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Damai Pangkal Damai

Stepping Up the Good Fight?

Nonviolent Resistance in Indonesia and the World 2022

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Damai Pangkal Damai:

Stepping Up the Good Fight?

Nonviolent Resistance in Indonesia and the World 2022

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Damai Pangkal Damai (DPD) is a nonviolence database project and campaign initiated by the Institute of International Studies (IIS) – the research and advocacy arm of the Department of International Relations, Universitas Gadjah Mada (IR UGM). Its name can be loosely translated as Peace through Nonviolent Means, with a tip of the hat to Johan Galtung’s “peace by peaceful means” approach.

DPD’s database records nonviolent actions that have taken place in Indonesia throughout Reformasi (the post-Suharto era, 1998 onwards). Meanwhile, DPD’s campaign focuses on disseminating information and analyses regarding the 198 methods of waging conflicts nonviolently, as introduced by Gene Sharp in 1973.

Commencing in 2021, DPD publishes yearly reflections on nonviolent resistance in Indonesia and worldwide, with the hope that the publications can serve as a useful resource to those who are committed to strengthening democracies. DPD believes that consolidation of democracy should not only be furthered through strengthening the structures that underpin democracy (free and fair elections, separation of power, etc.) but also through fortifying the cultural components of democracy – including the civil society’s and the state’s preference and skills in resolving conflicts through nonviolent means.

DPD extends its gratitude to Samsu Rizal Panggabean, Aghniadi, Arie Utami, Chaiwat Satha-Anand, Christopher Shay, Cut Intan Auliannisa Isma, Erica Chenoweth, Ihsan Ali-Fauzi, Jacky Manuputty, Jamila Raqib, Janjira Sombatpoonsiri, Joned Suryatmoko, Lintang Amartya, Luqman-nul Hakim, Maulida Raviola, Melissa Kowara, Michael Beer, Nisrina Nadhifa, Puri Kencana Putri, Sana Jaffrey, Sekarini Wukirasih, Treviliana Eka Putri, Veronique Dudouet, Wahyu Aji, and Zainal Abidin Bagir.



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Damai Pangkal Damai

METHODS OF PROTEST AND PERSUASION

- #1 Public Speeches
- #2 Letters of Opposition or Support
- #3 Declarations by Organizations and Institutions
- #4 Signed Public Statements
- #5 Declarations of Indictment and Intention
- #6 Group or Mass Petitions
- #7 Slogans, Caricature, and Symbols
- #8 Banners, Posters, and Displayed Communications
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- #10 Newspapers and Journals
- #11 Records, Radio and Television
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Source:

Gene Sharp, *The Politics of Nonviolent Action. Part 2: The Methods of Nonviolent Action* (Bedford: Porter Sargent Publishing, 1973).

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Executive Summary: Stepping Up the Good Fight?

DPD Team

Looking back, we might see 2022 as the year the world slowly moved on from the COVID-19 pandemic. But while the lowering of pandemic restrictions and normalization of life should have brought about a renewed fervor amongst the civil society to engage in civil resistance, it is likely that 2022 will be remembered as the year autocratization became more entrenched. In many countries, including several in the Global North, the shrinking of civic space took place at unprecedented pace, where governments blatantly put into effect regulations that limit the rights to protest, often accompanied by attempts to co-opt democratic institutions. With COVID-19 restrictions loosened all over the world, we might have expected to see forceful resistance against various forms of autocratization – but did we?

This third edition of Damai Pangkal Damai (DPD)'s annual reflection presents four segments, each discussing nonviolent resistance in Indonesia, maximalist campaigns in different countries, issue-based or reformist campaigns around the world, as well as a special coverage. The first segment highlights the stagnation of nonviolent resistance in Indonesia in the year 2022, where five main trends and the growing necessity to build infrastructures of resistance were observed. The second segment deliberates on how and why a significant number of maximalist campaigns saw a decline in 2022, or even transformed into reformist campaigns. The third segment specifically discusses movements that fight for climate justice, gender equality, and dignified work in different parts of the world. Meanwhile, the fourth segment offers a discussion on the role of nonviolent civil defense in the face of foreign military aggression, as shown in the Ukrainian people's resistance against the recent Russian invasion. The following are the key takeaways of this year's reflection:

Damai Pangkal Damai (DPD) adopts Thomas Weber and Robert Burrowes' definition of nonviolence as "an umbrella term for describing a range of methods for dealing with conflict, which share the common principle that physical violence, at least against other people, is not used." Equivalent terminologies include active non-violence, nonviolent conflict, non-violent action, direct action, nonviolent resistance, civil resistance, and people power.

DPD also refers to Gene Sharp's 198 methods of nonviolent actions, classified into three categories: (1) non-violent protest and persuasion, (2) non-cooperation, and (3) nonviolent intervention.

Source:

Gene Sharp, *The Politics of Nonviolent Action. Part 2: The Methods of Nonviolent Action* (Bedford: Porter Sargent Publishing, 1973).

Thomas Weber and Robert J. Burrowes, "Nonviolence: An Introduction," *Peace Dossier* 27, no 2 (February 1991).



Authoritarian Innovation. 2022 shows that virtue and persistence alone are not enough to secure a resistance movement's victory. The effectiveness of resistance is also highly dependent on how much a movement can anticipate counter-resistance from its opposition. Unfortunately, in many observed instances, anti-democratic groups have proven themselves more adept in utilizing democratic procedures to weaken, or even coopt, various key institutions. The rapidly shrinking civic space in the face of authoritarian innovation has consequently made the cost of fighting nonviolently way higher than the cost of staying silent, thus impeding the organization and mobilization of resistance movements.



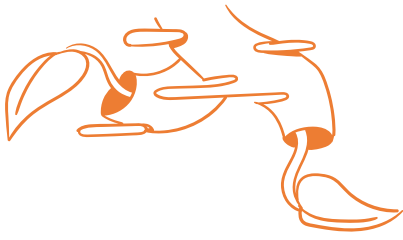
Stagnation of Resistance in Indonesia. As showcased in DPD's database, the number of nonviolent resistance in Indonesia went down in the year 2022 -- lower than the number before the pandemic, and a great contrast with the average number of resistance throughout the entire Reformasi era. Additionally, activists in Indonesia maintained the same repertoires of contention that relies on the "classic combo" of demonstrations, speeches, posters, and marches. At this point, the authorities are better trained at handling protesters than the protesters are at utilizing their "classic combo" vis a vis the authorities. It would be difficult for civil resistance movements in Indonesia to secure significant successes without bringing in some elements of surprise that throws the opponents off-balance, allowing for the moral and/or political jiu-jitsu to take place.



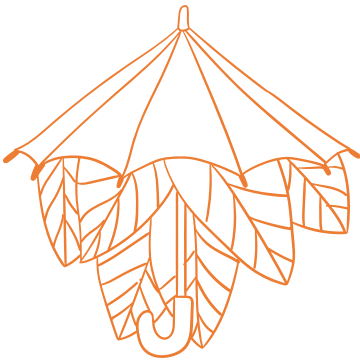
Infrastructures of Resistance. To overcome the stagnation of nonviolent resistance in Indonesia, it is thus important to put in place proper infrastructures of resistance. Such infrastructures include wider sets of tactical repertoires -- those that do not only rely on methods of protest and persuasion, but also methods of noncooperation and intervention. In 2022, only 30 out of a total of 198 methods of nonviolent intervention were recorded in the database. In other words, there are more than 150 unexplored methods of nonviolent action that can be “mixed and matched” to push the current resistance out of its slump. Another infrastructure would be the support of at least 3.5% of the population. This could be achieved by framing resistance in a way that appeals to different segments of society, that underlines resistance as patriotic, as a civic duty in the face of social injustices. The third infrastructure has to do with creating and maintaining a safety net that could lessen the political, economic, and social costs that come with an individual’s decision to join the resistance.



The Interconnectedness of Maximalist and Reformist Campaigns. Conceptually, nonviolent resistance can be categorized into either maximalist or reformist campaigns. While the former aims to topple a government that no longer serves the interest of the people, the latter exists to address specific issues without necessarily challenging the opposition’s sovereignty. In many instances, the various nonviolent resistance movements observed in the year 2022 show that the two were not entirely separate categories. Maximalist campaigns, for instance, are capable of transforming themselves into reformist campaigns, as shown by the nonviolent resistance in Afghanistan. Conversely, reformist campaigns can also evolve into maximalist campaigns, which was seen in the case of Iran.



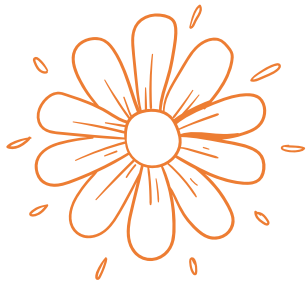
First Come, First Served. A number of maximalist campaigns in 2022 highlight the importance of escalation in a swift and timely manner to secure their victories. Without spending too much time relying on methods of protest and persuasion, the resistance movements in Sri Lanka and Sudan, for example, were quick to also make use of the various methods of non-cooperation and intervention. This progression allows them to yield and optimally capitalize on their gains before the implementation of autocratic innovation by the regime.



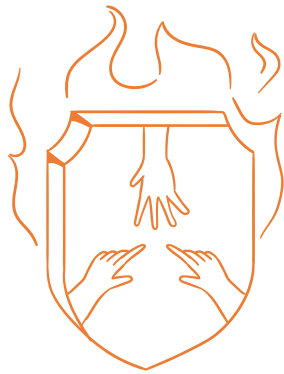
Intensified Climate Movement. In 2022, the combined effects of the climate crisis, pandemic, and economic recession following Russia's invasion of Ukraine have yielded a climate justice movement that has become more extreme and disruptive than ever. In the Global North and South, resistance no longer only presented itself in the form of physical blockades of airports, bridges, and the streets. The year 2022 also saw the adoption of more controversial methods such as throwing paint to famous paintings, barging into parliamentary buildings, and haunting politicians who support the fossil fuel industry.



Women's Resistance. 2022 also saw an increase in mobilization of women and gender minorities across the world, where they rose up to reclaim their basic and constitutional rights. While they would still primarily rely on methods of protest and persuasion, the resistance was elevated by the strong presence of cross-sector and multi-country solidarity. In Afghanistan, men walked out of various academic institutions to condemn the education ban on Afghan women. In the same spirit, Iran's national soccer team refused to sing their national anthem during the Qatar World Cup in support of the ongoing resistance following the death of Mahsa Amini. Solidarity was also shown between Mexican and American feminist groups, where the former would share their knowledge and experiences with the latter in regard to their successful journey of securing their reproductive rights. Here, digital activism has also made it easier for the different movements across the world to coalesce and show support for one another.



The Unification of Labor. In comparison to previous years, labor movements in 2022 saw a notable intensification in quantity, intensity, and duration. In different parts of the world, workers were able to mobilize in an organized and disciplined manner, where various methods of noncooperation and intervention were sustainably deployed to increase their leverage in negotiations with their employers and the government. This was likely made possible by the solidarity that grew among white-collar and blue-collar workers, as, for example, shown by the thousands of academic laborers in the United States who went on strike under the United Auto Workers (UAW) flag.



Nonviolent Civil Defense. The failure of Russia to largely achieve its military and political goals in its illegal invasion of Ukraine is likely not only due to Ukraine's military resistance, but also multiple instances of nonviolent civilian defense and civil resistance by Ukrainian citizens. Time and again, unarmed civilians successfully outmaneuvered the Russian army through various methods, for example, by using farming tractors to tow away Russian tanks and military equipment, changing street signs to confuse the invading troops, fraternizing with the military to get important information, and so on. That said, it is more timely than ever for governments and scholars to revisit the literature on nonviolent defense and civil defense established from the 1970s onwards, as history has shown that nonviolent resistance against invasions even against such ruthless regimes like Nazi Germany, has often been highly successful. Given how spontaneous unorganized Ukrainian civil resistance has been relatively successful in interjecting the Russian invasion, one wonders what a well-trained nonviolent civil defense force might achieve.

WADAS
MELAWAN
KEADILAN BAGI WARGA



MOLİ
KIRANA.

Indonesia 2022: How to Overcome the Stagnation

Diah Kusumaningrum¹

Amidst rampant autocratization and lifted pandemic restrictions, we expected to see more and intensified civil resistance in Indonesia throughout 2022. Surprisingly, Damai Pangkal Damai (DPD) database only recorded 219 acts of nonviolent resistance throughout that year, lower than the number just before the pandemic. Also, the database shows that there had not been much changes in terms of the repertoires of resistance – most movements still rely heavily on methods of protest and persuasion, without much utilizing methods of noncooperation and methods of intervention. More than half of the nonviolent resistance in Indonesia throughout 2022 employed the “classic combo” of marches, demonstrations, banners, slogans, and speeches. Of the 198 methods of nonviolent action identified by Gene Sharp, only 30 were used in Indonesia that year.

On the one hand, this stagnation is a letdown given the resounding calls for civil disobedience towards the end of 2020,² as well as the intensified climate actions through the Rebellion of One in 2021.³ On the other hand, it is not as surprising given the rapid shrinking of civic space in Indonesia.⁴ This stagnation signifies the success of authoritarian innovation,⁵ where pro-autocracy groups have become more adept in making the most of democratic procedures to further their non-democratic agendas, than pro-democracy groups have been.

We begin this reflective note with some data from DPD, followed by discussions on the five main themes that were put forward by civil resistance movements in Indonesia throughout 2022. We need to keep in mind that pro-autocracy groups did not gain their upper hand overnight. Such an advantaged position was preceded by years and years of building “infrastructures of repression,” including implementation of new laws and cooptation of key institutions. That said, we need to put serious efforts in building infrastructures of resistance, including (but not limited to) wide sets of repertoires, strong public support, and viable safety nets that could reduce the costs that individuals bear should they decide to join the resistance. Without solid infrastructures of resistance, it would be difficult to get more people to join and ramp up the noble fight for social justice.

1 Diah is thankful to Kanaya Ratu Aprillia and Dhania Salsha Handiani for assisting her in data collection, as well as to Nisrina Nadhifah, Sekarini Wukirasih, and Daniel Petz for their comments on the initial draft of this chapter.

2 See Damai Pangkal Damai’s annual reflection, *Defending Democracy Amidst the Pandemic: Nonviolent Resistance in Indonesia and the World 2020* (Yogyakarta: IIS Press, 2021).

3 See Damai Pangkal Damai’s annual reflection, *Pushing Back Autocratization: Nonviolent Resistance in Indonesia and the World 2022* (Yogyakarta: IIS Press, 2022).

4 See the Legal Aid Institute Jakarta’s 2022 End of Year Report, *Senjakala Demokrasi di Bawah Kendali Oligarki* (Jakarta: LBH Jakarta, 2022).

5 The origins of this term can be found in Nicole Curato and Diego Fossati, “*Authoritarian Innovations: Crafting support for a less democratic Southeast Asia*,” *Democratization* 27, no. 6 (2020): 1006-1020.

Box 1

Protest and persuasion consists of methods where actors “simply” show that they are against or for something. This includes demonstrations, marches, parades, petitions, speeches, posters, and art happenings.

Noncooperation consists of methods where actors not only demonstrate resistance, but also withdraw their participation from the practices or institutions that they oppose. This includes strikes, boycotts, and divestments.

Nonviolent intervention consists of methods where actors not only demonstrate resistance and withdraw their participation, but also strive to disrupt the practices or institutions they oppose. This includes sit-ins, nonviolent obstructions, nonviolent occupations, etc.

Resource:

Gene Sharp, *The Politics of Nonviolent Action. Part 2: The Methods of Nonviolent Action* (Bedford: Porter Sargent Publishing, 1973).

2022 In Numbers

DPD’s main database shows that there were 219 nonviolent actions in Indonesia in 2022. It should be noted that this is a low estimate, given that DPD’s main database has only coded data from *Harian Kompas*, a national daily newspaper with the highest readership in Indonesia. Upon combining and cross-checking said data with those from other news outlets and NGO reports, we find five trends: decline in number, limited repertoires, low intensity, very limited emulation of global campaigns, and increased personalization.

First, the number of nonviolent actions in Indonesia went down from 336 in 2020 and 271 in 2021 to 219 in 2022 – moving further away from the average throughout Reformasi (661 actions) and the pre-pandemic figure (268 in 2019). This number is also lower compared to those from the years where similar issues arised. Petrol price hike led to 227 (from a total of 1,386) acts of nonviolent resistance in 2003 and 57 (from a total of 517) acts in 2008. The plan to replace gubernatorial elections with legislative appointments was met with 34 (from a total of 834) acts of nonviolent resistance in 2014. Efforts to pass a number of not-so-pro-social-justice bills in 2019 galvanized 59 (from a total of 268) acts of nonviolent resistance. Meanwhile, in 2022, petrol price hike, plans to prolong

the presidential term, as well as the process to pass the new penal code, only prompted 6, 2, and 34 acts of resistance, respectively. Further research is needed to find out what the decline in number truly represents: people’s increased trust towards the country’s formal political process, hence acceptance of the above policies; their decreased trust in the effectiveness of nonviolent resistance, causing them to give up on the good fight; a change in the priorities of *Harian Kompas* (and other medias), which resulted in less news coverage on nonviolent resistance; or others.

