

University of Kentucky Law Professor Investigated Over Anti-Israel Petition

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The University of Kentucky has suspended and launched an investigation into a law professor who sparked controversy by circulating an online petition calling for global military action against Israel. The professor, Ramsi Woodcock, faces mounting scrutiny as questions rise about academic responsibility, free speech boundaries, and rhetoric potentially inciting violence.

Woodcock, an associate professor at the University of Kentucky's College of Law, was identified by the Herald-Leader as the individual behind the petition. The petition, hosted on his website under a project he calls the "Antizionist Legal Studies Movement," demands that "every country in the world make war on Israel immediately until Israel has submitted permanently and unconditionally to the government of Palestine." His suspension was confirmed by the university last week, although the official statement did not name him directly.

University President Eli Capilouto stated that the professor's remarks could be interpreted as antisemitic under both state and federal guidelines. Capilouto further noted that the university has engaged external legal counsel and requested an expedited review of the situation. The university emphasized its commitment to maintaining a respectful and lawful academic environment.

Woodcock, who holds a law degree from Harvard Law School and a philosophy degree from Yale College, has taught several upper-level law courses, including antitrust law. His background includes legal work with prestigious firms such as WilmerHale in Washington, D.C., and Debevoise & Plimpton in New York, as well as clerking for Judge Thomas Ambro on the United States Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit.

Beyond his academic and professional credentials, Woodcock has been outspoken in his political views. On his verified X account formerly known as Twitter, he doubled down on his position, declaring, "Every country in the world has a moral duty to make war on Israel and end this travesty." In another post addressing criticism, he wrote, "Zionists are frustrated that their intimidation campaign hasn't shut me up."

While Woodcock has claimed that his views are personal and not affiliated with any institution, the university's decision to suspend him indicates the seriousness with which they are treating the matter.

The case has ignited a broader conversation about the limits of academic freedom and the distinction between political advocacy and speech that may be viewed as inciting violence. The outcome of the legal review will likely set an important precedent for how public institutions handle faculty speech in politically sensitive areas.