

An Outsider's Guide to Supporting Nonviolent Resistance to Dictatorship

19 October 2012

Compiled by nonviolent activists from around the world.

Index

| | |
|---|-----------|
| <u>Introduction</u> | 7 |
| How do read this Document | |
| <u>Individuals</u> | 10 |
| Email or Call Elected Representatives | |
| Petition Elected Representatives | |
| Global Petitions | |
| Photo Petitions | |
| Social Media | |
| Twitter Alternatives | |
| Online or Text Donations | |
| Naming and Shaming a Dictator | |
| Translation | |
| Op-Eds | |
| Honorary Degree Withdrawal | |
| Online Course on Nonviolent Resistance | |
| Nonviolent Resistance Website | |
| HTTPS Encrypted Email | |
| PGP Encrypted Email | |
| Pranks | |
| Nonviolent Resistance at Home | |
| Global Hunger Strike | |
| Nonviolent Peacekeeping Accompaniment | |
| <u>NGOs, Foundations & Other Non-State Actors</u> | 15 |
| Small Grants | |
| Large Grants | |
| Hawala | |
| Material Aid | |
| Energy Assistance | |
| Web Resources | |
| Training for Local Activists | |
| Training for Local Political Party Members | |
| Training for Local Independent Media | |
| Training for Domestic Election Monitors | |
| Training for Police and the Armed Forces | |
| Training for Judiciaries, Prosecutors, and Public Defenders | |
| Training by Activists | |
| Public Opinion Polls | |
| Elections Monitoring | |
| Films on Nonviolent Resistance | |

[Video Games](#)
[Celebrity Recruitment](#)
[Concerts and Public Events](#)
[Religious Leaders](#)
[University Chairs Endowment](#)
[Honors for Acts of Nonviolent Resistance](#)
[Rewards for Defectors](#)
[‘Dictators Index’](#)
[Best Practices](#)
[Online Clearinghouse](#)
[Annual Conference](#)
[Rapid Response Team](#)
[Young Activists Network](#)
[Scholarships for Activists](#)
[Twitter Forum](#)
[Pillars of Support Mapping](#)
[Dictator Exposés](#)
[Toolkits for Contesting Important Spaces](#)
[Global Norms and Standards](#)
[Global North/South Pressure](#)
[Transparency in Payments](#)
[Foreign Correspondents](#)
[Education for Policymakers on Collateral Damage](#)
[Global Video Conferences](#)
[Live-Streaming](#)
[Lasers](#)
[Evidence Collection and Record Keeping](#)
[Crisis Mapping](#)
[Liberty Drones and Aerial Surveillance](#)
[Satellites](#)

Tech Savvy Activists

[Wiki for Whistle Blowers](#)
[Apps for Nonviolent Solidarity](#)
[Website Mirrors](#)
[Open Source Technology](#)
[Mesh Networks](#)
[Proxy Cloud](#)
[Spare Bandwidth Donations](#)
[Cyber Defense Manuals](#)
[Digital Rights Events Calendar](#)
[Cyber Defense Network](#)
[DoSP Insurance Policy](#)

27

[Denial-of-Service Attacks](#)
[Computer Viruses](#)
[Communications Jams](#)

Artists, Journalists and Communications Experts

34

[Graffiti](#)
[Messenger Animals](#)
[Unconventional Message Carriers](#)
[Sneakernet Methods](#)
[Color Coding Public Spaces](#)
[Light Signals](#)
[Infographics](#)
[Resistance Art](#)
[Adbusting](#)
[Billboards](#)
[Posters and Stickers](#)
[Live-Streaming Protests or Abuse](#)
[Pranks](#)
[Evidence Collection and Records Keeping](#)
[Loudspeakers](#)
[Hoax Toys and Sports Equipment](#)
[Cell Phones](#)
[Fax Machines](#)
[Bluetooth](#)
[Dial-Up Modems](#)
[Two-Way Radios](#)
[HAM Radio](#)
[AM/FM Radio](#)
[LPFM radio](#)
[Handheld VHF/UHF Radio](#)
[International Radio Broadcasting](#)
[Satellite Internet Modems](#)
[Satellite Phones](#)
[Digital Stegonagraphy](#)

Diplomats

42

[Statements and Démarches](#)
[Advice](#)
[Convening Activists](#)
[Connecting Activists with Foreign Governments](#)
[Trials Monitoring](#)
[Protests](#)
[Diplomatic Immunity](#)

[Refuge and Sanctuary for Activists](#)
[Resistance](#)

States

45

[Education for Foreign Service Corps, Military & Civil Servants](#)
[Aid](#)
[Companies](#)
[Tax Havens](#)
[Transparency in International Business](#)
[Military Aid](#)
[Export Licenses](#)
[Development Aid](#)
[Pressuring Neighbors](#)
[Dual Citizenship Withdrawal](#)
[Golden Parachutes](#)
[Radio Infrastructure in Neighboring States](#)
[Shadow Mobile Phone Networks](#)
[Membership Conditionality](#)
[UN Security Council Resolutions](#)
[Fact-Finding and UN Missions](#)
[Rome Statute](#)
[International Tribunal Indictments](#)
[ICC Indictments](#)
[International Arrest Warrants](#)
[Diplomatic Immunity Withdrawal](#)
[Diplomatic Sanctions](#)
[Travel Bans](#)
[Sports Sanctions](#)
[Arms Embargo](#)
[Technology Sanctions](#)
[Aviation Sanctions](#)
[“Smart” Economic Sanctions](#)
[Assets Freeze](#)
[Corporate Sanctions](#)
[Conditioned Sanctions](#)
[Odious Debts](#)

Corporations & Consumers

53

[Conscientious Traveling](#)
[Boycotts](#)
[White Lists](#)

[Transparent Payments](#)
[Global Conferences](#)
[Corporate Pressure](#)
[Pressure on Businesses in Neighboring States](#)

Annex: Criteria for Intervention

55

Introduction

All across the globe, democratic movements are taking root in places once thought hostile to democracy. As these movements spread and grow stronger, many people around the world are wondering what they can do to help.

For too long, support for democracy was treated as the exclusive prerogative of governments and foundations, many of which returned to the same handful of policy options again and again to little effect. Too often, the options presented within government and the public debate were simplified into three options: doing nothing, economic sanctions or military intervention. Meanwhile, ordinary citizens had few tools and little knowledge about how to help activists struggling for democracy in far off lands. That is no longer the case.

In an age of Twitter, Google, and PayPal, lending support for democracy abroad has never been easier. In many instances, vital help for democratic activists is just a click, donation, or tweet away. Governments, too, have an exciting new array of nonviolent policy options that could potentially revolutionize how states can and do support democracy abroad.

Still, for all the tools now available to individuals, organizations and governments, little is known about how external actors support nonviolent resistance abroad. This document is intended to change this.

The following pages are designed to kick start a global conversation on how—and how not—to support democratic activists around the world. Included below are more than 120 nonviolent resistance tools and tactics available to governments, diplomats, nongovernmental organizations, foundations, corporations, IT experts, and ordinary citizens across the globe.

As can be seen, some of these methods are tried and trusted; some have never been put into practice. A few tools could do great harm, while others may do a great deal of good. The authors of this document are not so bold as to suggest that we know which is best. Instead, we aim simply to provide an overview of the tools and techniques those outside repressive regimes can and are employing to counteract authoritarianism. We do not offer a list of instructions for how to do so.

Undoubtedly, this list is not without faults. Though it strives to be comprehensive, some tactics have likely been missed, and others neglected. As such, this remains a *working document*. Its intention is not to conclude the discussion on nonviolent resistance assistance methods, but to start it. We therefore welcome our readers' input and look forward to redefining the many ways that outsiders can support nonviolent resistance to dictatorship.

The authors of this document do not endorse the use of risky or illegal activities.

Readers undertaking the activities included within this document do so at their own risk.

How to Read this Document

This document is the product of a two-day workshop held in New York City among more than a dozen domestic nonviolent resistance activists, scholars, donors, and aid practitioners. The purpose of their meeting was to re-conceptualize the methods and tools by which external actors can and are supporting nonviolent resistance abroad. They were asked to think big and small—to identify any support, no matter how contentious or impractical—that could potentially affect the work of nonviolent resistance activists confronting dictatorship. Their ambition was not to advocate a specific method or tool to help support democracy, but rather, to get people thinking about a larger and more creative range of options for how to assist nonviolent resistance to dictatorship.

The discussion of nonviolent policy options is not, of course, without precedent. For years, scholars and practitioners have deliberated the pros and cons of external intervention abroad. Below are some of the principles that have emerged as critical when considering if and how external actors should implement the tools and methods listed throughout the following pages.

Local Context: All external interventions should be treated with the utmost caution and consideration for the specific context in question. All strategies should be born from a careful examination of the place and people in question, bearing in mind that no two countries—and thus no two strategies—are or should be exactly alike.

Consent: This menu offers an overview of policy options for external actors. Yet it is absolutely vital that domestic actors—those whose very lives are often at risk—are the drivers of these options. All too often, external interventions are made without due consideration for the wishes, concerns, and expectations of local activists and the constraints under which they live. External actors must work hard to get consent and input from those inside the country, and ensure that their efforts are meeting the self-defined demands of local activists.

Risks and Rewards: External actors must also be conscious of their own ignorance. All interventions come with their own set of risks and rewards. Whatever the policy option selected, there are inevitably trade-offs involved. To minimize unnecessary collateral damage, external actors must be mindful of these trade-offs and give full consideration to the myriad of ways in which their interventions may both help and hurt domestic activists in the short- and long-term.

Core Values: Finally, all interventions should be selected in accordance with the core values that external actors and local activists hold dear. This means, among other things, that interventions should be made with a reasonable degree of transparency. They should also be made responsibly and allow for full accountability. Wherever possible, interventions should be equitable and inclusive. Before they take action, external actors should consider how their own values apply to the actions that they take abroad.

Finally, one last note on typology: This menu is organized according to types of actors. Tools that are most applicable to governments have thus been separated from tools that are better suited for corporations, foundations, or individuals. The order of these tools was determined by the degree of complexity that the intervention demanded: simpler tools were put first, more complex tools put last. This classification is designed to make the menu more accessible and easier to implement. Where certain tools can be used by different categories of actors, we have indicated their dual use and included passages in each applicable category.

INDIVIDUALS

What individuals are doing and can do to help end dictatorship

As activists across the Middle East and North Africa protest against dictatorship, many people around the world are wondering what they can do to help. Whether in New York City, London or Tokyo, there are many steps individuals can and are taking to help end dictatorships abroad. Below are a few of the ways individuals are supporting the cause of nonviolent resistance.

Email and Call-ins: Mass email- and call-ins to the offices of elected representatives are a quick and cheap way for individuals to voice their discontent with the status quo. Call-ins are most effective when linked to a specific piece of legislation. Though calls and emails to elected representatives are often dismissed as ineffective, they have the capacity to generate impact if they are well-organized and combined strategically with other forms of advocacy. In the US, AmericanCensorship.org offers step-by-step instructions for how users can call their congressional representatives, and will even place calls on users' behalf.

Domestic Petitions: Like phone calls, petitions are an inexpensive way to signal discord with and exert pressure on elected representatives who support legislation that would bolster authoritarian regimes. Online petitions, in particular, have proven a time- and cost-effective way for citizens to voice their opposition to or support of legislative proposals. As with phone calls, however, these petitions must be well-organized and should be combined with other forms of civic protest to have an effect.

Global Petitions: Petitions can also be used to signal global discord against repressive regimes. Global petitions collect signatures from supporters irrespective of their geographic origin, and often target supranational institutions. For example, in the spring of 2011, Amnesty International collected 165,953 signatures in support of its efforts to refer Syria to the International Criminal Court. Though cost effective, many argue that such petitions are largely ineffective in promoting change and may convey a false sense of accomplishment.

Photo Petitions: Another type of petition gaining prominence on the web is the photo petition. Photo petitions rely on activists to send in visual images of collective actions, rather than traditional signatures, to signal discord with policy or support of a particular position. One example is 350.org, which uses photo petitions to advocate for lower CO₂ emissions. These images can become powerful symbols of nonviolent resistance and solidarity. Because they do not rely on words, they also have the advantage of being understood cross-culturally. Like traditional petitions, however, photo petitions must be organized strategically if they are to generate impact.

Social Media: Much has been said of the role social media had played in fueling revolutions throughout the Middle East and North Africa. While no simple panacea,

evidence suggests that where the Internet is available and accessible, social media like Facebook and Twitter can act as a widely accessible medium of communication for domestic activists and their external supporters. Cheap and efficient, social media has been credited with sparking the revolution in Egypt, while its influence on Iran's 2009 uprising was thought so great that it was dubbed the '[Twitter Revolution](#)'. The utility of social media to promote revolution has, however, been criticized for, among other things, [politicizing](#) the Internet. Social media sites are also easy targets for regime censorship, and can, potentially, be used to benefit the regime itself. In Syria, for example, many active users of social media sites have been arrested and tortured, as the government seeks out passwords and usernames of anti-regime protestors. Still, social media can be a useful tool for individuals outside the regime to speak up on democracy's behalf. Twitter and Facebook can be used to draw attention to regime abuses and shine a spotlight on democratic activists.

Twitter Alternatives: Where Twitter is shut down, [SpeakToTweet](#), launched by Google and Twitter, allows users to reroute Tweets through a phone number. Just like regular voicemail, people call and leave short messages. In Egypt, [Small World News](#) created a website called [Alive In Egypt](#) that posted the translations of the tweets, along with the original audio. Originally launched to help activists in Egypt evade the government-sponsored Internet shut down, Google has since cut funding to SpeakToTweet. Use your voice to encourage Google to keep SpeakToTweet alive, by starting a petition or emailing Google.

Online or Text Donations: Online fundraisers have been used to generate funds to support local opposition actors. Most recently, online fundraisers helped purchase satellite equipment to ship to the Middle East and North Africa. For example, [Buy This Satellite](#) is a nonprofit that is using the Internet to raise money to buy a dormant communications satellite that it intends to place over Africa, allowing Internet access in areas across the continent. Through small donations from close to 1,200 donors, they have raised almost \$65,000. Online donations have the potential to raise money quickly for critical needs—particularly humanitarian aid. Transparency in resource allocation is, however, essential, as is having a strategic plan for how to spend funds both promptly and effectively.

