



# NINTH GLOBAL ASSEMBLY

6 - 9, MAY 2018



Dakar, Senegal

## “Building Strategic Partnerships for Democratic Renewal”



<b>Letter from the Steering Committee</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>Excerpts from Opening Session</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>Democracy Courage Tributes Presentations &amp; John b. Hurford Memorial Dinner</b> .....	<b>7</b>
<b>Highlighted Discussions:</b>	
<b>Role of Parliamentarians: Guardians of Democracy</b> .....	<b>11</b>
<b>Strengthening a Coalition for Democratic Renewal</b> .....	<b>12</b>
<b>Transitioning from a People’s Movement to Democratic Consolidation</b> .....	<b>13</b>
<b>Integrating Democratic Values With Traditional Culture and National Identity</b> .....	<b>14</b>
<b>Shadowed by Anti-Money Laundering and Countering Terrorism: How can Civil Society Push Back Restrictions?</b> .....	<b>15</b>
<b>Shaping an Agenda for Protecting Freedom of Peaceful Assembly and of Association</b> .....	<b>16</b>
<b>Reclaiming the Internet for Democracy</b> .....	<b>17</b>
<b>Defending the Integrity of the Information Space</b> .....	<b>18</b>
<b>New Voices &amp; New Energy for Democratic Renewal</b> .....	<b>19</b>
<b>Expanding Space for the Next Generation: Strengthening Political Participation Mechanisms</b> .....	<b>20</b>
<b>Exploring the Voice of Business in Strengthening Democratic Governance</b> .....	<b>21</b>
<b>Breaking Barriers: Empowering Young Women’s Political Leadership</b> .....	<b>22</b>
<b>Innovative Partnerships</b>	
<b>Activism + Art = Activism for Deepening Democratic Culture</b> .....	<b>24</b>
<b>Lightning Talk: Defending Digital Information Space</b> .....	<b>25</b>
<b>Democracy Lounge &amp; Clinics</b> .....	<b>26</b>
<b>Soirée à Dakar</b> .....	<b>28</b>
<b>Join the Movement</b> .....	<b>30</b>
<b>Participants</b> .....	<b>31</b>
<b>Sponsors</b> .....	<b>41</b>
<b>Partner Organizations</b> .....	<b>42</b>

The Ninth Assembly took place at a critical time for global civil society – a time when the future of democracy is uncertain and democrats find themselves on the defensive against escalating attacks by authoritarian regimes. More than 400 participants gathered in Dakar, Senegal, and brought stories of sophisticated disinformation campaigns, closing internet spaces, and increasingly dangerous working conditions. Ayo Obe, human rights lawyer from Nigeria, rallied the group by acknowledging the obstacles, but challenged the audience that “the time to take a stand was always the day before yesterday – so the time to take a stand is today.”

First and foremost, we must defend access to digital spaces and communication channels and protect them against disinformation and cyber-attacks. Participants cited the use of artificial intelligence by authoritarian governments to weaponize social media and corrupt trust in the news media. How do we break through the disinformation that is flooding our airways and digital spaces? Daniel Milo, senior research fellow at the GLOBSEC Policy Institute, spoke on educating audiences with nontraditional methods saying, “With the level of global distrust towards media and NGOs hitting record numbers, you must look for unorthodox communicators. Youtubers, online celebrities, pop stars, actors. Whatever works for you in your context and target group.”

Beyond individual spokespersons, we must outreach to the business sector and religious leaders. With some major corporations’ profits exceeding many countries’ GDPs, they have tremendous resources to support our efforts and make an economic case for the importance of democratic institutions. Religious leaders are one of the most trusted community leaders and can help us counter the narrative that democratic and traditional values are incompatible. Ketevan Chachava, executive director of the Center for Development and Democracy, shared that the Georgian Orthodox Church enjoys 80% support among society while civil society comes in far behind. “We cannot afford to leave this majority out of [our] discussion . . . or not be sure how this majority understands these values where [the Church’s] word in one day, just like that, can change everything.”

At the Assembly, the World Movement explored ways to deepen working relationships between civil society and political society. Today, the public is increasingly losing its faith in democratic institutions. Many feel that those institutions do not represent their interests. To restore people’s faltering faith in the representative institutions, civil society leaders must engage with political society and sometimes consider becoming part of political society by running for public offices. Anita Vandenbeld argued in the Assembly discussion that “having people in positions of power that truly reflect the population - the diversity and the different life experiences of the populous - is one way to combat” the gap between citizens and the institutions.

Finally, we continue to honor those who have shown extraordinary bravery in their fight for human rights and democratic principles. The Democracy Courage Tributes presentation at the Assembly honored individuals from the Philippines, South Africa, and China, who have faced imprisonment and violence, but persevered in their work. In her acceptance speech, Jin Bianling, the wife of political prisoner Jiang Tianyoung of China, reminded us of the importance of international solidarity in her acceptance speech, saying “The Democracy Courage Tributes tell us we are not alone. The world is paying attention [to us] . . . The government has failed to erase us from history.”

The Ninth Assembly is over, but we will take our connections, ideas, and inspiration with us, and use the Assembly’s discussion as the foundation for future meetings and engagement. We hope this report will serve as a useful resource for everyone who works toward democratic renewal.



## OPENING REMARKS

**The Ninth Global Assembly convened at a crucial time for many democratic movements that are finding themselves on the defensive against increasingly sophisticated attacks by authoritarian governments. Speakers at the Opening Session of the Ninth Global Assembly took stock of these challenges, but also highlighted the immense advances made by democrats over the last few years and underscored the resilience and innovation displayed by Assembly participants around the world.**

In welcoming participants to the Ninth Global Assembly, [Zainab Bangura](#), Chairperson of the Steering Committee of the World Movement for Democracy, highlighted the inspiring history of Senegal in transforming its dark past into a promising future. “While many consider democracy to be in retreat today, Senegal is an emerging democracy that is providing democratic leadership on the African continent. During the Assembly, we hope you will have opportunities to interact with our Senegalese colleagues, and to learn from Senegal’s experience in motivating citizens to become engaged in the political arena, keeping those in power



accountable, maintaining public space for debate, and engaging with religious leaders in fighting extremism,” Bangura stated.

Representing the government of Senegal, [Penda Mbow](#), a special assistant to the President of Senegal, discussed further the role of civil society in engaging in democratic movements and processes within the continent to strengthen democratic institutions. In particular, she noted the inspiring story of keynote speaker [Isatou Touray](#), now the Minister of Trade, Regional Integration, and Employment of The Gambia, who played a pivotal role in fighting for the rights of women in her country. Although Touray was targeted by the Gambia’s former leader Yahya Jammeh, she continued to fight for the rights of women and later became the first female presidential candidate in the country’s history.

Touray emphasized the importance of building cross-sector relationships to resist authoritarianism. She shared the case of her country in liberating themselves from the oppressive regime of the Yahya Jammeh after 22 years. Only by building a coalition between opposition politicians and members of civil society were democrats in The Gambia able to defeat Jammeh in the 2016 elections. She highlighted the impor-

**“Experience has taught me that democracy is a journey, not a destination...[and] that you cannot take democratic progress for granted.” - Karen Bass**

## OPENING REMARKS, CONT.



tance of embracing “crossover”—the idea that members of civil society should pursue roles within political society to encourage a better working relationship between the two sectors and to help strengthen government institutions from within—an action she took by running for president and later by accepting the role of Minister.

Touray also highlighted the universality of democracy and its values, reinforcing the need to engage new voices in democratic dialogues and strengthening democratic unity. “If we look at democracy, every nation can identify elements that cut across boundaries and territories, gender, class, ethnicity or religion--it is a universal standard that involves everyone. Thus it is characterized as being of the people, for the people and by the people. The tenets of democracy call for independence of the judiciary, respect for the rule of law, and freedom of expression, with a common goal of promoting democratic rules and strengthening democratic norms and institutions around the world.”



At a time in which many democrats feel a sense of cynicism towards parliamentarians and governments, [Karen Bass](#), a member of the US House of Representatives, reminded participants that democratic institutions need their presence. Reforming government institutions from within is a necessary step that members of civil society can take to dismantle corruption and bring the voices of the people to the government: “As you heard, I am a US Member of Congress, but like you, I have struggled to make my own country more equal, more democratic, and more representative. I have been an activist. I also started and worked in the NGO world, and now I try to achieve that goal as a Member of Congress.”

To those who may be inclined towards despondence in the face of what seem like impossible circumstances, Bass closed the opening session by reminding participants, “experience has taught me that democracy is a journey, not a destination...[and] that you cannot take democratic progress for granted.”



