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
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<td>Fundación Altiero Spinelli, Argentina</td>
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<td>Fundación Puentes para el Desarrollo de Centroamérica, Nicaragua</td>
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<td>Global Project Against Hate and Extremism, United States of America</td>
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<td>Gobierno &amp; Análisis Político AC, Mexico</td>
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<td>Halley Movement, Mauritius</td>
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<td>HuMENA for Human Rights and Civic Engagement, Lebanon</td>
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<td>Independent Journalists Association Of Vietnam-IJAVN, Vietnam</td>
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<td>Institute G. Toniolo for the International Right of Peace, Italy</td>
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<td>International Center for Parliamentary Studies, Research and Foresight, Universidad Austral</td>
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<td>Lawyers for Human Rights, Ethiopia</td>
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<td>LEDA - Leadership, Education, Democracy, Art and Environment, Mozambique</td>
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<td>Liberal Democracy Institute, Egypt</td>
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<td>Mujer a Mujer y de Hombre a Hombre, Cuba</td>
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<td>Netherlands Institute for Multiparty Democracy (NIMD), Netherlands</td>
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<td>Nigeria Network of NGOs, Nigeria</td>
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<td>Olof Palme International Center, Sweden</td>
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<td>One More Percent, Kenya</td>
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<td>Open Society Foundations, United States of America</td>
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<td>Pakistan Development Alliance, Pakistan</td>
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<td>Parliamentarians for Global Action, United States of America</td>
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<td>PEN America, United States of America</td>
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<td>Peoples' Vigilance Committee on Human Rights (PVCHR), India</td>
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<td>ProboxVE, Venezuela</td>
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<td>61</td>
<td>Red Latinoamericana y del Caribe por la Democracia - Redlad, Colombia</td>
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<td>Sapari, Georgia</td>
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<td>Sassoufit collective, Congo (Brazzaville)</td>
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<td>Social Development International (SODEIT), Nigeria</td>
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<td>Society for Threatened Peoples, Germany</td>
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<td>Students for Global Democracy Uganda, Uganda</td>
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<td>Swedish International Liberal Centre (SILC), Sweden</td>
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<td>Swiss Democracy Foundation, Switzerland</td>
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<td>The Amarjargal Foundation, Mongolia</td>
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<td>The Carter Center, United States of America</td>
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<td>The Fund for Global Human Rights, United States of America</td>
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<td>The Hong Kong Scots, United Kingdom</td>
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<td>The May 18 Foundation, South Korea</td>
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<td>Transparencia Electoral, Argentina</td>
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<td>Union of European Federalists France, France</td>
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<td>Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem), Sweden</td>
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<td>Vietnamese Community Of Oregon, United States of America</td>
