

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

October 14, 2024

James E. Dennehy
Assistant Director in Charge
Federal Bureau of Investigation, New York
26 Federal Plaza, 23rd Floor
New York, NY 10278

Dear Assistant Director Dennehy,

It's rare for potential perpetrators of violence, particularly school-based violence, to widely and publicly broadcast their intent in such a way as it becomes national news. But that's exactly what the Columbia University Apartheid Divest (CUAD), a coalition of student groups, did on October 8, 2024.¹ These violent threats demand immediate attention and a thorough investigation to prevent any acts of terrorism.

Just one day after the one-year anniversary of the October 7, 2023, terrorist attacks—in which Hamas terrorists butchered over 1,200 innocent civilians, including American citizens—CUAD published a statement regarding one of its members. The member had made a number of violent threats, including:

- “Zionists don't deserve to live;”²
- “I feel very comfortable—very comfortable—calling for those people to die;”³
- “[T]aking someone's life in certain case scenarios is necessary and better for the overall world;”⁴
- “Be grateful that I'm not just going out and murdering Zionists;”⁵
- “I fight to kill;”⁶ and

¹ Luke Tress, *Columbia pro-Palestinian group endorses violence and walks back apology for student who said 'Zionists don't deserve to live'*, NY JEWISH WEEK, (Oct. 8, 2024, 5:01 PM), <https://www.jta.org/2024/10/08/ny/columbia-pro-palestinian-group-endorses-violence-and-walks-back-apology-for-student-who-said-zionists-dont-deserve-to-live>.

² Collin Anderson, *'I Meant It': Suspended Columbia Student Khymani James Stands By Remarks Fantasizing of 'Murdering Zionists'*, THE FREE BEACON (Oct. 8, 2024) <https://freebeacon.com/campus/columbia-student-group-apologizes-for-apologizing-on-behalf-of-member-who-fantasized-about-murdering-zionists/>.

³ TOI Staff and Agencies, *Columbia protest leader banned from campus for saying 'Zionists don't deserve to live'*, THE TIMES OF ISRAEL (Apr. 27, 2024, 3:51 AM), <https://www.timesofisrael.com/columbia-protest-leader-banned-from-campus-for-saying-zionists-dont-deserve-to-live/>.

⁴ *Id.*

⁵ David Propper and Georgett Roberts, *Suspended Columbia student that declared 'Zionists don't deserve to live' stands by hateful remark*, THE NEW YORK POST (Oct. 9, 2024, 12:14 AM), <https://nypost.com/2024/10/09/us-news/suspended-columbia-student-khymani-james-that-declared-zionists-dont-deserve-to-live-stands-by-hateful-remark/>.

⁶ Luke Tress, *Columbia student group retracts apology of member who says 'Zionists deserve to die'*, THE TIMES OF ISRAEL (Oct. 9, 2024, 5:39 AM), <https://www.timesofisrael.com/columbia-student-group-retracts-apology-of-member-who-said-zionists-deserve-to-die/>.

- “If we can agree as a society, as a collective, that people... some persons need to die, if they have an ideology that results in the death of thousands, hundreds of thousands, millions—if there are people like that who exist, shouldn’t they die?”⁷

Regarding these terroristic threats, CUAD initially wrote a statement apologizing for and disavowing such heinous remarks. However, on October 8, 2024, CUAD apologized for the apology, saying its contrition “does not represent ... CUAD’s values.”⁸ In the same statement, CUAD advocated for “liberation by any means necessary, including armed resistance,”⁹ and even wrote, in black and white, “violence is the only path forward.”¹⁰ Notably, earlier in the week, the same group *endorsed* the Hamas-claimed terrorist attack in Tel Aviv, embracing the same language used in its publicly posted threat, calling it “a significant act of resistance.”¹¹ This so-called “bold attack”¹² claimed the lives of seven people.¹³ Among the dead was the mother of a nine-month-old baby who died shielding her child, who himself was rushed to the hospital with injuries.¹⁴

These threats aren’t idle. Last spring, amid significant violence in which the group and its leaders engaged, the director of the Orthodox Union-Jewish Learning Initiative at Columbia and Barnard urged Jewish students to “return home as soon as possible and remain home” because “Columbia University’s Public Safety and the NYPD cannot guarantee Jewish students’ safety in the face of extreme antisemitism and anarchy.”¹⁵

⁷ TOI Staff and Agencies, *Columbia protest leader banned from campus for saying ‘Zionists don’t deserve to live*, THE TIMES OF ISRAEL (Apr. 27, 2024, 3:51 AM), <https://www.timesofisrael.com/columbia-protest-leader-banned-from-campus-for-saying-zionists-dont-deserve-to-live/>.