## OPENING CONVERSATION: STATE OF DEMOCRACY

Following the opening remarks, civil society leaders and regional experts unpacked the successes of and challenges facing democracy movements in different regions. “We have a massive task ahead of us. We have to deal with bipolarization, weakened institutions...and not enough transparency and accountability in democratic countries,” said [Larry Diamond](#), senior fellow with the Stanford University Center for Democracy, Development, and Rule of Law. [Tanya Hamada](#), a former government official in the Philippines, echoed a similar sentiment regarding the election of autocratic President Rodrigo Duterte. “The voters didn’t go to the polls to elect a dictator...they expressed their feeling of exclusion in Filipino democracy.”

“The time to take a stand was always the day before yesterday - but the time to take a stand remains today.” - Ayo Obe



Other panelists focused on the lack of opportunity to participate in free elections and create political space for new leadership. [Vladimir Kara-Murza](#), the coordinator of Open Russia, stated “since Putin came to power we have not had democratic elections, just a ritual that resembles an election... the so-called popularity of Putin inside Russia has never been tested.” In a similar vein, [E. Gyimah-Boadi](#), executive director of the Ghana Center for Democratic Development, reinforced this statement noting that while defining and enforcing term limits remains a contentious issue throughout Africa, eight in ten citizens in 28 countries support the enforcement of limits on presidential tenure, although politicians in power refuse to acquiesce to this popular desire.

While each speaker discussed the challenges to democracy today, they also underscored the necessity of remaining positive and continuing to work to change political and civic landscapes to be inclusive of all citizens. In closing, [Ayo Obe](#), a well-known human rights lawyer in Nigeria, remarked that “the time to take a stand was always the day before yesterday - but the time to take a stand remains today.”



### Democracy Courage Tribute Speeches at the John B. Hurford Memorial Dinner

The Democracy Courage Tributes are a highlight of each Global Assembly and are presented at the John B. Hurford Memorial Dinner. The Tributes give special recognition to movements around the world working on behalf of democracy and human rights under particularly difficult circumstances and often outside the spotlight of global attention. This year, the World Movements honored Night-watchers-Photojournalists in the Philippines, Human Rights Lawyers in China, and Advocates for the Rule of Law in Africa.





### Opening Remarks by Foreign Minister Sidiki Kaba

Senegalese Foreign Minister Sidiki Kaba provided opening remarks for the presentation of the [Democracy Courage Tributes](#) by highlighting the importance of civil society in creating democratic societies. “It should be noted that since independence, if democracy succeeded [in Senegal], it is because there has always been a thriving civil society,” he remarked. This is evidenced by the fact that Senegal has never experienced a coup d’état, unlike many other governments in Africa, noted Kaba.

As a lawyer and human rights advocate who frequently represented activists in his work, Kaba emphasized the importance of organizations like the World Movement for Democracy in connecting democrats and providing a support network through which activists can share experiences and lessons learned. In closing, he provided participants with three pieces of advice to take with them after the Assembly: never trivialize the misfortune of others, always be ready to mobilize for a common cause, and always demand accountability and justice for those who are vulnerable.

This inspiring welcome set the tone for an evening to honor democrats working at their own personal risk to ensure societies are more inclusive and representative for all.



### Nightwatchers: Photojournalists in the Philippines

Ezra Acayan and Raffy Lerma, two Manila-based photojournalists who have dedicated their careers to documenting extrajudicial killings in President Duterte’s war on drugs, accepted the award on behalf of Nightwatchers. “For us, it’s not about politics. We believe in human rights, in the humanity of every person regardless of class or background. We attempt balance and seek accountability. We are biased for facts, and we hope to honor the tradition of a free and fearless press,” said Lerma.

**“We receive death threats daily. However, we are committed to exposing the effect of the war on drugs on the poorest and most vulnerable people of the Philippines.” - Raffy Lerma**

In the face of threats from the president, police, and government supporters, the Nightwatchers operate at great risk to themselves and their families. “Some of us quit our full-time jobs to take this on. We receive death threats daily. However, we are committed to exposing the effect of the war on drugs on the poorest and most vulnerable people of the Philippines,” remarked Acayan.



### Human Rights Lawyers in China

In memory of Li Baiguang, an inspiring human rights lawyer from China who dedicated his career to defending religious minorities, and many other Chinese human rights lawyers today, the second Courage Tribute was awarded to Human Rights Lawyers in China.

The award was accepted remotely by Jin Bianling, the wife of political prisoner Jiang Tianyong, who defended religious minorities, people with HIV/AIDS, and other vulnerable groups. Bianling was forced to seek political asylum in the United States due to state harassment her family has faced and has not seen her husband in three years. Since the massive crackdown on human rights groups in 2015, human rights lawyers have increasingly faced harassment, imprisonment, and physical harm by the government.

Bianling struck a defiant tone in her acceptance speech, saying: “The government wants us to feel isolated and alone. They want us to step back and give up our pursuit of the rule of law, human rights, and freedom. The Democracy Courage Tribute and others tell us we are not alone. The world is paying attention [to us] and honoring us. The government has failed to erase us from history and we will continue to appeal for our loved ones.”



### Advocates for the Rule of Law in Africa

Thulisile “Thuli” Madonsela, the former Public Protector of South Africa (2009-2016), accepted the final Tribute on behalf of democrats committed to holding government leaders accountable in Africa. In her acceptance speech, she highlighted the importance of building strong institutions for defending the tenets of democracy.

“Democracy cannot work for all in the absence of the rule of law. President Mandela...said the following: ‘Even the most benevolent of governments have among them people with propensities for human failings. The rule of law as we understand it consists in the set of conventions and arrangements that ensure it’s not left to the whims of individuals to decide what’s good for the populous.’”

**“The government wants us to feel isolated and alone. They want us to step back and give up our pursuit of the rule of law, human rights, and freedom. The Democracy Courage Tribute and others tell us we are not alone.” - Jin Bianling**



The John B. Hurford Memorial Dinner was sponsored by the Hurford Foundation whose Trustees, Robert Miller and Jayne Kurtzman, welcomed all the Assembly participants and recognized their extraordinary efforts. The dinner was named for the late John Boyce Hurford (1938-2000), an internationalist and philanthropist who played an important role in helping to conceptualize and bring into being the World Movement for Democracy.



## ROLE OF PARLIAMENTARIANS: GUARDIANS OF DEMOCRACY?

In recent years, many civil society activists and other citizens have started to view the relationship between society and its government representatives as an unbridgeable gap. In this session, speakers—many of whom began their careers as activists and became parliamentarians—discussed how parliamentarians should work to combat this sense of cynicism. The distrust stems from the stigma surrounding elected office, as only the elite or the corrupt are able to achieve those positions of power in many countries. Speakers noted in agreement the incredible importance of ensuring that citizens are truly reflected and represented within their institutions.

Promoting institutions that provide opportunities for all would reduce the gap citizens see between themselves and their representatives and remedy the “us versus them” mentality that is prevalent in many countries, they noted. “In Canada,” remarked [Anita Vandenbeld](#), Member of Parliament in Canada, “the Minister of Infrastructure, who’s responsible for deciding on billions of dollars for transportation infrastructure, began his life as a bus driver. Having people in positions of power that truly reflect the population—the diversity and the different life experiences of the populous—is one way to combat this cynicism.”

To renew this relationship between the people and their parliaments, Vandenbeld remarked that, “if more activists begin going back and forth

between activism and politics, they’ll have an understanding that it’s wearing two different hats, but fighting for the same cause.” [Svitlana Zalizhchuk](#), Member of Parliament in Ukraine, underscored the importance of entering Parliament to fight for those without a voice. “Parliamentarians have great power. Even one voice in the parliament with courage and stamina can make a difference...for the LGBTQ community’s voice...for women’s voices...it can make a difference.”

To reinforce this point, [Ana Gomes](#), Member of European Parliament representing Portugal, discussed her own drive to serve in parliament after being a lifelong activist: “You can’t have democracy without political parties and you can’t have true democracy without [activists] joining those political parties and fighting for the things we think are right...I’m [in parliament] to talk about things people don’t want to talk about and to uncover things people don’t want uncovered...And I hope, indeed, that when I leave the parliament, I will once again rejoin civil society. I will put all I have known and my network at the service of civil society to continue with this fight.”

Throughout the conversation, speakers reinforced that by encouraging and participating in civil society and government crossover, members of civil society can help to remove the stigma around parliament and work to create real change from within the government for their countries.



## STRENGTHENING A COALITION FOR DEMOCRATIC RENEWAL

To counter global decline of democracy, the [Coalition for Democratic Renewal \(CDR\)](#)—launched in Prague in October 2017—seeks to strengthen coordination amongst democrats and incubate new approaches to promoting democratic values. During the workshop, the working groups that make up the CDR reported on their initial efforts and identified key areas in need of innovation including, communications outreach, civic education, and strategic partnerships.

