

# STOP THE CRACKDOWN: PROTECT STUDENT POWER TOOLKIT

## OVERVIEW

Amnesty International USA and partners are working to protect the rights of students whose rights to express themselves, assemble, and associate are under threat. Our campaign mobilizes student-led action, global solidarity and policy pressure to challenge abuses by government and university officials in crackdowns that restrict human rights activism. These attacks violate not only the right to peaceful protest and right to dissent, but also the rights to education, privacy, non-discrimination, academic freedom and participation in public life. We are especially concerned with the targeting of immigrant, international and marginalized students.

We've seen a radical escalation of attacks on human rights, specifically targeting students on and off campuses, shrinking civic space, silenced students, peaceful protestors punished, and surveillance tools tracking student activism. One of the ways in which the Trump administration aims to silence human rights activism is by intimidating and threatening campus communities throughout the U.S. We've seen this Administration detain and revoke the visas of student organizers and activists, digitally surveil them, and call on state and local officials to crack down on peaceful protestors. Additionally, some colleges have capitulated to the administration. They have curtailed freedom of expression and peaceful protest, suspended or expelled students, censored speech, and canceled events. Urgent action and global solidarity are needed to defend and protect the rights of student protestors.

This campaign is a direct response to these violations, and a powerful call to reclaim campuses as a space for empowerment, not oppression. Amnesty International USA seeks to:

- Exert policy pressure on federal and university officials to halt rights violations
- Push for institutional protections on campuses
- Build a student-led movement supported by broader and international solidarity
- Restore the revoked visas and legal status of 1,200–4,000 foreign-born students
- Push universities to adopt a Firewall for Freedom Resolution
- Urge members of Congress to strengthen their oversight and regulatory mechanisms to ensure that tech companies are not contributing to human rights violations
- Respond to ongoing attacks on human rights on campus

This toolkit provides information and guidance for Amnesty International members and supporters to take action. We hope you join us!

## HUMAN RIGHTS UNDER THREAT

**Non-Discrimination and Equal Treatment:** “Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, color, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status. Furthermore, no distinction shall be made on the basis of the political, jurisdictional or international status of the country or territory to which a person belongs, whether it be independent, trust, non-self-governing or under any other limitation of sovereignty.” *Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) Article 2.*

**Freedom of Expression:** “Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.” *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights Article (ICCPR) Article 19.*

“Everyone shall have the right to hold opinions without interference. *ICCPR – Article 19.*

**Freedom of Assembly and Association (Protest)** “Everyone has the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association. No one may be compelled to belong to an association.” *UDHR – Article 20.*

“The right of peaceful assembly shall be recognized. No restrictions may be placed on the exercise of this right other than those imposed in conformity with the law and which are necessary in a democratic society in the interests of national security or public safety, public order, the protection of public health or morals or the protection of the rights and freedoms of others.” *ICCPR – Article 21.*

“Everyone shall have the right to freedom of association with others, including the right to form and join trade unions for the protection of his interests.” *ICCPR – Article 22.*

**Right to Safety & Security of Person** “Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person.” *UDHR – Article 3.*

“Everyone has the right to liberty and security of person. No one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest or detention. No one shall be deprived of his liberty except on such grounds and in accordance with such procedure as are established by law.” *ICCPR – Article 9.*

**Right to Privacy:** “No one shall be subjected to arbitrary interference with his privacy, family, home or correspondence, nor to attacks upon his honor and reputation. Everyone has the right to the protection of the law against such interference or attacks.” *UDHR – Article 12.*

**Right to Education:** “Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace.” *UDHR – Article 26.*

## TAKE ACTION

### Students:

- Start a [Firewall for freedom](#) campaign on your campus.
- Host a teach-in or action to raise awareness and drive action on the [Firewall](#) and [Urgent Action](#)
- [New Investigation](#) by Amnesty International: Join us in urging Congress and tech firms Palantir and Babel Street to stop using AI-powered technologies to support mass deportation. They must respect human rights.
- Use our social media guide below to amplify the campaign online.
- Write a blog or op-ed on why these freedoms matter to you. ([See our op-ed how-to guide](#))
- Share your story at [campaigns@aiusa.org](mailto:campaigns@aiusa.org). If you're concerned about being targeted, we can ensure your identity remains anonymous.
- Invite Amnesty to speak virtually at your campus. [Fill this form](#).

### Faculty or staff:

- [Endorse the campaign publicly](#).
- Propose [Firewall resolutions](#) to faculty senate and to your students
- Support students in speaking out.
- [Co-author an op-ed](#) with a student about the repression on your campus.
- Partner with other educators and librarians in solidarity with your students.
- Use our social media guide below to amplify the campaign online.

### Faith or community groups:

- Send a letter to your local university or to your alma mater. [Sample Model Letters](#).
- Host events and amplify student-led actions.
- Provide safety and logistics support by connecting with student groups in your community. AIUSA can help you [youth@aiusa.org](mailto:youth@aiusa.org)!
- Mobilize other local faith or community groups, institutions and media outlets to support students' firewall for freedom resolutions on their campuses.
- Use our social media guide below to amplify the campaign online.

### Alumni and Donors:

- Use your influence as an alum or donor to uplift student demands to your university leaders ([sample letter](#)).
- Author or co-sign an op-ed ([op-ed guidelines](#)) in your local paper or alumni magazine. You can use these platforms to promote the [Firewall for Freedom toolkit](#).
- Attend student events to show solidarity and signal support from the broader university community
- Sponsor a student-led action, workshop or campaign effort.
- Use our social media guide below to amplify the campaign online.

