

CASE STUDY FOR 2024 PROTESTS

CIVIL UNREST in United States

Situation

With escalating political tension around the world, protests by people exercising their freedom of speech and freedom of assembly rights are becoming more frequent. Political tensions, from domestic disagreements to international conflicts, reached even higher levels. The Israel-Hamas conflict, in particular, garnered international attention, with large groups taking opposing sides.

In April 2024, large-scale pro-Palestinian protests erupted on US college campuses in response to the Israel-Hamas situation. Protestors demanded universities divest from companies linked to Israel. The protests involved setting up camps on campuses, leading to thousands of arrests, including some professors. This situation raised concerns about safety during tense geo-political disagreements on campuses and in surrounding communities.



Problem

Protests began peacefully by establishing encampments like the "Gaza Solidarity Encampment" at Columbia University. Over time, safety concerns arose, especially the potential for violent clashes with pro-Israel protesting voices. Maintaining peace and order among hundreds or thousands of people is difficult, as loud shouting and screaming make communication almost impossible. The crowds' high emotional state and the adrenaline of the tense situation compounded this challenge. Police and public safety officials focused on balancing the right to peacefully protest with keeping people safe, roads open for access, and communities protected. As authorities engaged protestors to maintain order, they needed ways to safely engage, communicate clear information, and instructions to peacefully deescalate tensions.

Solution

Law enforcement agencies utilized the LRAD 100X Long Range Acoustic Device (LRAD), some in conjunction with Genasys Evertel, to address these large crowds with live voice commands and information. Genasys solutions were deployed across the US at various institutions, including City College of New York, New York University, Columbia University, the Met Gala, University of California San Diego, University of Arizona, and UC Irvine.

The LRAD 100X is a portable communications device capable of broadcasting live or pre-recorded voice messages at distances up to 1968ft (600m), overcoming loud background noise and penetrating buildings and vehicles. Genasys Evertel enables seamless, secure, and compliant real-time collaboration, keeping teams informed and in sync without access vulnerabilities experienced in radio communication.





Results

The deployment of LRADs played a crucial role in managing the tense protests on college campuses in 2024. Protestors were kept informed by broadcasting clear and intelligible messages, minimizing confusion, and maintaining order. Authorities used LRADs to deescalate tensions by addressing the crowd and providing continuous updates, which helped reduce anxiety and prevent escalations. LRADs also issued clear instructions for peaceful dispersal when it was time for protestors to leave.

Additionally, Evertel has been highly successful in aiding law enforcement, like the Albuquerque NM Police Department, with civil unrest this year. It has seen additional use by the Baltimore Police Department over the years. In these cases, it organized responses to protests by forming ad-hoc groups of officers and leaders for quick decision-making and information sharing.

By deescalating tense crowds and ensuring awareness of the law and potential repercussions, LRADs prevented confrontations between pro-Palestinian and pro-Israeli protestors. Timely and precise communication ensured everyone remained in their designated areas, effectively avoiding clashes. Overall, LRADs significantly contributed to maintaining peace and order during the protests, allowing demonstrations to proceed without major incidents.



"As requested by the university, we are on campus to assist in dispersing those trespassing. What you are hearing is our LRAD announcing very clearly that CCNY has ordered (these) individuals off the campus." – **NYPD Deputy Commissioner, Operations Kaz Daughtry**

LRAD in Action - <https://youtu.be/Utj5lz76OV0>

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