The Youth Working Group stressed the need to integrate and revitalize civic education with "rituals that will celebrate democracy and attract the attention of youth." To the same end, the China Working Group discussed its efforts to create a new educational narrative on China's economic and political models. By uncovering the flaws in China's governing system they can decrease its influence in the world and discredit claims that it's a better alternative to democracy. The Media Working Group highlighted the success of the information campaign that followed the signing of the "Prague Appeal," the core mission statement of the coalition, and posited that using new media and simple audio-visual messaging will be key to expanding their reach to the critical youth audience.

A common thread throughout the discussion was the need to utilize existing outreach platforms by building partnerships with media, youth networks, and religious leaders. As was discussed frequently throughout the Assembly, today's challenges to democracy require innovative responses. Workshop participants agreed that democrats should challenge themselves by reaching out to nontraditional communicators—such as celebrities, religious leaders, and other social influencers—that have a heightened impact on members of society who may be skeptical of democracy and its traditional proponents. Despite the obstacles facing democracy, the workshop ended on a hopeful note with panelists encouraging the participants to use the current challenges as inspiration to find innovative ways to engage other citizens and to build more inclusive democratic movements and institutions. To continue the discussion, members of the CDR will meet again at the [22nd Forum 2000 Conference](#) in Prague on October 7-9, 2018.



## Transitioning from a People's Movement to Democratic Consolidation

Peoples' movements have often triggered democratic transitions, shepherding governance reform, and bolstering democratic consolidation. However, the varying degrees of success of different movements illustrates that long-term change is much harder to achieve. Throughout the workshop, participants highlighted examples of protests that failed to keep up the momentum they generated and discussed how civil society can learn from these mistakes.

These examples, from South Korea's 24-week-long "Candlelight Revolution" that ousted a corrupt president, to Senegal's Y'en a Marre movement that encouraged voter registration to unseat the long-sitting president in 2012, show that citizens are often mollified with the replacement of a leader. Unfortunately, actual change does not come without systematic institutional reforms. Participants emphasized that the removal of one authoritarian leader may bring temporary satisfaction, but it does not necessarily produce long-term results if democrats do not initiate attempts at institutional reform.

Workshop participants recognized that these movements serve as critical entry points for CSOs to engage everyday citizens. To take advantage of this opportunity, CSOs must build out a strategy for reforming democratic institutions and maintaining civic engagement. With this in mind, workshop participants also emphasized the necessity for civil society to tackle corruption and reform government institutions from within by running for parliamentary and other political positions. With continued public engagement, and the ascension of civil society members to political roles, these movements could create long-lasting change. In September 2018, the Korea Foundation and the World Movement will convene participants once again to discuss further how movements in Asia can better reform institutions and engage the public.





## Shadowed by Anti-Money Laundering and Countering Terrorism: How Can Civil Society Push Back Restrictions?

### Integrating Democratic Values with Traditional Culture and National Identity

Authoritarian governments frequently claim that traditional and democratic values are incompatible in order to sow distrust between civil society and citizens. To counteract this fabricated conflict of values, civil society actors must develop counter narratives that demonstrate how democratic norms support, rather than contradict, a community's traditional values and identities. Panelists observed that traditionalists are often left out of discussions among members of civil society—with their beliefs labeled as archaic and incongruent with democratic ideals. Members of civil society must bridge this gap by attempting to initiate this dialogue with, and break the stigma that has been created around, traditionalists.

In the case of Georgia, noted [Ketevan Chachava](#), executive director of the Center for Development and Democracy, “only 4% of people in society said that they fully trust NGOs...but the Orthodox Church approval rating has been 80-85%.” With this clear discrepancy in mind, Chachava emphasized that working with religious leaders to build mutual understandings is instrumental if democrats want to spread their message to all of society. “When it comes to building strategic partnerships for

democratic renewal, we need to become more open ourselves...Now we have seen religious leaders like bishops [and] the Vicar of Patriarch making these statements, promoting tolerance and promoting the freedom of choice, saying that [these values are] given to us by God and no one can take it away from us.”

In Jordan, [Oraib Al-Rantawi](#), the director of Al Quds Center for Political Studies, had a similar experience. “We decided to launch a regional program under the title ‘Coalition for Civic and Democratic Islamic Discourse.’ We reached a conclusion that without the Islamic movement being adept in more democratic and civic values, democracy will not work...And now, in the Islamic movement, we have serious debates about civic and democratic values. We have four Islamist parties...willing to join forces with democrats, and they have more open-minded approaches and discourse. It just so happens that most of their leaders used to be frequent participants in our program.” By taking initiative to create a dialogue between leaders in civil society and religious leaders, panelists agreed, democrats will be able to expand their audience and bring other community stakeholders to the table.



Increasingly, governments are imposing funding restrictions on non-profit organizations under the guise of countering terrorism and money laundering. Although many governments use these laws as excuses to suppress dissenting voices, these provisions stem to some extent from global requirements crafted by the [Financial Action Task Force \(FATF\)](#), an international policy-making body established by the G-7 in 1989 to combat money laundering. The organization issues financial regulations and enforces compliance with public warnings to countries failing to meet these requirements, affecting governments' financial reputation and access to markets.

In its original guidelines, the FATF indicated that non-profits are susceptible to money laundering and terrorist funding. This language accounted for the increased scrutiny and financial regulation of CSOs, explained workshop panelists. Following coordinated action taken by the Non-Profit Organization Committee of the FATF, the FATF revised this language to recommend a more nuanced approach to assessing non-profit funding. The revised guidelines recommended that countries should undertake a non-profit risk assessment, should review its laws to mitigate these risks, and should consult with non-profit organizations to educate them about potential terrorist financing risks. However, compliance with these recommendations is inconsistent and sometimes results in onerous restrictions on civic space.

In order to improve regulations for non-profit organizations, participants identified opportunities in which non-profits can influence the conversation surrounding international regulations on [Anti-Money Laundering and Combating Terrorism \(AML/CFT\)](#). First, participants agreed it is necessary to make a coordinated effort to educate all non-profits about the regulations and how they can be changed. The more voices that express discontent with funding restrictions stemming from the FATF, the more successful these efforts will be. Under Recommendation #8 of the FATF guidelines, governments are required to reach out to non-profit organizations for risk-based assessments, which is a good opportunity for non-profits to initiate a dialogue. Additionally, when countries are up for evaluation, non-profits have the chance to make their case at the international level. However, noted speakers, these efforts take months of planning, so non-profit leaders must work together to create coordinated and effective messaging.





## SHAPING AN AGENDA FOR PROTECTING FREEDOM OF PEACEFUL ASSEMBLY AND ASSOCIATION

The mandate of the [United Nations Special Rapporteur for freedom of assembly and association \(FOAA\)](#) serves as a critical connection point between civil society and the United Nations (UN). The newly appointed UNSR, Clément Voule of Togo, held a workshop to solicit strategic input from civil society voices on how best to serve the human rights community. The discussion identified three critical areas for improving civil society space—creating additional opportunities for country visits, streamlining the petitions to the UNSR, and strengthening communication channels between civil society and the UN.

One of the most effective tools the UNSR has access to is country visits where he can meet with government and civil society representatives. Participants agreed that lobbying for a UNSR visit was one of the best advocacy strategies for attracting global and national exposure. However, the UNSR's limited time and financial resources are often overwhelmed with hundreds of requests for visits. It would therefore be helpful if civil society could coordinate their requests among themselves to ensure that his visits serve broader regional and strategic goals. Although representatives of civil society have high expectations for the mandate, participants acknowledged that they need to also take initiative and be more proactive to help the UNSR improve the state of FOAA around the world.

Civil society can further help by providing the UNSR with broader updates on the state of civic space in their respective countries and by providing him with contact information for key people and organizations. Additionally, after the country visit, civil society has the ability to monitor reform processes—something that is difficult for the UNSR to do alone. Ultimately, participants agreed that while the mandate's role is to bring the people closer to the UN, it is civil society's advocacy and support for the mandate that will allow the new UNSR to make a difference. To aid in strengthening the mandate, the [Civic Space Initiative](#)—an initiative by Article 19, CIVICUS: World Alliance for Citizen Participation, the International Center for Not-for-Profit Law, and the World Movement for Democracy—will continue to facilitate consultations between the UNSR and civil society, as it has in the past.

## RECLAIMING THE INTERNET FOR DEMOCRACY



A panel of digital media and journalism experts discussed how activists can take back the Internet as a forum for democratic engagement, rather than allowing the space to be overtaken by censorship and disinformation. The speakers emphasized that in the context of online security, things will get worse before they get better. However, they also provided a sense of hope as they discussed global initiatives “to take back the Internet.”