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<td>Westminster Foundation for Democracy, United Kingdom</td>
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<td>World Federalist Movement-Institute for Global Policy, United States of America</td>
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<td>World Uyghur Congress, Germany</td>
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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
135. McCain Institute at Arizona State University, United States of America
136. Jaringan Aktivis Kemanusiaan Internasional - JAKI (International Humanitarian Activists Network), Indonesia
137. Association des dynamiques des jeunes marocains, Morocco
138. Friends of Angola, United States of America
139. Group of Actions and Initiatives, Congo (Kinshasa)
140. Center for Global Nonkilling, United States of America
141. Share the Commons, United States of America
142. ACRD-Congo, France
143. Participatory Democracy Cultural Initiative, Inc., United States of America
144. SAAM Foundation, Islamabad, Pakistan
145. National Campaign for Sustainable Development Nepal, Nepal
146. HRM Bir Duino-Kyrgyzstan, Kyrgyzstan
147. Association for Farmers Rights Defense (AFRD), Georgia
148. African Network of Young Researchers, Ivory Coast
149. Centro de Investigaciones de Política Comparada (CIPCOM), Venezuela
150. Malawi Times Group, Malawi
151. Ruta Cívica, Mexico
152. DataStrategia Consultores, Spain
153. Willy Obrist Development Research Institute (DRI), Austria
154. Defence Network for Democracy, Ghana
155. West Africa Network of Election Observers (WANE0), Ghana
156. Tournons La Page, France
157. Association des Dynamiques des Jeunes Marocains, Morocco
158. World Academy of Art and Science, United States of America
159. Amman Center for Human Rights Studies, Jordan
160. Koinonia Dimokratikis Symmetoxis, Greece
161. Participedia, Canada
162. Great Hope Foundation, Malawi
163. Mulabi, Costa Rica
164. Civil Society Pillar of the Community of Democracies, Poland

B. Individual signatories

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6. Tutu Alicante, Executive Director, EG Justice, Equatorial Guinea
7. Richelle Allison, Executive Director, Young Women's Actions For Rights Peace and Development, Liberia
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13. Mohamed Awad, Président, Egyptian Green Party, Egypt
14. Lloyd Axworthy, Chair, World Refugee and Migration Council, former Foreign Minister of Canada, Canada
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16. Petra Bayr, Member of the National Assembly, Austria
17. Thijs Berman, Executive Director, Netherlands Institute for Multiparty Democracy, Netherlands
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23. Andreas Bummel, Executive Director, Democracy Without Borders, Germany
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28. Sandro Calvani, President of the scientific council of the G. Toniolo institute for the International Right of Peace, Thailand
29. Thomas Carothers, Senior Fellow, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, United States of America
30. David Carroll, Director, Democracy Program, The Carter Center, United States of America
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32. Fabio Massimo Castaldo, Member of the European Parliament, Italy
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35. Joan Chirwa, Founder - Zambia Free Press Initiative, Zambia
36. Wing Cheung Chung, Finland
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42. Isa kwambo Dagona, Senior Program Officer, Social Development International (SO-DEIT), Nigeria
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44. Jesús Delgado, Executive Director of Transparencia Electoral, Argentina
45. Michelle Desreux, Canada
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47. Ashutosh Dubey, Journalist, public affairs advisor, founding editor, KanishkSocialMedia, India
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52. Elaine Ford, Director, Democracia Digital, Peru
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54. Manuela Franco, Ambassador, Portugal
55. Dewan K. Gabriel, Minority Whip, Pankship North, Plateau State, Nigeria
56. Michael Gahler, Member of the European Parliament, Germany
57. Thomas Garrett, Secretary General, Community of Democracies, United States of America
58. Daniel Garzón López, Senior Program Officer, Democracy, Gender, and Inclusion Program - Parliamentarians for Global Action, Colombia
59. Bernard Georges, Member of Parliament, Seychelles
