

Call for a UN Special Rapporteur on Democracy

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A. Statement

Global reports on the state of democracy and human rights indicate that democracy is threatened and authoritarianism is on the rise. Civic space and freedoms are fiercely and increasingly restricted in many countries. In addition, democratic backsliding or a decline in the quality of democracy is occurring in newer as well as long-established democracies across all regions.

In this situation, the United Nations needs to do more to strengthen human rights and democracy. The undersigned organizations and individuals thus call for the creation of a new mandate by the UN's Human Rights Council: a UN Special Rapporteur on Democracy (UN-RoD).

Protecting human rights is a fundamental pillar of the UN and democracy is one of its core values. The opening words of the UN Charter, "We the Peoples," imply support for democracy. They underscore the central democratic principle that public authority must derive from the will of the people.

A democratic society offers the best conditions for guaranteeing human rights for all, in particular minorities and excluded groups. At the same time, full implementation of human rights is a foundation of a democratic society. The UN needs to recognize the nexus between democracy and human rights and help further strengthen democratic governance. A UN Special Rapporteur on Democracy will serve this purpose.

The new mandate will be based on and guided by principles the UN enshrined in past and present resolutions and instruments, including the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the 1966 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the 1993 Vienna Declaration of the World Conference on Human Rights.

The Rapporteur would be mandated to investigate the state of democracy around the world from a broader perspective, going beyond, complementing and linking together analysis and data on specific issues being investigated by existing mandates set up by the Human Rights Council that deal with democratic rights such as freedom of opinion and expression; peaceful assembly and association; independence of judges and lawyers; freedom of religion or belief; minority issues; as well as human rights defenders.

The UNRoD would examine challenges and opportunities related to the realization of democracy. This includes, but is not limited to, constitutional and institutional arrangements such as checks and balances; effectiveness of parliaments; free, fair and competitive elections and election environments; political participation including of minorities and women; direct and deliberative mechanisms; as well as civic space and freedoms.

The Rapporteur, assisted by an independent advisory board, will gather, manage, and assess information, data and evidence as well as conduct and evaluate research. The mandate holder will engage, as appropriate, with Member States, other Rapporteurs, relevant stakeholders, and the public. In particular, the Rapporteur will seek input from citizens and civil society groups, acknowledging the crucial role of civil society in strengthening and protecting democracy. The Rapporteur will share observations on shortcomings but also on best practices and offer recommendations for improvement, thus serving an important oversight function, among other things.

On the 75th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the 30th anniversary of the Vienna Declaration, we call on all governments that are committed to democracy to support the establishment of this new mandate under the auspices of the Human Rights Council. We call on like-minded organizations, policy-makers and individuals to join our cause and endorse this appeal.

B. Endorsing organizations

With country of national or international headquarters:

1. AfricTivistes, Senegal
2. Alliance for Vietnam's Democracy, Vietnam
3. Alma Cívica, Paraguay
4. ASEAN Parliamentarians for Human Rights, Indonesia
5. Asia Democracy Network, Thailand
6. Atlas, United Kingdom
7. Bundesnetzwerk Bürgerschaftliches Engagement BBE (National Network for Civil Society), Germany
8. CDD - Center for Development and Democracy, Georgia
9. Center for Democracy (DD Foundation), Estonia
10. Center for Strategic Litigation, Tanzania
11. Centro de Liderazgo e Innovación para Mujeres de las Américas, Peru
12. Citizens for Global Solutions, United States of America
13. Civic IDEA, Georgia
14. CIVICUS: World Alliance for Citizen Participation, South Africa
15. Coalition for a World Security Community, Australia
16. Consejo Regional Indígena y Popular de Xpujil, Mexico
17. Counterpart International, United States of America
18. Danish Institute for Parties and Democracy (DIPD), Denmark
19. Democracia Digital, Peru
20. Democracia Global, Argentina
21. Democracy International, United States of America
22. Democracy International e.V., Germany
23. Democracy Reporting International, Germany
24. Democracy Today, Armenia
25. Democracy Without Borders, Germany
26. DT Institute, United States of America
27. EG Justice, Equatorial Guinea
28. Egyptian Green Party, Egypt
29. elbarlament e.V., Germany
30. Election Monitoring and Democracy Studies Center, Azerbaijan