**“Human rights are not an afterthought when it comes to cyber security—they should be the foundation.” - Ron Deibert**

Throughout the discussion, panelists underscored that access to an open Internet should be taken more seriously by the international community. [Ron Deibert](#), director of CitizenLab, stressed that “human rights are not an afterthought when it comes to cyber security—they should be the foundation of cyber security.” In an age that has been completely transformed by digital communications, the ability to access an uncensored Internet

should be considered a basic human right. The international community must take a more active role in demanding access to the Internet for all, rather than choosing to ignore situations where countries restrict accessibility of online spaces.

The discussion also focused upon the challenge of countering disinformation and the seeming impossibility of halting the spread of fake news—especially for those who aren't tech experts. “If you don't know what to believe, then the person with the loudest megaphone wins,” remarked [Maria Ressa](#), CEO of Rappler, a Filipino news site. Although panelists agreed that engagement of social media platforms by cyber activists and governments is necessary to stop the flow of false information, typical members of civil society still have a role to play. “You can't discount people learning. Once they know that are being manipulated, you can take strides forward.” Providing media literacy trainings and information campaigns are steps that all members of civil society can take to help fight the war against disinformation.





## DEFENDING THE INTEGRITY OF THE INFORMATION SPACE

Healthy democracies require an informed citizenry. In recent years, however, targeted disinformation campaigns directed by hostile domestic and foreign actors have increased sharply and are damaging even the most established democracies. The Beacon Project, carried out by the International Republican Institute (IRI), counters these campaigns by identifying and exposing false narratives; pinpointing gaps in democratic governance that are exploited through disinformation; and helping spur a coordinated response. In this workshop, speakers outlined how lessons from the Beacon Project can help political actors in democracies respond to disinformation campaigns and how those actors can best collaborate with civil society in doing so.

**“Democracy creates great expectations and must deliver great results.”**

One workshop participant explained that, although disinformation campaigns are becoming increasingly complex, it is still possible to expose false narratives by using traditional legal methods. The participant detailed how they used legal pathways to access emails between the government of South Africa and a public relations company in order to expose a government-funded disinformation campaign. Those emails revealed that the public relations firm had created 13 fake non-governmental organizations and over 80,000 fake Facebook and Twitter profiles to spread government propaganda.

Other speakers emphasized that democrats, especially democrats in the “West,” must set an example so that the ideals of democracy cannot be as easily exploited in disinformation campaigns. “Democracy creates great expectations and must deliver results,” noted one participant. To help democracy deliver, civil society organizations must take the lead in informing the public through civic education and outreach programs. To this effect, participants agreed that coordinated international efforts to enact Right to Information and Freedom of Information laws are crucial for transparency and holding governments accountable.



## NEW VOICES AND NEW ENERGY FOR DEMOCRATIC RENEWAL

With the rise of authoritarianism around the world, many democrats have expressed fear that youth are not committed to fighting for the principles of democracy. This panel of young leaders attempted to answer one question: are youth truly apathetic, and if so, what can be done to change these attitudes? Of course, began panelists, the circumstances of youth participation will differ greatly by region, and even by country. However, “youth—and I think this is something that goes beyond borders—feel that politics, democracy, and decision making is completely alien to them, and that it is something reserved for older, more powerful, and more wealthy people,” remarked [Jatzel Roman](#), general coordinator for the Latin American Youth Network for Democracy.

In Latin America, youth have displayed not just a lack of interest in democracy, but almost a sense of contempt for it in polls taken over the last few years, he noted. Given the failure of many ‘democratic’ governments—in truth, governments run by authoritarian leaders who control both elections and parliaments—it is understandable why people have



begun to lose faith in democracy. Combatting this sense of apathy, he stated, is of the utmost importance: “As Ronald Reagan once said, ‘freedom is never more than one generation away from extinction.’” If democrats want to create sustainable democratic change within their countries, there must be a greater focus on bolstering youth engagement in civic and political spaces.

To combat youth apathy towards democracy, electoral and campaign reforms would help to make an important difference, panelists agreed. Parliaments and government institutions play a significant role in functioning democracies—however, substantial barriers to participation for youth discourage them from engaging with political bodies. In both Iraq and Nigeria, noted [Kadhim Mohsin](#) of the Nissan Center for Democratic Awareness and [Rinsola Abiola](#) of the Nigerian All Progressive Congress, even if youth have an interest in politics, the financial costs of running for office make political engagement difficult for all but the wealthiest. Additionally, age limits in parliamentary institutions ensure that youth are excluded from the decision-making process.

In Nigeria, emphasized Abiola, she has seen the incredible power youth hold if given the chance to engage meaningfully with their representative institutions. In 2015, a youth-led campaign helped to defeat an incumbent in presidential elections for the first time in Nigeria’s history. Showing youth that they can have an impact within political institutions reinvigorated their interest in democratic processes. Since that election, youth have become far more active in political society, evidenced in the popularity of the #NotTooYoungToRun campaign—a successful initiative to reduce the age limit for running for elected office in Nigeria. If there are equal opportunities for youth to run for office, it will help to renew their interest in democratic processes, panelists agreed.



## Expanding Space for the Next Generation: Strengthening Political Participation Mechanisms



In a rapidly-evolving world, young people have developed and adopted mechanisms for engaging in political processes that challenge the frequent recourse to old-fashioned, top-down frameworks, which benefit only a few. It's perceived that youth are not fully committed to fighting for democracy and its ideals. Workshop participants discussed the ways young people are engaging in politics and reinforced the need for youth-based initiatives and movements.

One participant noted that in Sri Lanka, a country plagued by conflict for over 30 years, youth struggled to identify their role in a society fractured by ethnic and political division. In order to combat this polarization, members of civil society created “friendship clubs” where young people had the opportunity to discuss social and political issues in a constructive environment. To engage youth further in democratic processes it



is instrumental to encourage the growth of youth networks and provide civic education, participants agreed. However, these programs require funding, and members of civil society should begin presenting the issue of youth engagement as a long-term investment in encouraging stable societies to donors, others noted.

Throughout the conversation, participants also argued that perhaps youth are not “doing democracy wrong,” and that they are just doing democracy differently. In an age where globalization and new technologies have revolutionized how people interact with each other and with democratic institutions, youth are finding new avenues to engage. “Democracy is a set of values and principles. The structures may change, but the principles are the same. There are different ways of influencing the spaces, and it's okay for youth to try and fail with alternatives,” noted one participant.

## Exploring the Voice of Business in Strengthening Democratic Governance



The growing threat to democracy around the world requires a concerted response from different sectors of society to identify areas of collaboration and address issues surrounding governance and security. Although often unacknowledged in democratic discussions, the private sector plays an important role in shaping sustainable economic and democratic development. The workshop discussion focused on one central question: how can collaboration between the private sector and civil society be encouraged to address cross-cutting challenges facing countries?

By far, the largest barrier to cooperation between business and civil society has been mistrust between the two sectors, speakers began. However, several recent civil society initiatives and the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights have made significant steps towards helping these sectors understand the value in one another. In Africa, remarked one participant, rapidly-changing mindsets have evidenced themselves in agreements like the [Ouagadougou Declaration](#), the outcome of an event organized by the World Movement for Democracy, Center for International Private Enterprise (CIPE), and US Chamber of Commerce where 400 members representing 10 different countries came together to identify areas of collaboration between sectors for strengthening democratic governance.

Another participant highlighted the importance of enforcing international and regional norms, noting: “Communities are more empowered because they know their rights; the business sector is more aware of the international framework related to rights that govern their actions; and the public sector knows more about these issues and is deciding in favor of protecting rights.” Now that businesses are aware of legal limitations, they are less likely to be at odds with the work of civil society. In fact, civil society can play an important role in encouraging discussions between vulnerable communities and businesses. With heightened mutual understanding, business, civil society, and government will have the opportunity to work together to build a stable environment for steady and long-term business growth, as well as a prosperous and free society. To strengthen these cross-sector partnerships, the World Movement's [Promoting Inclusive Governance](#) program will continue to engage the three sectors by convening national dialogues in Kenya and Nigeria in late 2018.



# Breaking Barriers: Empowering Young Women's Political Leadership



From Ghana, to Pakistan, to Argentina, social media movements in the last year have mobilized women to combat sexual harassment, speak out about violence against women, and run for political office in historic numbers. Despite the incredible momentum, systematic barriers, often reinforced by religious, educational, and cultural institutions, still limit the participation and potential of many young women in political processes. In this workshop, participants leveraged intergenerational experiences to help frame a global response to boost participation of women in political and civic spaces.

In order to change regressive stereotypes about women in many societies, one speaker suggested engaging media to increase the representation of academic women on TV and in the news. Unlike the inner-workings of the government, TV reaches almost every household in Haiti, she remarked. However, women represented on TV are not consulted on serious matters or considered to be experts. Proponents of gender equality need to work with media outlets to convey the reality that women are equals and to set an example for the rest of the populous, participants agreed.

