

Topic Youth in protests

Speakers Rafid Ariyan, youth activist, storyteller and artist from Bangladesh. He works at the intersection of digital rights, youth engagement, and activism.
Radak Sammy, Kenyan Youth leader, Healthcare leader, and Democratic Governance advocate.

Key Takeaways Background

2025 has seen a growing wave of youth-led mobilizations taking place across the world, from Bangladesh to Tanzania, Madagascar, Nepal, Morocco, and beyond. In many of these contexts, young people are stepping up to challenge the status quo, organize collectively, and push for real change from policy shifts to increased funding for health, and even government accountability. The webinar highlighted that for youth activism to be sustainable, security must be treated as a core pillar of democratic participation, not an afterthought. Without protection, youth victories remain fragile moments rather than lasting transformations. At the same time, youth movements are also innovating how protest itself is practiced. Insights from Bangladesh demonstrate how Gen Z activism blends creativity, digital tools, and non-violent expression to mobilize rapidly and inclusively, even under conditions of repression.

Legal and Rights-Based Security

Knowing and strategically using the law transforms fear into confidence. Youth movements anchor their actions in constitutional rights, such as freedom of expression and assembly, to force authorities to operate within legal frameworks. Legal literacy becomes a first line of defense, reducing arbitrary repression while maintaining moral legitimacy.

Decentralization

- Clear non-violence rules, agreed plans, and unified messaging protect movements from provocation and discreditation.
- Organizing through small, trusted digital groups (WhatsApp, Signal) enhances security and resilience.
- Leadership is shared rather than hierarchical, ensuring everyone can act as a leader and reducing vulnerability to targeted repression.

Activism as Mobilization

- Art becomes a non-violent language of protest that invites mass participation.
- Visual symbols, creative content, and collective digital actions lower the risks of confrontation while amplifying reach.
- Social media enables real-time exposure of human rights violations, preventing silence and erasure.

Real-World Findings:

- Gen Z protests differ from previous movements through instant digital documentation of abuses.
- Non-violent online activism reduces exposure to physical repression while increasing public engagement.
- Small encrypted online groups enable rapid coordination and collective leadership.

Additional Reading

- [How Young People are Rewriting Democracy](#)