Secondly, there has been no meaningful additions to the repertoires of resistance. Like in the previous years, nonviolent resistance in Indonesia throughout 2022 only made use of around 30 of 198 available methods. Demonstrations (method #47) remains to be the main method of resistance. Combined with speeches (method #1), slogans and hashtags (method #7), posters and banners (method #8), art performances (method #36), and marches (method #38), demonstrations cover about 60.73% of nonviolent actions in Indonesia 2022. Cross-checking

Diagram 1

Number of nonviolent actions in Indonesia throughout Reformasi

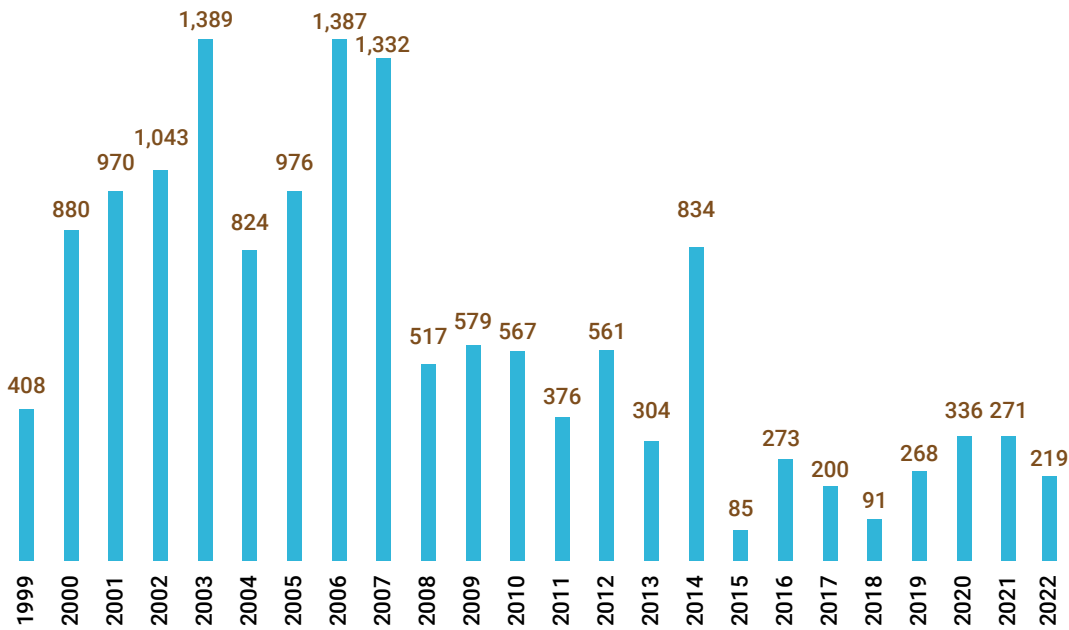
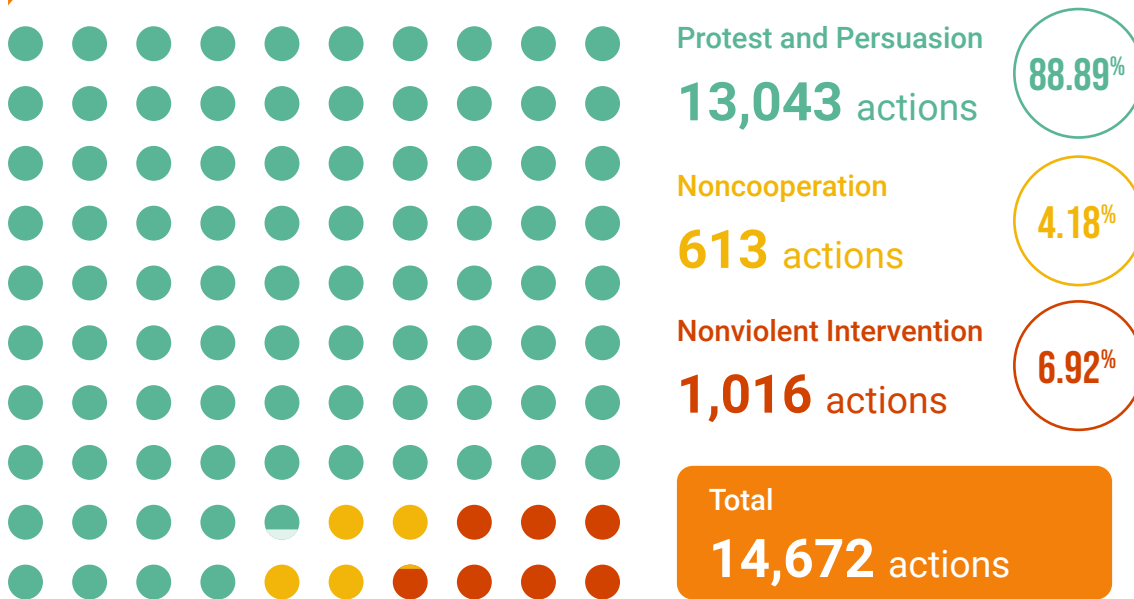


Diagram 2

Composition of nonviolent actions in Indonesia throughout Reformasi



this with other sources of data, we find that teach-in (method #50) was frequently used in 2022, where activists provide counter-narratives through webinars, Twitter threads, as well as Tiktok and Instagram reels. Also, in response to increased and escalated land-grabbing incidents,⁶ methods of nonviolent interjection, obstruction, and occupation (methods #171, #172, and #173) were used by a number of communities to nonviolently resist the acquisition of their land.

⁶ Consortium for Agrarian Reform, "*Bara Konflik Agraria: PTPN Tak Tersentuh, Kriminalisasi Petani Meningkat*," January 6, 2022.

Thirdly, the intensity of nonviolent resistance in Indonesia remained low. Fitting with the pattern throughout Reformasi, the majority of nonviolent resistance in 2022 (94.97%) relied on methods of protest and persuasion. Only a few made use of methods of noncooperation (1.8%) and methods of nonviolent intervention (3.19%). A closer look into the DPD database from 1999 to 2022 yields an insight on how different issues seem to be addressed using different methods of nonviolent actions. The methods of protest and persuasion, for example, were widely used in conflicts over governance issues. Methods of noncooperation were often associated with labor and industrial conflicts. Meanwhile, those addressing agrarian conflict would frequently rely on methods of nonviolent intervention.⁷

Fourthly, unlike in the previous years, 2022 did not really see groups in Indonesia emulating global social justice movements. In 2020, when people across the world took part in #BlackLivesMatter and #MeToo protests, Indonesians extended the spirit by encouraging solidarity with Papuans and survivors of sexual violence in Indonesia. When climate activists around the world held the Rebellion of One in 2021, Indonesian activists implemented the same strategy at home. Throughout 2022, a surge in strikes, boycotts, and blockades was apparent in many parts of the world. Strikes, demanding for fair pay and improved working conditions, took place in the US, UK, Australia, South Korea, Chile, Peru, and dozens of other countries amidst the recession caused by the pandemic and Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Boycotts were mainly done to put pressure on Russia for its attack on Ukraine, on Israel for its occupation of Palestine, and on FIFA and the Qatar World Cup for the exploitation of migrant workers in preparation for the event. Meanwhile, the blockades of intersections, bridges, factories, mines, shops, airports, and other public facilities were primarily used to inflict massive disruption on the use of fossil fuel. Unfortunately, we did not see groups in Indonesia emulate this global trend.

Fifth, 2022 saw how some individuals and groups in Indonesia tried to make nonviolent resistance more "personal." This "personalization" of resistance took various forms. In Aceh, a fisherman filed to the local court a request for lethal injection (method #158) following the government's policy that threatens the sustainability of local fish-breeding techniques.⁸ In response to the protracted land conflict in Kendeng and Wadas, several acts of resistance were directed at the individual holding the gubernatorial seat of Central Java, namely by returning economic assistance that was disbursed by this governor (method #56),⁹ unfurling protest banners inside a mosque where the governor was giving a Ramadan sermon¹⁰ and holding up a protest poster when the governor was giving a welcome speech at a student orientation

7 See Daniel Petz, Dhanisa Salsha Handiani, dan Diah Kusumaningrum's article for the International Peace Research Association Foundation, "*Damai Pangkal Damai: Insights from a Database of Nonviolent Actions in Post-Soeharto Indonesia*," Damai Pangkal Damai, June 17, 2022.

8 VOI, "*Stressed By The City Government's Policy, Fishermen In Aceh Apply For Lethal Injection To The Court*," January 6, 2022.

9 VOI, "*Many Uploaded On Social Media, PDIP Temanggung Cadre Returns Aid For Children's Toys And Cellphones From Ganjar Pranowo*," January 12, 2022.

10 CNN Indonesia, "*Spanduk Simpatisan Wadas Terbantang saat Ganjar di Masjid UGM*," April 6, 2022.

ceremony (method #8),¹¹ as well as giving the “Environment Destroyer” award to the governor (method #14).¹² Meanwhile, the widespread rejection of the Criminal Code Bill was eventually expressed through the #SemuaBisaKena hashtag (method #7), where individuals were encouraged to share examples on how the legislation would impact them personally. Previously, the movement used more general hashtags such as #TolakRKUHP (Reject the Penal Code Bill), #ReformasiDikorupsi (The Reform has been Corrupted), and so on.

The Five Themes of 2022

The five major themes of resistance in Indonesia in 2022 were land grabbing, unfair working conditions, petrol price hike, bad governance, and the climate crisis.

Building upon the momentum gained in 2021, which features the virality of the #Kendeng-Melawan, #WadasMelawan, #SaveSangihe, #SaveKinipan, #SaveMeratus, #SaveLakardowo, #SavePulauPari, and #SaveKomodo hashtags, nonviolent resistance against land grabbing managed to garner a huge amount of attention at the beginning of 2022. Most of said actions involve a combination of direct action in the disputed areas, such as nonviolent interjection, obstruction, and occupation of one’s own land (methods #171, #172, and #173), and the conduct of both offline and online public campaigns, which includes the dissemination of hashtags (method #7) and posters (method #8). This was supported by a number of other actions that were specifically oriented towards strengthening legal efforts concerning land grabbing and the criminalization of agrarian and/or customary land defenders – including sending deputations (method #13), picketing (method #16), as well as doing marches (method #38) and demonstrations (method #47) in front of the court and government buildings. Compared to the other four themes, anti-land grabbing resistance was the most intensive, relying mainly on methods of nonviolent intervention, where methods of protest and persuasion “only” served as complements. It is unfortunate that such level of intensity has not led to significant wins.

On unfair working conditions, 2022 saw more than just the classic struggle between workers and management/owners nor the grievances of health workers that was immense in 2021. It also saw waves of resistance launched by gig workers, especially by motorcycle and courier drivers with whom online platforms “partnered” up. They combined methods of protest and persuasion – such as marches (method #38) and demonstrations (method #47) – with methods of noncooperation such as strikes (method #97). Interestingly, in comparison to workers’ strikes that proliferated in other parts of the world throughout 2022, strikes in Indonesia tend to be shorter in duration and narrower in scope. The strikes were unable to last for weeks, let alone months, hence never able to escalate into general strikes. It is plausible to argue that such limited duration and scope of workers’ strikes in Indonesia prevented the movement from being able to effectively promote decent and dignified working conditions.

¹¹ Eleonora PW, “*Di Depan Ganjar, Aksi Berani Mahasiswa Baru UGM Singgung Wadas Banjir Pujian*,” Suara Jogja, August 8, 2022.

¹² NN Indonesia, “*Warga Wadas Beri ‘Penghargaan’ ke Ganjar: Gubernur Perusak Lingkungan*,” July 22, 2022.

Another important theme was resistance against petrol price hike. Aside from marches (method #38) and demonstrations (method #47), a method that stood out was “motorcades” (method #42), where protesters “walk” their motorcycles through the road, to show how they cannot afford to buy petrol and “ride” their motorcycles. As mentioned in the previous section, the increase in petrol prices did not garner as many protests in 2022 than in previous years. Furthermore, this theme was not potent enough to become the umbrella theme of resistance, despite its intertwinedness with the issues of bad governance, climate crisis, and unjust working conditions (low pay).

The resistance surrounding various instances of bad governance gained significant traction among the general public. There were bustling rejections of the Job Creation Law, the Criminal Code Bill, the idea of postponing general elections and extending the presidential term, non-judicial solutions to past human rights violations, criminalization of activists, and the blocking of a number of Electronic System Providers. Such dissent was mostly raised through demonstrations (method #47), complemented by various teach-in forums (method #50) as well as slogans and hashtags (method #7) such as #ReformasiDikorupsi, #SemuaBisaKena, #BlokirKOMINFO, #MosiTidakPercaya, and others. Some other important methods were picketing (method #16), faithfully held by Aksi Kamisan for more than 750 consecutive weeks in front of the Presidential Palace in Jakarta and replicated in other cities, as well as the speak-ins (method #177) carried out to disrupt forums in support of the Criminal Code Bill. What provoked the most controversy, of course, was the act of pouring urine in front of the Ministry of Communication and Information Technology (KOMINFO)’s building.¹³ Although said action, done by a group of students under the banner of the Student Political Block, can be categorized as one of the 198 methods of nonviolent action (rude gesture, method #30), many have questioned the appropriateness of the action. It is important to appreciate how such an act of resistance sparked extensive online dialogues, pushing people to recalibrate their aversion towards methods of civil resistance. To a certain extent, this is not unlike the discourse taking place at the global level on climate activists’ decisions to throw soup and other forms of liquid at world-famous paintings.

This brings us to the fifth theme, that is, nonviolent resistance in pursuit of climate justice. While disruptive methods such as the Discobedience (method #36) and the Rebellion of One (method #171) have taken the climate justice movement by storm in 2021, the resistance in Indonesia in 2022 has mainly focused on calling out greenwashing practices and calling banks to divest from fossil fuel companies – take, for example, the #BersihkanIndonesia (Clean Indonesia) movement. These were done by displaying climate justice messages on murals and virtual backgrounds in online meetings (method #8), as well as conducting marches (method #38), parades (method #39), demonstrations (method #47), teach-ins (method #50), and speak-ins (method #177). On the one hand, the methods used throughout 2022 were able to nurture a climate justice movement that looks and feels more communal. On the other hand,

¹³ CNN Indonesia, “*Protesters pour urine on Communication Ministry’s address marker over internet blocks,*” August 1, 2022.

the dilemma action inflicted through such methods is greatly lower compared to that of imposed through the methods used in the previous years and abroad, which relied on exposing individual activists to great risks (methods #158, #171, #172, and #173). Needless to say, various blockades and “extreme” individual acts found in the 2022 global climate justice movement were not seen in Indonesia. Even those who initially planned to cycle across Java and Bali to “attend” the G20 Summit ended up “obeying” the authorities’ instructions to stop their journey and return home. However, it is important to appreciate how Indonesian climate activists put extra efforts to stitch together the theme of climate justice with the other themes of land grabbing, unjust working conditions, rising fuel prices, and bad governance – especially given how activists associated with the latter themes seem to not necessarily see the need to tie those themes together.

Building Infrastructures of Nonviolent Resistance

There is no single reason as to why nonviolent resistance in Indonesia did not increase in number or intensity throughout 2022. Any strategies to address this stagnation need to take into account the success of authoritarian innovation, where pro-autocracy groups have been more adept in utilizing democratic procedures to further their agendas, as opposed to their pro-democratic counterparts’ lack of ability in using the same procedures to subdue autocratization.

It is important to remember that the shrinking civic space in Indonesia – which is marked by, among other things, high levels of physical and digital repression, as well as criminalization of activists – did not happen overnight. There has been a long process of “politicizing” and “weaponizing”¹⁴ old and new legislations, as well as the co-opting of key democratic institutions, including the Corruption Eradication Commission and the Supreme Court.¹⁵ In other words, repression and criminalization cannot work effectively without the presence and support of certain “infrastructures of repression” – legislations that justify them and state institutions that let them take their course. By the same logic, if we were to increase the effectiveness of our fight for social justice, we should put serious efforts in building solid infrastructures of resistance.

That being said, what kinds of infrastructures of resistance do we need to build in Indonesia? There are, of course, plenty of them. However, based on the discussions above, we can outline three things to begin with.

¹⁴ Janjira Sombatpoonsiri and Dien Nguyen An Luong argued that digital repression begins with the politicization and weaponization of legislation products. See Janjira Sombatpoonsiri and Dien Nguyen An Luong, *Justifying Digital Repression via “Fighting Fake News”: A Study of Four Southeast Asian Autocracies* (ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute, 2022).