Name and Shame a Dictator: One way individuals can help raise awareness of human rights violations is to draw attention to the specific governments, companies, or individuals that lend their support to repressive regimes. Naming and shaming tactics have been used to point a finger at the actors and organizations that provide funds, weapons, or legitimacy to repressive regimes. By 'outing' those complicit in atrocities, foreign actors pressure these groups to withdraw their support for repression. Many nongovernmental organizations have been active on this front. The [Burma Campaign UK](#), for example, has compiled a list of companies that provide insurance services to Burmese generals and calls on British citizens to petition those companies to stop their unethical business practices. Efforts to name and shame clothing companies found to be in violation of child labor laws have also been effective in stopping companies like Nike,

Gap, and others from exploiting sweatshop labor. Like other forms of nonviolent resistance, naming and shaming has the potential to be an effective tool in undermining the pillars of support for a regime. However, it must be strategically organized and implemented in coordination with other tools.

*This technique can also be used by nongovernmental organizations.

Resource Translation: There is a large body of work – academic and otherwise – on nonviolent tactics. These resources range from Gene Sharp’s [seminal works](#) to medical treatments for tear gas. They are not always accessible to activists who may not be fluent in the language of publication, which is often English. For those fluent in, for example, Russian, Burmese, Korean or Shona, translation can help put information at activists’ fingertips. [GlobalVoices Lingua Project](#) is one forum individuals are using to put their linguistic talents to work.

Op-Eds: External actors might also consider lending their support to domestic activists by publishing op-eds on their behalf. Opinion pieces in widely read news outlets, like the New York Times or the Wall Street Journal, have the capacity to draw attention to important causes and raise awareness of little known human rights abuses. Foreign correspondents might also consider publishing pieces in the name of local activists.

Honorary Degree Withdrawal: Throughout their long careers, dictators and their family members occasionally accrue honorary degrees from venerable academic institutions. To protest their descent into authoritarianism, these institutions can occasionally consider withdrawing such degrees. Where universities do not do so of their own accord, individuals have considered waging nonviolent resistance.

Online Courses on Nonviolent Resistance: Online courses on nonviolent resistance are another potential way external actors can help educate activists on the forms and methods of nonviolent resistance. In October 2011, the United States Institute for Peace and the International Center on Nonviolent Conflict co-organized a 7-week online training course on [‘Civil Resistance and the Dynamics of Nonviolent Conflict’](#). Designed as a for-credit college course, the course attracted students, professors, and independent scholars interested in nonviolence.

Nonviolent Resistance Websites: Websites have been credited with providing critical information on the means and methods of strategic nonviolent action, but they also played a role in facilitating communication between and among domestic activists and the international community. During the Arab Spring, for example, websites like www.accessnow.org provided information for activists on how to jump the firewall. At the same time, websites like www.avaaz.org provided an outlet for domestic activists to share their videos of regime-sponsored abuses. [YouTube](#) and other websites helped circulate this footage to the masses, bringing the extent of human rights abuses unfolding in places like Egypt, Syria, or Yemen into the homes of concerned citizens everywhere.

HTTPS Encrypted Email: Regime surveillance has increased the demand for simple technologies that allow activists to communicate without fear of interception. One form of such communication is encrypted email. Encryption protects email content from being read by anyone except the intended recipients. There are several types of email encryption, some of which are offered by the major free email service providers. Emails sent via Gmail, for example, are encrypted with HTTPS by default. Similarly, Hotmail gives users the option to encrypt their emails via HTTPS. Yahoo, by contrast, does *not* offer the option of encryption—meaning that activists who communicate via Yahoo are particularly vulnerable to email interception. Still, even HTTPS encryption is not without its vulnerabilities. While HTTPS emails are secure between the sender and the service provider, these emails can be unencrypted when they reach email accounts of non-HTTPS users. A more secure form of email communication is PGP or public key encryption, which protects emails before they are sent.

PGP Encrypted Email: PGP encrypted email is the next step up the security chain from HTTPS. The distribution of a public and private key (or code) ensures that only intended recipients can read PGP emails. Because they are encrypted even before they leave senders' computers, PGP encryption can be used with any type of email—whether Gmail, Hotmail, Yahoo, or other providers. While an excellent way to ensure email privacy, one drawback of public key encryption is that its use can attract the attention of authorities. Email users who rely on encryption are often flagged as activists and may face criminal prosecution in countries that have banned encryption (such as Pakistan). To read more about public key encryption, click [here](#). For more on how to increase the privacy of Internet communications, click [here](#).

Pranks: Pranks, like prank phone calls and hoax meetings are another way individuals have tried to mock dictators. In Milosevic's Serbia, for example, members of the youth movement *Otpor* regularly organized pranks on the state-run police and other Milosevic loyalists, believing that humor could counteract fear. Increasingly, pranks are also being pulled by external actors hoping to undermine dictators abroad. In 2003, for example, two US-based radio hosts staged a call-in to Venezuela's President Hugo Chavez, pretending to be Fidel Castro. Members of the Diaspora and other external actors might also consider arranging hoax meetings with the regime. Hoax meetings, ostensibly arranged at an agreed upon time and place, have been used to divert the regime's attention while the opposition stages a protest at alternate locations. Pranks have also been widely hailed as important tools in nonviolent resistance for domestic activists. Yet external actors have yet to use them en masse. Some have suggested organizing a global 'prank a dictator' day, flooding the phone lines of regime members and loyalists with critical calls. Such efforts must be organized with caution to limit any negative backlash against suspected informants or local activists.

Nonviolent Resistance at Home: Individuals also play a role in organizing acts of nonviolent resistance when authoritarian leaders travel abroad. By staging mass sit-ins or protests at critical locations, such as airports, hotels, or the United Nations, individuals voice their opposition to human rights violations and anti-democratic policies.

To generate media attention, however, such acts must be well organized and employed strategically to coincide with other forms of nonviolent resistance.

Global Hunger Strikes: One form of nonviolent resistance is the global hunger strike. A global hunger strike occurs when a critical mass of people engage in a hunger strike together at an agreed upon time. In July 2011, [Darfur Fast for Life](#) organized a global hunger strike of 10,000 people, who each fasted for 24 hours in solidarity with the victims of violence in Darfur. Hunger strikes should always be considered with great caution and in consultation with medical experts. While global hunger strikes have the capacity to generate media attention, it is critical that they are designed with a clear, achievable goal, and are implemented as one part of a larger nonviolent resistance strategy.

Nonviolent Peacekeeping Accompaniment: One way individuals might consider taking a dramatic stand against violence is by joining a multinational peacekeeping force. For close to ten years now, the Fellowship of Reconciliation has brought volunteers to wage nonviolent resistance in Colombia, via its [Colombia Peace Presence](#) project. These volunteers provide accompaniment to local community members in their efforts to outsmart paramilitaries, helping them get food and return safely to their homes. Other accompaniment organizations include: [Peace Brigades International](#), [Nonviolent Peace Force](#) and [Christian Peacemaker Teams](#). Why not expand such efforts to other countries facing brutal dictators? By developing training for nonviolent accompaniment, dedicated individuals across America, Europe, Asia and elsewhere can help local activists fight oppression by lending their support on the ground. This tool must be used only at the activists' request as in certain situations accompaniment may be a risk to both activists identified by the practice and the accompaniers themselves. This tool also risks being manipulated by a regime eager to paint activists as foreign agents or spies.

NGOs, FOUNDATIONS & OTHER NON-STATE ACTORS

What NGOs, Foundations, Universities

And Other Non-State Actors can do and are doing to end dictatorship

For decades, non-state actors have worked to support democratic activists in non-democratic contexts. Too little is known about these nonviolent interventions. While state-sponsored sanctions receive ample discussion, nonviolent policy options promoted by NGOs, foundations, universities and other non-state actors do not. This section is meant to provide an overview of these options, offering insight into the means and methods by which non-state actors can help undermine repressive regimes around the world *without* resorting to violence.

Small grants: Small cash allotments may be given to political parties, sympathetic local governments, members of the military, NGOs, civic education organizations, trade unions, and members of the media. Where foreign bank accounts are frozen, cash may be channeled into the country via suitcases, cars, or foreign businesses situated within the country. Small sums of money are believed to have been critical in the case of Serbia, where they helped anti-Milosevic movements like Otpor, pay for things like fax machines and computers, as well as a wide array of promotional materials like T-Shirts, pins, stickers, and pamphlets. Small cash allotments have the advantage of being easy to transfer and require relatively few bureaucratic hassles, particularly when it comes to larger donors. As with all forms of intervention, however, cash allotments risk providing fodder for the regime's demonization of the opposition as 'foreign mercenaries' (a frequent accusation hurled against Otpor, which did the organization no small amount of damage, particularly after Milosevic's ouster).

Large grants: Governments and international NGOs may also channel larger grants to domestic organizations, like independent media outlets, civil society organizations, and labor unions to support long-term programming. The advantage is that unlike small cash allotments, this funding may be more sustainable over a longer period of time and supports larger projects. The problem, however, is that such grants often require long waiting periods and, due to bureaucratic hurdles within aid agencies, often wind up arriving late on the ground. Moreover, because many of these grants are awarded transparently, they often draw attention to foreign funding of opposition movements.

Hawala: Getting funds to domestic activists is often difficult. Remittances are one way external actors have channeled funds to domestic activists in authoritarian regimes. *Hawala*, also known as *Hundi*, is a form of remittance that exists outside of the traditional banking system. It is based not on the formal transfer of funds through conventional banking channels, but on the honor of a global network of informal *hawala* brokers, who agree to lend and borrow at unofficial exchange rates. Because *Hawala* takes place through unofficial channels, these funds are difficult for regimes to trace. *Hawala* has emerged as a frequently used form of money transfer throughout parts of the Middle East, Africa, and Asia, enabling members of the diaspora to transfer funds to their family members. But *Hawala* has also been used by external donors looking to

support human rights and provide emergency relief, particularly in areas that lack an effective formal financial sector.

In Afghanistan, for example, *Hawala* has emerged as the chief financial instrument for the delivery of humanitarian and development aid for the majority of NGOs and international donors. NGOs alone are estimated to have transferred more than \$200 million through these informal money exchange dealers, with individual payments exceeding \$1 million. In lieu of an operational formal financial sector, analysts say that Afghan *Hawaladars* offer a reliable, efficient and inexpensive means for making international and domestic payments.

While a potentially useful tool for transmitting funds in countries that apply distortive exchange rate regulations or have poorly regulated banking systems, *Hawala* is not without its downsides. For one, just as it can be used by democratic activists, it can also be used by regime loyalists and criminals to transfer funds abroad. Due to its lack of transparency, the peer-to-peer transmission of funds has also provided a method for laundering the proceeds of illegal activities, such as opium production. Because it does not leave a paper trail, *Hawala* is also suspected of having supported the transfer of finances to terrorist organizations.

Material Aid: Material assistance provided by external actors can support the opposition's efforts to reach the public and mobilize citizens. Material aid may include the provision of laptops and printers, power generators, portable fax machines, satellite phones, mobile phones, and campaign paraphernalia such as buttons, whistles, and bullhorns. While useful, material aid may, however, be more difficult to transport into a country than cash and may draw domestic attention to external support.

Energy Assistance: In countries hit by sanctions, targeted sanctions-relief may be provided to local officials critical of the regime. In Milosevic's Serbia, for example, European officials provided independent mayors with access to heat and oil. This project, known as Energy for Democracy, was intended to generate public support for opposition figures and demonstrate the benefits of a Milosevic-free Serbia.

Web Resources: Websites and blogs have been credited for providing critical information on the means and methods of strategic nonviolent action. The websites of organizations like the [Albert Einstein Institute](#), [CANVAS](#), and the [International Center for Nonviolent Conflict](#) offer insight into how activists can confront oppression without resorting to violence. Blogs like [iRevolution](#) offer examples of different ways to spark nonviolent revolution. In addition, the [Project of the Communities of Democracies](#) website offers "A Diplomat's Handbook," exploring the diplomatic tools that help promote democracy. From Egypt to Syria, these websites are teaching activists the time-tested techniques that have worked to bring down dictatorships in other authoritarian contexts. In 2011 alone, the Arabic translation of CANVAS's manual for nonviolent resistance was downloaded more than 15,000 times.

Training for Activists: Foreign experts financed by NGOs like [NDI](#), [IRI](#), [FES](#), [KAS](#), the [Westminster Foundation for Democracy](#), or [Alfred Mozer Stichting](#) may provide training

for domestic activists in nonviolent resistance, political party building, mobilization methods, and electoral monitoring. Where foreign trainers are not permitted in the country, training may be organized in neighboring states. Some organizations, like NDI, have also established Trainer of Trainer programs that allow a core set of activists to receive training in how to train other domestic activists within the country. While a favored method of choice for donors, the impacts of training are rarely witnessed in the short-term. Moreover, training is often criticized for being supply-driven, led by trainers with little country-specific expertise, and often lack follow up.

Training for Party Members: Several international organizations also provide training to party members in repressive and newly democratic regimes. Known collectively as Party Institutes, or Party Foundations, organizations like [NDI](#), [IRI](#), [FES](#), [KAS](#), the [Westminster Foundation for Democracy](#), and [Alfred Mozer Stichting](#) train new party members in the basics of how to run for office and organize on a local, regional, or national scale. Training for party members include lessons in: public speaking, Get Out the Vote techniques, internal party communication, campaign management, public opinion polling, and political ideology. Organizations like IRI often bolster their training by independently contracting public opinion polls, which parties can use to test campaign messages and programmatic positions with the electorate.

Training for Local Independent Media: International NGOs like [IREX](#) and [Freedom House](#) also provide training to local independent media and journalists. In repressive contexts, these training sessions teach local journalists how to adopt standards of objective reporting and circumvent the regime's media stranglehold. Training also provides insight into how to use different types of media to attract different audiences, as well as how to fundraise.

Training for Domestic Election Monitors: Training can also target potential election monitors. Particularly in new and faux-democracies, election monitoring can serve as an important tool to identify electoral theft and galvanize disgruntled citizens against the regime. The verification of falsified electoral results is widely believed to have been critical to the unseating of authoritarian incumbents in Serbia, Georgia and Ukraine in 2000, 2003, and 2005, respectively. In each of these cases, international NGOs organized massive training for thousands of election monitors, who were taught how to identify fraud and how to report on actual results. In Serbia's case, domestic election monitors proved critical in discrediting Milosevic's calls for a second round of Presidential elections. However, the utility of election monitors depends on the context in question. In countries in which elections are not permitted, election monitors will clearly serve little purpose.

