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 & Análisis Político 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
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
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113. Gesellschaft für bedrohte Völker Schweiz, Switzerland
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115. Cultura Democrática, Argentina
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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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264. Vasila Hajiyeva, Professor of Khazar University, former Head of the Department of Political Science and International Relations at the Western Caspian University, Azerbaijan
265. Iris Schweizer, Germany
266. Lidija Vuckovic, President, CHR-Nis, Serbia
267. José Ignacio Hernández, CSIS, Harvard Kennedy School, United States of America
268. Delia Matilde Ferreira Rubio, independent consultant on institutional and electoral law, Chair of Transparency International (2017-2023), Argentina
269. Karin Malmgren, Sweden
270. Jacek Kucharczyk, President, Institute of Public Affairs, Poland
271. Richard Forth, Thailand
272. Finn Heinrich, Director, European Transformations, Open Society Foundations, Germany
273. Natalia Natsika, Program Manager, V-Dem Institute, Sweden
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 CCADE 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 Anghelé, Director, The Good Lobby Italia, Italy
280. Camille Dieu, Belgium
281. Daniel Durand, France
282. Tom Brake, Director of Unlock Democracy, United Kingdom
Frank Iszatt, United Kingdom
Mohammed Haque, Peace And Justice Alliance, Canada
Marjan Ehsassi, Future of Democracy Fellow, United States of America
Ana Silveira, Portugal
Didi Fall, Executive Director, 1000 Shades of Women Foundation International, United States of America
Celine Orji, Executive Director of Extended Arms Diamond Inc, United States of America
Charmaine Moses, Executive Director, Pleading for the Widows, United States of America
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Oded Gilad, Israel
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Michael Wheatley, Canada
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Cecilia Edholm, Sweden
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Siv Östman, Sweden
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Evan Freund, Treasurer, World Federalist Movement - Institute for Global Policy, United States of America
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329. Barbara Hocke, United Kingdom
330. Vital Moors, Senior legislative lawyer, Netherlands
331. Tim Wöffen, Germany
332. Salem Mohamed Ilyas, Association des Dynamiques des Jeunes Marocains, Morocco
333. Florindo Chivucute, Executive Director, Friends of Angola, Andorra
334. Holiness Kibelo Dimbu, Executive Secretary of N'Djili youth council and cofounder, Group of Actions and Initiatives, Congo (Kinshasa)
335. Nigel Johnson, United Kingdom
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338. Susan Ruzic, Canada
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340. Christophe Barbey, Main representative, Center for Global Nonkilling, at the UN's human rights council, Switzerland
341. Christopher Wroth, Share the Commons, United States of America
342. Marcus Lyon, United Kingdom
343. Isa Kwambo Dagona, Nigeria
344. Annie P. Olycarpe Loubaki, Présidente, ACRD-Congo, France
345. Gerardo E. Martínez-Solanas, Former UN staff, United States of America
346. Jorge Leguizamon, Spain
347. Syed Hasib, Assistant Professor, English Higher and Technical Education Department, Government of Balochistan, Pakistan
348. Tolekan Ismailova, Director of the HRM "Bir Duino-Kyrgyzstan", Kyrgyzstan
349. Peter Kayanga, Uganda
350. Hugo Bengtsson, Sweden
351. Jean-Marc Sparenberg, Member of ECOLO (Belgian Green Party), Belgium
352. Kakha Nadiradze, Association for Farmers Rights Defense (AFRD), Georgia
353. Rebecca Ekpe, Ghana
354. Carlos Echegarreta, Docente Universitario, Venezuela
355. Dekoum ta nda Hugues Martin, University professor, Cameroon
356. Gonçalo Rosete, Invited Auxiliary Professor, University of Aveiro, Portugal
357. Joe Mitchell, United Kingdom