## Parents and allies

- Write to your school board, uplifting students' demands or raising your concerns about repression on campus and violations of your children's human rights ([can use language from the university sample letter](#)).
- Attend a local action organized by community members, Amnesty members or student groups.
- Write to your alma mater: It's time for a wakeup call! ([sample letter](#)).
- Use our social media guide below to amplify the campaign online.

## Everyone

- Follow and share our posts on [Instagram](#) and [X \(@amnestyusa\)](#)
- Use our social media guide below to amplify the campaign online.
- Email your university administration using our pre-written letter template ([Model letter](#)).
- Start a discussion online: post your story, student experience or why you care. If you want to post anonymously, share your story with us [campaigns@aiusa.org](mailto:campaigns@aiusa.org).
- Distribute the [Firewall toolkit](#) in your group chats: WhatsApp, Signal; Facebook, etc.
- Use our social media guide below to amplify the campaign online.
- Bring 3 friends into the campaign!

## SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDE

Repost, tag your university, and use our hashtags: #CampusFirewallForFreedom | #HumanRightsCampus | #ProtectStudentPower | #StopTheCrackdown.

Pick one of the social media graphics we pulled together [here](#) and use one of these suggested captions:

- Recent crackdowns on student protest are part of a broader erosion of civic space, not isolated violations, and abuse of power.
- All students should feel like they belong on their campus and are free to be themselves without being harassed or singled out. Universities must fight to protect students' rights and refuse to collaborate in the government's attacks on campuses.
- No one should be ripped away from their family and sent to detention just to exercise their right to protest; no one should be deported for speaking out for human rights.
- Everyone has the right to peacefully protest, whether on Palestinian rights or any other issue or cause.
- Campuses are sites of global resistance. From South Africa's anti-apartheid protests to Hong Kong's pro-democracy marches, to protests on U.S. campuses for the rights of Palestinians, students have led global movements for justice.
- We call on President Trump to release all students facing deportation simply for exercising their human rights to freedom of expression, association and assembly. Everyone has the right to peacefully protest and express dissent, whether on Palestinian rights or any other issue or cause.

Want to do more? Make a short video or reel explaining the campaign in your own words, or why these freedoms matter. Here's a starter script to get you going:

*The Trump administration is attacking our rights as students to speech, protest, and an inclusive education, and [university name] is not immune. One of the most important ways we [can fight back / have already started to fight back] is by passing a campus resolution demanding our school administrators refuse to coordinate with the federal government's crackdown on our rights.*

*As the [role] of [name of student/faculty/organization], and as a [student/alumnus/donor/parent/faculty member/etc.] concerned with universities across the country capitulating to President Trump's demands, I hope you join me in keeping [university name] a place where academic freedom thrives by signing our petition urging student government to pass this resolution. Together, we have the power to [pass / implement] a campus Firewall for Freedom resolution and send a strong message to our school officials: We demand they protect their students!*

Don't forget to share with us at [campaigns@aiusa.org](mailto:campaigns@aiusa.org) or tag @amnestyusa on IG or X!

## **FIREWALL FOR FREEDOM RESOLUTIONS**

### **What is a Firewall for Freedom resolution?**

A student-led policy framework that students can introduce and pass on their campuses. The resolution calls on campus administrations to defend the rights of students and refuse to voluntarily collaborate with the Trump administration's attacks on free speech, academic freedom, and inclusive learning environments. The resolution specifically urges universities to:

- Defend the rights of students
- Refuse cooperation in the government's attacks on campus
- Protect student privacy and protest rights
- Create inclusive and safe learning environments

### **How can my campus adopt one?**

Use our Firewall for Freedom Toolkit to launch your campaign and push your university to commit publicly. Learn more and access the full [Firewall for Freedom Toolkit](#).

### **What risks do students face?**

While we haven't seen targeted pushback against Firewall actions, including those that have passed, high-profile student activism has faced backlash elsewhere. Students may face academic discipline, including suspension or even expulsion; digital targeting and surveillance by campus or government; and exposure or harassment. Students who are migrants, immigrants, or on international student visas may have their data shared by their school to police or ICE, and they face visa revocation or targeting by ICE. Our campaign, trainings, human rights education, and rapid response tools are designed to help mitigate risk. For immediate risk assessment mitigation strategies, see our [Firewall for Freedom toolkit risk matrix on Page 11](#).

## CAMPAIGN TOOLS & ACTIONS

- Amnesty’s [“Stop the Crackdown: Protect Student Power”](#) webpage
- Social Media Guide including graphics above and [digital flyer template](#)
- [Firewall Resolution Toolkit](#)
- [Urgent Action: Stop Revoking Students’ Visas](#)
- [H.R. 3651 Digital Action, toolkit, and lobbying materials.](#)

## SAFETY & SECURITY: WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I AM TARGETED?

**IMPORTANT:** If you witness any form of threat, crackdown or repression on campus—or if you experience that yourself—please report the incident to [youth@aiusa.org](mailto:youth@aiusa.org).

### How does the campaign ensure protest safety?

We offer Know Your Rights (KYR) materials, and digital security guidance to help protect students and allies. You can find KYR resources and Risk Assessment and Mitigation Strategies in the [Appendix](#) section of our [Firewall for Freedom Toolkit](#).

While we haven’t seen targeted pushback against Firewall actions, including those that have passed, high-profile student activism has faced backlash elsewhere. These tools and resources help you do your own risk assessment, so you’re prepared, proactive, diligent, and protected if circumstances change.

## CONTACTS & MORE INFO

- Reach out about the Campaign, Action, Activism, Collaborations, Reporting, and Safety concerns: [campaigns@aiusa.org](mailto:campaigns@aiusa.org)
- For Firewall for Freedom support: [fill this form](#) or contact [firewall@aiusa.org](mailto:firewall@aiusa.org)
- To join a student group: [youth@aiusa.org](mailto:youth@aiusa.org)