Another participant stated that one way to ensure women have a seat at the table is to promote quota requirements in legislative bodies. While many agreed that quota systems are generally beneficial, they also emphasized that quotas do not have a direct impact on the cultural practices that inhibit women's participation in the first place. On one matter, almost all participants agreed: the most important way of providing young women access to political spaces is by fostering intergenerational mentorship. Women who have achieved success or positions of authority should initiate mentorship with aspiring young leaders to prepare them for the challenges that lie ahead. To encourage the involvement of young women in mentorship and community engagement in Africa, the Youngstars Foundation of Nigeria hosted a "[Female and More](#)" symposium on August 31-September 1, 2018 in Lagos, Nigeria.



# Innovative Partnerships

In an era where the public is increasingly losing trust in democracy, artistic expression and innovative communication are important tools for reaching audiences with little interest in democratic processes. Throughout the Assembly, participants highlighted strategies to engage new actors in understanding the values of democracy.







## Activism + Art = Artivism for Deepening Democratic Culture

Artistic expression is an important tool for reaching audiences with little interest in democratic processes. Through “artivism,” artists can highlight sentiments of democracy and address the repression of individuality and free-thinking that authoritarians impose. Through art, activists are better able to convey sentiments and emotions that words often cannot. Recognizing the transformative potential of art as a form of protest, speakers showcased the importance of civil society providing these opportunities for local communities.

During the second half of the workshop, participants collaborated on a piece of art that represented global solidarity for democracy. The artwork comprising of three panels, which reads from left to right, begins with images of cocoons and individual hands raised in resistance. As the painting continues, the hands join together, representing global solidarity. As this happens, the cocoons bloom into butterflies. The painting, a fitting product of a gathering such as the Ninth Global Assembly where participants are able to build solidarity and enact change together, are now displayed at Dakar City’s Communal Building allowing participants to have left a positive mark on the city for years to come.

## Lightning Talk: Defending Digital Information Space



“With the level of global distrust towards media and NGOs hitting record numbers, you must look for unorthodox communicators—Youtubers, online celebrities, pop stars, actors—whatever works for you in your context, and target group.”  
- Daniel Milo

In a lightning talk on “Defending Digital Information Space,” [Daniel Milo](#), Senior Research Fellow at the GLOBSEC Policy Institute, discussed how GLOBSEC managed to reach youth in Slovakia with messages about disinformation by utilizing the capabilities of two popular [YouTube stars](#), rather than traditional methods.

The two young Internet celebrities were asked to begin spreading false information about each other in an on-line “war.” Their respective supporters quickly joined in without thinking to fact-check any of the information or consider alternative narratives. In the end, the two YouTubers released a video together announcing that their feud was fake and urging their viewers to always fact-check their information and be wary of disinformation on social media.

“With the level of global distrust towards media and NGOs hitting record numbers, you must look for unorthodox communicators—Youtubers, online celebrities, pop stars, actors—whatever works for you in your context, and target group,” noted Milo.



## Democracy Lounge— Networking Space

The Democracy Lounge was an informal space for participants to connect and form strategic partnerships at the Assembly. In addition to facilitating informal networking, the Democracy Lounge featured four “democracy clinics” to help activists and civil society members troubleshoot potential problems in their line of work and learn more about innovative strategies being employed around the world.

### Enhancing Digital Security for Online Activists

The digital revolution has transformed the world’s ability to interact with others and access information. Today, democracy activists conduct large parts of their work online, using digital media and other outlets that enable new forms of mass advocacy, but also render activists vulnerable to digital surveillance and attacks. The Digital Security Clinic, hosted by DefendDefenders, offered participants the chance to identify their digital security vulnerabilities and provided guidance on how to proactively protect themselves and their devices.

### Discovering the State of Civil Society Through “Democracy Dialogues”

The CIVICUS 2018 State of Civil Society Report discusses 10 key trends affecting civil society, including political polarization and divided societies. During the CIVICUS Democracy Dialogues, participants had the opportunity to discuss the current challenges facing democracy and civic space in different regions and to collaborate with other activists to identify solutions. CIVICUS is a global alliance of civil society organizations and activists dedicated to strengthening citizen action and civil society throughout the world.



### Developing Deeper Understandings of Democracy with Democracy Cake

What are “ingredients” that are essential to building and sustaining a democracy? With the Rafto Foundation for Human Rights’ “Democracy Cake” board game, participants had the opportunity to learn hands-on what ingredients are necessary for building and nourishing a democracy. The Rafto Foundation for Human Rights is an organization dedicated to the global promotion of human rights. It funds and facilitates projects, and offers human rights education to local and international audiences.

### Sustaining Resources for NGOs

In today’s challenging economic and political environments, the Center for Private and International Enterprise (CIPE) posits that nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) may become ineffective if they are forced to tailor initiatives around donor priorities. In CIPE’s Building Sustainable NGOs Clinic, participants had the opportunity to build a “portfolio” to identify different funding sources that would ease donor-dependence and encourage local stakeholder engagement.





# SOIRÉE À DAKAR

The Soirée à Dakar was hosted by the City of Dakar, and it featured a concert of West African rappers who use music as a medium to inspire their audiences to get involved in political processes and civil society.

## PERFORMERS

### KEUR GUI CREW (SENEGAL)

Keur Gui Crew is a widely popular, socially-conscious rap group that helped found the Y'en a Marre movement in 2011, a grassroots campaign against injustice and inequality. Originally a response to local power outages, the nascent protest movement went on to mobilize against the controversial bid by Senegalese president Abdoulaye Wade to remain in office for a third term. The Y'en a Marre movement continues to help mobilize Senegalese citizens, civil society organizations, and youth to engage in political processes and dialogues.

### ELOM 20CE (TOGO)

Elom 20ce is an activist and Pan African rapper from Togo. He created the practice of 'Arctivism,' an activity that promotes political participation through artistic mediums. Through his Arctivism, Elom 20ce facilitates debates and dialogue among citizens to challenge restrictions on freedom of expression and promotes youth development.

### KILLA ACE (THE GAMBIA)

Ali Cham, also known as Killa Ace, is a rapper from The Gambia and founder of the movement, Team Gom sa bopa (Believe in Yourself). It is a social-media driven movement dedicated to raising social and political awareness among young people. Killa Ace was also the host of 'The Cypher,' a weekly broadcast that encouraged youth to express their socio-cultural and political views through rap and showcased their talent on air.







# Join the Movement

Through the World Movement for Democracy, our participants have the ability to engage with others facing similar challenges, build solidarity within regional and global networks, and collaborate on innovative approaches. We welcome any organization or individual who can contribute to and benefit from this network. Make sure to keep up with our network's activities by following us on Twitter and Facebook.

Connect with other participants by checking out our interactive participant directory, which includes profiles of individuals, networks, and organizations associated with the World Movement for Democracy. Users can identify and connect with fellow activists through the directory when searching by topics, countries, and regions.

To stay up to date with the latest democracy developments, sign up for our bi-monthly newsletter, DemocracyNews. We also welcome newsletter contribution submissions—[submit](#) statements, research, reports, information on your projects, and advocacy efforts.

Express solidarity with political prisoners through the [Set Them Free Campaign](#) and commit to sharing DemocracyAlerts, which spotlight at-risk activists in our network who face violence and arrests as they advocate for democracy in their countries. [Sign up here!](#)

# Participants

Democracy activists, practitioners, and scholars from every region of the world gathered in Dakar, Senegal to discuss practical solutions to a wide range of challenges to democracy. In the following pages, participants are listed according to region, country, and then alphabetically by last name. Those who attended are but a small fraction of the thousands of activists around the world, so many of whom could not be included in this Assembly. However, they are as much participants in the World Movement as those who attended. Many of the participants took great personal risks to attend the Assembly and some cannot be listed here for that reason. We wish to thank both those who attended and those who were not able to attend for their support, dedication, and commitment.