¹⁵ See the Legal Aid Institute Jakarta’s 2022 End of Year Report, *Senjakala Demokrasi di Bawah Kendali Oligarki* (Jakarta: LBH Jakarta, 2022).

The first would be a repertoire of nonviolent action that is more diverse and intensive. Throughout Reformasi, from the year 1999 to 2022, the state has too frequently dealt with the classic combo of demonstrations, banners, posters, hashtags, speeches, and art performances, allowing them to easily come up with an authoritarian innovation capable of neutralizing, stopping, or even criminalizing such acts. As mentioned earlier, Indonesians have so far “only” used 30 out of the existing 198 methods of nonviolent action, with the majority of them “merely” comprising the protest and persuasion methods. This means there are still hundreds of other methods of noncooperation and intervention that can be further developed into a new infrastructure of nonviolent resistance.

On the one hand, restrictions that emerged during the pandemic – among other things, turning classes online – may have impeded the regeneration of student activism. Those experienced in designing and implementing various methods of nonviolent action have now graduated or been occupied with their undergraduate thesis, while the most recent batch of students is likely still familiarizing themselves with returning to offline activities and activism, thus the limited room for cross-generational transfer of knowledge. On the other hand, said “disconnection” can also be seen as an opportunity for the new generation of activists to explore a variety of new repertoires, especially ones that revolve around noncooperation and nonviolent intervention.

It is, after all, important to remember that nonviolent resistance is not just a matter of fighting for social justice without resorting to violent means. More than that, it is a contest of political and/or moral *jiu-jitsu*, where our selection and combination of methods of nonviolent action should be able to impose dilemma actions on our opponents. It is about forcing the opponent to weigh the social, political, economic, and/or moral costs of going in with their policies or actions. In the making of Reformasi, the aforementioned “classic combo” might have been successful in forcing the opponents to think that the cost of relinquishing their position of power is cheaper than the cost of staying in power. However, twenty years of authoritarian innovation has allowed pro-autocracy groups to learn and alter the situation so that the cost of continuing with their agenda becomes cheaper than the cost of paying heed to the demands of the masses. Instead of being overcome by dilemma actions, pro-autocracy groups have been more successful in inflicting dilemma actions on the people, making the cost of fighting nonviolently – such as the possibility of being criminalized, of losing their livelihood, of enduring physical injuries, and so on – way higher than the cost of staying silent. It is about time that “new combos” are developed so that pro-democracy groups can turn the tide.

The second infrastructure is a broad cross-sectoral support base, that holds together communities of activists and the general public. Erica Chenoweth’s¹⁶ research shows that nonviolent resistance supported by at least 3.5% of the population has largely resulted in success. Opponents are surely aware of this fact, and have therefore actively disseminated informa-

¹⁶ Erica Chenoweth, “*Questions, Answers, and Some Cautionary Updates Regarding the 3.5% Rule*,” Carr Center Discussion Paper Series, April 20, 2020.

tion that bolster their agenda, discredit information from activists, and/or distract the general public from the issue at hand. Despite the presence of various fact-checking institutions and facilities, their volume and speed have not been able to effectively quell misinformation and disinformation that are deliberately spread by the opponent. That said, there needs to be a shared commitment in outperforming the militancy and skills cyber troops associated with pro-autocracy groups.

More fundamentally, there needs to be an effort to instill a shared understanding that waging nonviolent resistance in the pursuit of social justice is a patriotic act that reflects one's love for their country and for humanity. After all, isn't social justice mandated by the Indonesian constitution? Various civil society groups need to jointly "stitch" their themes of struggle as one big fight for social justice, making it easier for everyone to stand in solidarity with one another. Professional journalism, citizen journalism, and daily social media activities can spearhead the building of this infrastructure – which, of course, should also be bolstered by educational, religious, and family institutions.

The third infrastructure is a safety net that mitigates the economic, social, and political costs borne by individuals who decide to join the resistance. A notable example that can be found in many countries is the presence of labor unions that allow people to make ends meet while going on strike for days or even weeks on end. Unions can use some funds collected through membership fees to provide financial support to those who go on strikes. They can also provide legal assistance and a media network that prevent strikers from being easily criminalized. Unions can also take the role of designing grand strategies that involve mixing and matching the 23 different methods of strike. Unions can, for example, lessen the workers' economic burden by relying on detailed strikes (method #108) or bumper strikes (method #109), where strikes are not carried out simultaneously, but alternately according to an agreed upon schedule. Alternatively, unions can also do their strikes in a more subtle manner – such as through the slowdown strike (method #110), working-to-rule strike (method #111), and reporting "sick" (method #112) – to lessen the risks faced by individual workers. Beyond that, unions can also monitor and impose social sanctions on members that deviate from their strike plan.

Of course, Indonesia can benefit from having way more infrastructures of resistance, such as a legal system that ensures the right to protest, school curricula that prioritizes critical thinking over blind obedience, religious teachings that are rooted at a taking side with the downtrodden, and so on. For now, focusing on building varied and intensified repertoires of resistance, establishing a broad cross-sectoral support base, and a safety net would be a good starting point. It has not always been easy for many individuals to take part in nonviolent resistance, especially ones that rely on methods of noncooperation and intervention they are not familiar with. The various collectives that exist – namely labor unions, professional associations, student associations, hobby groups, and others – should therefore be able to provide support systems that lessen the economic, social, and political costs that are likely to be faced by these individuals.



The Year in Motion: How Maximalist Campaigns Got Twisted, Turned, and Transformed in 2022

Dhania Salsha Handiani

Is there more to maximalist campaigns than meets the eye? As a number of such campaigns emerged, declined, or morphed into reformist campaigns throughout 2022, we see how unpredictable and fluid they are. Thus, it may be wise to look at maximalist campaigns as an extension or precursor of reformist ones, where gains and losses from one serve as building blocks for others.

Still, it is important to understand what each category is about. Damai Pangkal Damai (DPD) follows the Nonviolent and Violent Campaigns and Outcomes (NAVCO) Data Project's definitions of maximalist and reformist campaigns, where the former refers to campaigns driven by the objective of toppling an incumbent government due to the people's dissatisfaction with said government, while the latter is about campaigns that are issue-specific, oftentimes initiated without necessarily targeting the opponent's sovereignty.¹

We also follow George Lakey's proposition that a successful campaign entails going through a number of crucial stages.² The first, namely the conscientization stage, involves awareness-raising in regard to why it is necessary for nonviolent resistance to take place. Secondly, in the organizing stage, people gather and bolster their alliance alongside the commitment to nonviolent discipline. The third, or the confrontation stage, takes place when nonviolent actions are carried out in a sustained manner to target the regime and its resources. Upon finishing the fourth stage, which encompasses amplifying the resistance and getting the majority of the public to withdraw their support towards the regime, the final stage covers the creation of alternative regimes and institutions in place of the incumbent. When undergoing this process, movements do not only undergo a back-and-forth progression, but would also change their forms in between; in other words, we believe this framework should be approached with the insight that maximalist and reformist campaigns are interconnected.

¹ Weatherhead Center for International Affairs, "[What is a maximalist campaign?](#)" 2023.

² George Lakey, *A Manifesto for Nonviolent Revolution* (Philadelphia: Movement for a New Society, 1976).

Our 2021 report last year featured the intensification of maximalist campaigns in Algeria, Colombia, Lebanon, and Sudan, the stagnation of such campaigns in Belarus, Hong Kong, and Thailand, as well as their emergence in Myanmar, Russia, Afghanistan, El Salvador, and Guatemala. The one in Colombia has been more or less successful in bringing about change, while those in Lebanon and El Salvador have shown very few updates in regard to their continuation. Leaving out those three, this 2022 report highlights the decline of maximalist campaigns in Hong Kong, Belarus, Thailand, Myanmar, and Algeria, the intensification of such campaigns in Sudan, as well as their transformation into reformist campaigns in Afghanistan, Russia, and Guatemala. Obviously, we also look into the new campaigns in Iran, Sri Lanka, Tunisia, China, Ecuador, Panama, and Albania.

The Period of Twists and Declines

Of the twelve movements discussed in our 2021 report, five seems to have declined throughout 2022, namely Hong Kong, Belarus, Thailand, Myanmar, and Algeria.

For **Hong Kong, Belarus, and Thailand**, their contraction in 2022 was an extension of what had happened in the preceding year. Categorized under nonviolent struggles that dwindled in 2021, the heightened state repression that accompanied the arrests of important leaders and scores of activists in Thailand, Belarus, and Hong Kong contributed to a 2022 with little to no recorded resistance. As of last year, more than 10,000 people have been arrested in Hong Kong,³ thousands have fled Belarus in fear of persecution,⁴ and at least 1,800 Thai pro-democracy activists have been detained,⁵ thus considerably diluting the people's initial fervor and manpower to continue their resistance.

For **Myanmar and Algeria**, their decline is more of a U-turn from their progress in 2021. The resistance against the 2021 coup d'état in Myanmar was initially celebrated for its exuberance and creative employment of nonviolent methods with different degrees of intensity. Algeria's 2021 Hirak Movement was also lauded for the people's ability to escalate their ongoing protests against Abdelmadjid Tebboune's authoritarian regime by simultaneously incorporating civil disobedience, boycotts, and nonviolent interventions in the form of roadblocks and human chains. Alas, 2022 saw the backtracking of the aforementioned movements. In response to the death of 2,000 civilians and the imprisonment of 14,000,⁶ Myanmar's bold nonviolent resistance was replaced by a more subtle set of silent strikes at the beginning of the year.⁷ Further into 2022, a number of Myanmarese citizens, many of whom were displaced, started to also regroup themselves as the People's Defence Forces (PDFs) and proceeded with the struggle by taking up arms.⁸ In contrast, while not necessarily turning violent, the resistance in Algeria –

3 Lea Mok, "Explained in data: What happened to Hong Kong's protesters?," Hong Kong Free Press, July 16, 2022.

4 Human Rights Watch, "Belarus: New Laws Target Critics in Exile," December 22, 2022.

5 Emmy Sasipornkarn, "Thailand: What happened to monarchy protest movement?," Deutsche Welle, November 17, 2022.

6 Al Jazeera, "UN expert calls for Myanmar action as death toll tops 2,000," June 23, 2022.

7 Richard C. Paddock, "A Year After Coup, Myanmar Is Mired in Conflict and Chaos," The New York Times, February 1, 2022.

8 Jonathan Head, "Myanmar: Why once peaceful protesters are now choosing violence," BBC News, January 30, 2022.

despite its commendable ability to swiftly revive itself after the pandemic in the previous year – came to a halt due to the soaring number of arrests and unprecedented crackdowns in the country.⁹

A notable exception had been **Sudan**, the only case that distinctively maintained its presence in 2022, marking its third consecutive year of fighting for transition to democracy since the ousting of autocrat Omar al-Bashir. In 2022, the people of Sudan managed to strengthen their position in the confrontation stage by sustaining both their presence and intensity of resistance. Throughout the year, hundreds maintained their participation in near-weekly marches (method #38) and protests (method #47) throughout the country.¹⁰ To mark the one-year anniversary of the coup that happened in October 2021, thousands showed up in the capital Khartoum to conduct rallies and demonstrations that were bigger in size than the ones held in the previous year.¹¹ In tandem with the conduct of the aforementioned methods of protest and persuasion, which undoubtedly conveyed the message that the resistance is alive and well, the Sudanese, too, stayed committed to nonviolent methods that are high in intensity. Bolstering their previous efforts in 2021, multiple sitting protests were done across cities and villages (method #171),¹² important roads in Khartoum and other major cities were barricaded by bricks, rocks, and branches (method #172),¹³ and strikes were continuously done by employees across different sectors (method #117).¹⁴ This, as a result, has granted them a form of leverage to carry out further discussions with political forces and the military.¹⁵

What, then, differentiates maximalist campaigns that were able to sustain and intensify themselves from the ones that were unable to?

In last year's report, we proposed that movements undergoing intensification in 2021 were able to do so upon completing the conscientization and organizing stages, which was buttressed by years of initial struggle and a solid repertoire of contention. Interestingly, both the ongoing and dwindling movements listed in this section have roughly covered said prerequisites: Sudan's current fight against the military takeover was fueled by years of experience after their success in ousting Bashir's 30-year dictatorship in 2019, the Hirak Movement in Algeria was able to commit to nonviolent resistance since 2019 due to the lessons learned from the 2011 Arab uprisings, the Thais themselves were no stranger to resorting to people power when faced with coup d'états that had occurred throughout the years, and so forth.

While acknowledging that resistance is not always linear, this then leads us to the assumption that the differing ability to restore and amplify one's momentum after the COVID-19

9 Human Rights Watch, "*Algeria: 3 Years On, Repression on Protest Tightens*," February 21, 2022.

10 RFI, "*Protests in Sudan against deal to end post-coup crisis*," December 13, 2022.

11 Africa News, "*Thousands march across Sudan on 1st anniversary of military coup*," October 25, 2022.

12 Pavan Kulkarni, "*December Revolution's rebirth: Sit-ins mark new stage of protests against Sudan's military junta*," Peoples Dispatch, July 11, 2022.

13 Reuters, "*Barricade protests bring life to halt in Sudanese capital*," March 24, 2022.

14 Sacha Ismail, "*Towards a general strike in Sudan?*" Alliance for Workers' Liberty, September 6, 2022.

15 Susan Stigant, "*In Sudan, a Narrow Opportunity to Get the Democratic Transition Back on Track*," United States Institute of Peace, July 7, 2022.

pandemic derived from the movements' varying levels of organization and institutionalization. In Thailand and Hong Kong, constituents of the pro-democracy movement admitted to their reliance on a number of key figures for mobilization, thus their disorientation after the arrest of their leaders.¹⁶ In Belarus, in a time where unity is needed more than ever in the middle of the crackdown, a significant number of citizens still refused to actively take part in the resistance -- irrespective of their expressed dissatisfaction towards Lukashenka -- due to not seeing the current movement as representative of their interests.¹⁷ One could also argue that the people's fear of repression has been on the rise due to Belarus' active involvement in the Russo-Ukrainian war as an ally of Russia.¹⁸ In Algeria, the process of creating a structured opposition was similarly stalled by the targeted arrest of coordinators and party leaders amid government efforts to alter the law to buttress the ongoing repression.¹⁹

In contrast, one can argue that Sudan's resistance has been less prone to undergoing setbacks due to the more robust structure of its organization. Instead of relying on a hierarchical chain of command, the movement functions on neighborhood-level "resistance committees" that were constantly developed from the 2018-2019 resistance. Firstly, this ensures a sturdier unity, seeing as solidarity among people was organically formed through informal spaces -- take, for example, neighborhood soccer matches, card games, and meet-ups in the market²⁰ -- and was capable of reaching individuals from different walks of life, namely parents, teenagers, scholars, workers, and so on. Secondly, its leaderless arrangement has likely made it harder for authorities to close in on specific targets in hopes of incapacitating the entire movement.²¹

The Unforeseen Transformations

Three maximalist campaigns neither escalated nor demobilized, but somewhat morphed themselves as campaigns that are more reformist in nature. If the movements in Afghanistan, Russia, and Guatemala had initially aimed to replace an entire regime with a more decentralized and democratic government, 2022 saw them shifting their focus to more issue-oriented ones.

Since the seizure of Afghanistan by the Taliban, protests held by hundreds of Afghans in Kabul and surrounding cities had been a monumental series of events in 2021. By destroying the flag of the Taliban and chanting slogans that demand the people's freedom, Afghanistan's early maximalist orientation was made clear by the citizens' wish of installing a new and more inclusive government that upholds the rights of all Afghans.²² However, as more restrictions were issued to curb the rights of women (take, for instance, forcing women to cover their

¹⁶ Emmy Sasipornkarn, "[What's next for Thailand's stalled pro-democracy movement?](#)," Deutsche Welle, March 24, 2021.

¹⁷ Ryhor Astapenia, "[Why the Belarusian revolution has stalled](#)," Chatham House, February 9, 2021.

¹⁸ Digital Forensic Research Lab, "[Russian Hybrid War Report: Belarus joins conflict against Ukraine](#)," Atlantic Council, February 24, 2022.

¹⁹ Ilhem Rachidi, "[Repression in Algeria: Could It End The Hirak Movement?](#)," Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, July 29, 2021.

²⁰ Nada Wann, "[Sudan's hidden resistance: 'The day that can no longer wait'](#)," Al Jazeera, October 25, 2022.

²¹ Nafisa Eltahir, "[Sudan's resistance committees take centre stage in fight against military rule](#)," Reuters, February 3, 2022.

