Generation Mental Health unequivocally condemns the state violence, intimidation and repression being directed at young people across the world right now for peacefully exercising their fundamental rights to freedom of expression, peaceful assembly and democratic participation.

Across countries, young people are organising to challenge injustice, confront systemic failures and demand accountability from those in power. Yet instead of engaging with their grievances and demands, states are choosing to respond with threats, criminalisation and violent crackdowns that put young people's rights, safety and lives at risk. As a youth-led organisation working within the global mental health sector, we are witnessing how state violence and political repression are affecting young people and our communities across contexts, as these events continue to unfold. This is not an abstract issue for us; it is deeply personal to us as young people. We cannot stand by while young people are being subjected to violence and repression for exercising their democratic rights, and while their lives, safety and freedoms remain under threat.

We stand in solidarity with youth-led movements and with young people defending their rights and freedoms across the world right now, often at considerable personal risk.

Mental health does not exist in a political vacuum. Existing research links exposure to political violence and protest-related unrest with adverse mental health outcomes, while also highlighting how collective action can have complex effects on well-being, underscoring why young people’s mental health cannot be separated from the political conditions in which they live, organise and exercise their rights. State violence, political repression and the erosion of democratic freedoms undermine the conditions young people need to exercise their agency, participate in decisions that shape their lives and safeguard their mental health and well-being. Fear, insecurity and exposure to violence have consequences for both individual and collective well-being. Mental health support is essential, but it cannot substitute for safety, dignity, justice, accountability or the freedom to participate in decisions that shape our lives.

There can be no meaningful commitment to young people's mental health while the political conditions undermining their safety, agency and rights remain outside the global mental health sector's concerns.

An invitation to co-create a youth-led agenda for action

We are inviting young people, youth-led and lived experience-led organisations, human rights defenders, activists, researchers, mental health practitioners and allies across regions to **co-create a youth-led commentary and call to action that challenges the global mental health sector to confront the relationship between state violence, democratic freedoms, human rights and young people's mental health and to act on it.**

We want to bring together evidence, lived experience and perspectives from different political and social contexts to examine questions that remain insufficiently addressed in global mental health: What does state violence and political repression mean for young people's mental health and collective well-being? What responsibilities do mental health organisations, research institutions, professional associations and funders have when young people's rights and safety are under threat? And what must change in the sector's research, funding, institutional practices and public advocacy to address these realities?

Our aim is to move beyond documenting the problem and to build a shared agenda for action. Through this process, we hope to develop collective demands, strengthen cross-regional and cross-movement solidarity, mobilise a broader coalition and work towards a collective declaration and coordinated call to action that translates the global mental health sector's commitments to young people' mental health, equity, lived experience and the social determinants of mental health into concrete institutional commitments and meaningful accountability.

We are particularly keen to hear from young people and collectives directly experiencing, documenting and resisting these realities, as well as those supporting affected communities, researching these issues or positioned to influence institutional decisions and resource allocation. We want the agenda to be shaped by the knowledge, experiences and priorities of those most affected.

We recognise that young people are organising under very different political conditions and face different risks. The process must therefore be collaborative, cross-regional and attentive to these differences, with meaningful opportunities to shape both the agenda and the call for actions that emerge from it.

Who should be part of this conversation?

If you are a young person, part of a youth-led or lived experience-led collective, a human rights defender or organization, activist, researcher, mental health practitioner or an ally who believes these issues belong on the global mental health agenda, we want to hear from you. We also welcome introductions to people and organisations across contexts who should be part of this effort.

If you would like to contribute to the commentary, help shape the collective demands, connect us with potential collaborators, or support the wider coalition-building and advocacy effort, please contact Generation Mental Health at **shruti@generationmentalhealth.org**.

We want to build the relationships, evidence, resources and collective power needed to make state violence, democratic freedoms and young people's ability to participate safely in society unavoidable concerns within global mental health.

There can be no mental health justice without young people's democratic freedoms and safety. No well-being without dignity. No solidarity without action.