Training for the Police and Armed Forces: Police and the armed forces often serve as a critical tool in an authoritarian regime's arsenal of repression. For this reason, foreign governments and international NGOs strive to democratize the police and armed forces, particularly in new democracies emerging from authoritarianism. One way to do this is through training. Training often center on teaching regime forces how to abide by

international standards of human rights and to be responsive to the rule of law. For over two decades, police training has been at the heart of US efforts to promote democracy in Latin America. These training have become an increasingly prominent fixture of post-conflict recovery efforts in places like Bosnia, Rwanda and Somalia. Unfortunately, many efforts to assist police units, including programs sponsored by the FBI, US Drug Enforcement Agency, and the State Department, have little bearing on democratic practice, and may in fact conflict with efforts to support human rights in newly democratic settings (for more on this see, see the work of [Thomas Carothers](#)).

Training for Judiciaries, Prosecutors, and Public Defenders: To promote the rule of law in non- and newly-democratic settings, external actors have developed a multi-faceted training toolbox that targets the very state institutions that enforce the law: judiciaries and lawyers. Training for judiciaries, prosecutors and public defenders aim to teach individuals how to treat and represent suspects in accordance with due process, how to root out corruption and handle heavy caseloads, as well as how to provide citizens with equal access to the courts.

Training by Activists: One common criticism of training is that they lack contextual specificity. Foreign trainers are charged with failing to sufficiently analyze the political realities faced by local activists. One way external actors have sought to remedy this is by having foreign activists take the lead on training, rather than relying on so-called 'experts'. In this vein, [CANVAS](#) creates opportunities for former activists with hands-on experience in nonviolent resistance methods in Milosevic's Serbia and elsewhere to share lessons learned with activists struggling to unseat current dictatorships. Thus far, CANVAS has trained activists from dozens of repressive countries around the world.

Public Opinion Polls: In authoritarian countries that permit elections, NGOs and foreign governments sponsor public opinion polls testing popular support of existing regimes, as well as opposition candidates. Poll results have been used to build confidence in the possibility of regime change, and to encourage opposition forces to unite. These polls have been heralded by foreign donors as having been instrumental in contexts such as Milosevic's Serbia for, among other things, increasing confidence among opposition members and the public about the possibility of the regime's defeat. While potentially useful, it is important to understand that public opinion polls are often inaccurate in repressive contexts, and may be of less consequence in areas that lack elections. Also, opposition figures are often wary of relying on opinion polls, as they are subject to manipulation and can easily be used in the regime's favor.

Elections Monitors: Election monitoring has become a key way for external actors to intervene on democracy's behalf. IFES, OSCE, IDEA, the UN and others offer a litany of election monitoring missions that, upon invitation, can enter repressive contexts and monitor the quality of domestic elections. Their ability to issue condemnation of electoral results has the capacity to propel disgruntled voters to the streets, providing a spark for 'electoral revolution'. Election monitors have given failing grades to Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, and Azerbaijan, deeming their elections to be neither free nor

fair, and have found voting inconsistencies and faults in numerous other elections. But if such assessments have undermined the self-proclaimed democratic legitimacy of these regimes, they have done little to facilitate democracy in the short-term. Moreover, election monitors often require the invitation of repressive governments—something many dictators refuse to offer—and must withstand the scrutiny of regime-sponsored election monitors, who will often report very different findings. International actors might consider lobbying more aggressively for such monitors' presence and/or condemn the denial of monitors in authoritarian settings.

Films on Nonviolent Resistance: Video clips and documentaries have also served as educational tools providing inspiration for domestic activists. The documentary [Bringing Down a Dictator](#) traces the success and obstacles confronting Serbia's nonviolent resistance movement in the late 1990s. The documentary aired on public television in both Georgia and Ukraine prior to the color Revolutions and has been translated into Arabic, Burmese, Farsi, French, Indonesian, Mandarin, Russian, Spanish, Uzbek, and Vietnamese. Documentaries' impact on activists themselves is, however, difficult to determine, though they have proven a mainstay of nonviolent resistance education in universities across the world.

Video Games: Video games have also been used as a fun, creative way to support education on nonviolent resistance. In Washington, DC, [Breakaway Games](#) created the interactive video game, [A Force More Powerful](#), to encourage users to explore strategic, nonviolent conflict techniques to break down repressive political regimes. Designed by former Otpor activists from Serbia, the game asks users to orchestrate nonviolent resistance campaigns by assembling a team, building public support, and undermining the pillars of the regime's support.

Celebrities Recruitment: Attracting the support of high-profile celebrities is another way external actors can generate attention for specific causes. By virtue of their celebrity, these individuals can generate media attention and may have access to policymakers' ears. For example, celebrities like George Clooney and Mia Farrow used their star power to draw attention to the violence erupting in Darfur. In 2006, Clooney delivered a highly publicized speech at the UN, helping to generate support for an independent South Sudan. But while celebrities can help focus public attention on critical issues, their impact may be temporally limited unless they remain committed for the long haul. Celebrity interventions have also been criticized for being too topical, with attention focusing on a small set of core issues and thus diverting attention from other, neglected topics.

Concerts and Public Events: External actors frequently use music and social events to draw attention to injustices being committed abroad. Large-scale concerts featuring notable musicians can help raise money for urgent causes and draw mainstream attention to a specific issue. In 1984, for example, Bob Geldof founded Band Aid to raise money for famine relief in Ethiopia. In the years since, other musicians, including Bono of U2, have followed suit with efforts like [Playing for Change](#). Like other celebrity causes,

these events have the capacity to raise attention and funds for urgent issues and the show of solidarity can boost morale inside a repressive country. However, if implemented without a long-term vision for lasting change or a clear vehicle through which to disperse aid, their impact can be ephemeral.

Religious Leaders: Religious leaders have a large audience, often wield moral and political influence, and can drive donations. By recruiting these leaders to use their bully pulpit in support of democracy, external actors can raise awareness, funds and political pressure both in their local communities and boost morale for local activists. Diaspora religious leaders may be particularly effective in this. External actors of different religious sects than the local communities, however, must be carefully considered, particularly given any ethnic or religious tensions that may be at play in the local context. This can also be used by an authoritarian regime as evidence of foreign meddling or religious conspiracy.

Honors for Acts of Nonviolent Resistance: Another method to heighten awareness of human rights abuses is to honor acts of nonviolent resistance through an annual or semiannual award. Various organizations are already doing this. For example, each year, the [National Endowment for Democracy](#) presents a Democracy Award in recognition of courageous individuals who are working to advance human rights and democracy around the world. The 2011 award recipients included the 'People of Tunisia and Egypt who Struggled and Sacrificed for Democracy'. Though designed to shine a light on noble acts of resistance, such awards often occur to little fanfare, unless accompanied by very generous financial enticements.

University Chairs & Department Endowments: Universities can draw attention and build on the existing volume of work on nonviolent democratic movements by endowing faculty chairs or whole departments to the study of nonviolent resistance to dictatorship. This could be in addition to establishing a socially responsible university policy that ensures that university investments, faculty and student body meet their stated values and do not inadvertently support dictatorships.

Rewards for Defectors: Since 2006, the [Mo Ibrahim Foundation](#) has incentivized good governance in Africa by awarding a multimillion dollar prize to former African heads of state who leave office within their term limits and demonstrate excellence in leadership. The award—which consists of \$5 million over 10 years, and \$200,000 every year thereafter—provides a financial incentive for heads of state to act within the bounds of their constitutions and in so doing, promote democracy. Why not offer a similar incentive—albeit of a more modest size and on a sliding scale to incentivize early defection—for government defection in dictatorial regimes? Of course, steps must be taken to ensure that human rights violators do not receive compensation or safe haven. Assuming that this is possible, however, an award for defectors has the potential to increase the numbers of defections in dictatorships.

'Dictators Index': Another instrument through which to draw attention to authoritarian regimes is the establishment of a Dictators Index. Several organizations, such as Freedom House, the Bertelsmann Stiftung, and the Economist Intelligence Unit, already provide indexes of democracy. There are no comprehensive indexes dedicated exclusively to authoritarianism, however. Though [Parade](#) offers a list of the 'World's Worst Dictators', it does not offer a thorough explanation for how it assembles this list. In the future, individuals or organizations might consider developing a classificatory schema exclusively for authoritarian regimes, and offer a mock 'prize' for Worst Dictator of the Year. The event could potentially be used to attract media attention to ongoing crimes, as well as to name and shame the world's worst leaders.

Best Practices: External actors might consider joining forces to create a virtual platform where best practices in nonviolent policy solutions can be debated and shared. This platform could take the form of an interactive website, where aid providers, policymakers, academics, and activists can discuss what works and what does not work in the realm of foreign aid.

Online Clearinghouse: One potential idea to broaden the scope of nonviolent resistance channels is to develop a clearinghouse dedicated to nonviolent resistance methods. While several individual organizations concerned with nonviolent resistance already exist, an organizational clearinghouse would help forge synergies between them, creating a common vehicle for the sharing of best practices and allowing activists from around the world to network and trade lessons learned. This, however, could pose a risk for activists without secure technology or whose online presence can be tracked.

Annual Conference: Already, many organizations are working to train activists in authoritarian settings and promote the virtues of nonviolent resistance. Why not organize an annual convention, bringing these activists, academics, experts, and policymakers together, to discuss new techniques in nonviolent resistance, lessons learned on the ground, and how to forge synergies among activists going forward? This convention could be used to spark a transnational conversation on the importance of nonviolent resistance. Designed as a 'Davos' for nonviolent resistance, this convention could one day become a permanent educational institution, endowed with funds dedicated to spreading the tools of nonviolence and civil disobedience.

Rapid Response Advisory Team: For individuals with expertise in a relevant area, whether sanctions, diplomacy, PR and marketing, or IT, networking with other experts can help to create a rapid response team that can act as a resource to nonviolent activists in the midst of a crisis. Such teams must, however, have a trusted relationship with activists on the ground and a secure means of regular communication.

Young Activists Network: Despite the proliferation of Facebook, Twitter, and online chat rooms, many activists worry that they know little of the struggles and lessons learned by activists in other parts of the world. Why not create a platform for activists to forge transnational networks with foreign colleagues engaged in similar nonviolent

resistance struggles in places like Africa, the Middle East, South Asia, or the former Soviet Union? This network could enable activists to learn from one another and develop new ways to counteract oppression. The stories of their fellow revolutionaries could provide fodder for activists' own domestic struggles. As with an online clearinghouse and annual convention, it is important to understand the risks of such networking in flagging individuals as activists within their home-states.

Scholarships for Activists: Scholarships are another route external actors can take to support activists struggling in authoritarian contexts. Scholarships for activists can be used to provide activists with access to online training materials or to pay for their education in their home states or abroad, which provides opportunities not only for learning but networking and fundraising. When considering scholarships, external actors must be mindful that they do not promote brain drain in authoritarian settings, and do not encourage activists to leave the very countries where they are needed most. It should be noted that sponsoring education for activists outside of their home country could risk those very activists being painted as outsiders or foreign agents upon their return by the regime.

Twitter Forum: Many of today's most well known activists spread their message by way of social media. Unfortunately, they rarely have the opportunity to share their experiences offline. External actors can play a role in organizing and funding social media forums, during which well known Twitter and Facebook users can meet one another and forge relationships beyond the computer.

Pillars of Support Mapping: Every authoritarian regime relies on a network of loyalists, business partners, military alliances, cronies, or family members to maintain their grip on power. By mapping out this web of relationships, activists can work to undermine the regime's pillars of support both inside and outside the country. External actors can help by taking a first crack at what is known as 'relationship mapping'. Mapping entails a detailed analysis of the relationships a regime relies on to stay in power: whether it is the provision of sanctuary, trade, money laundering, arms, training, intelligence or legitimacy. Through mapping, external actors can help kick start a global conversation on how to sever those relationships.

Dictator Exposés: Working hand-in-hand with citizens inside the country, external actors can publish personal details of regime officials, such as email exchanges, schools attended, or social spots frequented by members of the regime and their families. With access to this data, domestic activists can use this information to wage nonviolent resistance, whether sit-ins or mass protests, and external actors can implement targeted sanctions.

Perhaps the most high-profile exposé conducted by external actors came in March of 2012, with the publication of [several thousand emails](#) received and sent by Syrian President Bashar al-Assad and his wife, Asma al-Assad. Published in international and regional newspapers like *the Guardian* and *New York Times*, the emails shone light on the purchasing habits, musical preferences, and strategic alliances of Syria's first

couple. The report of lavish spending amidst an ongoing bloodbath sparked international outrage, and prompted a plethora of YouTube [clips](#), online petitions, and social media campaigns designed to galvanize Asma Assad into action. To date, the campaign has yet to compel a shift in Asma Assad's behavior and violence remains ongoing.

Dictator exposés strive to compel regime loyalists to shift their allegiances. While a potentially useful way to make the lives of the regime and their supporters uncomfortable, exposés may not always be effective and come with potential drawbacks. Domestic activists who publicize such information are likely to be particularly at risk for government reprisals.

Toolkits of Contestation: One way external actors can help educate domestic activists on nonviolent resistance techniques is by developing contextually specific toolkits for contestation. These toolkits can, for example, teach political parties in Egypt how to prepare for elections. They can also teach civil society groups how to hold their elected representatives accountable, and ensure that they do not backtrack on their electoral promises. Developed by international NGOs, these toolkits could provide a starting point for activists to better understand the contests that exist and how they might better contest important spaces.

Global Norms and Standards: Global norms and standards can offer a powerful tool to draw attention to human rights abuses in far-off states. Global norms like the responsibility to protect, the right to free speech, and freedom of assembly have been used by domestic activists to compel dictators to end abuse, as well as to lobby foreign governments to join their causes. Global norms and standards have also served as focal points to rally diverse supporters behind a common, relatively uncontroversial conviction. A shared desire for the right to free speech, for example, has the potential to unite conservatives and liberals, secularists and Islamists, Republicans and Democrats alike. It should be noted, however, that authoritarian regimes often pay ample lip service to global norms and standards. Few profess an aversion to democracy, and many tout themselves as committed democrats.