358. Said Essoulami, President of the Centre for Media Freedom, Morocco
359. Johnny Baltzersen, Denmark
360. Richard Allen, United Kingdom
361. Kambo Martial Atse, Ivory Coast
362. Vello Pettai, Professor of Comparative Politics, University of Tartu, Estonia
363. Mark Peffley, Professor, United States of America
364. Luis Madueño, Profesor, Venezuela
365. Mr. Sri Krishna Pathak, Research Scholar, India
366. Richard Johnston, Professor emeritus, The University of British Columbia, Vancouver, Canada
367. Pavel Pseja, Lecturer, CEVRO Institute/Metropolitan University Prague; Chair of the Board, DEMAS, Prague (2016-2020), Czech Republic
368. Clayton M. Cunha Filho, Professor of Political Science, Federal University of Ceará, Brazil, Brazil
370. Thomas McDonnell, Professor of Law, Elisabeth Haub School of Law at Pace University, United States of America
371. Omololu Fagbadebo, Research Associate, Durban University of Technology, South Africa
373. Ying Hooi Khoo, Universiti of Malaya, Malaysia
374. Meen Nordin, Universiti of Malaya, Malaysia
375. Thomas Carlhed, Head of Policy and Advocacy, Olof Palme Internationella Center, Sweden
376. Guy Armand Adjoumani, Country expert for V-Dem Institute, Ivory Coast
377. Calvin Elison, American University, Washington DC, United States of America
378. Siri Hettige, Emeritus Professor of Sociology, University of Colombo, Sri Lanka
379. Yoshiaki Kobayashi, Professor, Keio University, Japan
380. Facundo Cruz, Observatorio Pulsar.UBA - Centro de Investigación para la Calidad Democrática (CICad), Argentina
381. Robin McLay, Director, Fulbright Canada, Canada
382. Saraswathi Unni, Director, Research & Publications, Water Policy Centre, Aurangabad, INDIA, India
383. Karin Gibson, Sweden
384. Monica Tapia Alvarez, Executive Director, Mexico
385. Defny Holidin, Assistant Professor of Public Policy and Administration, Universitas Indonesia, Indonesia
386. Tegshbayar Darambazar, Lawyer, Mongolia
387. Julio Aguirre, Professor, Argentina
388. Amor Boubakri, Associate Professor, Faculty of Law and Political Science, University of Sousse, Tunisia, Haiti
389. Anna Nyqvist, Sweden
390. Koert Vrijhof, Netherlands
391. Carmen Beatriz Fernández, DataStrategia Consultores, Universidad de Navarra, Pforzheim University, IESA, Spain
392. Yuliya Bidenko, Associate Professor at Karazin Kharkiv State University, Ukraine
393. Karen Widess, UCLA Law School; University of Kent Law School; Loyola University Chicago Law School; NED; IWPR; John Smith Trust, United States of America
394. Mert Yılmazoglu, Turkey
395. Konstantinos Bizas, Academic, Greece
396. Sudha Mohan, Former Professor and Head, Dept of Civics and Politics, University of Mumbai, India, India
397. Daniel Adrião, Researcher at CIES/ISCTE, Portugal
398. Philippe Forêt, University Professor, Switzerland
399. Carla Young, Germany
400. Susan Ruzic, Canada
401. Kingsley Amoah, Executive Director/Chair, West Africa Network of Election Observers and Defence Network for Democracy, Ghana
402. Mathieu Pourchier, Executive Director, Tournons La Page, France
403. Luc Victor Andegue, Council Branch Head for Elections Cameroon (ELECAM), Cameroon
404. Marc De Tollenaere, France
405. Christopher Wroth, Share the Commons, United States of America
406. Sanjib Bhardwaj, Center for International Media Research and Studies, India
407. Brigitte Loicq, Belgium
408. Baruti Likoyi, Senior Research Fellow, Recherches et Documentation Juridiques Africaines (RDJA), Belgium
409. Anne Brasseur, Board Member, Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom, Human Rights Hub, Geneva, Switzerland
410. Sabine Leutheusser-Schnarrenberger, Board Member, Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom, Human Rights Hub, Geneva, Switzerland
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416. Peter Schubert, Professor at IUPUI, CEO at Green Fortress Engineering, Inc., Board President of The Andromeda Movement, Inc., United States of America
417. Michael Gerten, Philosopher, University Teacher, Germany
418. Fuad Abdul Aziz, Singapore
419. Sabine Frochmaier, Germany
420. Xavier Moncada, United States of America
421. Peter Verbeek, Ward Councillor Emfuleni Local Municipality, South Africa
422. Valeria Sinisi, Friedrich Naumann Foundation, Spain