²² Ali M Latifi, "[Hundreds of Afghans take to Kabul's streets calling for 'freedom'](#)," Al Jazeera, September 7, 2021.

faces in public, banning them from driving, and depriving them of their access to education), the movement started to revolve around the plight of Afghan women. In the middle of indiscriminate attacks against protesters, women started to initiate their own wave of resistance, initially through smaller-scale protests (method #47). After ensuring further mobilization through the dissemination of photos and videos via social media applications (method #122), hundreds of other women picked up the pace and resumed rallies (method #38) in Kabul, Herat, and Bamiyan with the slogan “Women, Life, Freedom” (method #7) to specifically demand the restoration of women’s rights to education, employment, and other fundamental necessities.²³ This then extends to having female professors, teachers, and students gathering and maintaining their presence in universities and learning centers (methods #137 and #171) that were either shut down or attacked by the Taliban and their supporters.²⁴

In Russia, 2021 witnessed thousands of people launching the country’s biggest anti-government protest since 2012 to express their discontent with Putin’s corrupt regime and the detainment of opposition leader Alexei Navalny approaching its legislative election. Even though things only lasted for three months due to the large-scale crackdowns and detainment of thousands that followed, protests of similar size once again engulfed Russia at the beginning of 2022. Unlike the previous protest that aimed to generally transform the existing government, the demand of the 2022 protests was notably more specific: to denounce Russia’s invasion of Ukraine that unfolded in February.²⁵ Similar to 2021, thousands of Russians held protests (method #47) in the streets of Moscow, St. Petersburg, Krasnodar, Ekaterinburg, Saratov, Nizhny Novgorod, and Voronezh -- this time, however, they donned anti-war slogans and placards (method #7),²⁶ and were accompanied by tens of thousands of men fleeing the country to escape conscription (method #139).²⁷

Although the protests in Guatemala still very much targeted the regime of Alejandro Giammattei and did not necessarily call for a change of label from a maximalist to a reformist campaign, it is interesting to take a look at how the movement’s goals were presented in 2022. In the middle of the marches (method #38) and demonstrations (method #47) attended by hundreds of Guatemalans in various points of the capital, one could pinpoint the strong presence of the indigenous population and leaders. Aside from emphasizing how the country’s rising cost of living would harm the indigenous community the most,²⁸ they, too, made sure that the issue of the exploitation of ancestral territories took center stage in the protests.²⁹

Having established that maximalist campaigns can turn reformist, studies on the two should be more cognizant of the fact that they are closely related. Furthermore, we can also

23 Belquis Ahmadi and Palwasha L. Kakar, “*Iran’s Protests ... and the Afghan Sisters Next Door*,” United States Institute of Peace, October 13, 2022.

24 Orooj Hakimi, “*Afghan women protest school attack as Taliban cracks down*,” Al Jazeera, October 3, 2022.

25 CIVICUS Monitor, “*Mass Anti-War Protests, Censorship, As Population Denounces Ukraine Invasion*,” March 2, 2022.

26 CIVICUS Monitor, “*Mass Anti-War Protests, Censorship, As Population Denounces Ukraine Invasion*,” March 2, 2022.

27 Fatma Tanis, “*Russian men flee the country. Many are showing up in Istanbul*,” NPR, September 26, 2022.

28 Sonia Perez D., “*Guatemalans March In Protest of Corruption, Cost Of Living*,” CTV News, August 12, 2022.

29 CIVICUS Monitor, “*Guatemala: Protests Against Corruption And Rising Cost of Living*,” September 1, 2022.

look into how one type of the movement can influence the other, which was recently brought up in the United States Institute of Peace's commentary on the Afghan and Iranian resistance.³⁰ Sharing Afghans' concerns on women's rights, for instance, the newly emerged maximalist campaign in Iran (further explained in the next section) has been deemed by many as an inspiration for their Afghan sisters and the needed push to realign themselves in the fight against dictatorship. This, then, leaves us with the untapped question of: does the success of a reformist campaign help secure an easier pathway to the success of a maximalist campaign, or is it the other way around?

Turning Up with a Big Bang

2022 also saw the emergence of new resistance movements in **Iran, Sri Lanka, Tunisia, China, Ecuador, Panama,** and **Albania**. While the movements are young, they right away employ a wide range of methods of nonviolent actions, not only those within the protest and persuasion category often associated with the initial conscientization and organization phase. Right from the start, methods of noncooperation and intervention took center stage in the form of boycotts, nonviolent occupation, civil disobedience, and more.

In Iran, demonstrations dubbed the biggest since the Islamic Revolution in 1979 were triggered by the death of 22-year-old Mahsa Amini after her detainment by the morality police for dressing "inappropriately." What was initially an anti-hijab protest eventually evolved into a form of rejection toward a violent fundamentalist regime that does not respect the freedom of its constituents.³¹ Nonviolent actions were carried out by Iranians of all genders, ages, ethnicities, and backgrounds. In large-scale demonstrations across major cities (method #47), women would take off their hijabs (method #22), burn their hijabs (method #23), and chop their hair off (method #21).³² In the streets, people undermine clerics' authority by knocking turbans off the clerics' heads (method #31).³³ Aside from having shopkeepers shutting down their businesses (method #85), nationwide strikes were also observed in schools, universities, and the country's oil sector (method #117).³⁴ Protests, too, have proliferated outside the country -- one of the most talked about took place during the 2022 FIFA World Cup in Qatar, where the Iranian soccer players refused to sing their national anthem as an act of defiance against their government (method #121).³⁵

In Sri Lanka, resistance stemmed from a longstanding economic crisis. Due to Gotabaya Rajapaksa's authoritarian government's corruption and economic mismanagement, Sri Lankans

30 Belquis Ahmadi and Palwasha L. Kakar, "*Iran's Protests ... and the Afghan Sisters Next Door*," United States Institute of Peace, October 13, 2022.

31 Mia Vanket, Kai McNamee, Christopher Intagliata, and Ari Shapiro, "*A look at where Iran demonstrations are headed after over 100 days of public protests*," NPR, December 28, 2022.

32 Joshua Askew, "*Iran Protests: What Caused Them? Are They Different This Time? Will The Regime Fall?*," Euronews, December 20, 2022.

33 Shadi Sadr, "*Iranians are knocking clerics' turbans off. This isn't an anti-religion act but an indirect tool for accountability*," Atlantic Council, November 22, 2022.

34 Joshua Askew, "*Iran Protests: What Caused Them? Are They Different This Time? Will The Regime Fall?*," Euronews, December 20, 2022.

35 Patrick Smith, "*Iran Soccer Team Silent During National Anthem At Its First World Cup Game*," CNBC News, November 21, 2022.

have been dealing with high living costs and shortages of essential items since 2019.³⁶ Alas, further affected by the worsening socioeconomic condition of the world, thousands started to embark on massive rallies (methods #38 and #47) across Colombo and outside the president's office, with slogans such as "Go home Gota" and "Go home Rajapaksas" (method #7) enlivening the resistance.³⁷ For more than 70 days, protesters also occupied a site in the middle of the city called Galle Face Green, which they later renamed "GotaGoGama" (methods #27 and #173).³⁸ When the government imposed a state of emergency and curfews, Sri Lankans intensified their resistance by defying said laws, making their protest a form of civil disobedience (method 141).³⁹ Later in July 2022, protesters occupied Rajapaksa's home and used its amenities as if they were the owner of the house (methods #170 and #173), eventually pushing the president to flee the country.⁴⁰

In another part of the world, after President Kais Saied's decision to enact a one-man rule in Tunisia's constitution, firing the country's prime minister, and suspending parliament in the middle of a decade-long socioeconomic crisis, Tunisia saw thousands from opposition groups demonstrating in the capital Tunis (method #47) while chanting slogans along the lines of "Revolution against dictator Kais" and "The coup will fall" (method #7). At the end of the year, people also called for the boycott of the new constitution and the country's impending parliamentary elections (method #124).⁴¹

The week-long anti-government protests that emerged in China, on the other hand, were triggered by the zero-COVID policy (encompassing strict lockdowns and mandatory mass testing) that was deemed by the people as draconian and economically unsustainable⁴² -- especially after the deaths of many for not being able to leave their homes in grave situations. Also known as the "White Paper Movement," methods of resistance varied from banging pots and pans in one's neighborhood (method #28), holding vigils in the memory of the victims that had died under the inhumane lockdown measures (method #34),⁴³ to carrying out demonstrations across hundreds of universities and major cities (method #47) while sporting blank sheets of paper to represent "everything protesters wish they could say but cannot" (method #21).⁴⁴ All of this, of course, was done in defiance of the government's protest ban, thus presenting the movement as an act of civil disobedience (method #141). While seemingly COVID-centered, this chapter categorizes the movement as a maximalist campaign, seeing as it ultimately criticizes the government's authoritarian nature and tendency to suppress the people's freedom of expression.

36 Borgen Magazine, "[Everything to Know About Sri Lanka's Economic Crisis](#)," April 23, 2022.

37 Meera Srinivasan, "[Opposition Reject Gotabaya Call to Join Cabinet Amid Crisis](#)," The Hindu, April 5, 2022.

38 Bhavani Fonseka, "[Sri Lanka's Crisis and the Power of Citizen Mobilization](#)," Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, June 30, 2022.

39 Bhavani Fonseka, "[Sri Lanka's Crisis and the Power of Citizen Mobilization](#)," Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, June 30, 2022.

40 BBC News, "[Sri Lanka: Protesters 'Will Occupy Palace Until Leaders Go'](#)," July 10, 2022.

41 France 24, "[Thousands Of Tunisian Protesters Demand President Saied Removal After 'Coup'](#)," October 15, 2022.

42 Shakeel Sobhan, "[What is China's Zero-COVID Policy?](#)" Deutsche Welle, September 5, 2022.

43 The Diplomat, "[Explaining the Unthinkable: How the Protest Movement in China Took Place](#)," December 8, 2022.

44 Billy Perrigo, "[Why a Blank Sheet of Paper Became a Protest Symbol in China](#)," TIME, December 1, 2022.

In Ecuador, Panama, and Albania, emerging protests against the government were notably fueled by inflation and the rising cost of living that stemmed from the Russo-Ukrainian War. In comparison to the previous cases, the campaigns in these three countries were just as large in scale and variative in methods.

Aside from congregating in marches (method #38) and demonstrations (method #47) that lasted for days on end in the capital Quito, thousands of indigenous activists, students, and workers in Ecuador ensured that their demand for the removal of President Guillermo Lasso was heard by setting up roadblocks on major highways in at least 10 different cities (method #172)⁴⁵ and going on an indefinite general strike (method #117).⁴⁶ Similarly, in tandem with protesting in the streets, thousands of Panamanian union members, teachers, students, and indigenous communities have resorted to erecting blockades in the Pan-American Highway (method #172) -- which strategically connects the country with the rest of Central America -- to push for price reduction and the resignation of both President Laurentino Cortizo and Vice President José Gabriel Carrizo.⁴⁷ To condemn the 8 percent price hike in 2022, tens of thousands of Albanians joined rallies and street protests across cities (methods #38 and #47), held vigils in public spaces (method #34), and sprayed paintings on government buildings (method #26), all of which often served as a form of blockade of its own.⁴⁸

Enthrillingly, the action of doing an intense form of resistance within a short period of time has allowed the new movements in 2022 to secure a notable set of victories. In Sri Lanka, the people's unprecedented persistence and choice of nonviolent methods have yielded the year's true maximalist success, namely Rajapaksa's eventual resignation and the election of a new president in the country.⁴⁹ However, it is also important to note that maximalist campaigns do not always produce maximalist outcomes, where wins can also take the form of policy reforms that are critical to achieving the bigger goal. In China, while the government has not exactly been dented in structure, previously strict rules on lockdown and travel were eased,⁵⁰ allowing the people to gain a part of their freedom back. In Panama, the citizens' sustained protests and blockade of the strategic Pan-American highway had resulted in more shortages of fuel and food, thus contributing to the shutting down of markets due to the lack of produce to be sold and approximately \$500 million in economic loss for the government.⁵¹ In consequence, negotiations between the people and government were made possible, and have resulted in the latter agreeing to lower the price of gas by 24%.⁵²

45 Al Jazeera, "[Indigenous Protesters Block Roads In Ecuador Over Rising Costs](#)," June 13, 2022.

46 Marc Becker, "[In Ecuador, Indigenous-led National Strike Intensifies](#)," NACLA, June 23, 2022.

47 Al Jazeera, "[What Is Behind The Largest Protests In Panama In Years?](#)," July 20, 2022.

48 Fatjon Cuka, "[Albania: Thousands Gather In Anti-Government Demonstration](#)," AA, November 13, 2022.

49 It is to be noted, however, that the result is not without its shortcomings. While successful in toppling the incumbent president, the election of Ranil Wickremesinghe as Sri Lanka's new president by the Member of Parliament was not necessarily embraced by the public, seeing as he has also been perceived as part of the circle of elites responsible for the country's economic mismanagement.

50 The Diplomat, "[Explaining the Unthinkable: How the Protest Movement in China Took Place](#)," December 8, 2022.

51 Al Jazeera, "[What Is Behind The Largest Protests In Panama In Years?](#)," July 20, 2022.

52 Janae O'Connell, "[Panama Protesting Against Living Costs](#)," The Borgen Project, November 3, 2022.

The Convoluted Pathway Ahead

2022 has presented to us a variety of campaigns, which journeys are frequently messy and not as clear-cut. The newly emerged maximalist campaigns showed that the goal of overturning an existing government often needs to be broken down into bits of policy wins. At times, the boundary between the maximalist and reformist campaigns seemed to be quite fluid and obscure, judging by how reformist campaigns can turn maximalist (as shown by the progression of Iran's movement in the past year) and how maximalist campaigns can reverse into a reformist version of themselves (as projected by the Afghan and Russian resistance movements). With the latter, transitions take place by accepting concessions from the government, which are sometimes seen as a necessary compromise, especially when refusal to take concessions could result in harsher repression and the risk of undoing a movement's entire progress.

In the case of Brazil, which was not entirely covered in this report due to the event's recency at the time of the writing, the fluidity of orientation can also be seen in a not-so-positive light, where nonviolent methods such as demonstrations, street blockades, and strikes were used by pro-Bolsonaro supporters to call for a coup against the newly elected new president, Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva. Instead of sustaining democracy, these campaigns were carried out by the people to demand a return to military dictatorship, where supporters of right-wing Jair Bolsonaro were seen begging and serenading the army in Brazil to do a military intervention after the election.⁵³ With pro-democracy rallies held to counter said groups at the beginning of 2023, the progression of the situation in Brazil is certainly to be observed.

Nevertheless, putting aside the unpredictability of these campaigns, a line of key factors that are critical in ensuring the sustainability and achievement of resistance can still be highlighted.

Speed and spontaneity have proven beneficial for the new movements in 2022. In many of the recent resistance mentioned above, the decision to escalate their fight from merely using methods within the protest and persuasion category to ones under the noncooperation and nonviolent intervention category was either rapid or nonexistent (seeing as many were done in tandem with one another from the very get-go). Success is ultimately achieved by securing quick progressions and swiftly capitalizing on them before the regime gets to adjust itself to the movement and implements autocratic innovation, which had unfortunately occurred in Hong Kong, Thailand, and Myanmar. In Sri Lanka and Sudan, success was likely buttressed by the leaderless nature of their movements, where spontaneity is conventionalized by their close-knit and non-rigid structure.

In the event where the government reacts in a less-than-pleasant manner, creativity always proves to be useful. Aware of the repressive nature of the Chinese government, citizens ensured their safety by implementing strategic ambiguity throughout the resistance. Examples include posting sarcastic and overly enthusiastic messages about authorities, as well as

⁵³ Andrew Downie, "*Pro-Bolsonaro Truck Drivers Threaten New Road Blockades In Brazil*," The Guardian, November 18, 2022.

making use of random phrases such as “shrimp moss” -- which actually sounds like “step down” in the Chinese language -- throughout their protests.⁵⁴

Solidarity, too, has often presented itself as a lifeline to the resistance. In Sri Lanka, the government’s ban on social media only lasted for a day and was deemed unsuccessful, seeing as hashtags such as #GoHomeGota and #GoGotaGo were still trending across all social media platforms with the help of the Sri Lankan diaspora in the United States, Germany, and Singapore.⁵⁵ Chanting slogans such as “Iran has risen, now it’s our turn!” and “From Kabul to Iran, say no to dictatorship!”, Afghan women brought up Iran’s resistance to highlight the congruity and urgency of their own amid government efforts to silence them.⁵⁶ The Iranians themselves were able to instill global pressure on their government with the emergence of solidarity rallies attended by thousands across the world.⁵⁷

Last but not least, no secured wins would be meaningful without tenacity and consistency. While not discussed extensively in this chapter, past movements that were able to achieve their goals have not ceased to fight nonviolently. Upon the election of Gustavo Petro as Colombia’s first left-wing president in its history, demonstrations still flourished as a platform of criticism towards Petro’s socioeconomic reforms.⁵⁸ In Chile, student-led rallies and street protests have continuously been used by the people to ensure progressive reforms even after the rejection of the new constitution.⁵⁹ Sri Lankans, who successfully overturned Rajapaksa but were unhappy about the newly elected president, have also extended their nationwide protests to express the people’s dissatisfaction.⁶⁰

There really is no fixed blueprint for a successful maximalist campaign. It is to be considered, however, that the second best way to achieving success may just be to take lessons from the various maximalist and reformist campaigns taking the world by storm.

