WHAT: Yale Police violently assaults and arrests pro-Palestine protestors
WHO: Yale students and New Haven community members
WHEN: 11:30PM, Wednesday, May 1st, 2024
WHERE: Alexander Walk, outside of Beinecke Plaza. 100 Wall St. New Haven, CT

Joint statement from Yale students and New Haven community members on Yale Police Department’s violent arrests of protestors

On Wednesday night, Yale Police officers violently assaulted Yale students and New Haven community members who were holding a peaceful march through campus calling on Yale to disclose their investments and divest from war. When the march was coming to a close, YPD officers physically blocked students from nearing Beinecke Plaza before brutally arresting peaceful protestors. These protestors were simply asking what was going on, and were not given any dispersal or arrest warnings onsite. After two students were immediately arrested, community members stood alongside students to demand why they were arrested before they were assaulted; officers led by YPD Chief Campbell, tackled individual protestors to the ground, forcing their full body weight on top of the protestors though they were not armed or resisting arrest. Multiple officers continually slammed those individuals’ faces into the ground while they were handcuffed, causing bleeding from cuts on one protester’s nose. YPD repeatedly shoved and grabbed other protestors, including clearly marked marshals and police liaisons. Officer Martinez struck a protestor in the chest who was standing behind him. Officer Pan gropped the chest of another protestor in a sexually violent manner while pushing her. The police shoved the crowd down Rose Walk, threatening arrests, until they were kicked off of Yale property and forced onto the street. Officers did not allow students unaffiliated with the protest to enter cross campus or access Bass library.

We are appalled by the behavior of the Yale Police Department and the use of excessive force. This escalation of police violence and brutality toward students and community members during protests is unprecedented in recent years, even from New Haven police officers during the George Floyd uprisings in 2020. Students and community members have a right to assemble and protest genocide without facing violent intimidation tactics. These students were assaulted by police while adhering to the administration’s guidelines on permissible protest. Hundreds of students exiting buildings witnessed traumatized students screaming, watching their peers tackled to the ground and slammed into concrete minutes after they were standing beside them.

The police, following the orders of university administration and the state, continue to place their efforts in repressing students fighting for a free Palestine, here and at universities all over the country. In response to peaceful protests, the NHPD, YPD, and administration shut down the Gaza Liberation encampment twice. They have now made two rounds of arrests with disproportionate violence, arresting a total of 53 people for peacefully protesting genocide. They have consistently and deliberately tried to intimidate students. We have the right to collectively assemble and protest repression and war. We won’t rest until Yale discloses, divests, and reinvests in New Haven. Further, we won’t rest until we see a free Palestine.