

Pledge of Nonviolent Action

Wherever there is oppression, there is resistance. Across the breadth of human generations, resistance movements are the beating heart of history. Every human and civil right we enjoy was won for us by the stalwart efforts of the brave women and men who came before us.

One form of resistance is Nonviolent Direct Action (NVDA). NVDA is a technique of waging conflict without using violence. It's a way to confront power directly that relies not on weaponry but on the courage of the combatants alone. The technique has been used by the dispossessed across the globe because they don't have the capacity to wage conventional war. But people without money, political power, or military might can fight and win using NVDA.

The goal of nonviolent action is to attack a regime or opponent group by getting people to withdraw their support of it. Once people withdraw their submission, obedience, and cooperation, the opponent has no power. That is the goal.

NVDA doesn't work by persuasion or conversion. Its power is not in a claim to morality or a call to spirituality. It works by taking power away from the powerful.

Success depends on actionists' absolute commitment to nonviolent discipline. This is because the technique works by making the invisible violence visible. When Bull Connor turned firehoses on children in Birmingham, AL, the daily degradation of Black

people in the segregated South was exposed before the world: the invisible was made visible. Public support surged, President Kennedy pledged federal legislation, and the Civil Rights Act of 1964 was the result.

When the Philippine Marines pointed their guns at unarmed civilians and the nuns stepped in to protect them, the brutality of Marcos' regime was made visible. When not a single Marine fired, Marcos lost his authority over the armed forces, and he fled the country soon after.

Gene Sharp calls the phenomenon "political jujitsu." Actionists can turn the power of an unjust regime back against itself. It only works if the protestors stay the course of nonviolent discipline.

Participants in this action hereby pledge to nonviolence in our speech and action. This is not a call to "love our enemy." It is a call to fight him with the best weapon we have: his own violence. We will let the world see these men for who they are.

We will bring our righteous rage, our love for women and girls, and our unbreakable determination and turn them to the only strategy that can win us justice.

Participants agree to refrain from:

- Taunts and insults
- Threatening words
- Property destruction

- Physical contact of any kind. We will not physically touch members of our opposition for any reason.
- Moving forward into someone blocking us. We will retreat or hold our position, but will not advance into another person.
- Chasing anyone

We will:

- Sing
- Chant
- Link arms
- Sit down as a de-escalation tactic
- Ask another sister to step back if she is losing her nonviolent discipline
- Step back ourselves if a situation is overwhelming us

For more information about the theory and practice of NVDA, see the work of Gene Sharp: <https://www.aeinstein.org/how-nonviolent-struggle-works/>