Global North/South Pressure: United action by organizations, individuals, and companies across the globe can also work to exert influence over anti-democratic legislation and human rights abuses incurred abroad. One example of how successful global pressure can be is the international outcry that emerged over Uganda's proposed Anti-Homosexuality Bill (popularly known as the 'Kill the Gays Bill'). Over a four-day period in 2011, international organizations like [All Out](#) collected over 500,000 signatures from individuals in 192 countries and ten territories in condemnation of the proposed bill, which would have made homosexuality punishable by death. The pressure these groups exerted helped temporarily shelve the bill, although it was reopened for debate in October 2011. This suggests that to be effective, global pressure must not only be consistent and sustained, but should be coordinated with other forms of resistance and/or condemnation.

Transparent Payments: Despite their often ample financial resources, repressive regimes often force their citizens to live at or near abject poverty. The [publish what you pay](#) movement seeks to promote greater transparency in the financial transactions that governments make, so that citizens can hold them accountable. Why not extend these efforts even further? Transparency in financial transactions should be extended to all corporations, governments, organizations, and individual investors that do business with dictatorial regimes. Such transparency should not merely be enforced by law, but by secondary pressure exerted by the international community. NGOs, governments, and international organizations should work together to ensure that businesses are not making profits at the price of human rights.

Foreign Correspondents: One of the first steps authoritarian governments often take before launching assaults on their citizens is to cast out foreign journalists. Foreign correspondents risk generating unwanted attention and their coverage has the potential to spark international condemnation. As in Yemen, these correspondents are often denied visas, making it impossible for them to report from the country. External actors should do more to insist that all countries are legally bound to grant visas to foreign correspondents. This may include lobbying Western governments to exert pressure on dictatorships.

Education for Policy Makers: Policymakers in established democracies often lack insight into the negative repercussions their policies can have in authoritarian states. This is particularly true in the realm of Internet technology, where laws designed for ostensibly legal purposes can have dangerous consequences for activists in countries that can ill afford them. For instance, legislative solutions designed to fight cyber crime, may provide legal and technical ammunition to repressive regimes that seek to control networks in ways that harm free speech. Likewise, laws designed to stop piracy might threaten free speech and kill creativity. Citizens in North America and Western Europe can play a role in educating their elected representatives about this so-called ‘collateral damage’.

Global Video Conferences: The simultaneous sharing of video conferences is another tool that external actors can use to fuel communication between activists and the international community. Already, organizations like Access have used video conferences to put corporate leaders and policymakers in touch with domestic activists engaged in real-time protest. For example, speeches delivered by protestors in Yemen have been live-streamed into corporate conferences in the United States. These video conferences provide chilling visual imagery of the risks that activists are taking and the scale of their discontent. Video conferences can thus serve not only to raise awareness of human rights abuses in repressive regimes, but also to press corporations to change harmful policies. While a potentially powerful tool, it is important to note that video conferences require ample coordination and careful logistical planning. They also are not appropriate in every circumstance, as activists participating in such conferences may be vulnerable to arrest.

Live-Streaming: Organizations looking to raise public awareness of regime abuses and/or lobby policymakers to take action on specific transgressions may also consider live-streaming images of abuse – or in the converse, of protests. [Al Jazeera](#), for example, provided live-stream coverage of Egypt’s revolution, while the website, [GlobalRevolution](#), provided live-streamed coverage of Occupy Wall Street. Live-streaming has the potential to be very effective in documenting large-scale protests and exposing regime abuses. These images can be used to galvanize global public opinion against a regime, and to propel foreign policymakers to take action in favor of democracy.

Lasers: One way to force policymakers, companies, or individuals to bear witness to abuse or protest is through the use of high-powered lasers that project images of that abuse in highly utilized public spaces. In a project known as L.A.S.E.R.tag, [Graffiti Research Lab](#) has experimented with ways to project writing on walls at a distance of several hundred feet using high power laser pointers, known as LaserTag. While boasting the potential to gain publicity for human rights abuses, such efforts may be of limited impact and, unless organized on a large scale, may be vulnerable to regime manipulation. For example, a 2008 attempt by Graffiti Research Lab to beam laser projections of the message ‘Free Tibet’ throughout Beijing led to the arrest of the graffiti artist, James Powderly.

Evidence Collection & Record Keeping: External actors can also provide a vehicle for domestic activists to act as informants against the regime. By providing a number for activists to call or an email address to send evidence to, external actors can help activists collect evidence of abuses that are ongoing. Unfortunately, such repositories have the capacity to become very vulnerable. External actors must proceed with extreme caution on this front to ensure that human rights data is properly encrypted and safe from harm. This must be done very carefully to avoid identification of activists and to avoid compromising evidence, which must be in a condition for use in court once a case is filed.

Crisis Mapping: In countries experiencing humanitarian crises, [Crisis Mappers](#) use a combination of mobile and web-based applications, participatory maps, crowd-sourced event data, aerial and satellite imagery, geospatial platforms, visual analytics, and computational and statistical models to provide early warnings, informing local viewers of precisely where crises are happening. [Ushahidi](#) is a non-profit tech company specializing in the development of free and open source software for information collection, visualization and interactive mapping. Developed in 2008 in response to the post-election violence witnessed in Kenya, Ushahidi allows users to submit reports and evidence of human rights abuses through basic technologies like mobile phones, email and Twitter. Crisis Mapping is, however, vulnerable to Internet and cell phone network breakdowns.

Liberty Drones and Aerial Surveillance: Drones are often used to wage military warfare. Increasingly, however, human rights activists are exploring creative options to use

drones for good. Because drones serve as a tool for aerial surveillance, [advocates suggest](#) that they can also be used to monitor human rights abuses as they unfold in hot zones like Syria. The advantages of drones are believed to be manifold: Because they operate from the air, and not from the ground, they can escape the violence that often confronts human rights observers. They also get to places that live observers might not have access to. And because they operate at high-definition (unlike most cell phones or handheld cameras), drones could potentially allow human rights groups to count demonstrators, pinpoint weapons, and identify crimes as they are being committed in real-time. What's more, surveillance drones are increasingly affordable, costing no more than a few hundred thousand dollars.

As result, drones from human rights are no longer mere fantasy: they are being used in practice. The environmental group, the Sea Shepherd Conservation Society, for example, now uses drones to monitor Japanese whaling in the Southern Hemisphere. And in Poland, protestors have used '[robokopter](#)' drones to document police excesses during city-wide riots in Warsaw. In each of these instances, drones have provided visual evidence of crimes as they unfold. In the future, drones might also be used to transfer materials. Instead of dropping bombs, for example, they might drop educational information to domestic activists, or critical resources like satphones or flash drives.

While a potentially creative method to promote democracy, drones are not without pitfalls. For one, they may well be considered illegal in the eyes of authoritarian states. Not only will likely be considered an invasion of airspace, but if used improperly, could potentially provide a vehicle for surveillance beyond human rights abuses. Additionally, it is likely that targeted governments will use drones to accuse international actors of a foreign conspiracy, Local operators of drones could also be at risk of government reprisals.

Satellites: Satellites are another way external actors are helping to monitor the outbreak of human rights violations as they unfold in real-time. In Sudan, the [Sudan Sentinel Project](#) rents a surveillance satellite to monitor potential sources of violence. Satellite communications are, however, very expensive. Moreover, evidence indicates that regimes may be devising methods through which to avoid detection. Iran, for example, has been [accused](#) of providing the Syrian government with technology that blocks satellite telephone signals.

TECH SAVVY ACTIVISTS

What IT activists are doing to end dictatorship

Over the past decade, the web has become an increasingly popular instrument for external actors to collaborate with domestic activists. Many online communication tools are low-tech, while others require greater sophistication. Below are some of the ways international activists are using the Internet to support democracy abroad.

Please note that the actions listed below may represent a risk for the individuals or groups engaged in them. Many jurisdictions have laws that provide *severe* penalties, both criminal and civil, for actions that interfere with or compromise electronic communications and commerce. *The authors do not endorse such activities.*

Wikis for Whistleblowers: Regime loyalists are often the best poised to expose the regime's underbelly and pinpoint evidence of abuse. Increasingly, democratic activists are thinking up new and creative ways to encourage regime loyalists to come forward and share their evidence with the international community. One way to do so may be via the Internet. By offering a platform for potential whistleblowers to come forward, the Internet could help to bleed a dictator of his or her supporters. Creating a Wiki, in the vein of Wikileaks, might potentially enable the Internet to achieve this.

Launched in 2006, [WikiLeaks](#) is an online, international nonprofit that publishes submissions of private and classified materials offered by whistleblowers, members of the media, and others. The organization first made headlines in 2010 for publishing footage of a US airstrike that resulted in the deaths of Iraqi journalists. Less well known is Wikileaks' expose of corrupt practices in several dictatorial regimes. Wikileaks' exposure of corruption in Tunisia, for example, has been attributed in part to the fall of President Ben Ali. Could a wiki for pro-democratic informants prove similarly significant for the promotion of democracy in other authoritarian contexts? Some believe it could.

If properly conceived, advocates suggest that a Wiki for Whistleblowers could offer a one-stop shop for regime informants, or anyone else with evidence of abuse, to come forward. Not only might it help offer tangible evidence of anti-democratic activities, but it could undermine the legitimacy of the regime, by unmasking its authoritarian character. The development of a Wiki is not without pitfalls, however. Informants might potentially risk reprisals from the regime. And if information is not properly vetted, a Wiki could become a convenient means for scapegoating or settling old scores that are not related to the abusive regime. Additionally, the release of classified data could put those administering the Wiki at legal risk in countries with laws protecting confidential source-journalists relationships.

Apps for Nonviolent Solidarity: Smartphones offer a cost-effective way for local activists to stay in contact and keep abreast of activities happening abroad. The development of new smartphone applications or 'apps' for nonviolent solidarity might be one way to enhance smartphones' utility for democracy activities. Apps for nonviolent solidarity could take any number of forms. For example, they could document interactive manuals of nonviolent resistance techniques, offer information on cutting-edge circumvention

methods, network activists in other parts of the world, or help to alert friends and families of an imminent regime crackdown. Downloadable via iTunes or the Android store, these apps could also be updated in real-time to let activists know where protests are happening, what actions the regime has taken to stop them from organizing, and daily tips of the trade.

At present, there are no official nonviolent resistance apps. There are, however, several ideas that could offer a source of inspiration. In Arizona, for example, a group of pro-immigrant rights activists is developing a smartphone app that will allow immigrants to notify friends, family members, attorneys, and consulates, should they be arrested. The app will enable third parties to identify when and where the arrest took place, and offer users' a quick reminder of civil rights laws, such as the right to remain silent.

If designed to meet activists' needs, these apps could help democrats wage nonviolent resistance. But while potentially useful, the costs of app development may outweigh the benefits. For one, Nonviolent Solidarity apps risk flagging their users as activists and could potentially help dictators monitor activists' texts and phone calls. App development is also expensive, costing as much as several hundred thousand dollars. Moreover, apps' utility ultimately depends not simply of their availability, but on the prominence of smartphone technology in a specific context. Already, several regimes have begun crackdown on smartphones. Syria, for example, recently banned Apple's iPhone in an attempt to crackdown on the social media usage of anti-Assad activists.

Website Mirrors: Where oppositional websites are torn down by a regime, website "mirrors" have helped Internet-savvy activists to keep them online. Widely utilized in communities where governments heavily censor the Internet, website mirrors enable Internet activists to create exact "mirror" copies of existing websites, by copying site content and hosting it on a different website.

Mirrors have been widely utilized in China. For example, when Chinese authorities banned Google in 2002, activists responded by using the mirror website, elgooG, to circumvent government firewalls. Originally created as a Google parody site, elgooG returns all the same hits as Google, but it presents them backwards. Unlike web proxies like anonymizer.com or safeweb.com, Chinese activists can access elgooG through a system designed to test China's firewalls. elgooG thus enables tech savvy activists to defy government censorship.

Mirroring has emerged as an important way to keep valuable information in activists' hands. It is not, however, without risks. Most notably, it is traceable to its source. In other words, if local activists are doing the mirroring, they may be vulnerable to government persecution. Mirroring is also difficult to do well. Reproducing dynamic content from original websites is often impossible.

Open Source Technology: In recent years, open source technology has facilitated communication between domestic and international activists. Open source technology allows tech-savvy activists to customize existing web-technologies to better fit local contexts. External actors can help provide activists with training in or access to open source technologies, like Live CDs with anti-encryption tools.

Increasing the availability of open source software is widely recognized as an important tool for the promotion of nonviolent resistance. In 2004, for example, members of the World Movement for Democracy called for the development of open source applications that could be used by democracy groups to develop anti-censorship technologies. The rush towards open source software has not been lost on aid organizations. Eager to keep costs down, humanitarian organizations have been increasingly keen on using open source technology. The [Syria Crisis Map](#), for example, relies on an open source data-mining platform known as [HealthMap](#) to monitor thousands of English-language sources. Open source technology also powers the [Ushahidi](#) crisis management map.

The benefits of open source software lie in its no or low cost nature, as well as its ability to be modified to individual needs. Critics have complained, however, that such software can suffer from poor quality and may lack reliability. Still, the benefits of open soft software would seem to outweigh the drawbacks, hence recent moves on China and Russia's part to embrace open source software like Linux as an alternative to commercial ventures like Microsoft.

Global Proxy Clouds: Where regimes monitor Internet usage, Internet activists frequently rely on proxy clouds to outsmart censors. Proxy clouds offer their members access to a free and open Internet through a network of supporters (often based abroad) that allow them to bypass state censors and communicate directly with one another, the international media, and concerned citizens worldwide, without fear of government surveillance.

Today, several organizations are working to provide access to proxy clouds and to promote their usage by activists in authoritarian contexts. They often do so through [Tor](#), an anonymity circumvention project, which is also the most prominent of the proxy cloud methods. Tor reroutes user traffic through a network of volunteers' computers across the globe, making it almost impossible to trace. Relying on Tor, groups like [Access](#) have created proxy clouds that allow Internet users to avoid government surveillance. [Hotspot Shield](#), a free piece of software that secures Web surfing, is one popular alternative to Tor. Faster than Tor, its main disadvantage is that it offers less anonymity, which means that its users could potentially be flagged by an authoritarian regime.

Advocates say that proxy clouds offer a critical way to circumvent government surveillance. But they are not without downsides. One problem with proxy clouds lies in their ease of use. Though groups like Access are trying to make these tools user-friendly, proxy clouds remain targeted at IT savvy activists. Moreover, because proxy clouds depend on a pre-existing Internet, proxy clouds may not be very useful where IT sectors are less well developed or prone to government shut-down. Where the Internet is not widely available, low and no-tech interventions may offer an important alternative. Where the Internet is shutdown, IT activists suggest using mesh networks. Finally, because proxy clouds offer activists a way to divert government surveillance, they do put activists at risk.

