

The following document was used to code events of repression against student activists, as well as the forms of activism that students engaged in.

Violation Categories & Violations

Violent Violations

These included instances in which authorities (e.g., police, military, private security forces) or others (e.g., other students) used violent force to suppress or end student activism. Noting there are other forms of violence; including but not limited to mental, spiritual, and cultural violence, the violent violations category focuses on situations in which another individual causes direct violence in response to student activism. In some cases, multiple forms of violence are used during the same event.

1. Tear Gas

This includes cases when people—usually authorities like police or security forces—use tear gas, typically to suppress or end student protests. These canisters are usually deployed into crowds, irritating the part of the body it comes into contact with (primarily within the skin and eyes). The effects of the tear gas are short-lasting prior to decontamination but occasionally may have long-term adverse effects.

2. Pepper Spray

This includes cases when people—usually authorities like police or security forces—use pepper spray, typically to suppress or end student protests. Pepper spray causes irritation to the lungs and contact area, burning, and temporary blindness.

3. Live Bullets

This includes cases when people—usually authorities like police or security forces—use guns with live bullets, typically to suppress or end student protests. Live bullets often cause fatal or severe injuries.

4. Rubber Bullets

This includes cases when people—usually authorities like police or security forces—use guns with rubber bullets, typically to suppress or end student protests. Rubber bullets are usually non-fatal but can cause severe injury.

5. Stun Guns

This includes cases when people—usually authorities like police or security forces—use stun guns, typically to suppress or end student protests. Stun guns deliver a non-fatal electric shock, sometimes leading to immobilization.

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6. Batons

This includes cases when people—usually authorities like police or security forces—use batons, typically to suppress or end student protests. Batons are clubs or sticks commonly made of metal or wood. They are typically non-fatal but can cause serious injuries.

7. Assault/Beating

This includes cases when people—usually authorities like police or security forces—use force to cause bodily harm. In some cases, assault/beating may overlap with the use of batons.

8. Sexual Violence

This includes cases when someone uses unwanted or non-consensual sexual activity or assault against student activists. This may include physical assault or rape, but may also include non-physical violence as well, such as exposure of genitals, viewing of sexual activity, sexual advances, or verbal sexual harassment.

9. Handcuffs

This includes cases when law enforcement uses handcuffs to restrict the mobility of someone, usually being detained or arrested. Other mechanisms, such as zip ties may be used for the same purpose.

10. Denial of Medical Access

This includes cases in which authorities refuse an injured student activist medical treatment. It does not include instances in which the individual themselves refuses medical treatment.

11. Explosives

This includes cases in which individuals use explosive devices against student activists.

12. Killing

This includes cases in which individuals caused either deliberate or accidental death to student activists. Killings may occur in a variety of situations, including, for example, because of force used against students engaged in protests or during interrogation of detained student activists. Killing may overlap with the use of other forms of physical violence.

13. Dispersal

This includes cases in which individuals—usually authorities like security forces—force students to leave a place where they are gathered for some form of activism. Dispersal is often physically forced.

14. Clashes

This includes cases in which student activists engage in physical scuffles or fights with others, such as security forces or other student groups.

Deprivation of Liberty

The category of deprivation of liberty includes instances in which student activists are detained, imprisoned, or placed in public or private confinement and prevented from leaving at will. The associated consequences of such detention are also included in this category, including charges associated with crimes, convictions, and sentencing. In applying these codes, we do not make any judgment about whether the acts are lawful or not.

1. Detainment/Detention

This includes cases in which state security forces hold student activists in custody. Detainment may be for varying lengths of time. However, detentions are typically more short term than arrests. We have coded as detainment/detention or arrest depending on how the event is described.

2. Arrests

This includes cases in which state security forces hold student activists in custody. Arrests are typically longer term than detentions. We have coded as detainment/detention or arrest depending on how the event is described.

3. Removal from Premises

This includes cases in which police or security forces remove a student activist from an area. In some instances, force may be used.

