
U.S. Judge Orders Columbia Activist Mahmoud Khalil Deported Amid Free Speech Dispute



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A federal immigration judge has ordered Mahmoud Khalil, a former Columbia University graduate student and green card holder, to be deported to either Algeria, his country of citizenship, or Syria, where he was born. The decision, issued last week by Louisiana-based Judge Jamee Comans, surfaced in court filings Wednesday as part of Khalil's ongoing lawsuit against the

U.S. government.

Khalil argues that the Trump administration targeted him for his role in pro-Palestinian campus protests, accusing officials of using immigration laws to punish foreign students critical of Israel's conduct in Gaza. He spent months in immigration detention earlier this year before being released by court order.

Judge Comans denied Khalil's request for a waiver that would prevent removal, ruling that he misrepresented details on his immigration forms, including prior ties to a U.N. agency working with Palestinians and past work at the British Embassy in Lebanon. The judge described Khalil as "ivy-league educated" and concluded his omissions were willful attempts to avoid denial of his green card.

Khalil, however, has denied the allegations, insisting he was only an unpaid intern at the U.N. agency and ended his embassy role in 2022. His lawyers blasted the ruling as rushed, procedurally flawed, and politically motivated. "This kangaroo immigration court exposes their true colors once again," Khalil said in a statement, accusing the administration of retaliating against him for exercising free speech.

The Department of Homeland Security defended the decision, saying visas and green cards are a privilege that can be revoked if individuals glorify terrorists, harass Jews, or promote violence.

Khalil rejects such accusations, maintaining his commitment to peaceful protest.

Khalil now has 30 days to appeal to the Board of Immigration Appeals. If unsuccessful, he will lose his green card and face deportation.