Mesh Networks: Where Internet access is shut down or heavily monitored, mesh networks are enabling democratic activists to circumvent official government-sponsored

Internet networks and defy government censorship. An increasingly popular form of net activism, the promotion of mesh networks has emerged as a favored vehicle through which external actors are supporting democratic activists abroad.

A mesh network is a type of wireless communications network that connects laptops, cell phone, and other wireless devices to form a parallel communications network capable of operating outside of the Internet. In countries where government censor or shut-down the Internet, organizations like the [Open Technology Initiative](#), FabLab and FabFi are teaching activists how to establish mesh networks by turning cell phones and regular laptops into nodes on a “mesh network.” These nodes are able to communicate with each other, while bypassing the official network—thus allowing users to avoid state-sanctioned Internet blackouts.

Though mesh networks are an increasingly popular tool within the IT activist community, they are not without their own sets of problems. For one, the larger they are, the greater their price. The cost of uplink bandwidth for large mesh network has proven prohibitively expensive for domestic activists, which has led international organization to seek out alternative funding arrangements. One widely discussed solution may be for providers to buy bandwidth in bulk, or for individuals to donate spare bandwidth.

Spare Bandwidth Donation: To send data quickly, mesh networks require large amounts of bandwidth. But when purchased in bulk, bandwidth is *very* expensive. IT activists believe that one simple way individuals could help support independent mesh networks in authoritarian contexts is to donate their spare bandwidth.

Most Internet users use only a small portion of their monthly bandwidth allotment. This means that most bandwidth goes unused. That is why organizations like FabFi suggest that individual users donate their spare bandwidth. There is, however, no easy way for Internet users to do this. IT activists are therefore looking to develop a simpler mechanism through which individual Internet consumers can donate their unused bandwidth to organizations or individuals in need.

Cyber Defense Manual: As authoritarian governments grow increasingly sophisticated in their ability to wage Internet warfare, domestic activists are developing new ways to counteract such assaults. One way external actors are helping local activists outsmart foreign governments is by providing cyber defense guides. Available on and offline, these guides include easy steps organizations can take before, while and after the Internet is shut down. The global digital rights advocacy organization, Access, provides a widely utilized [cyber defense manual](#) that is currently available in six languages. The guide is targeted at democratic activists in the Middle East and North Africa and offers step-by-step instructions for how users can defend against and respond to Denial of Service (DoS) attacks.

Cyber defense manuals serve as an educational resource for democratic activists in authoritarian regimes. But like other tools, they come with both advantages and disadvantages. One potential drawback of online cyber defense manuals is that they risk flagging their users as regime opponents. Second, because new viruses and DoS attacks

are always being developed, such manuals require constant updates to keep abreast of evolving threats.

Digital Rights Events Calendar: Repressive regimes tend to engage in cyber assaults in a predictable pattern—most often just before major events like elections. To help activists prepare for an oncoming assault, Access offers a [Digital Rights Events Calendar](#), that predicts when such events might take place. Designed for digital rights activists, organizations and corporations, the Calendar lists all significant meetings, conferences, and event on the issues pertaining to global digital rights, as well as key international events, like elections or proposed legislation, that might impact upon digital rights and Internet freedom.

Cyber Defense Network: Internet attacks often happen quickly, leaving many activists unsure of how to respond. To help prepare activists and independent news sites for the event of a cyber attack, Access is developing a Cyber Defense Network aimed to counteract censorship. As currently conceived, this network will put domestic activists in touch with a trusted group of external experts capable of providing technical and tactical communications advice and support as emergencies unfold.

DoSP Insurance Policy: There are many steps governments and corporations can take to protect against DoS attacks, the most prominent of which is the installation of Denial of Service Protection (DoSP) on servers. But DoSP installation comes with a high price tag, meaning many nonprofits cannot afford it. By developing a DoSP insurance policy, the costs of such protection would go down for everyone, while the ease of installation would increase. This would make DoSP more widely available at lower prices. Though still in the pipelines, Access is currently considering creative ways to develop such a policy. To read more on this, please click [here](#).

In addition to the aforementioned tools, several other controversial and, in many jurisdictions, illegal tools exist in the IT category. These include launching Denial of Service (DoS) attacks, spreading computer viruses and jamming of regime communications. These highly contentious activities are explored below.

Please be advised that the following tactics carry severe legal risks to the individual or groups engaging in them and the authors do not endorse these actions.

Denial-of-Service Attacks: Among the most controversial means of nonviolent intervention is the Denial-of-Service Attack (DoS) or Distributed-Denial-of-Service attack (DDoS). A DoS attack refers to a systemic assault, organized by one or more individuals, on an Internet site or service, with the intention of preventing that site from functioning properly. DoS attacks generally lead to system overloads, meaning that an affected site can no longer provide its services.

DoS attacks have proven a corrosive tool in the hands of dictators, enabling them to censor the web and block critical content. Increasingly, however, DoS attacks are also employed by IT activists intent on disabling pro-regime websites and services. In Syria,

for example, the hacker collective Anonymous is accused of having organized DDoS attacks on government websites. In June 2011, it staged a virtual assault on Syrian embassies based abroad. According to Anonymous, these attacks were designed to slow communications among government officials, and stop the regime from “[isolating and terrorizing](#)” the Syrian people. Highly controversial, these attacks were later stopped at the request of Syrian activists, who complained that the DDoS of Syrian IPs were overloading Syria’s bandwidth, making access to pro-opposition websites and inter-opposition communication more difficult.

Cyber warfare is highly controversial and, in many contexts, formally classified as a form of military warfare. Because of this, DoS attacks thus risk escalating from nonviolent into violent conflict. Moreover, critics argue that DoS attacks could one day set a precedent for non-democratic governments to engage in similar attacks abroad. As in the case of Syria, DoS attacks may also have negative unintended consequences for anti-regime opponents, whose Internet access might potentially be stifled. *The authors of this document do not condone cyber attacks as a form of nonviolent resistance.*

Computer Viruses: Computer viruses are another highly controversial tool external actors are using to counteract dictatorship. In instances spanning from Iran to Libya, computer viruses have been used to halt regime communications and cause damage to infrastructure. Depending on their targets, they can have debilitating consequences for a dictator and have far-reaching consequences both for regime loyalists, as well as for members of the opposition.

Undoubtedly the most notorious global cyber virus is that of Stuxnet, a computer worm discovered in June 2010. First spread through [Microsoft Windows](#), Stuxnet targets [Siemens industrial](#) software and equipment, enabling external actors to spy on and subvert major industrial systems. Five different forms of Stuxnet are thought to have targeted Iranian Siemens facilities. In 2010, the Israeli and US governments were reported to have used Stuxnet to infiltrate Iran’s nuclear armory (allegations both government deny). The virus was reported to have done serious damage to uranium centrifuge operations, causing them to spin out of control (Iranian authorities deny this). Iran’s nuclear facilities have since been hit by an array of computer assaults, including one in April 2012, which forced Iranian authorities to disconnect the country’s main oil export terminal from the Internet.

Like DoS attacks, computer viruses are highly risky. They may be one day be declared acts of formal acts of war and therefore have the potential to escalate into violence. Moreover, computer viruses risk a strong backlash effect, enabling an authoritarian regime to label external actors as part of a larger foreign conspiracy. *The authors of this document do not condone the use of cyber viruses as a form of nonviolent resistance.*

Communications Jams: Where authoritarian regimes use their monopoly of the airwaves to silence dissent and promote propaganda, external actors have sought to jam regime communications. These interruptions to government communication frequencies (whether via radio, Internet, or television) have been used not only to stop authoritarian regimes from spreading hate, but also to broadcast oppositional messages.

Jamming communications frequencies is a commonly employed method of military warfare used by authoritarian and democratic governments alike. Traditionally designed to stop the transmission of propaganda during formal warfare, communications jams are increasingly being considered as a nonviolent option to promote democratic regime change. As one military analyst acknowledges, “Jamming is something we think about in the context of shooting wars [but] it may have its place in social revolutions as well.” In NATO’s 2011 military intervention in Libya, for example, government communications jams were among the most favored methods discussed among military circles. Communications jams, it was hoped, would make it harder for Qaddafi to communicate with his forces and help sustain the Libyan rebels.

Communications jams are widely considered to be a relatively passive military option that can have damaging effects on targeted military or inter-governmental communications. That said, communications jamming may be interpreted as an act of war and risks prompting violent conflict.

ARTISTS, JOURNALISTS & COMMUNICATIONS EXPERTS

What artists, communications professionals and others are doing to end dictatorship

Authoritarian regimes do their best to intercept streams of communication among opposition groups, and between the opposition and the outside world. By isolating domestic activists, authoritarian regimes hope to thwart communication and thereby undermine organized dissent. External actors can play an important role in helping local activists overcome such obstacles. Below is a sample of the many techniques and tools available to external actors seeking to facilitate communication among democratic forces in repressive contexts.

Graffiti: Graffiti has proven to be a mainstay of nonviolent resistance for domestic activists struggling against authoritarian regimes. Whether in Belgrade or in Cairo, graffiti offers an inexpensive, time-effective way for regime critics to communicate their dissatisfaction with the regime, and communicate their solidarity with fellow resisters. It is also a reliable method to communicate messages among the resistance, particularly when the Internet or phone lines have been shut down. For example, graffiti was a staple of activism for youth movements like Otpor, Kmara, and Pora, and has been used by members of the opposition in Egypt, Tunisia, Yemen, and Syria. External actors looking to support such activism may consider delivering canisters of spray paint to members of the opposition or providing financial resources to enable its purchase within a country. It is noteworthy, however, that, like other methods of nonviolent resistance, graffiti alone is no panacea. Savvy authoritarian regimes can quickly remove all remnants of graffiti, and may resort to using anti-graffiti paints on walls and buildings. Moreover, authoritarian loyalists or regime-backed mercenaries may also use graffiti to voice their support for the regime.

Messenger Animals: Animals such as livestock, dogs, cats, and homing pigeons are another unconventional tool activists have used to communicate messages to one another. Particularly in areas where the Internet is not widely available, animals can provide a no-tech way for messages to be sent from one part of a country or city to another. Message delivery via pigeons dates back to the Persians, and has even been used by journalistic organizations like Reuters. Under rare circumstances, external actors might consider using such methods to communicate with domestic activists, or to aid communication among members of the opposition. It should be mentioned, however, that such methods are likely to be time consuming, require significant training of animals, and may result in harm to animals.

Unconventional Message Carriers: Objects like balloons and ping-pong balls offer another unconventional means of communication among domestic activists and the outside world. Since 2005, for example, a group of North Korean dissidents living in South Korea have sent millions of balloons carrying USBs, DVDs, radios, pens, and leaflets condemning Kim Jong-il into North Korea. Propaganda balloons were also a regular source of communication between the West and communist Soviet Union, with

balloons stowing anti-Communist literature sent from West Germany over the Berlin Wall. Balloons may also be used to communicate strategy or other important sources of information, and may be particularly useful where other forms of communication have been cut off. Flying objects are, however, an easy target for snipers, and may be of limited effect, depending on the type of information transmitted and the geographic reach of the vector. Such forms of intervention may also risk escalating into violence. In early 2011, for example, North Korea threatened “direct fire” against South Korea if it allowed balloon propaganda to continue.

Sneakernet Methods: One technique external actors can use to facilitate communication among and with domestic activists is that of sneakernet. Sneakernet refers to the method of physically swapping electronic information that is held in removable media, like USB flash drives, DVDs, or external hard drives. Where Internet usage is censored and/or heavily restricted, this media can be traded among activists in creative ways that defy detection. For example, activists may consider hiding memory cards in shoe soles or couriering flash drives via carrier pigeons. Sneakernet is becoming an increasingly common form of activism, as authoritarian regimes become increasingly sophisticated in monitoring cell phone and internet usage. External actors might consider developing new sneakernet techniques, and sharing them with activists abroad.
* This technique may also be employed by IT activists and organizations.

Color Coded Public Spaces: Another tech-free method of communication among domestic activists is the use of color coding to signify solidarity. Color-coding public spaces or wearing agreed-upon colors, such as was witnessed during the Color Revolutions in Ukraine and Georgia or during Iran’s Green Revolution, can symbolize unity against repression, and communicate opposition-strongholds. External actors looking to support color-coding activities may consider providing color-specific ware, such as T-Shirts, whistles, armbands, bandanas, etc. They may also demonstrate solidarity with the opposition by communicating these colors via instruments such as laser beams. Or, they can even color their own public spaces to demonstrate their solidarity with foreign revolutionaries. As the color revolutions demonstrate, color-coding can be an important way to show kinship and demonstrate the depth of opposition to the regime. However, it also marks activists as easy targets for the regime. In Iran, for example, security forces are alleged to have made mass arrests of people wearing green armbands. With respect to external actors, organizations looking to support color-coding efforts should be wary of tainting the opposition’s claims to independence. In Iran, for example, green T-Shirts emblazoned with “Made in the USA” may well do more harm than good.

Lights Signals: Like color codes, light signals are a mainstay of nonviolent resistance methodology. Light signals—whereby individuals sympathetic to the regime switch on (or off) lights or candles at an agreed upon time—can be an effective way to communicate solidarity and the extent of opposition to an authoritarian regime. They can also be used to deliver messages across short distances. For external actors, light signals can also be a tool to communicate moral support for an opposition, and also, to

draw attention to a foreign people's plight. On Earth Day, for example, environmental activists around the world agreed upon a set hour to turn off non-essential lights—thereby signaling their collective environmental consciousness. If coordinated effectively, global light signals can help draw attention to important causes, and also bolster the confidence of domestic activists.

Messages via Infographics: Particularly in countries where literacy rates are low, transmitting messages through infographics and pictures can be an important method of communication. Leaflets and billboards conveying nonviolent resistance strategies and other important messages via pictures rather than words are one form such infographics might take. External actors can transmit leaflets through balloons, birds, or other unconventional sources to domestic activists.