60. Romel Rubén González Díaz, Coordinador de Democracia y Buen vivir del Consejo Regional Indígena y Popular de Xpújil y Coordinador General de la Coordinadora Indígena Abya Yala, Mexico
61. Meenu Gupta, Germany
62. Chris Hamer, President, Coalition for a World Security Community, Australia
63. Justin Haner, Ph.D. Candidate, Northeastern University, United States of America
64. Adamu Haruna, Supervisory Councilor on Special Duties, Niger State, Nigeria
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66. Yoojung Hong, Assistance Manager, The May 18 Foundation, South Korea
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70. Samson Itodo, Executive Director, Yiaga Africa, Nigeria
71. Earl James, Common Home of Humanity, United States of America
72. Juuso Järvinen, Vice-President, Young European Federalists (JEF-Europe), Finland
73. Daniel Jositsch, Member of Parliament (Council of States), Switzerland
74. Marc Jost, Member of the Swiss Parliament, Switzerland
75. Renata Juliotti, Brazil
76. Tinatin Khidasheli, Chair, Civic IDEA, former Minister of Defense, Georgia
77. Evelyn Kleinert, Germany
78. Renate Knudsen, Sweden
79. Arndis Anna Kristinardottir Gunnarsdottir, Member of Althingi, the Icelandic parliament, Iceland
80. Roman Kühn, Executive Director, Society for Threatened Peoples, Germany
81. Sonja Kühnle, Germany
82. Batu kutelia, Senior Fellow, Foreign Policy Research Institute, Georgia
83. Daniel Kwok, Scottish Hongkongers, United Kingdom
84. Lars-Göran Larsson, Sweden
85. Jo Leinen, Former MEP, Germany
86. François Leray, former President of UEF France, France
87. Taopiphop Limjittrakorn, Member of Thai National Assembly, Thailand
88. Staffan Lindberg, Director, Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem), Sweden
89. Sigrid Lipott, UN Advisor, Geneva Hub, Switzerland
90. Camila Lopez Badra, Executive Director, Democracia Global, Argentina
91. Jean Jacques Lumumba, Unis, Réseau Panafricain de lutte contre la corruption, France
92. Ian Lynch, Managing Director and Program Director at Integrity Initiatives International, United States of America
93. Carlos Africo Madrid Hart, Human Rights and Democracy Observatoire/White City Foundation, Honduras
94. Anis Mahfoudh, Human rights defender, Tunisia
95. Brian Malika, One More Percent, Kenya
96. Anar Mammadli, Chairperson, Election Monitoring and Democracy Studies Center, Azerbaijan
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99. Gaia Marchiori, Directora, Fundación Altiero Spinelli, Argentina
100. Maria V Marin, ProboxVE Executive Director, Venezuela
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102. Oleksandra Matviichuk, Center for Civil Liberties, Nobel Peace Laureate, Ukraine
103. Herbert Emmanuel Mba Aki Nze, Assistant Professor in Political Science/ Université Omar Bongo, Gabon
104. Monday Mbah, Councilor Nenwe 2, Aninri LGA, Enugu State, Nigeria
105. Michael Mo, The Hong Kong Scots, United Kingdom
106. Christian Moos, European Rep for the Bundesnetzwerk Bürgerschaftliches Engagement (National Network for Civil Society), Germany
107. Athayde Motta, Former member of the Executive Committee of the Brazilian Association of Non-governmental Organizations (ABONG), Brazil
108. Henry Muguzi, Executive Director, ACFIM / Overall Coordinator, African Election Observers Network (AIEONet), Uganda
109. Gesa Mike, Munabi, Students for Global Democracy Uganda, Uganda
110. Tim Murithi, Head of Programme, Institute for Justice and Reconciliation, South Africa
111. Mulle Musau, African Election Observation Network, Kenya
112. Florence Mutua, Former Member of the National Assembly, Kenya
113. Kumi Naidoo, Global Ambassador, Africans Rising for Justice, Peace and Dignity, South Africa
114. Ucha Nanuashvili, Founder, Democracy Research Institute (DRI), Georgia; former Public Defender (Ombudsman) of Georgia, Georgia
115. Mary Navicha, Member of Parliament, Malawi
116. Andrea Ngombet, Founder, Sassoufit collective, Congo (Brazzaville)
117. Giaquoc Nguyen, Overseas Coordinator & Representative, Independent Journalists Association Of Vietnam IJAVN, United States of America
118. Antonio Niquice, Member of Parliament, Mozambique
119. Ede Magnus Nnaemeka, House Committee Chairman on Transport, Inter governmental and House matters, Enugu State, Nigeria
120. Martin A. Noorkõiv, CEO, Center for Democracy (DD Foundation), Estonia
122. Millie Odhiambo, Member of Parliament, Kenya
123. Matthew Kenechukwu Ogbonna, Majority Leader of 10th Assembly, Enugu State, Nigeria
