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**Combating the threats
posed by violent
protests**

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**President Chair:
Deputy Chair:**

Introduction

Violent protests pose a significant threat to public safety, property, and the stability of societies. These events can quickly escalate, leading to injuries, property damage, and even loss of life. The disruption caused by violent protests can also severely impact businesses, essential services, and the overall functioning of a community.

Furthermore, violent protests can undermine public trust in institutions and exacerbate social tensions. The presence of violence can deter individuals from peacefully exercising their right to protest, chilling dissent and limiting open dialogue on important issues. Addressing the challenges posed by violent protests requires a multifaceted approach that balances the protection of public safety with the right to freedom of expression.

Definition of Key Terms

Protest: A public demonstration or action expressing objection to or disapproval of something, such as a government policy, social injustice, or corporate practice. Protests can take various forms, including marches, rallies, sit-ins, and boycotts.

Peaceful Protest: A protest conducted without the use of violence or the intent to cause harm to people or property. Peaceful protest is a fundamental right in many democracies.

Violent Protest: A protest that involves the use of violence, such as property damage, assault, or the use of weapons.

Civil Disobedience: A nonviolent, intentional act of breaking the law as a form of protest against perceived injustice.

Riot: A violent public disturbance involving a large number of people, often characterized by property damage, looting, and clashes with law enforcement.

Insurrection: An open revolt against the established government or authority.

Freedom of Assembly: The right to gather peacefully and without government interference. This is a fundamental human right protected by many international and national laws.

Due Process: The legal requirement that the state must respect all legal rights that are owed to a person. This includes the right to¹ a fair trial, the right to legal representation, and the right to be free from arbitrary arrest and detention.

General Overview

Violent protests present a complex challenge for societies. While peaceful protest is a fundamental right, violent demonstrations can have severe consequences. These events can lead to injuries, property damage, and even loss of life, disrupting the daily lives of citizens and undermining public safety. The economic impact of violent protests can be significant, affecting businesses, essential services, and the overall economic stability of a region.

Furthermore, violent protests can erode public trust in institutions and exacerbate social divisions. The presence of violence can deter individuals from peacefully exercising their right to protest, chilling dissent and limiting open dialogue on important issues. Addressing the challenges posed by violent protests requires a multifaceted approach that balances the protection of public safety with the right to freedom of expression.

The spread of false or misleading information online can fuel anger, incite violence, and distort public perception of events. Social media platforms can be used to organize and mobilize violent protests, while also amplifying extremist views and conspiracy theories.

Violent protests can have significant geopolitical implications. They can strain relations between countries, impact foreign investment, and damage a nation's international reputation. In some cases, foreign actors may seek to exploit or exacerbate internal tensions for their own strategic interests.

This requires careful consideration of the root causes of the unrest, such as social and economic inequality, political grievances, and systemic discrimination. Effective responses may include measures to improve communication and dialogue between protesters and authorities, address underlying social and economic issues, and ensure that law enforcement agencies use appropriate and proportionate force in managing protests.

Timeline of Key Events

December 15, 1791

Bill of Rights (United States): Ratified as part of the U.S. Constitution, the First Amendment guarantees freedom of speech, the right to peaceably assemble, and the right to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.

March 21, 1968

Civil Rights Act of 1968 (United States): Signed into law by President Lyndon B. Johnson, this act includes provisions related to public order and disorder, aimed at protecting interstate commerce from interference by riots and civil disturbances.

December 10, 1948

Universal Declaration of Human Rights (United Nations): Article 19 of this landmark document proclaims "Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers." Article 20 affirms "Everyone has the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association."

May 25, 1993

Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action (World Conference on Human Rights): This document reaffirms the importance of the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and the need to ensure that the exercise of this right does not disrupt the work of public institutions.

September 18, 2006

UN Human Rights Council Resolution 7/24 on the right to freedom of peaceful assembly: This resolution emphasizes the importance of protecting the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and calls upon States to ensure that any restrictions on this right are necessary and proportionate.

April 29, 2022

Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022 (United Kingdom): This legislation grants police increased powers to impose conditions on protests, raising concerns about restrictions on the right to peaceful assembly.