# Africa

## Angola

**Maria Da Silveira**  
Association for Justice,  
Peace and Democracy

## Rafael Morais

Maka Angola

## Burkina Faso

**Eric Ilboudo**  
BEOG-NEERE

## Kounkine Some

Centre de Capacitation  
Citoyenne

## Burundi

**Gertrude Kazoviyo**  
Ligue des Droits de la Per-  
sonne dans la Région des  
Grands Lacs

## Vital Nshimirimana

Forum for Strengthening  
Civil Society

## Cameroon

**Ateki Caxton**  
Network for Solidarity,  
Empowerment, and Trans-  
formation for All

## Central African Re- public

**Pingama Modo Socrates  
Innocent**  
NGO URU

## Maximilienne Chantal Ngo Mbe

Réseau des Défenseurs  
des Droits Humains en  
Afrique Centrale

## Zanre Ngombala Samba

Initiative pour la Démocra-  
tie et le Développement  
Durable

## Chad

**Delphine Djiraibe**  
Public Interest Law Cent-  
er

## Cote D'Ivoire

**Marie- Paule Capri Kodjo**  
PLAYDOO- CI

## Drissa Soulama

Forum de la Societé Civile  
de l'Afrique de l'Ouest

## Wodjo Fini Traore

Commission Nationale  
des Droits de l'Homme de  
Côte d'Ivoire

## Democratic Republic of the Congo

**Floribert Anzuluni**  
FILIMBI

## Aunel Arneth Kimbembe Makaya

Cinema for Peace and  
Democracy

## Christian Mounzeo

Rencontre Pour La Paix et  
Les Droits de L'Homme

## Gerard Mpang'de

Agir pour les Elections  
transparentes et apaisees

## Nsapu Mukulu

International Federation  
for Human Rights

## Robert Ilunga Numbi

Les Amis de Nelson Man-  
dela

## Patrick Pindu Di Lusanga

South Africa Organisations  
and Federations for Peo-  
ple with Disabilities

## Samuel Yagase

Groupement des Or-  
ganisations Villageoises  
d'Auto-développement

## Equatorial Guinea

**Tutu Alicante**  
Equatorial Guinea Justice

## Ghana

**Emmanuel Gyimah-  
Boadi**

Ghana Center for Demo-  
cratic Development /  
Afrobarometer

## Jean Mensa

Insitute of Economic Af-  
fairs.

## Franklin Oduro

Ghana Center for Demo-  
cratic Development

## Kwasi Prempeh

Ghana Center for Demo-  
cratic Development

## Esther Tawiah

Gender Centre for Em-  
powering Development

## Guinea

**Ruben Johnson**  
United States Agency for  
International Develop-  
ment

## Kenya

**Maina Kiai**  
InformAction Kenya

## Lynnette Micheni

PAWA Initiative

## Charity Michigani

Central Organization of  
Trade Unions - Kenya

## Immaculate Nabwire

Defend Defenders

## Regina Opondo

Constitution and Reform  
Education Consortium

## Liberia

**Eddie Jarwolo**

Naymote Partners for  
Democratic Development

## Samuel Woods

Liberia Law Society

## Mali

**Wassa Kamissoko**  
Collectif des Femmes du  
Mali

## Tidiani Togola

Democracy Tech Squad /  
Tuwindi

## Mauritania

**Bechir El Hassen**  
Le Pacte Republicain

## Mauritania

**Sidatt Haroune**  
Center for International  
Private Enterprise

## Mauritius

**Roukaya Kasenally**  
African Media Initiative

## Nigeria

**Kareemat Rinsola Abiola**  
All Progressives Congress

## Yetunde Bakare

Youth Initiative for Advo-  
cacy Growth and Advance-  
ment

## Samson Itodo

Youth Initiative for Advo-  
cacy, Growth and Ad-  
vancement/African Move-  
ment For Democracy

## Ayodele Mabogunje

Lagos Chamber of Com-  
merce and Industry

## Dabesaki Mac-Ikemen- jima

Ford Foundation

## Paul Nwulu

Ford Foundation

## Ayo Obe

International Crisis Group

## Fatu Ogwuche

The Election Network

## Edetaen Ojo

Media Rights Agenda

## Akeem Omotayo Sule

HiKey

## Rwanda

**Alphonse Bizimana**  
Syndicat des Travailleurs  
aux Services des Droits  
Humains

## Jean Claude Ngendan- dumwe

Conseil de Concertation  
des Organisations d'Appui  
aux Initiatives de Base

## Amandine Rushenguzi- minenga

TrustAfrica

## Senegal

**Adjaratou Aïdara**  
Partners West Africa Sé-  
négal

## Eugénie Aw

Université Cheikh Anta  
Diop

## Jean Bassene

YMCA Senegal

## Mamadou Boiro

Forum pour un Développe-  
ment Durable Endogène

## Aboubakry Deh

Fodde Fouta

## Mor Diakhate

Alphabétiser pour un  
Développement Durable

## Khady Diamé

Réseau des Femmes de  
Fatick

## Bassa Diawara

Comité d'Appui et de Sout-  
ien au Développement  
Economique et Sociale

## Mamadou Diop

Mairie de L'île de Gorée

## Moustapha Diop

Partners West Africa

## Amacodou Diouf

Economist

## Mame Fall

Publiez Ce Que Vous  
Payez

## Khady Fall Tall

Afaowawa

## Adja Fatou Faye

Mouvement Citoyen

## Ibrahima Lissa Faye

PressAfrik

## Ndeye Gnilane Faye

## Balla Gaye

Association des Agricul-  
teurs de la Région de  
Kaolack

## Oumou Gaye

Union des Jeunes Actif

## Alfred Gomis

WANEP Senegal

## Babacar Gueye

Plateforme des Acteurs  
non Étatiques

## Fatoumata Gueye

Ndiaye Crédit du Sénégal

## Fatou Jagne Senghor

Article 19

## Abdoulaye Kane

Reseau Sénégalais des  
Éducateurs en Droits  
Humains

## Abdou Mbacke

ONG ARCH

## Penda Mbow

Government of Senegal

## Momar Ndao

Association des Consom-  
mateurs du Sénégal

## Babacar Ndiaye

WATHI

## Moussa Ndiaye

Fédération des Asso-  
ciations Paysanne de la  
Région de Louga

## Modou Sall

Mouvement des Etudi-  
ant et Jeunes Leaders du  
Sénégal

## Bakary Sambe

Timbuktu Institute - Af-  
rican Center for Peace  
Studies

## Moussa Sane

Association pour le Dével-  
oppement de la Zone  
Intermédiaire de Sédhiou  
et Bambaly