⁸ CU Apartheid Divest (CUAD) (@ColumbiaBDS), X (Oct. 8, 2024, 12:10PM), <https://twitter.com/ColumbiaBDS/status/1843685444741190018>.

⁹ CU Apartheid Divest (CUAD) (@ColumbiaBDS), X (Oct. 8, 2024, 12:12 PM), <https://twitter.com/ColumbiaBDS/status/1843685943347425316>.

¹⁰ CU Apartheid Divest (CUAD) (@ColumbiaBDS), X (Oct. 8, 2024, 12:18 PM), <https://twitter.com/ColumbiaBDS/status/1843687358325272979>.

¹¹ CUAD, *RESISTANCE REACHES THE CORE OF THE ZIONIST REGIME | REPRESSION WON’T DIVIDE US | MOBILIZE THE MASSES TO ACHIEVE VICTORY*, The Barricade (Oct. 3, 2024), <https://cuapartheiddivest.substack.com/p/resistance-reaches-the-core-of-the>.

¹² *Id.*

¹³ Jerusalem Post Staff, *Seven murdered in Jaffa terror shooting, many more wounded*, THE JERUSALEM POST (Oct. 2, 2024, 9:11 PM) <https://www.jpost.com/breaking-news/article-822839>.

¹⁴ Monica Sager, *Tel Aviv Shooting Victim Identified as New Mom Who Died Shielding Infant*, Newsweek (Oct. 2, 2024, 1:02 PM), <https://www.newsweek.com/tel-aviv-mass-shooting-victim-identified-inbar-segev-vigder-1962680>.


¹⁵ Rebecca Massel, *Rabbi advises Jewish students to ‘return home as soon as possible’ following reports of ‘extreme antisemitism’ on and around campus*, THE COLUMBIA SPECTATOR (Apr. 21, 2024, 7:26 PM), <https://www.columbiaspectator.com/news/2024/04/21/rabbi-advises-jewish-students-to-return-home-as-soon-as-possible-following-reports-of-extreme-antisemitism-on-and-around-campus/>.

In light of the considerable violence occurring for which this group is already responsible, and Columbia University's inability and unwillingness to police its own campus¹⁶ necessitating it to request the NYPD intervene,¹⁷ federal intervention is now necessary.

According to "The School Shooter: A Threat Assessment Perspective," a long-standing tool published by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), the National Center for the Analysis of Violence Crime, and the Critical Incident Response Group, CUAD's threats—coupled with its past actions—make CUAD's statements "a medium-level threat."¹⁸ As you know, such threats can be identified by such markers as "a specific statement seeking to convey that the threat is not empty," and "veiled reference[s]" to possible preparatory steps.¹⁹ Such threats often "warrant investigation as a possible criminal offense."²⁰

The time to act is now. Rarely has the FBI had such public and obvious evidence of potentially imminent violence. This cannot become another instance in which a terrible case of violence takes place at a school and the FBI issues a statement after the fact that the perpetrators were "on its radar," but did nothing. Put simply, the writing is on the wall and you have no excuse. Do your job.

Sincerely,



Joni K. Ernst
United States Senator



Elise Stefanik
Member of Congress

CC:
Katrina Armstrong
Interim President
Columbia University

¹⁶ Douglas Belkin, *Columbia Failed to Stop Hate, Violence Against Jews on Campus, New Report Says*, THE WALL STREET JOURNAL (Aug. 30, 2024, 4:11PM), <https://www.wsj.com/us-news/education/columbia-university-anti-semitism-report-37d018c8>.

¹⁷ Ayana Archie, *New York police arrest 300 people as they clear Hamilton Hall at Columbia University*, NATIONAL PUBLIC RADIO (May 1, 2024, 2:21 PM), <https://www.npr.org/2024/05/01/1248401802/columbia-university-protests-new-york>.

¹⁸ CRITICAL INCIDENT RESPONSE GROUP, NATIONAL CENTER FOR THE ANALYSIS OF VIOLENT CRIME, AND FBI ACADEMY, *THE SCHOOL SHOOTER: A THREAT ASSESSMENT PERSPECTIVE* (1999). <https://www.fbi.gov/file-repository/stats-services-publications-school-shooter-school-shooter/view>.

¹⁹ *Id.*

²⁰ *Id.*