54 Gareth Dale, “China’s ‘White Paper’ Protest Movement Echoes Freedom Struggles Across Asia and the World,” *The Conversation*, November 30, 2022.

55 Tamil Guardian, “Go Home Gota’ - Global Sri Lankan Diaspora Protest Against Rajapaksa Administration,” April 3, 2022.

56 Belquis Ahmadi and Palwasha L. Kakar, “Iran’s Protests ... and the Afghan Sisters Next Door,” *United States Institute of Peace*, October 13, 2022.

57 Agence France-Presse, “Protest Strikes In Iran Reported As Solidarity Rallies Held Around World,” *The Guardian*, October 22, 2021.

58 Reuters, “Thousands March Against Colombian President Petro’s Tax Reform,” September 27, 2022.

59 Al Jazeera, “Chileans Take to the Streets to Mark 3rd Anniversary of Upheaval,” October 18, 2022.

60 Arshad R. Zargar, “Sri Lanka Protests Resume As Unpopular Premiere Ranil Wickremesinghe Tapped As New President,” *CBS News*, July 20, 2022.

Soaring Prices, Rising Climate, and Gender Trouble: A Record of Reformist Campaigns in 2022

Alfredo Putrawidjoyo and Dhanisa Salsha Handiani

Throughout the pandemic, governments, corporations, and people in power often tried to appease the public by claiming that the crisis had brought them equal agony. Despite their reliance on the “we are in the same boat” rhetoric, however, it was clear that different groups had experienced the crisis differently, where vulnerable groups had to bear the brunt of the situation. With pandemic restrictions being lifted and injustices becoming more relevant than ever, 2022 ultimately saw a surge of nonviolent reformist campaigns across the world, where many consistently demanded **climate justice, dignified work, and gender equality**. Aside from further discerning the trajectory of these movements, this chapter also aims to study the reason behind their bearings, the hurdles that they faced, and key takeaways for the future of the resistance.



A Kaleidoscope of Intensified Resistance

Against structural inequalities heightened by the combined effects of the climate crisis, pandemic, and recent global events such as the Russo-Ukrainian war, 2022's **climate justice movement** has been more disruptive than ever. If resistance in 2021 had primarily relied on marches (method #38) and demonstrations (method #47) with the occasional blocking of roads by individuals (method #171), 2022 saw escalation and methodical innovation, with climate activists tapping more frequently into the repertoires of noncooperation and nonviolent intervention.

In the Global North, environmental groups such as Just Stop Oil, Extinction Rebellion (XR), and Last Generation garnered public attention by barging into the year with methods of physical intervention, where they often took the form of nonviolent interjection (method #171) and obstruction (method #172). To ensure the government's commitment to stopping new fossil fuel licensing and production, for example, hundreds of individuals from Just Stop Oil blocked major oil terminals in the United Kingdom and stopped operations across the country.¹ In the airports of Amsterdam and Munich, activists glued themselves to the runway and cycled haphazardly throughout the area in protest against insufficient public transportation systems and unnecessary emissions from the transportation of the elites.² As a continuation of last year's acts, many also blocked streets and bridges. Dozens of activists glued themselves to the asphalt in New York, London, Berlin, Munich, and other cities to call for climate action. In conjunction, hundreds blocked a total of four bridges (consisting of the Waterloo Bridge, Westminster Bridge, Lambeth Bridge, and Vauxhall Bridge) in London alone,³ the Mont Blanc Bridge in Geneva,⁴ the Sydney Harbour Bridge in Sydney,⁵ and port bridges in Hamburg.⁶

Other times, disruptions launched by climate activists did not always present themselves as physical blockades, but were just as striking. Young climate activist Xiye Bastida, for instance, disrupted a fashion show by simply attending its red carpet event while holding a placard saying "Stop Fossil Fuels, Stop Ecocide" (methods #7, #8, and #63).⁷ In a more extravagant approach, activists in the UK barged into the House of Commons, glued themselves on the Speaker's chair, and did speeches that demand a citizens' assembly on climate issues (methods #1, #158, and #173).⁸ In Indonesia, a similar action was done by activists who joined G20's online forums; instead of speaking in, however, these activists showed up with virtual backgrounds that showcase messages against the extractive industry until they got kicked out

1 Tom Batchelor, "[Just Stop Oil: Protesters block 10 oil terminals and force Exxon Mobil UK to suspend operations](#)," Independent, April 1, 2022.

2 Deutsche Welle, "[Munich Airport Runway Closes Amid Climate Protest](#)," August 12, 2022.

3 Damien Gayle, "[Just Stop Oil Activists Blockade Four London Bridges](#)," The Guardian, October 1, 2022.

4 SWI, "[Climate Activists Block Mont Blanc Bridge](#)," October 22, 2022.

5 Elias Visontay, "[Climate Activist Who Blocked Traffic On Sydney Harbour Bridge Jailed For At Least Eight Months](#)," The Guardian, December 2, 2022.

6 Deutsche Welle, "[Climate Change Activists Block Hamburg Port Bridge](#)," August 12, 2022.

7 Xiye Bastida, [Twitter](#), September 10, 2022.

8 Damien Gayle, "[Eight Arrested After Climate Activists Glue Themselves Around Commons Speaker's Chair](#)," The Guardian, September 2, 2022.

(methods #7, #8, and #168).⁹ Other spaces that got disrupted by climate protests also involved museums across the world. Nearing the end of the year, activists who threw soup, mashed potatoes, and buckets of painting (method #26) on famous artworks -- among them being Van Gogh's Sunflowers, Vermeer's Pearl Earring, and Monet's Haystacks -- took center stage.¹⁰ They provocatively justified their actions with messages along the lines of "What is worth more, art or life? Are you more concerned about the protection of a painting or the protection of our planet?"¹¹

On top of that, 2022 also showed that rebellion can begin from one's own spaces and communities. Throughout the year, thousands of scientists embarked on acts of civil disobedience to criticize the government's refusal to listen to the science behind the climate crisis (methods #141 and #196). This was done in tandem with the academic community's participation in international strikes to strengthen the movement (methods #97 and #104).¹² In regard to more specific issues, activists who present themselves as the Animal Rebellion also made headlines by occupying high-end restaurants and supermarkets (method #173). Here, they brought attention to the contribution of the overconsumption of animal products to the climate crisis.¹³

In the Global South, many activists had specifically protested against the issue of oil colonialism and environmental degradation by holding marches (method #38) and protests (method #47) in front of major government buildings, donors, and conferences.¹⁴ Throughout the annual Africa Oil Week, protesters went all out by covering themselves in fake blood and oil (method #26).¹⁵ Choosing not to confine themselves to their own countries, citizens of the Global South also ensured the amplification of their voices by attending the COP27 in Egypt and joining forces with their peers from the Global North.

Despite Egypt's ban on street protests, COP27 witnessed indigenous people, feminists, workers, and the youth from Southeast Asia to Africa holding massive rallies within the UN quarters to demand climate reparations, condemn the fossil fuel agenda, and commemorate environmental defenders whose rights have been violated (methods #38 and #47).¹⁶ Other examples included directly confronting world leaders who were present at the conference and have been notorious for glossing over the voice of the community. Four indigenous activists from the United States, for example, brazenly interrupted President Joe Biden's speech (method #177) while unfurling a banner reading "People vs Fossil Fuels" (methods #7 and #8).¹⁷ Inside the building, indigenous youth activist Licypriya Kangujam "haunted" and followed

9 Extinction Rebellion Indonesia, [Instagram](#), September 10, 2022.

10 Vittoria Benzine, "[Here Is Every Artwork Attacked by Climate Activists This Year, From the 'Mona Lisa' to 'Girl With a Pearl Earring'](#)," ArtNet, October 31, 2022.

11 Halisia Hubbard, "[Who is Just Stop Oil, the group that threw soup on Van Gogh's painting?](#)," NPR, October 15, 2022.

12 Scientist Rebellion, "[Strikes and Occupation](#)," 2022.

13 Jane Clinton, "[Animal Rebellion Occupies Gordon Ramsay's Three-Star Michelin Restaurant](#)," The Guardian, November 19, 2022.

14 Ashraf Hendricks, "[Climate Activists See Red With 'Blood' And Oil Protest Outside CTICC](#)," Daily Maverick, October 4, 2022.

15 Stephany Rajagukguk, "[Africa Oil Week 2022: Climate Protesters Cover Themselves In Fake Blood And Oil](#)," Extinction Rebellion, October 4, 2022.

16 Adrian Salazar, [Twitter](#), November 12, 2022; Peace Brigades International, [Twitter](#), November 10, 2022.

17 Ivana Kottasová, "[These climate activists protested during Biden's speech and got kicked out of the COP27 summit](#)," CNN, November

UK Minister Zac Goldsmith around to hold him accountable for the detainment of climate activists in the UK (method #31).¹⁸

The labor movements also went through intensification in terms of quantity in the year 2022. As the late David Graeber suggests, COVID-19 and its implications may serve as a wake-up call from a systemic-induced slumber, seeing that those who do the work that makes societies function are often underpaid and exploited.¹⁹ While much of the working and lower middle class have been struggling or even unable to make ends meet, major companies, their shareholders, and executives saw record profits and benefitted from the pandemic as well as inflation.²⁰ In comparison to 2021, for example, the Cornell-ILR Labor Action Tracker database recorded a 48% uptick in strikes in the United States alone.²¹

Such data includes the record-breaking strikes done by thousands of teachers, nurses, and other education professionals in Ohio,²² Minnesota,²³ and New York (method #117),²⁴ as well as the 48,000 academic workers under the United Auto Works (UAW) who rose up for better pay and working conditions in ten University of California cities (method #104).²⁵ During Black Friday, thousands of Amazon workers, too, came into the spotlight by staging walk-outs (method #51) and demonstrations (method #47) to condemn the company's union-busting efforts and to call for the better treatment of employees.²⁶

Across the Atlantic, massive inflation and the cost-of-living crisis caused by Russia's invasion of Ukraine had propelled tens of thousands of workers across Europe to go on strike for days on end. According to Strike Map, there were over 2,000 strikes taking place in the UK and Ireland in the month of August alone, which puts into perspective why the period was called the "summer of discontent".²⁷

In the UK, this features 40,000 rail workers across 16 companies who carried out the biggest walk-out (method #51 and #106) in the country since 1955.²⁸ Over 70,000 staff at 150 universities also began a three-day strike over attacks on pay, working conditions, and pensions.²⁹

14, 2022.

18 Licypriya Kangujam, [Twitter](#), November 14, 2022.

19 David Graeber, "[David Graeber: After the Pandemic, We Can't Go Back to Sleep](#)," *Jacobin*, April 3, 2021.

20 Anne Vogelpohl, Chris Hurl, Michael Howard, Reut Marciano, Uttara Purandare, and Andrew Sturdy, "[Pandemic Consulting: How Private Consultants Leverage Public Crisis Management](#)," *Critical Policy Studies* 16, no. 3 (2022): 371-381.

21 ILR School, "[Labor Action Tracker](#)," 2021.

22 Eric Bradner, "[Ohio Teachers Say They Won't End Their Strike Without Improvements To Miserable Classroom Environment](#)," *CNN*, August 24, 2022.

23 Lauren Kaori Gurley, "[Largest Private-Sector Nurses Strike In U.S. History Begins In Minnesota](#)," *The Washington Post*, September 12, 2022.

24 Liam Reily, "[New York Nursing Union Announces Intention To Strike, Delivers Notices To Eight Hospitals Across NYC](#)," *CNN*, December 30, 2022.

25 Phoebe Wall Howard, "[UAW strike stuns University of California in 10 cities, heading into fourth week](#)," *Detroit Free Press*, December 4, 2022.

26 Al Jazeera, "[Amazon Workers Stage Walkouts, Protests On Black Friday](#)," November 26, 2022.

27 Gaby Hinsliff, "[This summer of discontent should be a gift to Labour – so where are Starmer's big ideas?](#)" *The Guardian*, June 23, 2022; Strike Map, [Twitter](#), December 22, 2022.

28 Karl Hansen, "[Rail Workers Are Fighting for All of Us](#)," *Tribune*, May 24, 2022.

29 University and College Union, "[Biggest ever university strike begins in fight over pay, pensions & conditions](#)," November 23, 2022.

The strike, organized by the University and College Union (UCU), took place on 24, 25, and 30 November 2022, and is the largest in the history of higher education. Similar strikes (method #106), walk-outs (method #51), and demonstrations (method #47) were also conducted by multiple unions in Belgium, Italy, and France to demand higher wages, an energy price freeze, and increased taxation on capital.³⁰

In Asia, intensification was seen in the people's growing tenacity against governments' and companies' attempts to limit worker rights and their freedom of expression. Trade unions in South Korea, for instance, held a large protest in Seoul to condemn their government's strike-breaking efforts. Coinciding with the end of the 10-day strike by truck drivers, the Korean Confederation of Trade Unions (KCTU) organized the demonstration to actively call out the government for ignoring the drivers' financial struggles and imposing oppressive back-to-work orders.³¹ Meanwhile, hundreds of gig workers and delivery riders across Hong Kong, Thailand, the Philippines, and Indonesia have also staged strikes -- in a manner in which it was carried out one after the other -- to sustain momentum across the region in the middle of platforms' refusal to rectify unfair pay and working conditions.³²

The region of Latin America also saw dedicated labor movements. Chile, home to the world's largest copper deposit, saw labor organization taking place among workers in its key economic sector. The Copper Worker Federation organized a strike in February against state-owned mining company Coldeco (method #106), where they protested against the closure of a copper foundry that they deemed arbitrary.³³ In Peru, high prices for fuel and fertilizer led to a nationwide strike by unions of farmers and truckers (method #100), who also called for freight transport to be made a public service to reduce costs.³⁴ In Argentina, truck drivers declared their outcry over fuel shortages and rising prices by setting up blockades in the port city of Rosario (method #172), which is a major gateway for exports.³⁵ Some workers in the region also took a stand for human rights, with over 200 academic workers participating in a boycott, divestment, and sanctions movement against the Israeli apartheid (methods #71 and #121). The movement calls for a cultural, academic, and political boycott of Israel until it acknowledges the rights of Palestinians and terminates its occupation.³⁶

Aside from worker's rights, 2022 has unfortunately seen the violation of the rights of women and gender minorities in different parts of the world. This triggered the increasing mobilization of **gender equality movements**. In comparison to the year 2019, with only 1 recorded major women's protest, Carnegie Endowment's Global Protest Tracker identified a total of 13 major campaigns in 2022.³⁷ In the Middle East, the women of Iran and Afghanistan have been

30 Euronews, "[Workers strike across Europe calling for higher wages amid rising inflation](#)," December 16, 2022.

31 NPR, "[Thousands Protest In South Korea In Support Of Truckers](#)," December 3, 2022.

32 Long Nguyen, "[Platform Workers on Strike in South Korea, Hong Kong and Thailand: a moment for building transnational labour solidarity](#)," Asian Labour Review, October 31, 2022.

33 Buenos Aires Times, "[Workers Strike At World's Largest Copper Producer, Chile's Coldeco](#)," June 22, 2022.

34 Marco Aquino, "[Peru Truckers, Farmers To Strike Over Fuel And Fertilizer Costs](#)," Reuters, June 27, 2022.

35 Maximilian Heath, "[Argentine trucker protest slashes grains delivery, threatening exports and milling](#)," Reuters, June 30, 2022.

36 Peoples Dispatch, "[Over 200 Academics From Across Latin America Call For Boycott Of Israel](#)," March 2, 2022.

37 Tess Lowery, "[13 Feminist Protests in 2022 Taught Me These 7 Things](#)," Global Citizen, December 21, 2022.

protesting against strict dress codes and the Taliban regimes' decision to limit their access to education, work, and the freedom of expression by flocking to the streets (methods #38 and #47) and maintaining their presence in institutions that were forcefully shut down (method #16). In Afghanistan, this was accompanied by chants to "Open the schools! Justice, justice!" and the famous slogan "Women, Life, Liberty!" that was also present in the neighboring country Iran (method #7).³⁸ Meanwhile, the protests in Iran, set off by the death of 22-year-old Mahsa Amini in the hands of the morality police, were associated with women taking their hijabs off (method #22), burning their attires (method #23), and later chopping their hair off (method #21).³⁹ Some would also deploy the tactic of knocking off clerics' turbans on the street (method #31).⁴⁰

In other parts of the world, an overarching theme of protests has been in regard to women's constitutional right to abortion. In the US, the overturning of *Roe v. Wade* -- a legal case from 1973 that granted US citizens the right to have an abortion -- propelled around 10,000 people from across the country to gather in the capital, hold protests in front of the White House (method #47), and glue themselves on the White House fence to ensure that their demands were heard (method #171).⁴¹ Massive demonstrations were also seen in Mexico, Venezuela, Chile, Peru, Bolivia, Colombia, El Salvador, Poland, Hungary, Croatia, and India. Triggered by deaths caused by the lack of access to safe and legal abortion,⁴² tens of thousand marched in the streets (method #38) while shouting and donning banners with messages along the line of "Master of my own body" and "Woman's toughest decision is not yours" (methods #7 and #8).⁴³

Solidarity to Power Up

As discussed above, the intensification of movements in 2022 varied in terms of their size, choice of methods of nonviolent actions, and persistence. Of course, the aforementioned was not an easy feat to achieve, seeing as it required the willingness, assurance, and active involvement of people in large quantities. This is where we highlight the importance of solidarity and framing throughout the process.