31. Election Observation Group, Kenya
32. Election Watch EU, Austria
33. European Endowment for Democracy, Brussels
34. European Exchange, Germany
35. European Partnership for Democracy, Belgium
36. Fundación Altiero Spinelli, Argentina
37. Fundación Puentes para el Desarrollo de Centroamérica, Nicaragua
38. Global Project Against Hate and Extremism, United States of America
39. Gobierno & Analisis Politico AC, Mexico
40. Halley Movement, Mauritius
41. HuMENA for Human Rights and Civic Engagement, Lebanon
42. Independent Journalists Association Of Vietnam-IJAVN, Vietnam
43. Institute G. Toniolo for the International Right of Peace, Italy
44. Integrity Initiatives International, United States of America
45. International Center for Parliamentary Studies, Research and Foresight, Universidad Austral (CIDEIPP), Argentina
46. International Youth Think Tank, Sweden
47. Lawyers for Human Rights, Ethiopia
48. LEDA - Leadership, Education, Democracy, Art and Environment, Mozambique
49. Liberal Democracy Institute, Egypt
50. Mujer a Mujer y de Hombre a Hombre, Cuba
51. Netherlands Institute for Multiparty Democracy (NIMD), Netherlands
52. Nigeria Network of NGOs, Nigeria
53. Olof Palme International Center, Sweden
54. One More Percent, Kenya
55. Open Society Foundations, United States of America
56. Pakistan Development Alliance, Pakistan
57. Parliamentarians for Global Action, United States of America
58. PEN America, United States of America
59. Peoples' Vigilance Committee on Human Rights (PVCHR), India
60. ProboxVE, Venezuela
61. Red Latinoamericana y del Caribe por la Democracia - Redlad, Colombia
62. Sapari, Georgia
63. Sassoufit collective, Congo (Brazzaville)
64. Social Development International (SODEIT), Nigeria
65. Society for Threatened Peoples, Germany
66. Students for Global Democracy Uganda, Uganda
67. Swedish International Liberal Centre (SILC), Sweden
68. Swiss Democracy Foundation, Switzerland
69. The Amarjargal Foundation, Mongolia
70. The Carter Center, United States of America
71. The Fund for Global Human Rights, United States of America
72. The Hong Kong Scots, United Kingdom
73. The May 18 Foundation, South Korea
74. Transparencia Electoral, Argentina
75. Union of European Federalists France, France
76. Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem), Sweden
77. Vietnamese Community Of Oregon, United States of America
78. Westminster Foundation for Democracy, United Kingdom
79. World Federalist Movement-Institute for Global Policy, United States of America
80. World Uyghur Congress, Germany

81. Yiaga Africa, Nigeria
82. Young European Federalists (JEF-Europe), Belgium
83. Young Women's Actions For Rights, Peace and Development, Liberia
84. Youth Democracy Movement, United States of America
85. Zambia Free Press Initiative, Zambia
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86. Society for Threatened Peoples, Italy
87. Human Rights Cities Network, Belgium
88. Model United Nations School, India
89. International Organization for the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (EA-FORD), Switzerland
90. Students for Global Democracy, Uganda
91. International Coalition to End Transplant Abuse in China (ETAC), Australia
92. Connect4Value, Netherlands
93. Gloco, Switzerland
94. Mahurangi Action Incorporated, New Zealand
95. Institute for Asian Democracy, United States of America
96. POLITICOM Inc., Canada
97. Provea, Venezuela
98. OIDP Afrique, Senegal
99. World Federalist Movement Canada - Toronto Region Branch, Canada
100. Public Association for Assistance to Free Economy, Azerbaijan
101. Alliance congolaise pour les foyers et combustibles améliorés (ACFCA), Congo (Kinshasa)
102. Center for International Media Research and Studies, India
103. SADC Youth Network, Zambia
104. Centro Faces, Dominican Republic
105. Institute of Public Affairs, Poland
106. PAK Education Society/Pakistan Development Network, Pakistan
107. International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH), France
108. FAIR Italy, Italy
109. Foro permanente de organizaciones de sociedad civil, Honduras
110. Association pour la Promotion de la Solidarité, France
111. Assemblée des Citoyens du Monde, France
112. Human rights center Viasna, Belarus
113. Gesellschaft für bedrohte Völker Schweiz, Switzerland
114. Centro de Capacitación y promoción de la Democracia, CECADE, El Salvador
115. Cultura Democrática, Argentina
116. The Good Lobby Italia, Italy
117. Peace And Justice Alliance, Canada
118. Democracy Without Borders-Kenya, Kenya
119. International Association for Democracy, United Kingdom
120. Trippinz Care International Foundation, Nigeria
121. 1000 Shades of Women Foundation International, United States of America
122. Extended Arms Diamond Inc., United States of America
123. Pleading for the Widows Foundation International, United States of America
124. Trippinz Care Inc., United States of America
125. One World: Movement for Global Democracy, Israel
126. Associazione Culturale dei Triangoli e della Buona Volontà Mondiale (The Good News Agency), Italy
127. Femmes et Droits Humains, Mali

128. Balkan Civil Society Development Network, Macedonia
129. Network of Democrats in the Arab World, Jordan
130. Alma Cívica, Paraguay
131. Narrative Hub, South Sudan
132. Humanistischer Verband Deutschlands HVD - German Humanist Association, Germany
133. Deutsche Gesellschaft für die Vereinten Nationen e.V./UNA Germany, Germany
134. Youth Awareness for Peace and Development (YAPD4Africa), Nigeria
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B. Individual signatories