124. Amy Oloo, Executive Director, World Federalist Movement/Institute for Global Policy, Kenya
125. Ibrahim Yahaya Oloriegb, Chairman Senate Committee on Health of 9th Assembly, Kwara State, Nigeria
126. Per Olsson, Secretary General, Swedish International Liberal Centre (SILC), Sweden
127. Okay Joe Onuakalusi, Member House of Representatives, representing Isolo, Oshodi Federal Constituency, Lagos State, Nigeria
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134. Baia Pataraia, Director of Sapari; Chair of Human Rights House Tbilisi, Georgia
136. Lucas Peña, Rotary International member; University professor, Colombia
137. Lisbeth Pilegaard, Executive Director, Danish Institute for Parties and Democracy (DIPD), Denmark
138. Jerzy Pomianowski, Executive Director, European Endowment for Democracy, Poland
139. Syed Naveed, Qamar, Member National Assembly, Pakistan
140. Armin Rabitsch, Chairperson, Election Watch EU, Austria
141. Lenin Raghuvanshi, Founder and CEO, Peoples' Vigilance Committee on Human Rights (PVCHR), India
142. Nadia Ramos Serrano, CEO & Founder, Centro de Liderazgo e Innovación para Mujeres de las Américas, Peru
143. Amarjargal Rinchinnyam, Former Prime Minister of Mongolia, Mongolia
144. Cristina Maria Rodriguez Penton, Presidenta, Mujer a Mujer y de Hombre a Hombre, Cuba
145. Gina Romero, Executive Director, Red Latinoamericana y del Caribe por la Democracia - Redlad, Colombia
146. Antonio Roque, Co-founder, World Peace Alliance, United Kingdom
147. Laina Rosberg, Sweden
148. Deus Rweyemamu, Chief Executive Officer, Center for Strategic Litigation, Tanzania
149. Christopher Sabatini, Senior Research Fellow for Latin America and Senior Professor of Practice, Chatham House and London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE), United Kingdom
150. Niranjan Sahoo, Senior Fellow, Observer Research Foundation, India
151. Stefanie Schiffer, Director, European Exchange, Germany
152. Nicola Schmidt, Executive Director, Democracy Reporting International, Germany
153. Livingstone Sewanyana, UN Independent Expert for the Promotion of an Equitable and Democratic International Order, Uganda
154. Gulnara Shahinian, Founder, Democracy Today; former UN Special Rapporteur on Contemporary Forms of Slavery, Armenia
155. Rebecca Shoot, Executive Director, Citizens for Global Solutions, United States of America
156. Annika Silva-Leander, Head of North America and Permanent Observer of International IDEA to the United Nations, Sweden
157. Anthony Smith, CEO, Westminster Foundation for Democracy, United Kingdom
158. Ivone Soares, Member of Parliament, Mozambique
159. Miriam Solaimankhil, Member of Parliament, Afghanistan
160. Jordi Solé, Member of the European Parliament, Spain
161. Jenny Sporrong, Sweden
162. Margarita Stolbizer, Member of Parliament, Argentina
163. Urban Strandberg, Managing Director & Co-Founder, International Youth Think Tank; Associate Professor of Political Science, University of Gothenburg, Sweden
164. Kannavee Suebsang, Member of Parliament, Thailand
165. Anna Sundström, Secretary General, Olof Palme International Center, Sweden
166. Ichal Supriadi, Secretary-General, Asia Democracy Network, Thailand
167. Ulrike Talkner, Germany
168. Karina Tehusijarana, Media Officer, ASEAN Parliamentarians for Human Rights, Indonesia
169. Olga Tokariuk, Independent journalist, Ukraine
170. Quoc-Hung Tran, MD, Coordinator, Alliance for Vietnam's Democracy, Vietnam
171. Violet Tsgaka, DT Institute, United States of America
172. Thao Tu, President of Vietnamese Community of Oregon, United States of America
173. Zia Ur Rehman, Pakistan Development Alliance, Pakistan
174. Caroline Vernaillen, 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
177. Nicolas Waldner, Member of Parliament, Switzerland
178. Njeri Wanjeri, Coalition for Peace and Gender Champions in Africa, Kenya
179. Alyn Ware, Program Director, World Federalist Movement-Institute for Global Policy, New Zealand
180. Uwe Welteke-Fabricius, Germany
181. Robert Wilkens, Lawyer, Germany
182. Valerie Woods, Speaker of the House of Representatives, Belize
183. Henry Wright, Chair, Youth Democracy Movement, former Global Youth Representative, UN Fund for Education in Emergencies, United States of America
184. Mathew Danjuma Yare, Speaker Abuja Municipal Area Council (AMAC), FCT, Abuja Nigeria
185. Dalia Ziada, Director, Liberal Democracy Institute, Egypt
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