Resistance Art: Art – whether musical, poetic, dramatic or visual – can be powerful symbols of defiance against oppressive rulers. Using humor, cultural symbolism and colloquial language, local artists can not only ridicule regime leaders but galvanize a public to action and pass along valuable information hidden in lyrics or images. Songs, poetry and public art were commonly used in Tahrir Square in 2011. Outside actors can support these artists financially, materially or morally, and can spread their messages globally by translating and propagating videos, images or text of local art. Artists outside of a repressive regime - particularly celebrities – have the power to attract the attention of their followers to celebrate resistance or condemn abuse.

Adbusting: To undermine the legitimacy of authoritarian regimes, external actors may consider creative methods to mock incumbents and their supporters. Taking a cue from [Adbusters](#), individuals and organizations can spoof propagandistic images of the regime. One [example](#) was a recent commercial launched by a South African chicken chain, Nando, mocking Mugabe as the “last dictator standing”. Such efforts are likely to face a strong backlash by the authoritarian in question. In Zimbabwe's case, the controversial ad was quickly pulled after Nando's Zimbabwe branch received threats and other forms of harassment.

Billboards: Billboards offer a large, highly visible vehicle for domestic activists to take issue with the regime. Particularly where authoritarian regimes do not rule with a total iron fist, billboards can provide an important tool for the opposition to communicate with potential sympathizers and to broaden the appeal of their message. In 2000, billboards proved to be an important tool in the hands of Serbia's opposition, helping to legitimize anti-Milosevic candidates and raise the profile of the opposition. External actors can help domestic activists gain access to billboards by providing funds for rental costs (which can often be very pricey, particularly for a cash-strapped opposition) and possibly renting them directly on the opposition's behalf. Because of their public exposure, billboards can serve as important communication tools. However they are likely to be inaccessible to the opposition in traditional authoritarian contexts, where all forms of opposition are banned.

Posters and Stickers: Perhaps a more widely accessible tool for the opposition (even in more hard-line authoritarian contexts) is the poster. Posters advertising anti-regime protests or featuring pro-opposition messages are an important, inexpensive method of communication that has the potential to reach large audiences quickly. Unlike billboards, posters can be hung rent-free and can also be used to paste over regime-sponsored propaganda. In Egypt, for example, the April 6 Movement and the youth wing of the Muslim Brotherhood jointly plastered Cairo with posters advertising protests. In Serbia, Otpor members plastered posters throughout the country, advocating resistance and calling on patriotic Serbs to band together against dictatorship. Otpor also plastered stickers announcing “He’s Finished” over portraits of Milosevic, thereby transforming ostensibly pro-regime propaganda into anti-regime fodder. In Serbia’s case, external actors helped pay for and produce posters and stickers, enabling a truly national campaign to ouster Milosevic to emerge in late 2000. Where circumstances allow, external actors might also consider airlifting such products into an authoritarian country. External actors can sponsor or provide materials and design ideas for posters and stickers but, must be mindful, however, that they do not inadvertently delegitimize the opposition.

* This tool also applies to nongovernmental organizations and governments.

Live-Streaming: Organizations looking to raise public awareness of regime abuses and/or lobby policymakers to take action on specific transgressions may also consider live-streaming images of abuse – or in the converse, of protests. [Al Jazeera](#), for example, provided live-stream coverage of Egypt’s revolution, while the website, [GlobalRevolution](#), provided live-streamed coverage of Occupy Wall Street. Live-streaming has the potential to be very effective in documenting large-scale protests and exposing regime abuses. These images can be used to galvanize global public opinion against a regime, and to propel foreign policymakers to take action in favor of democracy.

Punk a Dictator: Pranks, such as prank phone calls or hoax meetings are a way individuals can mock a regime’s claims to legitimacy but this is also a tool for those working in TV and radio. [British TV comedian and satirist Mark Thomas uses pranks and stunts to expose questionable government and business practices.](#) For example, [pretending to work at a PR company, he managed to film a senior Indonesian military official to admit to torture.](#) This tool has the potential to reach a large audience and shame regimes publically. Such efforts must be organized with caution to limit any negative backlash against suspected informants.

Evidence Collection & Record Keeping: External actors can also provide a vehicle for domestic activists to act as informants against the regime. By providing a number for activists to call or an email address to send evidence to, external actors can help activists collect evidence of abuses that are ongoing. Unfortunately, such repositories can become very vulnerable. External actors must proceed with extreme caution on this front to ensure that human rights data is properly encrypted and safe from harm. This must be done very carefully to avoid identification of activists and to avoid

compromising evidence, which must be in a condition for use in court once a case is filed.

Loudspeakers: Another inexpensive way for critics of the regime to communicate to supporters is via loudspeakers – whether a bullhorn, speakers mounted on a truck, or the sound system from a community center or religious institution. Loudspeakers can be particularly important channels for communication at public protests. External actors can help provide funds for loudspeakers and other low-tech communication tools, or help funnel them directly into the country.

*This tool also applies to nongovernmental organizations and governments.

Hoax Toys and Sports Equipment: Turning conventional objects, like toys or soccer balls, into anti-regime communication tools is another form of nonviolent resistance. Footballs, for example, can be emblazoned with the face of a dictator and kicked around in acts of playful defiance. Simple toys and sports equipment creatively designed to poke fun at a dictator can bolster the confidence of activists and decrease the fear-factor upon which many authorities depend to maintain their grip on power. External actors can sponsor or supply such hoaxes.

*This tool also applies to nongovernmental organizations and governments.

Cell Phones: Since becoming widely available in the 1990s, cell phones have proven a convenient, low-cost means of communication for many opponents of authoritarianism. Mobile phones and text messaging are believed to have been particularly useful in Libya, where they were used to set up meetings, stage protests, and discuss strategy. [Research](#) shows that increasing access to existing, low-tech technologies like mobile phones increases protests against repressive regimes. In addition to purchasing and distributing cell phones, governments and INGOs have also sponsored the mass distribution of SMS texts. In Milosevic's Serbia, for example, foreign foundations sponsored mass SMS texts to get out the vote on Election Day. Mobile phones with cameras have also been used to document protests and regime-sponsored abuse. Cell phone coverage documenting violence committed by Iranian security forces, for example, sparked widespread protest and condemnation abroad, and helped galvanize protest around the country. In Russia, cell phone [footage](#) of electoral fraud sparked anti-Putin protests and prompted calls for free and fair elections.

*This tool also applies to nongovernmental organizations and governments.

Fax Machines: The transmission of messages via fax machines played an important part in the protests of the 1980s and 1990s, helping to bring the end to the Soviet Union, and even encouraging protestors in Tiananmen Square. But simple, low-tech fax machines continue to serve a purpose in the midst of today's upheavals. Where the Internet is down, fax machines are a cost-effective way to get information into the hands of activists. In Egypt, for example, external actors delivered medical leaflets on how to treat tear gas via fax. It is important to note, however, that faxes are particularly vulnerable to regime interception as there is no secure protocol for fax transmission.

*This tool also applies to nongovernmental organizations and governments.

Bluetooth: Available on most ordinary cell phones and laptop computers, Bluetooth is a widely accessible instrument that can transmit information among activists in short periods of time. An oft-overlooked technology, Bluetooth was most prominently used in Iran during the Green Revolution of 2009. Because Iranian authorities had sought to shut off text messaging and cell phone call coverage, domestic activists turned to Bluetooth. It was thanks to Bluetooth that the infamous video documenting the death of “Neda” went viral. External actors can supply both Bluetooth enable devices and the technical support to keep them up and running safely.

*This tool also applies to nongovernmental organizations, governments, and IT experts.

Dial-Up Modems: When regimes shut down the Internet, external actors can help local activists get back online using old-fashioned dial-up modems (traditional internet infrastructure). [We ReBuild](#) and [NDF](#) used dial-up modems, landline phones, fax machines and radios to re-establish contact with local activists. In Egypt, they used dial-up to connect to the Internet in Western Europe, out of Egyptian authorities' reach. This meant anyone in Egypt with an analog phone line capable of dialing Western Europe was able to connect to the network. While a potentially useful last course of action in cases where Internet has been cut-off, this can be a potentially expensive option and relies on telephone signals being operative and power being available for computers. Moreover, wire-lines may be prone to surveillance and numbers can be blocked by suspicious regimes.

*This tool also applies to nongovernmental organizations, governments, and IT experts.

Two-Way Radios: Unlike broadcast radio, two-way radio can both transmit and receive content. Known colloquially as walkie-talkies, two-way radios are personal radio transceivers that allow multiple users to communicate while operating at the same radio frequency. During the Egyptian Revolution, Telecomix offered simple instructions for how activists could turn ordinary clock radios into walkie-talkies capable of communicating with one another within a 2-kilometer range. Outside actors are uniquely positioned to provide both instruction and funding for this equipment or the actual hardware.

*This tool also applies to nongovernmental organizations, governments, and IT experts.

HAM Radio: Where Internet communication is blocked, HAM radio might provide a vehicle for regime critics to transmit messages out of the country, depending on that country's spectrum policy. In 1990, for example, Boris Yeltsin used HAM radio to communicate messages that were picked up by the BBC, Voice of America, and Radio Free Europe, and rebroadcast back into the Soviet Union. To teach domestic activists the utility of HAM, [We Rebuild](#) has a [website](#) detailing how users can use HAM radio to communicate. [Telecomix](#) and Germany's [Piraten Partei](#) also have more details. Thanks in part to these efforts, HAM allowed communication through code from Egypt. The utility of HAM radio is not, however, universal. Among the most avid users of HAM in Egypt, for example, were members of the regime with military training, as Telecomix realized

[early on](#). HAM's utility depends greatly on national spectrum policies—making the Middle East a less viable option, but a country like India more viable.

*This tool also applies to nongovernmental organizations, governments, and IT experts.

AM/FM Radio: AM/FM radio also offers an important tool for activists. Local radio stations, for instance, often provide alternative sources of information. For over a decade, external actors have provided financial and material resources to local radio stations in repressive regimes. Such assistance can be critical in helping to keep these voices alive amidst repression. In Serbia, for instance, the alternative b92 radio was able to maintain its criticism of the Milosevic regime in large part thanks to the support of foreign NGOs like [IREX](#), who helped pay for everything from office rent to transmitters.

*This tool also applies to nongovernmental organizations, governments, and IT experts.

LPFM radio: Low power, frequency modulated (LPFM) radio allows users to transmit electronic broadcasts using very low amounts of energy. While a normal FM radio station transmits at thousands of watts, LPFM radio allows users to transmit at just milliwatts, with a maximum broadcast power of 100 watts. This makes them less expensive, but also less powerful. At best, LPFM radio can reach only a small community of listeners.

*This tool also applies to nongovernmental organizations, governments, and IT experts.

Handheld VHF/UHF Radio: Handheld radios at Very High Frequencies or Ultrahigh Frequencies (VHF/UHF) can transmit radio frequencies from 30 MHz to 300 MHz and higher. These cheap, battery powered handheld devices can also be charged with solar power that allows for one time pad encryption modules. These radios allow users to bypass government infrastructure, and can enable communication at long distances. Such devices are particularly useful in emergency situations.

*This tool also applies to nongovernmental organizations, governments, and IT experts.

International Radio Broadcasting: Since World War II, international radio broadcasts have emerged as a critical tool of foreign policy. During the Cold War, for example, the US's Voice of America and Radio Free Europe transmitted foreign sources of information into the Soviet Union. More recently, broadcast radio was used to transmit Radio Free Europe broadcasts throughout the Middle East. Because international broadcasting boasts a long (and controversial) history, repressive regimes have responded accordingly. In North Korea, all radio receivers are produced with fixed frequencies, tuned to local frequencies so that North Koreans cannot access foreign broadcasts. In 2002, the Cuban government jammed the Voice of America broadcast, while Chinese authorities jammed Radio Free Asia. There are several steps external actors can take to mitigate such obstructionism. For example, external actors might consider developing more effective transmitting antennas or employing frequent changes to transmitted frequencies via Single Sideboard. In North Korea, dissidents are also reported to have smuggled in hand-held radios capable of receiving international transmissions.

*This tool also applies to nongovernmental organizations, governments, and IT experts.

Satellite Internet Modems: Satellite Internet modems allow users to bypass government-controlled telecom companies to get news out of the country. Particularly useful in emergency situations, or where mobile phones and Internet services are shut down, satellite or satmodems enable data transfer via communications satellites, thus serving as a form of circumvention technology. External actors concerned with circumvention have, in several cases, put satmodems into the hands of local activists. In Egypt, for example, nongovernmental organizations provided not only satphones but also portable Internet satellite modems. Unfortunately, as with satphones, satellite Internet modems can be monitored and their usage detected where activists are not operating from a secure location.

*This tool also applies to nongovernmental organizations, governments, and IT experts.

Satellite Phones: To avoid interception of regime-run mobile communication lines, external actors may also consider providing domestic activists with satellite phones (‘satphones’). Satphones function similarly to ordinary cell phones, but connect to orbiting satellites rather than land-based cell sites. Today, many satphones are indistinguishable from ordinary cell or smart phones. Satphones have been a tool of communication among opposition activists since the 1990s. In Milosevic’s Serbia, the international communication provided several leading regime critics with satphones. A pricey enterprise at the time, many of these phones went unused. Foreign governments and nongovernmental organizations were reported to have sent numerous satphones to revolutionaries in the Middle East and North Africa. The preponderance of satphones prompted Syria to [ban](#) satphones, labeling satphone possession a crime of treason. Where phone lines and electricity are cut off, satphones are one of the few means left for domestic activists to communicate with the outside world. Like all satellites devices, however, satphones have significant security weaknesses. In November 2011, [Access reported](#) allegations that the geographic locations of Thuraya satellite device users had been transmitted to Syrian authorities.

*This tool also applies to nongovernmental organizations, governments, and IT experts.

Digital Steganography: One technique for activists to get information out of a country and to communicate securely is through digital steganography. Steganography refers to a form of encryption in which data is hidden within the blank spaces found in digital file, like photos or sound files. Steganography is not a new method, nor is it foolproof: decryption methods abound and some countries, like Pakistan and Iran, have banned encryption technology altogether. If further honed and more widely taught, however, steganography has the capacity to provide activists with a communication method that is virtually indistinguishable from ordinary digital files. Particularly where regimes have developed sophisticated surveillance tools, steganography—when combined with sneakernet—may prove an important method of communication between domestic activists and the outside world.