## Ousmane Sene

West African Research  
Center

## Oumar Sy

Ndeyi Jirim

## Sophie Ndiaye Sy

Conseil National de la  
Jeunesse du Sénégal

## Dialiba Tandian

Kédougou Encadrement et  
Orientation pour le Dével-  
oppement Humain

## Alioune Tine

Amnesty International

## Sierra Leone

**Zainab Bangura**  
World Movement for De-  
mocracy



## *Somalia*

**Abdurashid Ali**  
Somali Family Services

**Sharmarke Farah**  
Hayaan Institute

## *South Africa*

**Bonginkosi Dhlamini**  
Thulisile Madonsela Foundation

**Geordin Hill-Lewis**  
Democratic Alliance, South Africa

**Corlett Letlojane**  
Human Rights Institute of South Africa

**Thulisile Madonsela**  
Thulisile Madonsela Foundation

**Stevens Mokgalapa**  
Africa Liberal Network

**Abner Mosaase**  
Africa Unmasked

**Rhulani Siweya**  
Africa Unmasked

## *South Sudan*

**Brian Adeba**  
Enough Project

**Emmanuel Anur**  
Plan International South Sudan

**Jame Kolok**  
Foundation for Democracy and Accountable Governance

**Mawa Lazarous**  
Community Empowerment for Rehabilitation and Development

**Mawa Nemaya Joseph**  
Maya Cultural Foundation

**Angelina Very**  
End Impunity Organization

## *Sudan*

**Safia Mohamed**  
UNDP

**Abdel-Rahman El Mahdi**  
Sudanese Development Initiative

## *Swaziland*

**Colani Hlatajawako**  
Women and Law in Southern Africa

**Fundizwi Sikhondze**  
National Workers Union for Swaziland Higher Institutions

## *Tanzania*

**Abella Bateyunga**  
Tanzania Bora Initiative

## *The Gambia*

**Naffie Barry**  
The Government of The Gambia

**Ali Cham**  
Team Gom Sa Bopa

**Marie Antoinette Corr**  
Gambia Teachers Union

**Momodou Darboe**  
Shepherd University

**Ya Kumba Jaiteh**  
The Gambia National Assembly

**Gaye Sowe**  
Institute for Human Rights and Development in Africa

**Isatou Touray**  
The Government of The Gambia

## *The Republic of Congo*

**Trésor Chardon Nzila Kendet**  
Observatoire Congolais des Droits de l'Homme

## *Togo*

**Elom Khaunbiow**  
Elom 20ce

**Clement Nyaletsossi Voule**  
UN Special Rapporteur on Rights to Freedom of Peaceful Assembly and of Association

## *Uganda*

**Perry Aritua**  
Women's Democracy Network-Uganda Chapter

**Neil Blazevic**  
Defend Defenders

**Emmanuel Kitamirike**  
Public Policy Institute

**Arthur Larok**  
ActionAid

**Nicholas Opiyo**  
Chapter Four Uganda

**Hassan Shire**  
DefendDefenders

**Yona Wanjala**  
Defenders Protection Initiative

## *Zanzibar*

**Ismail Ladhu**  
Civic United Front

## *Zimbabwe*

**Briggs Bomba**  
TrustAfrica

**Memory Kadau**  
Crisis in Zimbabwe Coalition

**Frances Lovemore**  
Counselling Services Unit

**Okay Machisa**  
ZimRights

**Tawanda Majoni**  
Information for Development Trust

**Tongai Makawa**  
Magamba Network

**Zenzele Ndebele**  
Center for Innovation and Technology

**Irene Petras**  
International Center for Not-for-Profit Law

# Asia/Pacific

## *Australia*

**Michael Danby**  
Labor Party

**Eric Johnson**  
Internet Freedom Activist

**Roland Rich**  
Rutgers University

**Tonya Stevens**  
Australian Labor Party and Sozialdemokratische Partei

## *Bangladesh*

**Korvi Dhrubo**  
JAAGO Foundation

## *Burma*

**Khin Lay**  
Triangle Women

**Min Zin**  
Institute for Strategy and Policy - Myanmar

## *China*

**Xiao Qiang**  
China Digital Times

## *India*

**Joyeeta Bhattacharjee**  
Observer Research Foundation

**Maja Daruwala**  
Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative

## *Indonesia*

**Bambang Harymurti**  
Tempo

**Migiyanto Mugiyanto**  
International NGO Forum on Indonesian Development

**Alissa Munawaroh**  
Gusdurian Network Indonesia

**Mansyur Pangeran**  
Ambassade de la République de l'Indonésie au Sénégal

**Ichal Supriadi**  
Asia Democracy Network

## *Japan*

**Takako Hikotani**  
Columbia University

**Maiko Ichihara**  
Hitotsubashi University

**Ryota Jonen**  
National Endowment for Democracy

## *Malaysia*

**Wan Saiful Wan Jan**  
United Indigenous Party

## *Mongolia*

**Damba Ganbat**  
Academy of Political Education

## *Nepal*

**Sarita Pariyar**  
Samata Foundation

## *Pakistan*

**Shahzad Ahmad**  
Bytes For All, Pakistan

**Shehryar Aziz**  
Policy Research Institute of Market Economy

**Gulalai Ismail**  
Aware Girls

**Taimur Rahman**  
Laal

**Fauzia Shaheen**  
Women Media Center

**Muhammad Zubair**  
Potohar Organization for Development Advocacy

## *The Philippines*

**Ezra Acayan**  
Nightwatchers

**Celito Arlegue**  
Council of Asian Liberals and Democrats

**Emerlynne Gil**  
International Commission of Jurists

**Maxine Tanya Hamada**  
Institute for Leadership, Empowerment, and Democracy

**Rafael Resty Lerma**  
Nightwatchers

**Maria Ressa**  
RAPPLER

## *South Korea*

**Dukjin Chang**  
Seoul National University

**Eunsil Jeong**  
The Korea Foundation

**Chungmin Lee**  
The Korea Foundation

**Hubert Lee**  
Transitional Justice Working Group

**Sihyung Lee**  
The Korea Foundation

**Sook Jong Lee**  
SungKyunKwan University

**Jai Chang Park**  
Hankuk University of Foreign Studies

**Hyung-Sik Shin**  
Korea Democracy Foundation

**Changrok Soh**  
Korea University / Human Asia

## *Sri Lanka*

**Ravindra De Silva**  
Association for Friendship and Love (AFRIEL) Youth Network

**Vidya Nathaniel**  
Verite Research

**Sandith Samarasinghe**  
Member of Parliament

## *Taiwan*

**Wei-Chun Hsu**  
Taiwan Association for Human Rights

**Chia-liang Kao**  
Open Culture Foundation



## Taiwan

### Bo Tedards

Taiwan Foundation for Democracy

### Yu Yung-wen

Taiwan Foundation for Democracy

### Szu-chien Hsu

Taiwan Foundation for Democracy

## Thailand

### Sirikan Charoensiri

Thai Lawyers for Human Rights

### Pirongrong Ramasoota

Chulalongkorn University

## Tibet

### Tenzin Dorjee

Tibet Action Institute

### Tenzin Palkyi

Central Tibetan Administration

## Vietnam

### Hoi Trinh

Vietnamese Overseas Initiative for Conscience Empowerment

# Central/ Eastern Europe

## Bosnia and Herzegovina

### Darko Brkan

Citizen's Association Why Not

### Senad Sepic

International Republican Institute

### Ada Sokolovic

Mebius Production

## Bulgaria

### Martin Vladimirov

Center for the Study of Democracy

## Croatia

### Ivan Novosel

Human Rights House Zagreb

## Czech Republic

### Igor Blazevic

Prague Civil Society Centre

### Martin Hala

Sinopsis.cz

### Jakub Klepal

Forum 2000 Foundation

### Marek Svoboda

Central and Eastern European Law Initiative

### Rostislav Valvoda

Prague Civil Society Centre

## Estonia

### Urve Eslas

Center For European Policy Analysis

## Georgia

### Natalia Antelava

Coda Story

### Ketevan Chachava

Center for Development and Democracy

### Nino Evgenidze

Economic Policy Research Center

### David Usupashvili

Former Speaker of the Parliament of Georgia

## Kosovo

### Florian Qehaja

Kosovar Centre for Security Studies

## Latvia

### Ilze Vinkele

McCain Institute

## Lithuania

### Dovile Sukyte

Eastern Europe Studies Centre

## Macedonia

### Sashka Cvetkovska

Investigative Reporting Technology LAB - In Real Life

### Biljana Janeva

Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies

## Moldova

### Alina Mazureac

Ziarul de Garda

## Montenegro

### Dragan Koprivica

Center for Democratic Transition

## Poland

### Martyna Bogaczyk

Fundacja Edukacja dla Demokracji

### Thomas Garrett

Community of Democracies

## Lenur Kerymov

Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights

## Romania

### Paul Radu

Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project

## Serbia

### Milan Antonijevic

Lawyers' Committee for Human Rights - YUCOM

### Vladan Dukanovic

Youth Initiative for Human Rights

### Goran Miletic

Civil Rights Defenders

### Jelena Milic

Center for Euro - Atlantic Studies

### Anita Mitic

Youth Initiative for Human Rights

### Andrej Nosov

Youth Initiative for Human Rights

## Slovakia

### Daniel Milo

GLOBSEC

## Ukraine

### Mykola Balaban

Prometheus Center

### Denys Bihus

Bihus.info

### Tristan Masat

Solidarity Center

### Vitalii Moroz

Internews Ukraine

### Andrij Nechyporuk

Lion Society

### George Sandul

Labor Initiatives NGO

### Svitlana Zalishchuk

Member of Parliament

# Eurasia

## Armenia

### Daniel Ioannisyan

Union of Informed Citizens

### Narine Khachatryan

Bellingcat

### Gulnara Shahinian

Democracy Today

## Azerbaijan

### Arzu Geybulla Kurtulus

Freelance Journalist

## Vugar Gojayev

Norwegian Helsinki Committee

### Zohrab Ismayil

Public Association for Assistance to Free Economy

## Kazakhstan

### Yevgeniy Zhovtis

Kazakhstan International Bureau for Human Rights and the Rule of Law

# Latin America

## Argentina

### Matias Bianchi

Asuntos del Sur

### Andrea Castagnola

CIPPEC

### Renzo Lavin

Civil Association for Equality and Justice

### Nicolas Panotto

Grupo de Estudios Multidisciplinarios sobre Relación e Incidencia Pública

## Maria Gabriella Pellon

Square Prevention Expertise

### Ines Pousadela

CIVICUS

### Gabriel Salvia

Centro para la Apertura y el Desarrollo de América Latina

### Diego Sueiras

Nueva Generación Argentina Foundation

## Bolivia

### Fabiola Cordova

National Endowment for Democracy

### Oscar de la Parra

Programa de Capacitación Política

### Raul Penaranda

Diario Pagina Siete

## Colombia

### Laura Gil

Diálogos y Estrategias

### Gina Romero

Latin American and Caribbean Network for Democracy

## Dominican Republic

### Jatzel Roman

Juventud LAC

## Ecuador

### Belen Paez

Fundacion Pachamama

### Maria Vivar Aguirre

OHCHR

## Guatemala

### Constanza Alarcon

Guatemala Visible

### Jose Ricardo Barrientos

### Quezada

Instituto Centramericano de Estudios Fiscales

## Haiti

### Yvenique Bathard

Jeunes pour la Participation Citoyenne

### Louis-Henri Mars

Lakou Lapè

### Nadège Robertson

### Tippenhauer

Fondation Espoir

### Hans Tippenhauer

Fondation Espoir

## Mexico

### Cirila Quintero-Ramirez

El Colegio de la Frontera Norte

### Joel Salas

Instituto Nacional de Transparencia, Acceso a la Información y Protección de Datos

