attempted insurrection at the United States Capitol and for his retention of classified documents. Trump accused the law firm of “[involvement of weaponization of government.](#)”

**March 6, 2025.** Trump issued an order revoking security clearance and federal contracts for the law firm of Perkins Coie LLP because the company had represented Hillary Clinton. The Trump administration also accused them of working “with activist donors including George Soros to judicially overturn popular, necessary, and democratically enacted election laws, including those requiring voter [identification.](#)”

**March 15, 2025.** Trump issued a [proclamation](#), citing the Venezuelan-based gang known as Tren de Aragua (TdA) as a “designated Foreign Terrorist Organization with thousands of members, many of whom have unlawfully infiltrated the United States and are conducting irregular warfare

and undertaking hostile actions against the United States.” Trump ordered ICE to scoop up 200 alleged gang members; 137 of them were deported to a notorious prison in El Salvador. These immigrants were not allowed to exercise their rights afforded by the 14th Amendment, which guarantees due process to all "persons" in the U.S., including non-citizens. “...nor shall any State deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the [laws](#).”

Along with a hearing, non-citizens have the right to be notified of the charges they’re facing, the right to counsel and the right to offer evidence on their behalf. And even if the judge finds they can be deported, they have the right to an appeal.

To effect the deportations without due process, Trump invoked the 1798 wartime [Alien Enemies Act](#), promulgated when America anticipated a war with France. It reads, “whenever there shall be a declared war [...] or any invasion or predatory incursion shall be perpetrated, attempted, or threatened” against the US, all "subjects of the hostile nation or government" could be "apprehended, restrained, secured and removed, as alien enemies." The Act has been used only three times since, and only during a major conflict: the War of 1812, World War I, and World War II, when 120,000 people of Japanese descent were arrested; thousands were sent to internment camps without a trial. Click on the photo below to see more images.



A [federal judge](#) in Texas recently issued a temporary order banning Trump from invoking the Act to deport people held in an immigration detention center without due process and a [federal judge](#) in New York issued a similar order.

Trump has falsified reality; there is no declared war, invasion or predatory incursion from Venezuela or any other country.

In addition, on **March 25, 2025**, Trump [revoked](#) what’s known as “humanitarian parole” status for non-citizens from Cuba, Haiti, Venezuela and Nicaragua. “Parole is an available tool under the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA) that allows certain individuals to enter the U.S. and temporarily stay without an immigrant or non-immigrant [visa](#).” It’s usually granted for urgent humanitarian reasons or some public benefit. But those people who’ve been granted parole have been ordered to leave the country by April 24, 2025, or by the expiration date of their parole, whichever is first.

Trump demonstrates his vindictiveness almost daily, firing government employees he perceives to have opposed him, including Justice Department officials who were simply doing their jobs

prosecuting the January 6 marauders. He's called for the impeachment of judges and threatened to withhold federal funding from universities and arts organizations.

Trump and his Weaponization Working Group echo other historical monsters who used "protection" of their regimes as cover. During the 1930s, Joseph Stalin used his power to terrorize the Russian people and millions died. "By the time the Great Terror ended, Stalin had subjected all aspects of Soviet society to strict party-state control, not tolerating even the slightest expression of local initiative, let alone political unorthodoxy. The Stalinist leadership felt especially threatened by the intelligentsia, whose creative efforts were thwarted through the strictest censorship; by religious groups, who were persecuted and driven underground; and by non-Russian nationalities, many of whom were deported en masse to Siberia during World War II because Stalin questioned their [loyalty](#)."

Under Adolph Hitler, "[The first wave of legislation](#), from 1933 to 1934, focused largely on limiting the participation of Jews in German public life. The first major law to curtail the rights of Jewish citizens was the "Law for the Restoration of the Professional Civil Service" of April 7, 1933, according to which Jewish and "politically unreliable" civil servants and employees were to be excluded from state service. The new Civil Service Law was the German authorities' first formulation of the so-called Aryan Paragraph, a kind of regulation used to exclude Jews (and often by extension other "non-Aryans") from organizations, professions, and other aspects of public life."

Donald Trump does what all dictators do: contravene existing laws and constitutions, abuse power to arbitrarily punish any perceived threat, then eviscerate the very institutions that could hold them responsible. History shows we'd better speak up now— before we're all silenced.