DIPLOMATS

What diplomats are doing to end dictatorship

Diplomatic tools are another widely utilized method for wielding leverage over repressive regimes. Less controversial than many of the instruments listed above, diplomatic tools are often criticized for lacking sufficient ‘bite’ and being poor substitutes for sanctions and/or military intervention. Still, these tools are often the precursor to more aggressive forms of intervention and, when complemented with other modes of foreign policy, have often proved successful.

Statements and Démarches: Foreign heads of state, foreign ministers, and diplomats may issue statements in condemnation of undemocratic actions taken by the regime. Statements of solidarity with regime opponents, endorsing the legitimacy of protests, may also be issued. Statements of support have proven an inexpensive and timely way to demonstrate opposition to repressive actions. Many argued, for example, that President Obama should have taken a more vocal role in support of Iranian activists in 2009. [Critics](#) argue, however, that such statements often backfire by lending credence to autocrats’ claims of foreign meddling.

Advice: Diplomatic missions, INGO offices, and other external actors residing in or near a repressive country can also show an open door to democratic activists looking for advice on how to administer nonviolent resistance techniques. In the 1990s, the OSCE mission to Belarus offered advice to governmental and nongovernmental actors. In Milosevic’s Serbia, opposition leaders sought electoral advice from foreign actors and governments. It is important, however, that such advice be demand-driven and be well informed. The ultimate impact of such advice will of course depend on domestic activists themselves.

Convening Activists: Foreign actors can also help set up discussions, panels, and conferences for opposition leaders. This can be particularly useful when opposition candidates are bickering or adversarial. Such meetings can set the grounds for political conciliation and provide the building blocks for coalition formation. Meeting between regime loyalists and the opposition may even provide a vehicle for a peaceful transfer of power or set the terms for free and fair elections. The first meetings between the ANC and South African authorities, for example, were arranged by diplomats and took place outside of the country. Gatherings of opposition candidates were also used to promote the newfound unity of the Democratic Opposition of Serbia in the months leading up to Milosevic’s unseating. Often, however, such meetings are costly and, occasionally, can have adverse effects if a regime-held media portrays such meetings as inorganic.

Connecting Activists with Foreign Governments: External actors can also facilitate meetings among local activists with foreign governments. In Algiers, in the 1990s, diplomats regularly invited opposition leaders to their embassies and missions, and fostered contacts with foreign leaders. This happens too in today’s Cuba. In Ukraine, Serbia and Georgia, embassies also developed travel programs to capitals for opposition

leaders. These trips can be used as fundraising opportunities for opposition politicians, as well as advocacy opportunities to draw attention to their country's plight. Such meetings can also backfire.

Trial Monitoring: Just as they monitor elections, so too can diplomats monitor the trials of democratic activists and/or regime loyalists. In Iran, EU diplomats regularly attended the trial of security personnel who killed a Canadian-Iranian journalist in Tehran. In 2009, diplomats attended the trial of Aung San Suu Kyi. Such monitoring can be used to spread awareness of human rights violations and signal the diplomatic community's disapproval of a perceived injustice. However, their effect may be more symbolic than anything else, as they rely on the power of public outrage to force change.

Protests: Diplomats (and other foreigners) can also take part in protests against the regime. A diplomatic presence was regularly witnessed at protests in Budapest, Santiago, Manila, Belgrade, Kiev, Havana and Kathmandu. Direct participation by diplomats at opposition-organized events may bolster the confidence of domestic activists and underline foreign countries' discord with repressive tactics. However, they may potentially undermine the credibility of the protests themselves, as authoritarian regimes use them as evidence of foreign intervention. Politically engaged diplomats may also face expulsion.

Diplomatic Immunity: Diplomats residing in repressive contexts can use their diplomatic immunity to protect democratic activists and provide sanctuary for potential dissidents. In 2004, diplomats in Ukraine representing the French Embassy, European Commission, and ODIHR helped stop the arrest of a youth activist by showing up at his home and imploring state security services to leave. In Nepal in 2005, diplomats helped protect dissidents from arrest by accompanying them to the airport and physically blocking their seizure. Active diplomats are, however, an easy target for the regime. While their immunity may not be withdrawn, diplomats can be expelled as was the case in Burma, Sudan, and Belarus. Repressive regimes have also used loyalists to intimidate diplomats by proxy, as the Kremlin did by sponsoring the harassment of the UK Ambassador to Russia by the Nashi, a pro-Kremlin youth group.

Refuge and Sanctuary for Activists: Where human rights violations are particularly egregious, diplomats or foreign governments can offer refuge to dissidents. During World War II, several diplomats offered safe haven to Jews, artists, and other minorities persecuted by the Nazis. Diplomats also provided refuge to South African activists. While often useful for saving the lives of a few, such actions do not, however, provide long-term solutions to repressive regimes.

Joining the Resistance: External actors can also become active members of the resistance within a repressive country, helping to organize protests and get information out to foreign journalists. In Serbia, a handful of foreigners stayed in Serbia throughout the NATO bombing of the country and helped organize protests. In Libya, several [foreigners](#) joined the resistance, albeit often partaking in violence. Such efforts have,

however, been of dubious utility, as foreigners who do not speak the local language or have much familiarity with the domestic context may be ill-equipped to offer useful help and may in fact proven a burden on domestic forces.

STATES

How governments are helping to end dictatorship

States are often at the forefront of military conflict. Yet there are a variety of tools state actors can use—and are using—to undermine dictatorship abroad. Many of these tools involve sanctions, but several move beyond the coercive. By virtue of their unparalleled resources and sheer power, state actors have an important role to play not simply in ending their tacit support for dictatorship abroad, but also in fostering democracy abroad. Below are some of the tools and techniques state actors can use to support democratic activists in authoritarian contexts.

Education of Foreign Service Corps, Military & Civil Servants: Often nonviolent resistance is a foreign idea to democratic countries' Foreign Service corps, military officers and other key civil servants. By educating staff living and working for democratic governments inside repressive regimes, democratic states can better prepare their staff to understand, analyze and support nonviolent protestors, leading to better informed foreign policy decisions and subtle aid to activists.

Leveraging Aid: One way governments can incentivize democratization in repressive regimes is to better leverage trade and military aid. Too often, financial and military aid is provided without regard for a country's democratic standards. In many cases, flagrant human rights abuses are overlooked in the name of counter-terrorism and/or regional stability. In Yemen, for example, the U.S. continues to provide military aid under the guise of anti-terrorism, despite the preponderance of child soldiers in the Yemeni military. Governments should do more to leverage the aid they provide to incentive democratic reform.

Companies: Governments wield power to pressure companies within their own countries to change their dealings with oppressive governments. By enacting laws or by working with executives, governments can influence companies to end the sale of goods or services to oppressive regimes. Alternatively, governments can work with companies whose products are vital to activists, such as Facebook or Twitter, to maintain secure access to such goods and services. During Iran's Green Revolution, Twitter was persuaded to change the time of a planned service update so that it would not inadvertently cut activists off from each other.

Tax Havens: Tax havens often provide a critical resource for repressive regime leaders, loyalists, and their family members to hide their wealth. By channeling their ill-begotten fortunes through tax havens like the Cayman Islands, the Maldives or Switzerland, dictators can launder their money while maintaining an unrivaled powerbase back home. To hit dictators where it hurts (i.e. their wallets), foreign governments might consider prohibiting companies from making payments to tax havens that cater to dictators. Funds channeled to secret bank accounts could be frozen by sympathetic governments, as Switzerland did with respect to Gaddafi. Individual investors, companies, and tourists

could follow suit by boycotting tax havens, like the Bahamas, that refuse to buckle to international pressure.

Transparency in International Business: Despite their often ample financial resources, repressive regimes often force their citizens to live at or near abject poverty. The [publish what you pay](#) movement seeks to promote greater transparency in the financial transactions that governments make, so that citizens can hold them accountable. Why not extend these efforts even further? Transparency in financial transactions should be extended to all corporations, governments, organizations, and individual investors that do business with dictatorial regimes. Such transparency should not merely be enforced by law, but by secondary pressure exerted by the international community. NGOs, governments, and international organizations should work together to ensure that businesses are not making profits at the price of human rights.

Military Aid: Like development aid, many countries provide aid in the form of military weaponry and training. In authoritarian contexts, this aid is frequently used against nonviolent protestors. Egypt is a prime example: U.S. military aid to Egypt totaled over \$1.3 billion annually, even as the military cracked down on protestors. Donor governments should closely monitor the use of aid materials by recipient countries to ensure compliance to international standards. At the very least, human rights and international law should become mandatory components of any training by donor countries.

Export Licenses: Along with military aid, foreign governments often provide export licenses permitting the sale of weapons to countries with questionable human rights records. This fall, for example, [Amnesty International](#) reported that the U.S. State Department had provided export licenses to two U.S. companies known for selling the very chemical irritants and riot control agents that Egypt's military used to stifle domestic protests. One way state-actors can push to change this is by developing an effective global Arms Trade Treaty that would establish stricter national licensing controls. Thus far, attempts to develop such a Treaty have met great resistance in the U.S., where gun rights groups like the National Rifle Association have labeled it a threat to the Second Amendment.

Development Aid Restrictions: Western governments give millions of dollars in foreign aid each year, often to dubious governments who otherwise represent key national interests. For example, the U.S. Agency for International Development ([USAID](#)) has provided over \$28 billion in economic and development assistance to Egypt since 1975. This can be used as both a stick and a carrot to encourage governments to reform and punish those that refuse to respect their citizens' rights. In October 2011, for example, the British Prime Minister threatened to cut development aid to Commonwealth countries that criminalize homosexuality. While a potentially important tool, such policies are likely to prove more controversial where countries have a greater stake in national security or economic interests, as in the case of Egypt.

Pressuring Neighbors: Bordering states often lend passive or active support to dictatorships in neighboring states. By doing business with dictatorial regimes or lending diplomatic credibility to their neighbors, bordering states often (at times, inadvertently) bolster repression. This is in large part because neighbors rarely want to destabilize the region. Moreover, being friendly to dictators often pays. Nice neighbors frequently gain access to lucrative state coffers, and reap the financial benefits of dictators' financial monopolies. Why not help to alter the costs and benefits of neighborly behavior? If governments and corporations incentivize bordering states to stop doing business with neighboring dictatorships, they can help to further isolate such regimes and increase the odds that regime loyalists will abandon ship.

Dual Citizenship Withdrawal: Many dictators and human rights abusers enjoy dual citizenship. Foreign governments might consider revoking such citizenship to protest undemocratic acts committed by their citizens.

Golden Parachutes: Another way external actors can intervene to stop repression is to negotiate amnesty for dictators, whereby a dictator agrees to leave the repressive country in question in exchange for exile in a friendly country. Liberia's Charles Taylor was, for example, offered exile in Nigeria (though this was later rescinded after an indictment for his arrest was released by the Special Court for Sierra Leone). Amnesty for dictators is, however, highly [controversial](#). While advocates say it is a realistic way to end violence quickly, critics argue that it conflicts with international law and amounts to impunity.

Radio Infrastructure in Neighboring States: Where Internet is not available or is difficult to access, independent media sources may be channeled into the country through the establishment of FM radio transmitters. This costly and time-consuming technique was implemented in Milosevic's Serbia. Thanks to US aid, FM transmitters were built or refurbished in neighboring Bosnia, Kosovo, Croatia, and Romania. The so-called 'Ring Around Serbia' enabled foreign aid providers to rebroadcast domestic Serbian programming from independent news outlets as well as Serbian language programming from the Voice of America, the BBC, Deutsche Welle, and Radio France. Its effectiveness as an instrument of democracy promotion is best ensured if donors are committed to carrying out their efforts over the long-term. In Serbia's case, many of the transmitters and radio towers were only up and running *after* Milosevic's ouster.

Shadow Mobile Phone Networks: Where repressive governments have full control over mobile phone networks, foreign governments have established shadow networks to offset governments' ability to shut down services. In Afghanistan, the US State Department and Pentagon are reported to have spent at least \$50 million on a [Palisades Project](#) using towers on US military bases inside Afghanistan. This highly expensive and time-consuming project is clearly only a method that can be taken if an external actor is committed to maintaining a long-term presence in the country.

Membership Conditionality: In Europe, the lure of EU membership is frequently used as a carrot or stick to offending states thought to have violated international law or cracked down on democracy. For example, the promise of EU membership is believed to have been particularly effective in Slovakia's removal of Meciar. EU conditionality has also been used to prod Serbia into compliance with the ICTY. EU conditionality is, however, a controversial tool with utility limited to potential EU member states and/or close neighbors. In terms of efficacy, critics argue that conditionality's impact of Central and Eastern Europe has been overstated, as many of these countries were already en route to democracy and would have made the transition irrespective of the EU's influence. In cases, such as [Belarus](#), which lack a liberal democratic tradition, tools such as conditionality appear to be far less effective in facilitating reform.

UN Security Council Resolution: The five permanent members of the UN Security Council (the US, UK, France, Russia and China), as well as the ten rotating non-permanent members, can sponsor a resolution condemning repression, authorizing action (such as the use of force or the establishment of a peacekeeping mission), or referring a case to the ICC. At present, all five permanent members of the Security Council wield a veto that can be used at any time. In recent cases like Syria, some permanent members have successfully blocked Security Council action.

Fact-Finding and UN Missions: Obtaining records of abuse is an important way not simply to bolster international support for an end to violence, but also to wage a legal case against an incumbent regime. Fact-finding missions can be an important step in collecting evidence of torture, killings, rape, and other human rights violations. Such missions can be used to obtain witness testimony or evidence of mass graves, and be presented in the hopes of winning an indictment at, for example, the ICC. In 2011, the LA Times [reported](#) that some Western countries were supporting a war crimes investigation against President Assad of Syria. The creation of a standby UN peacekeeping force for rapid deployment to ensure human rights monitoring is another idea that bears greater thought.

The Rome Statute: The Rome Statute is the international treaty that established the International Criminal Court (ICC). By becoming party to the treaty, the Court automatically exercises jurisdiction over crimes committed there or by a national of that state. State parties must also cooperate with the Court and surrender suspects upon the Court's request. With fewer places available to dictators to hide in impunity, the cost of violating human rights rises.

International Tribunal Indictments: Ad hoc tribunal indictments such as those launched by the International Criminal Tribunals for the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda, offer a potential deterrent for dictators using violence against their citizens. The utility of such legal instrument is highly controversial, however. Critics point out that the ICTY, for example, while established in 1993 did nothing to prevent the genocide of Srebrenica and did not stop the ensuing war in Kosovo. Critics also say that indictments represent little more than 'victor's justice', and may in fact bolster domestic support for the

repressive regime, which can easily cast itself as a victim of global conspiracy. In Milosevic's Serbia, for example, Milosevic was widely hailed as a victim of global persecution. Many would have preferred to see Milosevic tried within Serbia.

