



DEMOCRACY

MODIFIED

JUNE 2023

Hindus
for Human Rights


Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi will be coming to the United States on July 22nd for a state visit - the most formal bilateral meeting between two heads of state. This is Modi's first state visit with Biden and will signify an important elevation in the US-India relationship at a time when Modi continues to centralize power around himself.

The state visit will also precede India's hosting of the G-20 Summit in September. With the potential protests in DC and New York City, it is important to exercise our first amendment rights, and do so safely. Here is a protest toolkit for all your protest needs.



WHAT DO WE STAND FOR:

- 1. Protect Democracy:** We rally to defend democratic values and institutions protected in the Indian Republic's secular Constitution and against erosion and authoritarian tendencies.
- 2. Human Rights Matter:** Our protest highlights the importance of upholding human rights for all, regardless of religion, caste, or background.
- 3. Inclusive India:** We demand an inclusive India that respects diversity and ensures equal rights and opportunities for everyone. We denounce hate speech that seeks to divide the Indian people.
- 4. Freedom of Speech:** We stand for the protection of free speech and expression, essential for a thriving democracy.
- 5. Social Justice:** We raise our voices against social injustices and demand policies that address inequality and uplift marginalized communities.



6. Defend Secularism: Our protest opposes any erosion of India's secular fabric and advocates for a truly secular and inclusive society.

7. Women's Empowerment: We support gender equality and demand an end to gender-based discrimination and violence.


8. LGBTQ Justice: We affirm every person's right to be their true self, love who they love, and be protected by the rights given to all.

9. Environmental Protection: We advocate for sustainable policies and actions to combat climate change and protect our environment.

10. Transparent Governance: We call for accountable and transparent governance that fosters trust and ensures the welfare of all citizens.

11. Global and Transnational Solidarity: We stand united with activists, organizations, and concerned individuals worldwide in the fight for democracy and human rights.

Remember, concise and impactful sound bites can help convey your message effectively to journalists and resonate with the public.



WHAT TO THINK ABOUT WHEN PROTESTING:

Participating in a protest can be an empowering way to express your voice and advocate for change. Whether you're a seasoned activist or new to protests, it's important to be prepared and informed. This guide/toolkit provides you with essential information and tips to ensure a safe and effective protest experience. Let's dive in!

KNOW THE CAUSE:

Before joining a protest, familiarize yourself with the cause or issue being addressed. Understand the underlying concerns, demands, and goals of the protest. Research reliable sources, news articles, and community organizations to gain a comprehensive understanding of the issue at hand. This knowledge will enable you to articulate your views effectively and engage in meaningful discussions during the protest.

BE INFORMED ABOUT YOUR RIGHTS:

Knowing your rights is crucial when participating in a protest. Understand the legal aspects of protesting in your specific country or region. Research laws related to freedom of assembly, freedom of speech, and any specific regulations or permits required for protests. Organizations such as the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) or local civil rights groups often provide useful resources on protester rights.

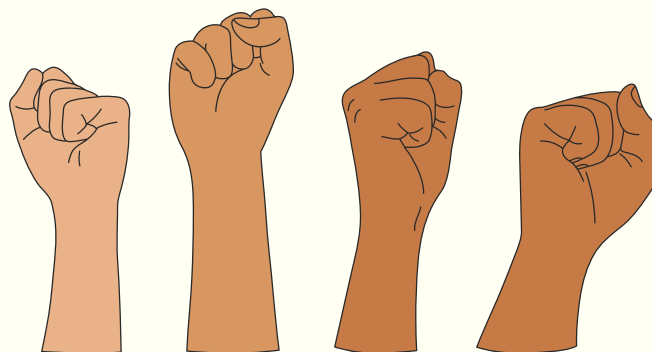
ACLU KNOW YOUR RIGHTS PRIMER

Your Rights

Your rights are strongest in what are known as “traditional public forums,” such as streets, sidewalks, and parks. You also likely have the right to speak out on other public property, like plazas in front of government buildings, as long as you are not blocking access to the government building or interfering with other purposes the property was designed for.

Private property owners can set rules for speech on their property. The government may not restrict your speech if it is taking place on your own property or with the consent of the property owner.

Counterprotesters also have free speech rights. Police must treat protesters and counterprotesters equally. Police are permitted to keep antagonistic groups separated but should allow them to be within sight and sound of one another.



