

# Regime Rhetoric and Protests: How Government Statements Can Repress

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## **Abstract**

This paper discusses the role that a regime's rhetoric plays in the suppression of protest. Although much work has examined how state repression affects mobilization, this has remained isolated from other repressive strategies. I argue that a regime's public statements serve as a non-violent alternative to state repression, that they substitute the use of force, and condition the consequences of state repression. This behavior serves to bolster the regime's public image and rally domestic support, while undermining the complaints of protesters. Relying on a monthly event analysis, I test the expectation that increased levels of regime rhetoric leads to lower levels of mobilization. Findings indicate that while rhetoric and repression alone increases mobilization, a campaign of regime statements used in conjunction with repression leads to a decrease in protest activity.