ICC Indictments: Indictments issued by the International Criminal Court (ICC) targeting dictators for violations of international law have also been heralded for acting as deterrents against future war crimes. In 2009, the ICC issued its first ever indictment of a sitting head of state. The indictment filed against Sudan's President Bashir, accused him of war crimes and crimes against humanity (originally, the indictment also included genocide, but this was later excluded on grounds of insufficient evidence). ICC indictments are, however, highly controversial, require considerable international consensus, and are very time consuming. Thus far, only African heads of state have been indicted by the ICC—a fact that has spurred resentment across the continent. Moreover, critics argue that such indictments are of questionable utility given that the ICC itself does not have the power to arrest and extradite the indicted, and must thus rely on states and organizations to do its bidding. Also, many argue that the crimes the ICC can prosecute are too limited. In the future, international actors might consider pressing for the expansion of the crimes that the ICC can prosecute.

International Arrest Warrants: States might also consider taking legal matters into their own hands through the deployment of international arrest warrants. Already, some states have turned to such methods. For example, in 1998, Spain indicted Augusto Pinochet for human rights violations committed in Chile. Unfortunately, these methods have proven difficult to implement in practice. In Pinochet's case, though British authorities ultimately staged an arrest at Spain's request, Pinochet was ultimately released and returned to Chile, without facing justice in Spain. Outstanding questions about rules of jurisdiction, application, and mechanisms for international arrest warrants for human rights violators mean that few states turn to such options. In the future, states might consider being more liberal in their use of international warrants.

Diplomatic Immunity: When representatives of repressive regimes visit foreign states under the guise of diplomatic immunity, such states might consider denying those representatives their diplomatic immunity. This would allow states to hold these individuals responsible for human rights violations, and ensure that justice is served. While a potentially fruitful avenue worth exploring further, it should be noted that any amendment to the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations risks setting a precedent that dictators might apply to diplomats on their home soil.

Diplomatic Sanctions: A low-cost alternative to economic and military sanctions can be found in diplomatic sanctions. The first line of offense in most sanctions regimes, diplomatic sanctions include such measures as limiting or cancelling high-level government visits and withdrawing or expelling diplomatic missions and/or staff members. Diplomatic sanctions are a widely utilized tool, and have been used in any number of cases. In part because of their preponderance, diplomatic sanctions are often criticized for being more symbolic than effective.

Travel Bans: One targeted form of sanctions is the travel ban. Designed to home in on select regime loyalists while bypassing innocent civilians, travel sanctions entail visa bans and transit restrictions on specific individuals. Occasionally, as in Cuba, travel sanctions will apply to entire nations. Travel sanctions have been employed against officials in many countries, including but by no means limited to Libya, Afghanistan, the Ivory Coast, North Korea, Iran, and Syria. Travel sanctions are regarded as an important tool to pressurize regime loyalists. One possibility for their improvement is to broaden their range by including regime family members and key supporters.

Sports Sanctions: One form of sanctions designed to galvanize public sentiment against a regime is the sports sanction. Sports sanctions were used in the case of Milosevic's Yugoslavia. Their impact there was, however, questionable. While many Serbs lamented their country's exclusion from international sporting events such as the European Championships, their anger was not always directed at Milosevic. Rather, many attributed their exclusion to the international community, which Milosevic frequently insisted was inherently anti-Serb. The 1980 Moscow Olympics, during which the US and other countries refused to send their athletes to compete in protest over the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, are another example of countries leveraging soft power sports sanctions.

Arms Embargo: An arms embargo refers to a ban on the export or sale of weapons to a targeted country. Arms embargoes are often used to penalize regimes that have engaged in violent conflict, either against other states or their own people. For example, an arms embargo was used in Yugoslavia during the outbreak of the Balkan wars to stop weapons from getting into the hands of the Yugoslav National Army. An arms embargo was also employed against Saddam Hussein's Iraq, in response to that country's invasion of Kuwait. Arms embargoes have also been applied to Iran, Sudan, China, and elsewhere. Arms embargoes generally win widespread support, but are not without their share of controversy. In Yugoslavia, for example, the UN-sponsored arms embargo was criticized for inadvertently bolstering the Bosnian Serbs at Bosniaks' expense, given Serbs' unrivalled access to the Yugoslav arsenal, while the Bosniaks were prevented from acquiring arms. More recently, the arms embargo on China—put into place after Tiananmen Square—has come under fire by France and other EU member states. They argue that the embargo is not only costing them business, but increasing the pace at which China is developing its own new arms technologies. Unfortunately, a side effect of all sanctions, but particularly arms embargoes, is the proliferation of a black market that can play into the hands of regime interests.

Technology Sanctions: Sanctions may also be directed at banning the sale of specific technologies. To date, the sale of nuclear weapons technology is frequently forbidden to regimes like Iran or North Korea. In the future, technology sanctions might be more widely applied to include the sale of Internet technologies that can be used to monitor and/or censor domestic activists. In 2011, for example, the Dutch government announced efforts to ban the export of Internet filters to repressive regimes, for fear

that they be used against citizens. In the future, countries might consider requiring tech giants like Cisco Systems, Nokia Siemens Network or Netfirms to apply for export licenses for networking equipment that enables such questionable tactics as 'deep packet inspection'.

Aviation Sanctions: Governments can also impose aviation sanctions or flight bans, to restrict travel to and from target countries. Aviation sanctions can be used to prevent the sale of aircraft or civil aviation parts to targeted countries. In 2010, for example, the US imposed harsh aviation restrictions on Iran, banning the sale of Boeing aircraft to Iran. Such tactics have been criticized on several fronts, most notably for leaving citizens with few reliable aircraft alternatives and thus putting innocent civilian travelers at risk. For more on the Iranian aircraft sanctions dilemma, click [here](#).

Targeted "Smart" Economic Sanctions: Economic sanctions can take many forms, including but not limited to: imports, exports, and even naval blockades to block imported goods. Economic sanctions are employed for many reasons, one of which is to protest a government's poor treatment of its citizens. Economic sanctions were employed against South Africa to end apartheid, North Korea since the Korean War, Yugoslavia after the outbreak of war, and elsewhere. While widely embraced as an alternative to armed conflict, economic sanctions are not uncontroversial. In Yugoslavia, for example, economic sanctions are credited with giving rise to a gray economy, stimulating hyper-inflation, and channeling resentment against the international community, rather than Milosevic himself. In South Africa, by contrast, economic sanctions are credited with fueling the anti-apartheid movement, though some believe their impact may have been [marginal](#) to the movement's ultimate success. Economic sanctions, if used, must be carefully crafted to target specific people, companies and industries to avoid affecting average civilians, which they often inadvertently do to horrific results. They can also backfire if citizens blame foreign governments, not their own; if this happens, sanctions may even build domestic support for the dictator in question.

Assets Freeze: Another form of economic sanction is the asset freeze. Asset freezes can be used to block the transfer or withdrawal of funds from the accounts of questionable political leaders, their family members, or their coterie. Asset freezes are often joined with other forms of economic and political sanctions, and are thought to be particularly effective in isolating regime loyalists. Switzerland, for example, recently froze the assets of Qaddafi. In November, the Arab league approved a freeze on Syrian government assets in Arab countries.

Corporate Sanctions: Dictators often rely on technology provided by foreign corporations to crack down on domestic opponents. This is true with respect to arms technology, as well as Internet surveillance technology. In September 2011, Reporters Without Borders released a [report](#) accusing major technology heavyweights, like Boeing, Cisco, Nokia, Netfirms, and Blue Coat of criminal cooperation with authoritarian regimes. The report alleges that these firms provide repressive governments in China, Syria, Libya,

Bahrain, and Thailand with communications equipment and confidential data critical to Internet censorship and surveillance. The report calls on governments to place financial sanctions on companies that support telecommunications surveillance in dictatorial regimes.

Condition Sanctions: To incentivize a change in behavior, sanctions can be made conditional on very specific, achievable benchmarks or conditions. The promised lifting of sanctions could thus be used to reward good behavior. Otherwise, faced with no escape route, dictators may be tempted to bring the ship down with them. In Myanmar, for example, the U.S. has recently sought to encourage political reform and the release of political prisoners by promising key rewards, such as the appointment of a U.S. Ambassador. Another way to make sanctions more dynamic would be to create exemptions for defectors. If defectors are ensured their removal from a sanctions list, they may be more likely to defect earlier and in larger numbers.

Odious Debts: In recent years, scholars have proposed the creation of a new type of economic sanction that could be used to disincentive countries from lending to dictators: Odious debts. The theory of odious debt stipulates that any debt incurred by a regime for purposes that do not serve the national interest are the personal debts of that regime, rather than debts of the state. This means that once a dictator is ousted, the state that emerges should not be held responsible for meeting the debts he or she accrued during the time of his or her tenure. The establishment of the odious debt sanction would mean that countries like Iraq would not be held accountable for the debt incurred by dictators like Saddam Hussein. It would also mean that lending to dictators would be financially undesirable for foreign states and investors, since repayment of such loans could not be guaranteed were the regime to fall. For more on the application of odious debt and other types of loan sanctions, click [here](#).

CORPORATIONS AND CONSUMERS

What corporations and consumers are doing to end dictatorship

Corporations often play a critical role in channeling support to repressive regimes. By lending their purchasing power to these corporations, consumers inadvertently facilitate such support. Corporations and consumers are, however, uniquely placed to hit dictators where it hurts: their wallets. Below are some of the ways corporations and consumers are helping to support democracy abroad.

Conscientious Traveling: Dictatorships, particularly those that keep a stranglehold on visible dissent and violence, glean much income from tourism. Sri Lanka's beaches are a favorite among tourists, pyramids have brought millions of visitors to Egypt and the Great Wall is doing a bang up business in China. By boycotting visits to dictatorships and spending travel cash in responsible, democratic countries, individuals can send an economic message to dictators that tourists value more than just the sights and will not turn a blind eye to repression. This idea might even be taken further to target specific hotels or destinations owned by the state or the dictator's network. A "Really Lonely Planet" travel guide book or travel company could even be published or established with this set of values in mind.

Company Boycotts: Boycotts are perhaps the mainstay of nonviolent resistance and they can take a variety of forms, whether cultural, financial, or academic. Boycotts may even target companies who support authoritarian regimes, or countries that provide tax-havens for dictators' wealth. Perhaps the most successful boycott witnessed in recent times was that organized by the Anti-Apartheid Movement in opposition to South Africa's system of apartheid. Boycotts are a potentially important way to isolate a regime, and have in several instances—as in South Africa—been important instruments in undermining repressive regimes. Boycotts must, however, be well organized, sustained, and widely inclusive if they are to be effective.

White Lists: While black lists can be used to condemn companies that work with dictators, white lists can be used to celebrate companies that do not. [Genocide Intervention's](#) Conflict Risk Network acts as such white list. The network includes institutional investors, financial service providers and other stakeholders who refuse to invest in countries with questionable human rights records. By highlighting companies who are making profits in a politically and socially responsible way, Genocide International draws attention to the role that corporations play in propping up dictators in repressive regimes.

Transparent Payments: Despite their ample financial resources, repressive regimes often force their citizens to live at or near abject poverty. The [publish what you pay](#) movement seeks to promote greater transparency in the financial transactions that governments make, so that citizens can hold them accountable. Why not extend these efforts even further? Transparency in financial transactions should be extended to all corporations, governments, organizations, and individual investors that do business with

dictatorial regimes. Such transparency should not merely be enforced by law, but by secondary pressure exerted by the international community. NGOs, governments, and supranational organizations should work together to ensure that businesses are not making profits at the price of human rights.

Global Video Conferences: The simultaneous sharing of video conferences is another tool that external actors can use to fuel communication between activists and the international community. Already, organizations like Access have used video conferences to put corporate leaders and policymakers in touch with domestic activists engaged in real-time protest. For example, speeches delivered by protestors in Yemen have been live-streamed into corporate conferences in the United States. These video conferences provide chilling visual imagery of the risks that activists are taking and the scale of their discontent. Video conferences can thus serve not only to raise awareness of human rights abuses in repressive regimes, but also to press corporations to change harmful policies. While a potentially powerful tool, it is important to note that video conferences require ample coordination and careful logistical planning. They also are not appropriate in every circumstance, as activists participating in such conferences may be vulnerable to arrest.

Corporate Pressure: Many corporations have a proven record of doing business responsibly. Why not band together and take a stand against dictatorship? Pressure exerted by corporations has a real capacity to alter the costs and benefits of human rights abuses. If corporations were to decide to stop doing business with dictators and their sympathizers, they would issue a powerful warning against dictatorships everywhere.

Pressuring Businesses in Neighboring States: Bordering states and their commercial class often lend passive or active support to dictatorships in neighboring states. By doing business with dictatorial regimes companies in neighboring states often (at times, inadvertently) bolster repression. After all, being friendly to dictators often pays. Friendly and nearby companies frequently gain access to lucrative state coffers, and reap the financial benefits of trade with dictators' financial monopolies. Why not help to alter the costs and benefits of neighborly behavior? If investors and consumers provide incentive or punishment to companies in bordering states to stop doing business with neighboring dictatorships, they can help to further isolate such regimes and increase the odds that regime loyalists will abandon ship.

ANNEX

CRITERIA FOR INTERVENTION

Many of the tools outlined above are controversial and may not be equally applicable to all situations. Some may well be dangerous in a particular situation. Others may do harm in one country, but work wonders in others. Tools and strategies must be designed to reflect this contextual specificity. Below are some of the criteria external actors might consider when debating the tools and strategies to employ in authoritarian contexts.

Context

- Do you understand the environment?
- Who is doing what?
- What are the competing interests?
- What does a map of the regime's power relations look like and how can you cut off support?

Consent

- Who needs to be consulted?
- Who is not being consulted?
- How do you determine consent?
- How do you consult?

Risks and Rewards

- What are the tradeoffs?
- Who can be harmed?
- What could be the local, domestic, regional, global repercussions?
- How do we adapt to realities on the ground?
- How do we measure and define impact and success or failure?
- How do we verify results?

Core Values

Are the methods in accordance with core values of:

- Transparency?
- Responsibility?
- Accountability?
- Equity?