ACLU KNOW YOUR RIGHTS PRIMER

Your Rights

When you are lawfully present in any public space, you have the right to photograph anything in plain view, including federal buildings and the police. On private property, the owner may set rules related to photography or video.

You don't need a permit to march in the streets or on sidewalks, as long as marchers don't obstruct car or pedestrian traffic. If you don't have a permit, police officers can ask you to move to the side of a street or sidewalk to let others pass or for safety reasons.



ACLU KNOW YOUR RIGHTS PRIMER

What to do if you believe your rights have been violated

When you can, write down everything you remember, including the officers' badge and patrol car numbers and the agency they work for.

Get contact information for witnesses. Take photographs of any injuries. Once you have all of this information, you can file a written complaint with the agency's internal affairs division or civilian complaint board.

What happens if the police issue an order to disperse the protest?

Shutting down a protest through a dispersal order must be law enforcement's last resort. Police may not break up a gathering unless there is a clear and present danger of riot, disorder, interference with traffic, or other immediate threat to public safety.

If officers issue a dispersal order, they must provide a reasonable opportunity to comply, including sufficient time and a clear, unobstructed exit path. Individuals must receive clear and detailed notice of a dispersal order, including how much time they have to disperse, the consequences of failing to disperse, and what clear exit route they can follow, before they may be arrested or charged with any crime.

Safety Precautions:

Protests can sometimes become unpredictable or escalate due to various factors. Prioritize your safety by following these guidelines:

a. Inform a trusted friend or family member about your participation, including the protest location and expected duration.

b. Dress appropriately, considering the weather and potential hazards. Wear comfortable shoes for long walks and avoid excessive jewelry or items that could be used as weapons.

c. Stay hydrated and bring snacks or water if necessary, especially for longer protests.

d. Carry identification, emergency contact information, and any required medical information.

e. Use sunscreen and protect yourself from sunburn during outdoor protests.

f. Stay aware of your surroundings, and if you notice any suspicious activity or potential violence, distance yourself from the situation.

g. Follow the instructions of protest organizers or marshals who may provide guidance or directions to ensure safety.

Peaceful Participation:

Most protests strive for nonviolent and peaceful demonstrations. Remember these key points to contribute to a peaceful environment:

- a. Respect the guidelines and instructions provided by the protest organizers.
- b. Engage in peaceful and respectful dialogue with other participants or counter-protesters, even if you disagree with their views.
- c. Avoid engaging in any form of physical or verbal aggression. Confrontations can escalate quickly and detract from the purpose of the protest.
- d. Familiarize yourself with nonviolent protest strategies such as sit-ins, chanting slogans, or holding signs.
- e. If you witness any acts of violence or aggression, try to de-escalate the situation peacefully or notify authorities if necessary.

Communication and Documentation:

During a protest, it is essential to document your experience and communicate effectively:

- a. Carry a fully charged mobile phone to communicate with fellow protesters and for emergencies.
- b. Disable biometric features like facial recognition or fingerprint unlocking to protect your privacy.
- c. Use secure messaging apps or social media platforms to stay connected with protest groups or organizers.
- d. Capture photos or videos of the protest if appropriate and within legal limits. Document any potential incidents or misconduct that may occur.
- e. Share your experiences responsibly on social media, focusing on accurate and factual information.
- f. Be cautious about sharing identifying information of fellow protesters to protect their privacy.

Post-Protest Reflection:

After the protest, take time to reflect on your experience and consider further actions:

a. Evaluate the effectiveness of the protest and its impact on the cause.

b. Engage in conversations with fellow protesters and community members to deepen your understanding of the issue.

c. Consider supporting organizations or initiatives that align with your beliefs beyond protest participation, such as volunteering, donating, or contacting your representatives to advocate for policy change.

d. Stay informed about upcoming protests, events, or campaigns related to the cause you support. Join relevant organizations or online communities to stay connected and continue your activism.

e. Reflect on your personal growth and learning from the protest experience. Identify areas where you can further educate yourself and expand your knowledge of social justice issues.

Remember, participating in a protest is just one form of activism, and there are many other ways to contribute to positive change. Be open to learning, respectful in your interactions, and committed to long-term efforts for a more just society.

By following these guidelines, you can enhance your experience as a protester, contribute to a peaceful and impactful demonstration, and make a difference in the causes you believe in. Stay informed, stay safe, and keep advocating for a better future.

