

Article that appeared in Bloomberg about Cornell University Antisemitic Activity

By David Voreacos and Amanda Gordon

(Bloomberg) -- A junior engineering student at Cornell University was charged with making death threats online to Jewish students in an incident that roiled a campus battling antisemitism.

Patrick Dai, 21, was charged with posting threats to kill or injure another using interstate communications, according to a statement by Carla Freedman, the US attorney for the Northern District of New York.

Dai allegedly threatened to “stab” and “slit the throat” of Jewish males he sees on campus, to rape and throw off a cliff any Jewish females and to behead Jewish babies, according to an FBI arrest complaint. He also threatened to “shoot up” a kosher dining hall next to the Cornell Jewish center.

The FBI traced the messages, posted on a website about fraternities and sororities, to an IP address used by Dai. In a recorded interview, Dai admitted posting the threatening messages, according to the complaint. The New York Post reported that Dai’s father said his son had suffered from “severe depression.”

‘Horrorific’ Threats

“We remain shocked by and condemn these horrific, antisemitic threats and believe they should be prosecuted to the full extent of the law,” said Joel Malina, the school’s vice president for university relations, in a statement. “Cornell Police will maintain its heightened security presence on campus as the university continues to focus on supporting the needs of our students, faculty and staff.”

Antisemitic incidents have soared since the Israel-Hamas war began, and the conflict has bitterly divided dozens of campuses, including Harvard, Stanford and the University of

Pennsylvania. At Cornell, a series of incidents culminated in the weekend posts that further rattled the campus.

Hamas, which has been designated a terrorist group by the US and the European Union, attacked Israel on Oct. 7, killing 1,400 people and abducting 240 others. In response, Israel has pummeled the Gaza Strip, claiming more than 8,500 Palestinian lives, according to Hamas-led health authorities.

Read more: [Israel's Step-by-Step Gaza Offensive Risks Longer Deadly War](#)

The arrest of Dai, who faces up to five years in prison, came after New York State Police took a suspect into custody for questioning. Dai is scheduled to appear Wednesday in federal court in Syracuse.

Hochul Visits

On Monday, New York Governor Kathy Hochul visited the campus in Ithaca, pledging to fight antisemitism and saying state police will provide additional security on campus. Hochul is to speak about the state's public safety efforts on Wednesday. In mid-October, associate history Professor Russell Rickford described the Hamas terrorist attacks as "energizing" and "exhilarating" at an off-campus rally. Cornell's president condemned the comments and Rickford issued an apology and took a leave of absence.

On Sunday, hundreds of Jewish parents visiting the campus gathered for a meeting with the university's provost, Michael Kotlikoff. Parents and students complained about Cornell's response to antisemitic incidents, including a graffiti attack last week, according to participants.

"The statements that came out of the president's office were weak," said Misha Galperin, the former chief executive of Jewish Agency for Israel who organized the meeting.

'Physical Danger'

Students at the meetings said they were terrified,

according to Galperin.

“They felt there was physical danger,” Galperin said. “Then parents spoke, and the anger was extraordinary.”

Dan Shlufman, who helped set up the meeting, said parents are growing increasingly organized.

“We’re trying to create a space on college campuses so that it returns to a place where education is paramount, exchanges of ideas are done in a civil manner and where harassment and intimidation are not permitted and given credence as free speech,” said Shlufman, president of the Jewish Federation of Northern New Jersey.

“Threats of violence are absolutely intolerable, and we will work to ensure that the person or people who posted them are punished to the full extent of the law,” Cornell President Martha Pollack said in a statement Sunday. “Our immediate focus is on keeping the community safe; we will continue to prioritize that. We will not tolerate antisemitism.”

The case is US v. Dai, US District Court, Northern District of New York.

To contact the reporters on this story:

David Voreacos in New York at dvoreacos@bloomberg.net;

Amanda Gordon in New York at agordon01@bloomberg.net

To contact the editors responsible for this story:

Misyrlena Egkolfopoulou at megkolfopoul@bloomberg.net

Anthony Aarons, Peter Jeffrey

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