Across the different resistance movements, solidarity has played an important role in strengthening the people's perseverance through the sharing of leverage and momentum. In many cases, this took the form of support across the different segments of society within a country. In solidarity with the Afghan women who were banned from attending schools and universities, for example, male students and professors staged massive walk-outs from their classes (method #51).⁴⁴ Kabul professor Ismail Mashal took things one step further by tearing

38 France 24, "[Open the schools: Afghan women protest against Taliban reversal on education](#)," March 26, 2022.

39 Joshua Askew, "[Iran protests: What caused them? Are they different this time? Will the regime fall?](#)," Euronews, December 20, 2022.

40 Golnaz Esfandiari and Hamid Fatemi, "[In New Tactic, Young Iranian Protesters Knock Off Clerics' Turbans On The Street](#)," Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, November 11, 2022.

41 Holly Honderich, "[Roe v Wade: Thousands march to White House for abortion rights](#)," BBC News, July 9, 2022.

42 Weronika Strzyżyńska, "[Protests flare across Poland after death of young mother denied an abortion](#)," The Guardian, January 28, 2022.

43 AP News, "[Thousands rally in Croatia after woman denied abortion](#)," May 13, 2022.

44 The Siasat Daily, "[Afghanistan: Male students walkout in support of women banned from unis](#)," December 25, 2022.

up all his diplomas on national TV to emphasize how the country is no longer a “place for an education” (method #23). In Iran, the solidarity shown by male figures took place in the streets and even in international stadiums, where the Iranian soccer players refused to sing their national anthem during the FIFA 2022 World Cup (method #121).⁴⁵ Aside from reinforcing the issue’s importance and the movement’s legitimacy to the general public, the support shown by the more privileged segments of society had conceivably served as a form of shield for their lesser privileged and more vulnerable counterparts.

Table 1. Distributions of Solidarity

	Within-Country	Multi-Country
Single-Issue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Afghan men’s support towards their female counterparts • Iranian men’s support towards their female counterparts • Multi-sector strikes in the Americas, Europe, and Asia • Scientist, Academic, and Animal Rebellions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Afghan-Iranian solidarity • Afghan and Iranian solidarity protests across the world • American-Mexican reproductive justice movements’ transfer of knowledge
Cross-Issue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joint protests held by workers from the UAW and climate activists in the US • Joint protests held by feminist groups, labor movements, and climate activists against repressive laws in different countries (discussed in next section) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Congregation of climate activists, gender minorities, workers, youth, etc. in the COP27

Within-country solidarity was also shown by activists highlighting the intersections across issues and sectors in their country. In the United States, for instance, UAW workers who went on strike managed to highlight the interconnectedness of unfair working conditions with one’s vulnerability in the face of the climate crisis by donning shark suits and carrying out banners saying “The sea is rising, why isn’t my wage?” in demonstrations (methods #7, #8, and #47).⁴⁶ During the same strike, UAW workers also received support from students and other workers, including postal service workers who stopped delivering to UC campuses and construction workers who paused their work (method #107).⁴⁷ These, too, could fortify the importance and urgency of the championed issue as they were capable of displaying the large-scale loss and repercussions that would come if the movement’s demands were not met.

Solidarity amongst activists didn’t stop at the borders though in 2022. Championing similar issues, solidarity between Iranian and Afghan women had been particularly noteworthy. To secure each other’s momentum in the face of counter-resistance, activists in each country

⁴⁵ Patrick Smith, “Iran soccer team silent during national anthem at its first World Cup game,” CNBC News, November 21, 2022.

⁴⁶ Nikayla Jefferson, [Twitter](#), November 16, 2022.

⁴⁷ Summer Lin and Grace Toohey, “Nearly A Week Into UC Strike, Little Bargaining Progress, But Support For Workers Grows,” Los Angeles Times, November 17, 2022.

would constantly bring up the plight of their counterparts in the various forms of protest that they did -- take, for example, expressing their support via street arts (method #8) and chanting slogans such as "We are both fighting against a Taliban" and "From Kabul to Iran, say no to dictatorship!" in their respective demonstrations (method #7 and #47). By adopting the Persian language, both movements were also able to discreetly share strategies and insights, especially considering that the Afghan movement has been around for a longer time and has been able to persist in the face of the Taliban's past crackdowns.⁴⁸ The same spirit was seen in the Americas, where the women of Mexico had opened lines of communication with their US peers to talk about what worked and didn't work in their successful journey of getting the Supreme Court to regard the penalization of abortion as unconstitutional in 2021.⁴⁹

Another example of garnering strength from coalitions beyond nationalities was ultimately seen in the series of demonstrations held at COP27. By bringing together climate activists, gender minorities, indigenous communities, the youth, workers, and the people of the Global South whose voices were often unrepresented in mainstream discourses, the movement's constituents were able to empower each other and instill the fact that each of their journey towards climate and social justice is interlinked to one another. In addition to that, the feeling of empathy and security -- which one could argue is crucial in convincing individuals to embark on and intensify a resistance movement -- were also likely bolstered by the solidarity protests held in support of persecuted human rights defenders and environmental activists around the world irrespective of their backgrounds.⁵⁰

Other than that, the contribution of perception and framing to the intensification of a movement could also be seen within the labor movement. 2022 has shown us that more workforce sectors are realizing their power in industrial action. In the US, for instance, an increase in strikes was also by virtue of the unrecognized workers who are often seen as outsiders of society, namely those incarcerated. Prisoners in Alabama have been striking to demand improved working conditions and reforms to harsh sentencing laws and parole denials (method #102). The strike began on 26 September 2022, and involved prisoners at all 13 prisons in the Alabama Department of Corrections system refusing to work prison service jobs such as food service, laundry, and maintenance that they do not get paid for.⁵¹ That said, more people around the world should be concerned that prison labor may be used to undermine the wages and working conditions of workers in the broader economy, as businesses may be able to produce goods more cheaply by using prison labor rather than hiring workers from outside the prison.

Another is the debunking of the belief that some workers -- such as corporate employees, tech start-up workers, university lecturers, and academics -- are too "white-collar" or too "noble"

48 Belquis Ahmadi and Palwasha L. Kakar, "[Iran's Protests ... and the Afghan Sisters Next Door](#)," United States Institute of Peace, October 13, 2022.

49 Sia Nowrojee, "[Gender Equality in 2022: the Best, the Worst, the Most Surprising, and Most Ridiculous](#)," United Nations Foundation, December 16, 2022.

50 The Guardian, "[Show of solidarity and a T rex: day four at Cop27 - in pictures](#)," November 10, 2022.

51 Michael Sainato, "[Alabama prisoners strike over 'horrendous' Conditions](#)," The Guardian, October 6, 2022.

to be considered laborers. In 2022, some defied this view and chose to use nonviolent actions to improve their working conditions. This is especially notable in the University of California case, where thousands of academic laborers who went on strike from the schools in Berkeley, Los Angeles, and Davis were represented by the United Auto Workers (UAW) union normally associated with auto workers. Dennis Williams, the president of UAW, mentioned that as the automobile industry shifts to incorporate science and technology, college campuses have gradually become a key area for recruitment,⁵² thus showcasing solidarity and the value of experience in industrial disputes.⁵³ The union provides academics with support and expertise in areas such as job security, fair wages, and retirement. In return, membership dues help maintain financial resources.

Fighting Back the Setbacks

Alas, strong resistance movements were often indicated by the presence of counter-resistance. In 2022, this was presented in different forms: **vertical reprisals** from governments and companies that the movements were protesting against, as well as **horizontal friction** between the people. Vertical reprisals could be further broken down into direct and indirect approaches, with the latter being just as invasive.

In the past year, all three movements were no strangers to threats and repression by the government and/or the companies that they were working for. Within the labor movement, this took the form of penalties, even criminal sanctions, for striking workers, as demonstrated by the South Korean government towards the KCTU. To prevent the truck drivers from continuing their strike and further disrupting the country's supply chains, for example, the government would impose a penalty of up to three years in jail, which amounts to a fine of up to \$22,550.⁵⁴ On the other hand, both the gender equality and climate justice movements were often associated with threats in the form of direct violence and arrests. In Afghanistan, for instance, protesters have experienced being stalked, arrested, and beaten up by the police.⁵⁵ Iranians have furthermore been subjected to death sentences and executions.⁵⁶ Meanwhile, across Europe, dozens of climate activists were often detained by the police for their act of blocking oil terminals, roads, and runways.⁵⁷

The past year also saw a handful of governments passing regulations that err on the side of shrinking their respective civic space, which one could perceive as repression in a more indirect way. In April 2022, the UK House of Parliament adopted the Police, Crime, Sentencing,

52 Phoebe Wall Howard, "[UAW moves beyond auto industry to colleges, expands by nearly 70K members](#)," Detroit Free Press, February 19, 2022.

53 Phoebe Wall Howard, "[UAW moves beyond auto industry to colleges, expands by nearly 70K members](#)," Detroit Free Press, February 19, 2022.

54 Al Jazeera, "[South Korean Truck Drivers Vote To End Nationwide Strike](#)," December 9, 2022.

55 Human Rights Watch, "[Afghanistan: Women Protesters Detail Taliban Abuse](#)," October 20, 2022.

56 Human Rights Watch, "[Iran: Death Sentences Against Protesters](#)," December 13, 2022.

57 BBC, "[Just Stop Oil: Dozens of activists arrested over M25 protest](#)," November 7, 2022; Ruairi Casey, "[Climate activists: How states are cracking down on protests](#)," Deutsche Welle, October 12, 2022; Reuters, "[UK police arrest 83 as climate activists blockade oil terminals](#)," April 3, 2022.

and Courts Bill (PCSC) that strengthens the jurisdiction of the police, criminal justice, and sentencing legislation, as well as regulations that make it easier to target protests and the people's freedom of expression.⁵⁸ Likewise, Indonesia also passed its new criminal code in December, which makes expressions of opposition high risk. Citizens can now be jailed for up to three years for making comments about the president and vice president that the latter deem derogatory.⁵⁹ A punishment of imprisonment for up to six months is also applicable to those who organize marches and demonstrations capable of causing public disturbance without prior notification to the authorities.⁶⁰ In the US, bills that sanction disruptive demonstrations towards critical infrastructure were, too, imposed in a dozen states.⁶¹

It is interesting to note, however, that the grave and imminent danger of these laws has pushed a diverse bunch of affinity groups to come together and display their dismay. In March 2022, Cambridge saw members of Extinction Rebellion, labor unions, feminist group Sisters Uncut, and trans rights organizations convening in a series of demonstrations in the attempt to "Kill the Bill."⁶² In Indonesia, the end-of-the-year protest against the criminal code also witnessed cross-cause unity. Together with farmers' unions, 2,000 workers under eleven trade unions planned long marches and demonstrations in front of the Jakarta State Palace (methods #38 and #47).⁶³ Women activists, too, started camping in front of the palace with posters and banners condemning the regulation (methods #7, #8, and #16).⁶⁴

In spite of this, one should still be cognizant of the fact that solidarity is not always a given. Aside from vertical repression, this report also acknowledges the presence of horizontal opposition among the people themselves. Throughout the protests for dignified work, this took the form of strikebreakers who responded to companies' efforts of recruiting replacements and temporary workers in the middle of the ongoing strikes. When thousands of New York Times employees participated in a strike after negotiations for a new contract broke down, for example, reporters Peter Baker and Michael Shear opted out of participation and contributed to a dual byline to the Times.⁶⁵ Meanwhile, in climate protests, throwing soup and paint at artworks often garnered mixed reactions from the public; this generally entails criticisms and claims that the group's actions were unnecessary and too "radical."⁶⁶

Other times, grassroots opposition towards the movements were associated with right-wing forces. In the fight for safe abortion, opposition from fellow citizens presented itself as anti-abortion protests in numerous countries. In the US, this has been orchestrated and funded

58 BBC News, "What is the Police and Crime Bill and how will it change protests?" April 28, 2022.

59 Human Rights Watch, "Indonesia: New Criminal Code Disastrous for Rights," December 8, 2022.

60 CNN Indonesia, "KUHP: Demo Tanpa Pemberitahuan Penjara 6 Bulan atau Denda Rp10 Juta," January 4, 2022.

61 Nicholas Kusnetz, "Driven by Industry, More States Are Passing Tough Laws Aimed at Pipeline Protesters," Inside Climate News, April 12, 2021.

62 Carole Concha Bell, "How 'Kill the Bill' Protests Have Reawakened Solidarity," Tribune, April 10, 2021.

63 Dewi Elvia Muthiariny, "2,000 Workers to Protest New Criminal Code at State Palace," Tempo, December 9, 2022.

64 Dewi Elvia Muthiariny, "Alliance of Criminal Code Bill Reform Holds Protest as Govt Passes RKUHP," Tempo, December 6, 2022.

65 Keith J. Kelly and Ariel Zilber, "NY Times Staffers Walk Out — But Two Key Reporters Cross Picket Line," New York Post, December 8, 2022.

66 Sarah Manavis, "Just Stop Oil's paint and soup protests are a lot smarter than they look," I Newspaper, October 29, 2022.

by influential right-wing groups such as Susan B. Anthony Pro-Life America.⁶⁷ Across Europe, anti-abortion protests were frequently directed toward leftists and were marked with harassment and intimidation.⁶⁸ In Germany and the US, the fight for climate justice was, too, faced with rebuttals from corresponding right-wing groups; while the former often came head-to-head with climate change deniers from the far-right populist Alternative for Germany (AfD), movements in the latter country had to deal with threats of being taken to court by right-wing groups and corporate-aligned nonprofits.⁶⁹

Furthermore, tensions among the different movements could also arise. The same issue of high energy prices, for instance, could be perceived differently by the existing movements. While environmental groups would categorize said condition as a win (seeing as it increases the appeal of renewables to consumers and investors),⁷⁰ said prices are likely going to mobilize the labor movements due to the inflation that follows.

Although we don't have the capacity to offer definite solutions to the obstacles above, we believe one should not shy away from engaging with differences nonviolently and constructively. A possible way to do this is through holding teach-ins or protest meetings. Firstly, these approaches would allow citizens to address the overlaps -- or lack thereof -- of the existing movements' issues and stances. By doing so, they can brainstorm ways in which their movements could complement one another and even protect each other in the face of repression. Other than that, discussions on how to approach and dismantle their right-wing counterparts can also be of useful addition. After all, movements wouldn't be able to optimally benefit from international calls of solidarity if the citizens themselves are fragmented, and are unable to garner the participation of as many pillars of support as possible within the country.⁷¹

Secondly, said approaches can also be used to deal with the recently emerging debate on "radicality," where open discussions would allow constituents to strike a balance and unravel the pros and cons of choosing a certain method. On the one hand, one could make use of the platform to clarify that the usage of radical methods has successfully gotten people to talk about the issue. This might also yield the "radical flank effect," which helps portray the movement's more moderate group as less radical, thus increasing people's likelihood to join the overall movement albeit through the more moderate group.⁷² On the other hand, such a platform should also be used to garner inputs regarding what is seen as desirable and not desirable by the people in the long run, which is useful to build on a more all-encompassing and inclusive movement in the future.

67 Ellen Ioanes, "[Dobbs Didn't End The Anti-Abortion Movement](#)," VOX, January 21, 2022.

68 Ines Eisele, "[US-Style Anti-Abortion Protests Come To Europe](#)," Deutsche Welle, October 23, 2022.

69 Rebecca Leber, "[The SEC Did A Sensible Thing On Climate Change. A Right-Wing Campaign Is Trying To Kill It.](#)" VOX, June 21, 2022.

70 Catherine Clifford, "[How Higher And More Volatile Energy Prices Will Affect The Move To Clean Energy.](#)" CNBC, March 17, 2022.

71 Srdja Popovic, Slobodan Djinnovic, Andrej Milivojevic, Hardy Merriman, and Ivan Marovic, "[Pillars of Support](#)," ICNC, 2007.

