

Judge halts U.S. efforts to detain Columbia student

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A federal judge has temporarily blocked U.S. immigration authorities from detaining Columbia University student Yunseo Chung, who claims she is being targeted due to her pro-Palestinian activism.

Judge Naomi Buchwald issued the temporary restraining order on Tuesday after Chung, a 21-year-old junior with a green card, filed a lawsuit against immigration enforcement. Chung, originally from Korea, was informed by Columbia officials earlier this month that U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents were looking to arrest her.

Chung's attorneys argue that Secretary of State Marco Rubio ordered the revocation of her green card, alleging that her presence in the U.S. undermines U.S. foreign policy. They further claim this is part of a broader crackdown targeting activists. Similar actions were taken against Mahmoud Khalil of Columbia and Badar Suri from Georgetown, both of whom are currently in custody in Louisiana. Both students have also filed lawsuits challenging their detentions.

“These actions infringe upon free speech,” said Ramzi Kassem, Co-Director of CLEAR at CUNY School of Law. “The court’s ruling ensures Yunseo’s rights are preserved as we address the larger constitutional issues at stake.”

Additionally, in Syracuse, New York, a federal judge heard arguments in the case of Cornell graduate student Momodou Taal. Taal, a dual citizen of the UK and Gambia, fears arrest under executive orders from the Trump administration targeting antisemitism. A decision on his case is pending.

The U.S. attorney’s office has not yet commented on these rulings.

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