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# HUPD 'Far More Vigilant' on Campus Amid Increased Threats Against Students Following Oct. 7



HUPD Chief Victor A. Clay said the department has increased their campus presence amid increased activism, doxxing attacks, and allegations of discrimination on campus. By [Julian J. Giordano](#)

By [Sally E. Edwards](#) and [Asher J. Montgomery](#), Crimson Staff Writers

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***Updated May 6, 2024, at 12:47 a.m.***

Harvard University Police Chief Victor A. Clay said in an April 26 interview with The Crimson that the department has considerably increased their presence on campus following an increase in threats aimed at students.

Following Hamas' Oct. 7 attack on Israel, pro-Palestinian activists have experienced **doxxing attacks**, and students have alleged both **increased antisemitism** and **anti-Arab discrimination** on campus. Clay said in the interview that since October, the force has been "far more vigilant" in a year marked by protests, **an occupation**, and **an encampment**.

"Our students felt incredibly uncomfortable, and some were actually threatened," he said. "So we increased our presence to respond to their calls for escorts, patrol checks, safety, investigating."

Despite the increase in presence, Clay said the department has not hired more officers, citing the "long process" of hiring police officers. Instead, the department has increased overtime shifts, incurring several hundred thousands of dollars in additional costs.

Along with a general increase in patrolling, per Clay, officers have been regularly stationed in front of student spaces like Harvard Hillel — the University's Jewish center — since the Oct. 7 attack.

According to Clay, Hillel specifically requested HUPD presence, but Clay added that an increase in the number of online threats made toward Harvard students has also informed decision-making on where officers are stationed.

"We received a lot of internet traffic that specifically spoke about the different groups here on campus," Clay said. "We started increasing our presence so that we could be responsive to people who felt threatened or unsafe in general."

HUPD constantly monitors the comment sections of news articles related to Harvard, including those from The Crimson and larger outlets, Clay said.

## Sections

making what we would assume being just a comment that is offensive,” Clay said.

According to Clay, a large factor in the initial increase of HUPD was the **arrival of a doxxing truck** on Oct. 12, which came almost immediately following the release of a controversial statement from the Palestinian Solidarity Committee calling Israel **“entirely responsible”** for the Oct. 7 attack.

Similar billboard trucks have made repeated appearances on Harvard’s campus over the past year, many displaying names and faces of Harvard affiliates and accusing them of harboring antisemitic views.

“It increased our workload, because a lot of students saw that truck and felt levels of anxiety that I hadn’t seen before,” Clay said.

He said that while he found the doxxing “offensive” and “problematic,” HUPD was largely unable to police the truck because of laws protecting free speech.

“I was not happy about the truck being here, but they had every right to do it, according to the law,” he said.

Still, Clay added that he spoke with Cambridge Police Department Commissioner Christine A. Elow “quite often” to coordinate with CPD on responding to the doxxing trucks, despite legal limitations around free speech.

“I had to get a little bit of an education from Commissioner Elow,” he said. “She told me what their limitations and their abilities were, and then we had a better understanding, and we went back to our own unique jobs and took care of business.”

Along with coordinating with CPD, Clay said HUPD has been in contact with out-of-state police departments as the doxxing truck traveled beyond the Harvard campus and to students’ homes.

“I do have a sergeant and an intel analyst who would address all doxxing concerns and would liaison with the local law enforcement wherever the truck was,” he said. “That sergeant would contact local law enforcement in whatever city and ask them to assist, rather than have the student or their family call and say, ‘This truck is following me.’”

## Sections

Many students who were doxxed have criticized the College and HUPD **for not doing enough** to support them in the immediate aftermath of the doxxing attacks.

While the University did establish a **temporary task force** to support students experiencing doxxing, harassment, and other online safety breaches, a number of students have described said the task force was too little, too late as doxxing trucks appeared on campus, but also outside students homes hundreds of miles away from Harvard Yard.

When interim Harvard President Alan M. Garber '76 attended an iftar event in late March, **students grilled Gabrer** over the University's handling of doxxing attacks against Muslim and Arab students.

Clay said that while the force has experienced many protests, the events since October have made this year unique.

“The pressure isn’t unprecedented. The requirements of HUPD — that’s not unprecedented,” Clay said. “But the basis of what created this moment is.”

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