72 Brent Simpson, Robb Willer, and Matthew Feinberg, "[Radical flanks of social movements can increase support for moderate factions.](#)" PNAS Nexus 1, no. 3 (2022).

Reforming the World, One Goal at a Time

With the people's commitment to fighting for their rights, 2022 is also a year in which a number of hard-fought victories were earned.

Within the gender equality movement, the persistence of the Colombian and Indian feminists has spurred their respective Supreme Courts to decriminalize abortion and safeguard the right to safe procedures within the first 24 weeks of pregnancy. In Spain, the movement's tenacity has also yielded the establishment of a sexual and reproductive health law for women across the country.⁷³ In addition to that, the Iranian struggle's unprecedented reach to the rest of the world is, too, worthy of being considered a victory on its own.

While there is still a long road ahead to achieving climate justice, wins in 2022 were projected in the ability of indigenous communities to regain ownership of their stolen lands. In the US, negotiations have successfully pushed state governments to return hundreds of acres of land back to the different tribes residing in California and New York State.⁷⁴ The Indigenous Ogiek people in Kenya have similarly secured a win in a court battle pertaining to reparations and the return of their ancestral land in the Mau Forest.⁷⁵ In Australia, success materialized in a different way; although the government had won an appeal against youth activists who demanded the protection of children from the effects of climate change in March,⁷⁶ citizens managed to regain their power by voting out the country's pro-coal coalition government in May.⁷⁷

After weeks of indefinite strikes committed by the South Korean drivers, victory presented itself as the approval of the demands of the union by the nation's transport ministry.⁷⁸ Other than that, the achievement of 2022's labor movements was also reflected in the proliferation of unions and their mobilization in different parts of the world. As suggested by historian Zoe Baker, workers who take part in strikes are not only acting in reference to the issue of industrial disputes at hand.⁷⁹ Instead, those workers are also simultaneously improving their skills and abilities through direct action, self-management, and adopting new motivations. In addition to achieving concessions, there is also a possibility that participating in nonviolent action can change their ways of perceiving, conceptualizing, and understanding the world, such as labor relations and political-economy writ large.

All in all, the year 2022 was indeed packed with different issues, mobilization efforts, as well as hardships. However, small progress is still progress, and the world would indisputably be worse off without the presence of those who have been tirelessly fighting for justice in the nooks and crannies of our lives.

73 Astha Rajvanshi, "6 Victories for Women's Rights in 2022," TIME, December 21, 2022.

74 BBC News, "500 acres of California forestland returned to indigenous tribes," January 27, 2022.

75 Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, "Kenya: UN expert hails historic ruling awarding reparations to Ogiek indigenous peoples," July 18, 2022.

76 BBC News, "Australia Climate Change: Court Overturns Teenagers' Case Against Minister," March 15, 2022.

77 Alice Klein, "Australia Votes For Stronger Climate Action In 'Greenslide' Election," New Scientist, May 23, 2022.

78 Peoples Dispatch, "Truckers' strike in South Korea ends in victory as government agrees to demands," June 15, 2022.

79 Zoe Baker, "Means and Ends: The Anarchist Critique of Seizing State Power," Black Rose Anarchist Federation, May 22, 2019.



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Fighting a War Without Weapons: Nonviolent Civilian Defense and Civil Resistance in Response to the Russian Invasion of Ukraine

Daniel Petz

Ukrainians' successful resistance to Russia's unprovoked full-scale invasion of Ukraine has shown us that defense is not only a matter of military resistance. The fact that Ukraine has defied Russia has also much to do with nonviolent actions and resistance done by ordinary, civilian Ukrainian citizens. Such actions, following what has conceptually been discussed as nonviolent civilian defense and civil resistance thus deserve more of our attention and study.

On February 24, 2022 Russia started an unprovoked full-scale invasion of Ukraine, which was a massive escalation following the 8-year Russian-fueled separatist conflict in Eastern Ukraine and the illegal annexation of Crimea by Russia in 2014. While the initial assault on Ukraine's capital faltered, Russia has occupied significant parts in the south and east of Ukraine and recently illegally annexed several Ukrainian provinces. Ukraine, supported by Western military aid, has after Russia's initial assault managed to liberate several of its territories. Still, while military fortunes seem to have shifted, the war is ongoing and seems at current far from any resolution.

The focus of media attention about the war has largely been on military and diplomatic developments surrounding the conflict, but maybe less noticed by media and observers, there have also been significant instances of nonviolent civilian defense and civil resistance influencing the course of the invasion. This article aims to provide an overview of some of the main developments, using the lens of nonviolent action. It argues that nonviolent civil resistance and civilian defense have had an important impact in shaping the tides of the conflict so far and that nonviolent action can and should be seen as a significant part of any strategy in dealing with military invasions. It does not question Ukraine's right to military self-defense, but claims that more systematic preparation in terms of nonviolent defense might have paid additional dividends in countering Russia's invasion.

To allow for a systematic discussion of the employment of nonviolent tactics throughout the invasion, this article looks at nonviolent action from a number of vantage points. First it provides a brief introduction to the concept of nonviolent defense and through that prism looks at the use of nonviolent action by Ukrainians and the Ukrainian state in both occupied and non-occupied territories. This includes looking at how nonviolence was employed in the information space to shape narratives and interpretations about the progress of the conflict. This is followed by a discussion of nonviolent resistance against the war outside of Ukraine, including anti-war civil resistance in Russia. This includes discussion on a topic that is often overlooked in nonviolence literature, which are sanctions. The article closes by assessing the effectiveness of Ukrainian's civil resistance against the occupation based on Burrowes' civilian defense paradigm.

Nonviolent defense and civil resistance in Ukraine

A number of scholars of nonviolence have advocated that military means of defense run counter to reaching the ideal of positive peace and that nonviolent forms of defense could provide a viable alternative to militarized security strategies. Two prominent examples are Sharp's conception of civilian defense (1970) and Burrowes' seminal work on nonviolent defense (1996). Sharp argues that "[Civilian-based defense] may prove to be a superior way to provide national security - safety from attack - by dissuading and deterring potential attackers, and, if need be, waging effective defense against them."¹ While both are in line with the theory of nonviolence, Sharp develops a more pragmatic approach of civilian-based defense, whereas Burrowes' Gandhian approach is deeply grounded in a strong ideological commitment to nonviolence and the broader aim to develop just societies that fulfill populations' basic needs.

Invading and occupying armies have been effectively resisted through nonviolent means on many occasions throughout (recent) history and both authors draw strongly on historical examples, including from anti-colonial struggles. Even against ruthless regimes, such as Nazi Germany, Sharp (1973) shows that nonviolent resistance in Denmark has been able to save

¹ Gene Sharp, *National Security Through Civilian-based Defense* (Omaha: Association for Transarmament Studies, 1970).

most Danish Jews from perishing in the Holocaust as Danish society resisted Nazi policies of deportation.² Other examples range from the Indian independence struggle, to resistance to the Soviet occupation of Czechoslovakia in 1968, the Tibetan resistance to Chinese occupation, as well as the Palestinian Intifada.³

Given that nonviolent defense seems not to have played any major deterrent factor in Russia's invasion, as the Ukrainian leadership's attempts to implement civilian defense since 2014 having according to Bartowski been "deeply flawed",⁴ I'm more interested in nonviolent defense's potential to deal with Russia's aggression, invasion and occupation. While for this article we don't have the space to dig into Russia's motivations for starting the war – particularly given that Vladimir Putin and the Russian leadership have provided a shifting rationale of both justifications and war aims throughout the conflict, Burrowes argues that generally "War is the result of military aggression organized by state elites in defense of their imperial interests and structures of exploitation".⁵ Burrowes' assessment, in the case of Russia's aggression seems fitting, given that the renowned historian Timothy Snyder, has called Russia's invasion a colonial war.⁶

According to Burrowes war thus is instigated by national elites' interests. Nonviolent defense then, according to Burrowes, has two aims. First, to consolidate the power and the will of the defending population to resist aggression. Second, to develop a counteroffensive that aims to "alter the will of the opponent elite to conduct the aggression – in favor of their participation in a problem-solving process that will create the conditions necessary to satisfy human needs".⁷ The counteroffensive should strategically target the opponent's center of gravity, which Burrowes argues are the key social groups whose support is necessary for the opponent elite to conduct and sustain the aggression.⁸

Ukraine and its allies have of course chosen to oppose the Russian invasion in the first place through conventional military resistance, so we cannot analyze the conflict purely through the lens of nonviolent defense. Nevertheless, nonviolent resistance strategies, as I would argue, have played an important role in both shaping the will and effectiveness of Ukrainian resistance, have played an important signaling role to motivate international support for Ukraine's cause and are having an important ongoing impact on Russian centers of gravity. We can thus conceptualize Ukraine's defense as a hybrid system between both armed and nonviolent resistance.

2 Gavin Musynske, "Danish citizens resist the Nazis, 1940-1945," Global Nonviolent Action Database, December 4, 2009.

3 Gene Sharp, *The Politics of Nonviolent Action. Part 2: The Methods of Nonviolent Action* (Bedford: Porter Sargent Publishing, 1973).; For a recent discussion of some historical examples linked to the Ukraine conflict see George Lakey, "[Ukraine doesn't need to match Russia's military might to defend against invasion](#)," *Waging Nonviolence*, February 25, 2022.

4 Maciej Bartkowski, "Nonviolent Civilian Defense to Counter Russian Hybrid Warfare," *Johns Hopkins University, Center for Advanced Governmental Studies*, (2015): 15.

5 Robert J. Burrowes, *The Strategy of Nonviolent Defense: A Gandhian Approach* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1996).

6 Timothy Snyder, "[The War in Ukraine Is a Colonial War](#)," *The New Yorker*, April 28, 2022.

7 Robert J. Burrowes, *The Strategy of Nonviolent Defense: A Gandhian Approach* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1996).

8 Robert J. Burrowes, *The Strategy of Nonviolent Defense: A Gandhian Approach* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1996).

Any analysis of civil resistance in Ukraine has to acknowledge the longstanding tradition of nonviolent civil resistance in Ukrainian history.⁹ Within the last two decades, Ukraine has seen two nonviolent revolutions, the Orange Revolution in 2004/5 and the Euromaidan in 2013/2014.¹⁰ The pro-Western Euromaidan revolution can be seen as a direct precursor to Russia's annexation of Crimea in 2014 as Russia felt its political influence in Ukraine diminish and through the annexation attempted to weaken the Ukrainian state.¹¹ Daza argues that the Euromaidan revolution led to increased civil society organization, including anti-corruption initiatives.¹² Once Russia invaded, these civil society networks became active and many organized to support the war effort, protect civilians and to oppose the occupation. Most of the mobilization seems to have been spontaneously, based on informal networks and trusting relationships.¹³

While media and analysts have picked up a wide number of nonviolent actions, Daza has provided a first detailed analysis on nonviolent resistance within the first half of 2022 (starting from February 24) in response to the full-scale Russian invasion. He finds documentation for 235 nonviolent actions throughout that period and using Michal Beer's methodological framework categorizes that 148 of these actions fall into the category of protest, 51 actions in the category of non-cooperation and 36 actions in the category of nonviolent intervention.¹⁴ Geographically, the actions were distributed as following: 20 actions in the northern regions of the country (Chernihiv, Sumy and Kyiv); 191 actions in the south (Kherson, Zaporizhia and Odessa); 9 actions in the east (Kharkiv, Luhansk, Donetsk); 9 actions in the west (Lviv, Chernivtsi, Rivne), and 6 actions at the state level or in more than one region and that most nonviolent actions were organized locally without national coordination.¹⁵

He also breaks down nonviolent actions by month. In February, 17 actions were organized, most of them to hinder Russian advances, such as physical interpositioning of citizens in front of military vehicles and tanks (14 actions) (method #171), the changing of street signs to confuse occupying troops (method #130), the construction of obstacles and barricades to stop Russian advances (method #172), etc. While these actions continued in March, among the 191 actions recorded during that month, the majority (91) were demonstrations (method

9 Felip Daza, "Ukrainian Nonviolent Civil Resistance in the Face of War: Analysis of trends, impacts and challenges of nonviolent action in Ukraine between February and June 2022," *ICIP & Novact.*, (2022): 11-12. The author highlights that there were significant acts of Ukrainian civil resistance during both the Tsarist and Soviet areas.

10 For analysis of the Euromaidan revolution, see, for example, David R. Maples and Frederick V. Mills, *Ukraine's Euromaidan: Analyses of a Civil Revolution* (Stuttgart: Ibidem Press, 2015).

11 Russia also staged "non-violent" protests in separatist regions to justify its military involvement, particularly in the Eastern regions of Donbas and Luhansk to bestow those actions "a façade of grassroots legitimacy." Bartowski, M. (2015), p. 11. Maciej Bartkowski, "Nonviolent Civilian Defense to Counter Russian Hybrid Warfare," Johns Hopkins University, Center for Advanced Governmental Studies, (2015): 11. Bartowski sees this civic mobilization as part of Russia's strategy of hybrid warfare. Several analysts of the invasion argue that one reason for the invasion was that Putin felt his autocratic regime threatened by a flourishing Ukrainian democracy. See, for example, Robert Person and Michael McFaul, "[What Putin Fears Most](#)," *Journal of Democracy*, February 22, 2022.

12 Felip Daza, "Ukrainian Nonviolent Civil Resistance in the Face of War: Analysis of trends, impacts and challenges of nonviolent action in Ukraine between February and June 2022," *ICIP & Novact.*, (2022).

13 Felip Daza, "Ukrainian Nonviolent Civil Resistance in the Face of War: Analysis of trends, impacts and challenges of nonviolent action in Ukraine between February and June 2022," *ICIP & Novact.*, (2022): 15.

14 Felip Daza, "Ukrainian Nonviolent Civil Resistance in the Face of War: Analysis of trends, impacts and challenges of nonviolent action in Ukraine between February and June 2022," *ICIP & Novact.*, (2022): 16.

15 Felip Daza, "Ukrainian Nonviolent Civil Resistance in the Face of War: Analysis of trends, impacts and challenges of nonviolent action in Ukraine between February and June 2022," *ICIP & Novact.*, (2022): 16.

#47) and public rallies (method #38) where flags and symbols of the country were displayed (method #18) to demonstrate the rejection of the invasion and to claim Ukrainian nationality.¹⁶ April saw a significant drop in nonviolent actions due to the withdrawal of Russian troops from the North and the strengthening of repression in occupied areas, including arbitrary arrests, kidnappings and force disappearances. Activists removed Russian flags in various cities, organized evacuation of civilians and documented war crimes. May (35 actions) saw the most action in the Southern regions around Kherson and due to repression, resistance went more clandestine, through displays of graffiti (method #8), hanging yellow and blue ribbons (method #18) and distribution of leaflets (method #9). June saw a significant number of methods of non-cooperation (15 of 29), including civil servants refusing to collaborate with occupiers. For example, school principals resigned (method #113), teachers refused to teach Russian curriculum (method #115), mayors and local administration workers resigned or abandoned their physical jobs, while going on to serve the public (method #145),¹⁷ medical professionals and workers refusing to pay taxes as well as refusal to contribute to public works (method #87).¹⁸ Ukrainian citizens in occupied areas have also provided important intelligence to the Ukrainian military and civilian authorities throughout the conflict. Nonviolent civilian protection has also been practiced in many instances, with activists helping to find safe routes to deliver relief goods and evacuate civilians.

Another area where civil resistance has played an important role was in framing the conflict to both internal and international audiences in the media and social media sphere. One set of iconic images that will remain of the early stages of the conflict is Ukrainian tractors towing Russian tanks and other military equipment. Ukrainians have been very skillful in shaping the information space, and with it the narrative about the war, by using memes, humor, subversion and framing of language (methods #7, #8 & #35). It is of course difficult to assess how much of that informational battle has been shaped bottom-up or top-down. Nevertheless, while Russia seems to rely more heavily aside on its state-owned and private information channels such as TV and news channels on “natural” and “cultivated” allies on the political right, Ukrainians have been more adept in applying social media, particularly when it comes to shaping opinions in the West. Given that at the beginning of the invasion, most observers gave Ukraine little chance to withstand the attack, the communication of the determination of Ukrainians to defend their country and to showing their successes in doing so have provided moral support within Ukraine as well as galvanized a reevaluation of the situation by Ukraine’s Western allies and their populations.

16 Felip Daza, “Ukrainian Nonviolent Civil Resistance in the Face of War: Analysis of trends, impacts and challenges of nonviolent action in Ukraine between February and June 2022,” *ICIP & Novact.*, (2022): 17.

17 According to Daza, the central government has instructed local administrations not to cooperate with the military occupation. Felip Daza, “Ukrainian Nonviolent Civil Resistance in the Face of War: Analysis of trends, impacts and challenges of nonviolent action in Ukraine between February and June 2022,” *ICIP & Novact.*, (2022): 21.