4. Forced Disappearance

This includes cases in which an individual is taken from a location without their consent. Forced disappearance may be perpetrated by security forces or other groups.

5. Denial of Bail

This includes cases in which a detained or arrested individual is denied permission to be released from jail with the condition of appearing in court when required.

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6. Charges

This includes cases in which student activists are legally accused of crimes.

7. Conviction

This includes cases in which a student activist is convicted of a crime, either because they have admitted guilt or because they have been found guilty.

8. Fines

This includes cases in which a student activist is required to pay money in retribution for a legal offense.

9. Imprisonment

This includes cases in which a student activist is forced to serve prison time after being sentenced for a legal offense.

10. Forced Confession

This includes cases in which physical or psychological pressure is used to force a student activist to confess to a crime that they may or may not have committed. This may include the use of torture or other forms of duress or threat of duress, including threats of death, of physical harm, against their loved ones, and against the student activist. These coerced confessions are often used as evidence in courts of law to convict the student, regardless or despite the method used to extract them.

11. Solitary Confinement

This includes cases in which an arrested student activist is placed into a single cell with little or no meaningful contact with other people. Solitary confinement may be for varying lengths of time. This isolation is often defined by minimal exposure to sunlight, cells with minimal resources, and is at the discretion of the security forces. Unlike normal incarceration, it has a distinct psychological impact on the individual, exacerbated by longer durations of confinement.

Invasion of Privacy

This includes cases in which student activists are subjected to an infringement on, the unauthorized distribution of, or the divulging of their personal or private information.

1. Police Surveillance

This includes cases in which police forces follow, “red-tag” (blacklist individual not supportive of government policies), or otherwise monitor student activists at or outside of

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protest settings. Surveillance may occur with or without students' knowledge. If known, surveillance can act as a threat.

2. Police Photos

This includes cases in which police forces take pictures of student activists. Such photos may be used for surveillance or may act as a form of intimidation.

3. Confiscation of Property

This includes cases in which security forces, including state, campus, or private forces, appropriate private property. The property is often used as evidence in court.

4. Raids

This includes cases in which student activists' personal homes are temporarily and forcibly entered by security forces. The purpose of such a raid may range from destroying evidence or specific goods or weapons to ransacking or plundering the location. Raids occur with the intent to harm student activists via obtainment of private information or possessions or to directly enact physical harm. This does not include raids that occur on university buildings.

Restrictions on Movement

This category includes actions that prevent student activists from traveling freely, including when crossing their national borders or when moving internally within their own country.

1. Denial of Entry/Exit

This includes acts that prevent a student activist from leaving or entering a country. It may include, for example, the confiscation of passports or denial of travel documents, such as visas.

Threats

This includes cases in which a person or group states directly or implies that they mean to inflict some kind of violence or harm upon a student activist or their family.

1. Threat of Violence

This includes cases in which a person or group states or insinuates that they intend to cause physical harm to a student activist or their family if the student activist does not refrain from their activism.

2. Threat of Sexual Violence

This includes cases in which a person or group states or insinuates that they intend to engage in sexual violence (as defined above) against student activist or their family if the student activist does not refrain from their activism.

3. Threats Related to Education

This includes cases in which a person or group—usually higher education authorities—state or insinuate that they intend to stop, restrict, or pose some other kind of barrier to a student activist's education if they do not refrain from their activism. This may include extended detention leading to missed classes, retaliatory leaking of classified student information that leads to institutional discipline, and so forth. In some cases the threat may be tacit, such as a review of academic records with no direct threat.

4. Police Presence

This includes cases in which police are present at an event of activism but do not intervene. In this case, the presence of police may have the effect of intimidating some students from participating in activism.

Disciplinary Actions

This includes actions that higher education authorities take against a student activist in response to their activism. It may include actions that disrupt the students' education or participating in the life of the university.

1. Expulsion

This includes refusal to allow a student activist to continue their education at the institution in which they are enrolled.