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110. Tim Murithi, Head of Programme, Institute for Justice and Reconciliation, South Africa
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125. Ibrahim Yahaya Oloriegbe, Chairman Senate Committee on Health of 9th Assembly, Kwara State, Nigeria
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173. Zia Ur Rehman, Pakistan Development Alliance, Pakistan
174. Caroline Vernailen, Head of Community Building, Democracy International e.V., Germany
175. Melissa Verpile, Director, Democracy, Gender, and Inclusion (DGI) Program, United States of America
176. Wendy Via, CEO, Global Project Against Hate and Extremism, United States of America
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185. Dalia Ziada, Director, Liberal Democracy Institute, Egypt
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189. Rosa Valerio, NGO Representative, United States of America
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192. Hilton Dawson, Former Member of Parliament. Founding member, The North East Party, United Kingdom
193. Magda Laurans, PA, teacher, TA, United Kingdom
194. Birgit Plate, Germany
195. Martin Dixon, United Kingdom
196. Jaco Momberg, South Africa
197. Jimmy Lövgren, Board member, UNA Stenungsund and UNA Gothenburg & Bohuslän, Sweden
198. Olette Bollen, Advisor, Connect4Value, Netherlands
199. Gery Colombo, Secretary General, Global Community Gloco, Switzerland
200. Louise Lungley, United Kingdom
201. Ian Dawson, United Kingdom
202. Frederic Eger, TV Journalist, Producer, Entrepreneur, former WFM-IMO Secretary, Israel
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243. Lennart Jonasson, Sweden
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245. Rosakebia Liliana Estela Mendoza, Peru
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259. Eddie Cóndor Chuquiruna, Peru
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265. Iris Schweizer, Germany
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267. José Ignacio Hernández, CSIS, Harvard Kennedy School, United States of America
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269. Karin Malmgren, Sweden
270. Jacek Kucharczyk, President, Institute of Public Affairs, Poland
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274. Zeeshan Shoki, Pak Education Society/Pakistan Development Network, Pakistan
275. Gerry Arthurs, Lecturer in International Relations and Politics, Ireland
276. Gustavo Amaya V., Director de CECADE Centroamérica, miembro de REDLAD y del ISC del Pilar de Sociedad Civil de la Comunidad de las Democracias, El Salvador
277. Felix Igbokwe, Nigeria
278. Micaela Hierro DORI, REDLAD-CIVICUS, Argentina
279. Federico Anghelè, Director, The Good Lobby Italia, Italy
280. Camille Dieu, Belgium
281. Daniel Durand, France
282. Tom Brake, Director of Unlock Democracy, United Kingdom
283. Frank Iszatt, United Kingdom
284. Mohammed Haque, Peace And Justice Alliance, Canada
285. Marjan Ehsassi, Future of Democracy Fellow, United States of America
286. Ana Silveira, Portugal
287. Didi Fall, Executive Director, 1000 Shades of Women Foundation International, United States of America
288. Celine Orji, Executive Director of Extended Arms Diamond Inc, United States of America
289. Charmaine Moses, Executive Director, Pleading for the Widows, United States of America
290. Teddy Igori, Executive Director of Trippinz Care Inc, United States of America
291. Alain Paquet, Belgium
292. Oded Gilad, Israel
293. Ester Stenlund Danelius, Sweden
294. Bjarte Bjørsvik, Norway
295. Michael Wheatley, Canada
296. Djingarey I Maiga, Executive Director, Femmes et Droits Humains, Mali
297. Martine Miller, Vice President, International Center for Religion & Diplomacy, United States of America
298. Thomas Pogge, Yale University, United States of America
299. Maartje Mensink, University of St Andrews, previous research intern, Democracy Without Borders, Netherlands
300. Biljana Spasovska, Executive Director, Balkan Civil Society Development Network, Macedonia
301. Sameer Jarrah, Executive Director, Network of Democrats in the Arab World , Jordan
302. Cecilia Edholm, Sweden
303. Jon Stever, Managing Director, Innovation for Policy Foundation, Rwanda
304. Siv Östman, Sweden

305. Ali Ibn Abi Talib Mahmoud, Former Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the Republic of the Sudan to the United Nations Office and other International Organizations in Geneva, Sudan
306. Evan Freund, Treasurer, World Federalist Movement - Institute for Global Policy, United States of America
307. Rakesh Raman, Founder, RMN Foundation; Editor, Raman Media Network, India
308. Folke Gyland, Sweden
309. Larry Diamond, Senior Fellow, Hoover Institution and Freeman Spogli Institute, Stanford University, United States of America
310. Mauricio Henrique Aiello Aiello, Brazil
311. Brendan Toh, Singapore
312. Nicola Andreani, France
313. Ioana Vrabiescu, Vrije University Amsterdam, Netherlands
314. Luigino Smiroldo, Italy
315. Luciano Zorzenone, Italy
316. Daniela Magnanini, Italy
317. Vittorio Bonamin, Italy
318. Erwin Kress, Bundesvorstand Humanistischer Verband Deutschlands, Germany
319. Stefania Carlotto, Italy
320. Simone Lorenzo Invernizzi, Italy
321. Gerardo Perillo Dalla Valle, Italy
322. Scott Carlin, Geographer; Member of the Unitive Justice and Global Security Circle, United States of America
323. Maxwell Cameron, Professor, UBC, Canada
324. Richard Maxheim, The Mondialists, Germany