List of Additional Resources:

[What To Do When Encountering Questions from Law Enforcement](#)

DC Resources

[Public Defender Service DC Protest Hotline](#) - Call (202) 824-2463

[ACLU DC Demonstration Resources](#)

NYC Resources

[NYCLU Demonstration Resources](#)

[Legal Aid Society Resources](#)

Social Media Language

Remember to use relevant hashtags, tag influential individuals, and engage with others in a respectful and constructive manner to increase the visibility and impact of your messages.

Remember to tailor these messages to the character limits and features of the specific social media platforms you are using

Messaging towards President Biden in advance of PM Modi's visit

Dear @POTUS, as you meet with PM Modi, we urge you to prioritize human rights and democracy. Stand up for the people of India and ensure accountability for any authoritarian actions.

#BidenHoldModiAccountable

#HumanRightsMatter

As President Biden meets PM Modi, we must not forget the importance of holding leaders accountable. Democracy is under threat, and it's time to speak up. We demand transparency, justice, and respect for human rights.

#AccountabilityNow #IndiaVisit

@JoeBiden, we look to you as a champion of democracy. During your meeting with PM Modi, please address concerns regarding press freedom, dissent, and human rights violations. Hold leaders accountable for their actions. #DefendDemocracy #ModiAccountability"

The world is watching as Biden meets Modi. Let's remind them of their responsibility to protect democratic values. Mr. President, demand answers, demand accountability. Stand up for democracy in India. #BidenSpeakUp #HoldModiAccountable

Dear @POTUS, we stand with the people of India who are facing an erosion of democratic values. As you engage with PM Modi, please prioritize human rights, freedom of speech, and protection of minority rights. Make accountability a priority. #IndiaVisit #ModiAccountability

Messaging pointed towards PM Modi more directly

The erosion of democracy is alarming. It's time to speak up against authoritarianism in India. We stand against any restrictions on free speech, press freedom, and minority rights. #DefendDemocracy #ModiAuthoritarianism

As citizens, we have the right to question those in power. We demand transparency, accountability, and respect for human rights in India. Let's unite to protect our democratic values.

#IndiaAgainstAuthoritarianism #StandAgainstModi

In a true democracy, dissent should be celebrated, not suppressed. Let's raise our voices against the stifling of dissenting opinions and demand a government that respects the rights and freedoms of its citizens. #ProtectDemocracy

#NoToAuthoritarianism

Our democracy is under threat. The targeting of activists, journalists, and critics is unacceptable. We need to hold our leaders accountable and fight for a government that upholds the principles of democracy. #StandUpForDemocracy

#ModiAuthoritarianMoves

Silencing voices and curbing freedoms is a dangerous path. We urge the government to respect human rights, protect the independence of institutions, and promote an inclusive society that values diversity. #IndiaDeservesBetter

#NoToAuthoritarianism

PROTEST MATERIALS

The following pages contain printable graphics you can use as protest signs.

Make sure to only make paper signs, as wood, metal, and similar materials can be considered dangerous/as weapons.

CHANTS

"India, India, democracy's pride,
United we stand, side by side!"

"Democracy in India, strong and true,
Our voices matter, for me and you!"

"In India's land, democracy rings,
Together we fight for the freedom it brings!"

"India's heart beats with democracy's fire,
We won't stop, our voices won't tire!"

"India's power, democracy's might,
We march together, for what's right!"

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**MODI!
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RETURN OF THE KING

WHILE INDIA BURNS









NOTE: The information included in this toolkit has been gathered from a variety of reputable sources, including published reports, existing toolkits, and interviews conducted with activists and members of civil society from different parts of the world. It is important to note that the tactics and strategies documented here may vary depending on the specific context: what proves effective in one city or State might not necessarily yield the same results in another. Consider your local circumstances before implementing any protest tactics and strategies. We encourage you to seek guidance from other protest movements, civil society organizations focused on issues related to the right to protest. Refer to other resources linked above.

DISCLAIMER: Please be aware that the information presented in this guide is intended for general informational purposes only and should not be construed as legal or professional advice. While we have taken utmost care to ensure the accuracy of the content, it is provided on an "as is" basis, and your use of and reliance on the information contained herein is solely at your own risk. It is important to note that this information is not intended to serve as standalone legal advice. Before making any decisions or taking any actions, we strongly advise you to consult with a qualified professional who can provide guidance tailored to your specific circumstances. We accept no responsibility for any loss or damage that may arise from your reliance on the information provided within these pages.