February 24, 2023

Public Order Act 2023 (United Kingdom): This act further strengthens police powers to restrict protests, including new offenses related to serious disruption and interference with key national infrastructure.

Major Parties Involved

United States:

Protests against police brutality and systemic racism have been a recurring theme in the United States. The George Floyd protests in 2020 sparked a nationwide movement against police violence and systemic racism. These protests, while largely peaceful, saw instances of violence and property damage, leading to renewed discussions about policing, protest rights, and the limits of free speech.

United Kingdom:

The United Kingdom has also seen its share of violent protests. Recent years have witnessed protests against government policies, including those related to Brexit and climate change. Some of these protests have involved instances of violence, leading to clashes with law enforcement and raising concerns about the balance between the right to protest and public order.

France:

France has a long history of social and political protests. Protests against social and economic inequality, as well as government reforms, have been a recurring feature of French society. These protests can sometimes turn violent, leading to clashes with police and damage to public property.

Iran:

Iran has experienced numerous protests against the government, particularly following the death of Mahsa Amini in 2022. These protests have been met with a strong crackdown by the Iranian authorities, leading to arrests, detentions, and even deaths.

Colombia:

Colombia has a history of social and political unrest. Protests against social and economic inequality and police brutality have occurred frequently in recent years. These protests have sometimes turned violent, leading to clashes with security forces and civilian casualties.

Possible Solutions

Address Root Causes:

Addressing social and economic inequality is crucial to preventing violent protests. This involves implementing policies that reduce poverty, unemployment, and lack of opportunity. Investments in education, healthcare, and affordable housing can help create a more equitable society and reduce the likelihood of social unrest.

Combating systemic discrimination is essential to creating a more just and equitable society. This can be achieved through legislative reforms, law enforcement reform, and public awareness campaigns. Addressing systemic discrimination can help to reduce feelings of marginalization and disenfranchisement, which can contribute to violent protests.

Ensuring responsive and accountable governance is essential to addressing political grievances. Promoting transparency, participation, and inclusivity in political processes can help to build trust between citizens and their government. When citizens feel that their voices are being heard and that their concerns are being addressed, they are less likely to resort to violence.

Promote Dialogue and Understanding:

Fostering open communication between community members, law enforcement, and government officials is crucial to building trust and understanding. Community engagement can help to identify and address underlying issues that may contribute to violence.

Encouraging the use of mediation and other peaceful conflict resolution mechanisms can help to address grievances and find common ground. Mediation can provide a neutral space for dialogue and can help to de-escalate tensions.

Establishing independent mechanisms to investigate allegations of police misconduct and ensure accountability is essential to building trust between law enforcement and the community. Independent investigations can help to identify systemic problems and implement reforms to prevent future abuses.

Reform Law Enforcement Practices:

Equipping law enforcement officers with de-escalation techniques and crisis intervention training can help to reduce the use of force and prevent violence.

Implementing robust systems of civilian oversight of law enforcement agencies, including independent review boards and community-based policing models, can help to ensure accountability and build trust between law enforcement and the community.

Developing and implementing clear and transparent policies on the use of force, emphasizing de-escalation and the use of force as a last resort, can help to reduce the likelihood of excessive force and violence.

Combat Misinformation and Disinformation:

Promoting media literacy education can help individuals to critically evaluate information and identify misinformation. Media literacy education can help people to become more discerning consumers of information and to be less susceptible to manipulation.

Encouraging social media platforms to take proactive steps to combat the spread of misinformation and hate speech is essential to creating a more informed and civil public

discourse. Social media platforms can play a significant role in shaping public opinion, and it is important that they use their power responsibly.

Supporting independent fact-checking organizations can help to identify and debunk false or misleading information. Fact-checking organizations can play an important role in combating the spread of misinformation and promoting a more informed public discourse.

Strengthen International Cooperation:

Facilitating the exchange of best practices and lessons learned between countries on managing protests and promoting peaceful assembly can help to improve the effectiveness of national policies and strategies.

Promoting adherence to international human rights standards and principles related to freedom of assembly and the right to protest can help to ensure that governments respect and protect these fundamental rights.

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The National Lawyers Guild (NLG):

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