2. Suspension

This includes the students' temporary exclusion from their institution and classes.

3. Failure

This includes the failing of a student by a professor or other university faculty member in their course.

4. Restricted Access to Scholarship

This includes refusal to allow students to access financial support in order to complete their education.

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5. Removal from Office

This includes cases in which a university refuses to allow a student activist to continue in an official position of student representation, such as on a student governance body.

6. Forced Cancellation of Protest

This includes cases in which university authorities refuse to allow students to engage in protest, typically by refusing to give permission for the event.

7. Disciplinary Hearing

This includes cases in which university authorities require students to participate in a disciplinary hearing because of some activist action that they have taken. Disciplinary hearings are often associated with penalties, such as suspensions or removal from office.

Policies

These include government or university policies that specifically target student activism by restricting, prohibiting, or otherwise making it more challenging for students to engage in political or social contention.

1. Agreements

This includes some kind of accord or concession that affects student activism, such as peace agreements or talks, ceasefires, negotiated release of prisoners or detained students, etc.

2. Restrictions/Bans

This includes legal constraints that impede student activism, such as bans or limitations on protests or expression, or curfews.

Form of Activism

1. Protests

This includes public gatherings against (or in support of) government regimes, bodies, or officials, institutional actions, policies, or traditions. Protests often start out as nonviolent, but may turn violent.

2. Riots

This includes public gatherings in which students intentionally engage in disruptive acts, including violence against other student groups or security forces.

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3. Sit-Ins

These are events in which the students refuse to leave an area, such as a university building, as an act of protest. They may also be known as “occupations.”

4. Vigils

Often used after the death of someone or another tragic event, vigils include gatherings of students in an attempt to commemorate or memorialize. Often the vigil represents a larger movement based on a social or political affiliation. Vigils are sometimes accompanied by marches, speeches, or other calls to action.

5. Marches/Rallies

These include public gatherings of student activists, during which they walk from a meeting place to a predetermined endpoint, often ending with a rally.

6. Strikes

This includes events during which students withhold services, refuse to be present, or refuse to work in order to gain leverage on a social or political issue. In the context of student activism, this may include the refusal to attend classes.

7. Walk-Outs

This includes cases in which students walk out of classes, meetings, and other events in order to gain leverage on a social or political issue.

8. Petitions

This includes documents that are delivered or sent by students containing signatures in support or against a particular case, issue or concern. They are typically delivered to a governing body of an institution or other authority in order to demonstrate widespread support for a particular demand.

9. Self-Harm

This includes cases in which a student activist jeopardizes or compromises their own physical wellbeing as a method of resistance. This includes but is not limited to hunger strikes, self-immolation, etc.

10. Student Organization Membership

This form of activism is context-specific. In some cases, merely being a member of a student organization, such as a student union, puts a student at risk. In these cases, in which it appears that an activist is targeted for their membership in a particular student organization, this is considered a form of activism.

Theme of Activism

1. Internal University Matters

This includes cases in which students' demands relate to their institution of higher education. Common demands are for lower tuition fees, more affordable or higher quality housing, changes in public health restrictions and safety protocols (particularly related to COVID-19, and, for example, examinations), building renovations, and the employment of particular administrators or professors. Conflicts between different student groups are also included in this category.

2. Educational Issues

This includes cases in which students' demands relate to regional or national educational policies, such as education reform or policies that restrict access to higher education.

3. Political Issues

This includes cases in which students' demands relate to regional, national, or international politics. This may include protests against opposition to the government in power, opposition to particular government figures, opposition to particular military actions, land ownership and disputes, or protests for climate action, free speech and other civil or political rights, among other issues.

4. Social Issues

This includes cases in which students' demands relate to social or cultural issues, such as sexual harassment, overt and systemic racism, gender and sexual discrimination (including against LGBTQIA+ folks), religious discrimination, police brutality, gun violence, etc.