18 Felip Daza, “Ukrainian Nonviolent Civil Resistance in the Face of War: Analysis of trends, impacts and challenges of nonviolent action in Ukraine between February and June 2022,” *ICIP & Novact.*, (2022): 17.

Nonviolent action outside of Ukraine

Nonviolent resistance to Russia's invasion has not only taken place in Ukraine. Many countries saw marches (method #38) and demonstrations (method #47) of solidarity with Ukraine, with at least 100,000 people taking to the streets in Berlin, Germany and over 30,000 in Tallinn, Estonia.¹⁹ There were a number of actions directed against symbols of Russia abroad, in particular against embassies and consulates. The Russian ambassador to Poland was doused with red paint (method #26).²⁰ Several embassy and consulate buildings were targeted by protesters, spraying anti-war messages through graffiti (method #8), by projecting messages on the buildings and by numerous protests (method #7).²¹ In April, Polish activists developed a "Free Ukraine Gallery" in front of the Russian embassy in Warsaw, encouraging people to deposit household items such as sinks and toilets to protest the alleged looting and pillaging by Russian troops in Ukraine (method #21).²² Governments also changed street names close to Russian embassies and consulates to give them pro-Ukrainian names. For example, Kraków has named an area outside the Russian consulate as "Free Ukraine Square" (method #27).²³ After Russia illegally annexed parts of Ukraine in October, numerous actions took place to protest this step. In Turku, Finland, for example, two activists annexed the parking spot of a Russian diplomat by painting it in the colors of Ukraine (method #26).²⁴ Czech internet users created memes mocking the Russian annexation referenda by claiming to support the Czech annexation of Kaliningrad, a Russian exclave between Lithuania and Poland, with some even creating a mock petition to support the call for annexation and 200 protesting at the Russian embassy in Prague to that purpose (method #35 & #47).²⁵ Hackers and net activists have also supported Ukraine by hacking Russian targets and supporting cyber security within Ukraine. 300,000 activists signed up for the "IT Army of Ukraine" in March, pledging to support Ukraine in the virtual space. Activities range from disrupting Russian websites and online activities linked to the war (method #193), to providing access to information about the reality of the war within the heavily censored Russian media environment (method #180).²⁶

While often overlooked when discussing nonviolent action, Sharp argues that sanctions are part of nonviolent methods. While Russia's invasion of Crimea and support for Eastern secessionists have already led to some sanctions from 2014, the invasion has triggered multiple rounds of sanctions from the United States, EU and other countries. These sanctions target government officials and oligarchs that are part of and/or close to Putin and the Russian leadership. Assets of a range of people were seized, including yachts, villas and financial assets

19 Andreas Illmer, "Protests, donations and solidarity grow across Europe," Deutsche Welle, February 27, 2022.

20 Notes from Poland, "Russian ambassador doused with red paint at Soviet cemetery in Warsaw," March 9, 2022.

21 Notes from Poland, "Polish cities rename streets outside Russian consulates in honour of Ukraine," July 22, 2022.

22 Andrei Grigorev, "Polish Anti-War Activists Get Creative in Russian Embassy Protest," Radio Free Europe, April 14, 2022.

23 See, for example, Maya Yang, "Russia's consulate in New York vandalized in apparent protest," The Guardian, September 30, 2022.

24 Hannah McDonald, "Russian diplomat's parking space is 'annexed' outside embassy in Finland after activists 'held a two-man referendum,'" Mail Online, October 14, 2022.

25 Alexandra Brzozowski, "The Brief – The beauty of annexing Kaliningrad," Euractiv, October 5, 2022.

26 Chris Stokel-Walker and Dan Milmo, "It's the right thing to do: the 300,000 volunteer hackers coming together to fight Russia," The Guardian, March 15, 2022.

(method #187).²⁷ Russian billionaire Roman Abramovich had to sell his pet project, Chelsea football club, with the proceeds frozen by the UK government and reportedly then being used to support Ukrainian war victims.²⁸ Many countries also suspended flights from Russia, with the EU suspending its airspace for Russian flights.²⁹ Western embassies also stopped or limited the issuance of visas for Russians. Other sanctions are directed at Russia's economy, such as the freezing of the controversial North Stream pipeline project, export controls for technology and parts that can be used in weapons manufacturing, import bans for Russian oil, etc (method #96).³⁰ Russia, in part, has played the oil and food card trying to pressure international public opinion by forcing raising energy prices (gas and oil) and food prices (by blocking Ukrainian grain exports). A range of other sanctions, such as against Russian athletes and sports teams, have also been put in place (method #56).³¹ Russia was also expelled from a number of international organizations (method #157),³² for example, it was expelled from the Council of Europe in March and withdrew from others, such as the World Trade Organization and the World Health Organization (method #156).³³ According to analysts, the sanctions have had significant impacts on the Russian economy, with Russia's GDP projected to contract by at least 5,5 percent in 2022. Russia's trade has also significantly contracted and inflation could reach up to 22 percent in 2022.³⁴

The invasion has also not gone unopposed in Russia. Given that the Russian government has become very repressive – exemplified with the early passing of a law that made calling the invasion a war a criminal act – many Russians have been brave in voicing opposition to the invasion. There were several rallies and marches (method #38) against the war at the beginning of the conflict.³⁵ A number of celebrities, academics, businesspeople and oligarchs have publicly voiced their concerns and opposition to the war, including the viral nonviolent protest by TV Channel One editor Marina Ovsyannikova who showed her opposition to the invasion by walking behind a news anchor while holding a sign reading “No War” and telling viewers they were being lied to (method #7, #8 & #177).³⁶ Research by Reuters showed that a significant

27 See, for example, Alexandra Brzozowski, “[EU freezes Russian assets worth €13.8 billion, but struggles to move towards seizure.](#)” Euractive, July 12, 2022.; Masood Farivar, “[US-Backed Task Force Seizes More Than \\$30B of Russian Oligarch Assets.](#)” VOA News, June 29, 2022.

28 Jacob Steinberg, “[Chelsea target Koundé and Gvardiol after government clears takeover.](#)” The Guardian, May 25, 2022.

29 BBC News, “[Ukraine invasion: EU shuts airspace to Russian planes.](#)” February 27, 2022.

30 Sarah Marsh and Madeline Chambers, “[Germany freezes Nord Stream 2 gas project as Ukraine crisis deepens.](#)” Reuters, February 22, 2022.

31 BBC News, “[What are the sanctions on Russia and are they hurting its economy?](#)” September 30, 2022.

32 Council of Europe, “[Council of Europe suspends Russia's rights of representation.](#)” February 25, 2022.

33 Sarah Anne Aarup and Ashleigh Furlong, “[Russia takes first steps to withdraw from WTO, WHO.](#)” Politico, March 18, 2022.

34 European Council, “[Infographic - Impact of sanctions on the Russian economy.](#)” October 31, 2022.

35 Reports show that nearly 6,000 persons were detained in protests in the first two weeks after the start of the invasion. Vasco Cotovio, “[Nearly 6,000 detained across Russia as anti-war protests enter fourth day, monitoring site says.](#)” CNN International, February 27, 2022.

36 Bill Chappell, “[A Russian who protested the war on live TV refused to retract her statement in court.](#)” NPR, March 15, 2022.

and rising percentage of protesters arrested were women.³⁷ This high percentage of women protesters might be linked to many young men having been either drafted, having fled the country or being afraid to be drafted if they get arrested during protests, but there might also be other factors in play. As the research highlights, female protesters faced the threat of sexual violence and other forms of mistreatment during detention.

There were also a series of sabotage acts against recruitment centers, military installations and war-related infrastructure in many parts of Russia. Some sources claim that up to 50 conscription centers were attacked in the weeks after the partial mobilization was announced.³⁸ Largely, many Russians have voted with their feet. Already during the first months of the occupation, more than 300,000 Russians left the country (method #139), which consisted of mostly young people and professionals from the middle class. This was compounded after Putin declared a partial mobilization in September, which led to between 200,000 and 700,000 Russian men fleeing the country.³⁹ The partial mobilization also led to renewed protests, with more than 2000 persons arrested during protests in September. There were also reports that protesters were forcibly recruited after they were arrested during protests.⁴⁰ Given that Russia's military is disproportionately relying on citizens from ethnic minorities, there were series of protests in those areas.⁴¹

Ukraine's resistance through the lens of nonviolent defense

Having looked at numerous examples of nonviolent resistance against the Russian invasion, both inside of Ukraine and outside, let me try to analyze the effectiveness of the resistance through a civilian defense lens. As noted above, Burrowes argued that nonviolent defense needs to fulfill two purposes, one, to consolidate the power and the will of the attacked population to resist, two, to organize a nonviolent counteroffensive that alters the will of the opponent elite to conduct the aggression. Burrowes argues that the counteroffensive should target a number of actors: 1) the opponent elite's troops, 2) the opponent elite's domestic constituency, 3) the domestic constituency of allied elites.⁴² Regarding the first purpose, we can likely argue that civil resistance has contributed to strengthening Ukrainians' resolve to oppose Russia's invasion. Actions have signaled internal unity, resolve to fight the invasion and, particularly in occupied areas, reminded people that people are not willing to accept the occupation. Nonviolent actions outside Ukraine also showed Ukrainians that they don't stand alone and

37 Lena Masri and Charlie Szymanski, "[Russian women pay the price in protests against Putin's war](#)," Reuters, October 17, 2022.

38 Some of the attacks involved arson, property damage and physical violence, thus cannot be classified as nonviolent actions. Olya Romashova, "[I won't go and kill my brothers!': Russians set fire to draft centres](#)," Open Democracy, September 29, 2022. Agence France-Presse, "[Is Ukraine Conducting a Sabotage Campaign Inside Russia?](#)," VOA News, May 8, 2022.

39 Georgi Katchev, Evan Gershkovich, and Yuliya Chernova, "[Fleeing Putin, Thousands of Educated Russians Are Moving Abroad](#)," The Wall Street Journal, April 10, 2022. Reuters, "[Factbox: Where have Russians been fleeing to since mobilisation began?](#)," October 6, 2022.

40 Christina Lu, "[Russians Protest Putin's Conscription](#)," Foreign Policy, September 26, 2022. Josh Pennington and Jessie Yeung, "[Protests erupt in Russia's Dagestan region as minorities say they are being targeted by Putin's mobilization orders](#)," CNN News, September 26, 2022.

41 Mary Ilyushina, "[Anger flares as Russia mobilization hits minority regions and protesters](#)," *The Washington Post*, September 23, 2022.

42 Robert J. Burrowes, *The Strategy of Nonviolent Defense: A Gandhian Approach* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1996).

that there is widespread solidarity for their struggle. Daza also highlights important impacts of nonviolent resistance on keeping morale high, strengthening community resilience and providing important civilian protection functions.⁴³

In terms of the second purpose, nonviolent action clearly has had mixed success so far, given that the war is still ongoing and Russia still occupies significant parts of Ukraine. Nevertheless, I would argue that nonviolent actions have made important contributions to the current, much more positive situation for Ukraine (as compared to the early months of the conflict). While civilians standing in front of tanks did not stop the invasion forces, they clearly showed Russian troops that they were not welcomed in Ukraine. Given that many Russian soldiers had been told that the invasion would be a cakewalk and that they would be warmly welcomed by the Ukrainian population once the “corrupted” elites were removed, these actions made the opposite abundantly clear. Similarly protests and noncooperation in occupied areas show the occupiers that they are not welcomed. These actions also push the occupier to expand more resources to police the occupied territory, which puts additional strain on the occupier. Harsh repression, as we have seen, has a tendency (through moral and/or political jiu-jitsu) to backfire. The documented atrocities, many of which are very likely war crimes, which Russian troops committed in occupied areas have led to wide-spread condemnations and war-crimes investigation, further weakening any Russian claims of moral righteousness.⁴⁴ There have also been many reports of desertions by Russian troops, and while the impact of nonviolent resistance on those dissertations is not measurable, it is likely that nonviolent resistance has contributed to the diminishing motivation of Russian troops to fight.⁴⁵

In terms of the opponent’s domestic constituency, nonviolent resistance has also had some impacts. While public opinion information from Russia is not to be trusted, there seems to be indications that parts of the middle classes and elites have grown wearier throughout the conflict. This can be simply argued by looking at how many Russians decided to vote with their feet and the numerous examples of civil resistance within Russia against the invasion, conscription, etc. Given that the Russian regime occupies much of the domestic information space, it is difficult for many Russians to grapple with the full reality of the conflict on the ground and airways are often filled with genocidal propaganda.⁴⁶ One question is, of course, whether it is principally the invasion or only the lack of success that is problematic for the domestic audience. Overall, it is likely that several pillars of support for Putin’s regime have been weakened since the beginning of the conflict, not the least because of the impacts of domestic and international nonviolent resistance action, including a comprehensive sanctions regime.

43 Felip Daza, “Ukrainian Nonviolent Civil Resistance in the Face of War: Analysis of trends, impacts and challenges of nonviolent action in Ukraine between February and June 2022,” *ICIP & Novact.*, (2022): 27.

44 Recent evidence shows that at least in Bucha there have been systematic attempts by Russian authorities to identify and arrest, deport, torture and/or execute people that were potential threats to the occupation. Erika Kinetz, Oleksandr Stashevskiy, and Vasilisa Stepanenko, “[How soldiers ran an ‘cleansing’ operation in Bucha.](#)” AP News, November 3, 2022.

45 Russia even changed the country’s criminal code in light of frequent desertions to equate desertion with the notion of treason with penalties of up to 20 years in prison. Felip Daza, “Ukrainian Nonviolent Civil Resistance in the Face of War: Analysis of trends, impacts and challenges of nonviolent action in Ukraine between February and June 2022,” *ICIP & Novact.*, (2022): 27.

46 Putin has throughout the conflict engaged in genocidal rhetoric, which has been echoed by many Russian media. For discussion if Russia’s invasion has genocidal features, see for example, Peter Dickinson, “[Vladimir Putin’s Ukrainian Genocide: Nobody can claim they did not know.](#)” The Atlantic Council, December 1, 2022.

The third category of Burrowes' counteroffensive -- which targets the allies of the opponent's elites -- is problematic, given that most of Putin and Russia's allies such as China, Syria and Iran are themselves dictatorships. So, nonviolent actions are difficult in those countries, where repression is strong and populations are shielded from unbiased information. I would argue the more important category of nonviolent actions has been to garner support for Ukraine's cause among its allies, given that most of them are democratic countries and public opinion is important politically. While few analysts gave Ukraine a fighting chance, the show of courage by ordinary Ukrainians fighting both nonviolently and violently have brought strong commitments of support for Ukraine. Even through Russia's tactics to wage the conflict via energy to contain Western support, which has led to high inflation and economic hardships for many people, particularly in Europe, public opinion has remained largely sympathetic to Ukraine's cause and, if anything, international support -- particularly in the military sphere -- has grown ever more steadfast.

Burrowes makes a strong claim that nonviolent defense needs significant preparation. Aside from analysis about the opponent, his power structures and weaknesses, it requires training in nonviolent theory and practice, including tactics and methods. As several analysts have hinted⁴⁷ and the largely uncoordinated application of nonviolent resistance within Ukraine seems to show, there would certainly have been opportunities for Ukrainian governments to more actively pursue a strategy of nonviolent defense or at least a hybrid strategy, which might have resulted in even more effective nonviolent resistance to the Russian invasion. Bartowski highlighted that regional neighbor Lithuania, for example, has considered the value of civilian-based defense. Facing threats of Russian hybrid warfare, in a 2015 defense manual, it argued for civilian defense, largely based on a Sharpian model as another way for citizens to resist invasion (and in addition to military resistance).⁴⁸

This article has, I hope, made the case of the importance of nonviolent defense strategies as -- at a minimum -- being a complimentary component for fighting against invasion and occupation. The books and articles about this important topic have picked up a little dust since the end of the Cold War, as it seems that countries invading their neighbors might be a thing of the bloody past, but again, history has proven us wrong. Given social media, globalization and other developments in the last decades, some renewed scholarship on civilian defense, including the lessons learned from Ukraine, would be a fruitful endeavor. The full history of Ukraine's nonviolent resistance can of course only be written in full detail once the conflict is over and there is access to all occupied areas, as it is likely that there were many more examples of nonviolent resistance that we simply don't know about at this point. Until then, I predict, we will still see many important nonviolent actions that will continuously shape the course of this conflict.

47 Felip Daza, "Ukrainian Nonviolent Civil Resistance in the Face of War: Analysis of trends, impacts and challenges of nonviolent action in Ukraine between February and June 2022," *ICIP & Novact*, (2022): 16., Maciej Bartkowski, "Nonviolent Civilian Defense to Counter Russian Hybrid Warfare," Johns Hopkins University, Center for Advanced Governmental Studies, (2015).

48 Maciej Bartkowski, "Nonviolent Civilian Defense to Counter Russian Hybrid Warfare," Johns Hopkins University, Center for Advanced Governmental Studies, (2015): 19.

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