## Nicaragua

### Felix Maradiaga

Instituto de Estudios Estratégicos y Políticas Públicas

### Edna Medina

Movimiento Puente

## Paraguay

### David Riveros Garcia

reAcción

## Venezuela

### Tamara Adrian

Venezuelan National Assembly

### Marianela Balbi Ochoa

Instituto Prensa y Sociedad - Venezuela

### Mercedes De Freitas

Transparencia Venezuela

### Feliciano Reyna

CIVILIS Human Rights



# Middle East/ North Africa

## Afghanistan

### Mariam Safi

Organization for Policy Research and Development Studies

### Yama Salik

Yama Salik

### Omaid Sharifi

ArtLords

## Algeria

### Fersaoui Abdelouhab

Fersaoui

## Bahrain

### Maryam Alkhawaja

Gulf Center for Human Rights

## Egypt

### Aya Hijazi

Belady Foundation

### Hisham Kassem

Independent Journalist

## Iran

### Ladan Boroumand

A. Boroumand Foundation

## Iraq

### Majid Abu-Kalal

The Development Center

### Hoshyar Malo

Kurdish Human Rights Watch

### Kadhim Mohsin

Nissan Institute for Democratic Awareness

## Jordan

### Oraib Al Rantawi

Al Quds Center for Political Studies

### Mai Eleimat

Al-Hayat Center-RASED

### Obaida Farajalla

Arab Association For Enlightened Muslim Educators

## Morocco

### Mokhtar Benabdallaoui

Center for Humanities Studies and Research

### Tarik Nesh-Nash

Mundiapolis University

## Palestine

### Muamar Nakhla

Wattan News Agency

## Syria

### Caroline Ayoub

SouriaLi Radio

### Redwan Ziadeh

Damascus Center for Human Rights Studies

## Tunisia

### Amine Ghali

Kawakibi Democracy Transition Center

### Radwan Masmoudi

Center for the Study of Islam & Democracy

## Yemen

### Shaima Al-Ahdal

Basement Cultural Foundation

# North America

## Canada

### Samantha Bradshaw

Oxford University

### Ronald Deibert

Citizen Lab, Munk School of Global Affairs, University of Toronto

### Ami Emmanuel Khamsin

Plan International Canada

### Nikahang Kowsar

Abangan

### Catherine Nadeau

Embassy of Canada

### Irene Poetranto

Citizen Lab, Munk School of Global Affairs, University of Toronto

### Brandon Silver

Raoul Wallenberg Centre for Human Rights

### Anita Vandenberg

Member of Parliament

### Aaryn Zhou

Global Affairs Canada

## United States

### Adjo Adjaka

National Endowment for Democracy

### Danielle Agyemang

National Endowment for Democracy

### Rahman Aljebouri

National Endowment for Democracy

### Megan Anderson

US Department of State Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor

### Katarina Antens-Miller

Honeywell

### Frieda Arenos

National Democratic Institute

### Melissa Aten

National Endowment for Democracy

### Shawna Bader-Blau

Solidarity Center

### Angelita Baeyens

Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights

## United States

### Eric Baker

National Endowment for Democracy

### Sarina Beges

Stanford Center on Democracy, Development, and the Rule of Law

### Lars Benson

Center for International Private Enterprise

### Kim Bettcher

Center for International Private Enterprise

### Jennifer Bognar

Solidarity Center

### Samlanchith Chanthavong

National Endowment for Democracy

### Imani Countess

Solidarity Center

### Ivana Cvetkovic Bajrovi

National Endowment for Democracy

### Larry Diamond

Stanford University

### Mamby Diouf

National Endowment for Democracy

## Eileen Donahoe

Global Digital Policy Incubator, Stanford University

### David Donat Cattin

Parliamentarians for Global Action

### Javana Dunnom

International Republican Institute

### Karen Farrell

National Endowment for Democracy

### Georges Fauriol

National Endowment for Democracy

### Carl Gershman

National Endowment for Democracy

### Fawzi Guleid

Civic Space Institute

### Barbara Haig

National Endowment for Democracy

### Elizabeth Hoffman

National Endowment for Democracy

### K. Scott Hubli

National Democratic Institute

## Troy Johnson

National Endowment for Democracy

### Brian Joseph

National Endowment for Democracy

### Shanthi Kalathil

National Endowment for Democracy

### Natalie Kay

National Endowment for Democracy

### Mark Kearney

International Republican Institute

### Mallory Knodel

Article 19

### Miriam Kornblith

National Endowment for Democracy

### Volodymyr Kozoriz

National Endowment for Democracy

### Jayne Kurzman

Hurford Foundation

### Lynn Lee

National Endowment for Democracy

## J. William Leonard

National Endowment for Democracy

### Rudy Massamba

National Endowment for Democracy

### Scott Mastic

International Republican Institute

### Stephen McInerney

Project on Middle East Democracy

### Wade McMullen

Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights

### Matteo Meccaci

International Campaign for Tibet

### Sheri Melvin

National Endowment for Democracy

### Fiorella Melzi Tauro

Inter-American Commission on Human Rights

### Nicholas Miller

International Center for Not-for-Profit Law

### Robert Miller

Hurford Foundation

## Yascha Mounk

Harvard University

### Daniel Munier

Scholars at Risk

### Mark Nelson

Center for International Media Assistance

### Christopher O'Connor

National Endowment for Democracy

### Crystal Patterson

Facebook

### Dave Peterson

National Endowment for Democracy

### Marc Plattner

National Endowment for Democracy

### Rodger Potocki

National Endowment for Democracy

### Eric Robinson

National Endowment for Democracy

### Paul Rothman

National Endowment for Democracy

### Kelly Russo

National Endowment for Democracy



# North America

## United States

**Douglas Rutzen**  
International Center for  
Not for Profit Law

**Pamela Rykowski**  
Prep for Prep

**John Scott-Railton**  
Citizen Lab, Munk School  
of Global Affairs, Univer-  
sity of Toronto

**Jan Surotchak**  
International Republican  
Institute

**Elsbeth Suthers**  
National Endowment for  
Democracy

**Pierre Tantchou**  
National Endowment for  
Democracy

**John Tomaszewski**  
International Republican  
Institute

**Robert Tuttle**  
National Endowment for  
Democracy

**Yelena Viner**  
National Endowment for  
Democracy

**Kip Wainscott**  
National Democratic  
Institute

**Christopher Walker**  
National Endowment for  
Democracy

**Kate Watters**  
Crude Accountability

**Toni Weis**  
Center for International  
Private Enterprise

**Andrew Wilson**  
Center for International  
Private Enterprise

**Sharon Witiw**  
Former Members of Con-  
gress Association

**Ken Wollack**  
National Democratic  
Institute

**Zerxes Spencer**  
National Endowment for  
Democracy

# Western Europe

**Belgium**  
**Assita Kanko**  
Women Political Leaders

**Denmark**  
**Marianne Abrahamsen**  
University of Southern  
Denmark

**Peter Bartram**  
Jyllands-Posten

**Jorgen Jensen**  
JPPolitiken

**France**  
**Antoine Bernard**  
Reporters without Borders

**Germany**  
**Kamal Bayramov**  
Freelancer

**Norway**  
**Maria Dahle**  
Human Rights House  
Foundation

**Therese Jebson**  
Rafto Foundation

**Daiva Petkeviciute**  
Human Rights House  
Foundation

**Portugal**  
**Ana Gomes**  
Member of Parliament  
(European Union)

**Spain**  
**Juan Cardenal**  
Centro para la Apertura y  
el Desarrollo de América  
Latina

**Sweden**  
**Helena Bjuremalm**  
Swedish International  
Development Cooperation  
Agency

**Robert Hardh**  
Novamedia Sweden

**Switzerland**  
**Florian Irminger**  
Human Rights House  
Foundation

**United Kingdom**  
**Nic Cheeseman**  
University of Birmingham

**Nick Mathiason**  
Finance Uncovered

**Sophie Pollak**  
Media Legal Defence Ini-  
tiative (MLDI)

**Karen Widess**  
Loyola University Chicago  
PROLAW Program

The World Movement thanks its partners in Senegalese civil society and the business community for their support and role in bringing local and regional perspectives into our program.

## ARTICLE 19 - Senegal

ARTICLE 19 works regionally and internationally to close the implementation gap between law and practice. They promote media freedom, increase access to information, protect journalists and human rights defenders, fight the shrinking of civic space, and place human rights at the heart of developing digital spaces.

## Enda Tiers Monde

Enda Tiers Monde has worked for over thirty years to fight against the socio-economic marginalization of the underprivileged in the Global South and to promote sustainable development. It works at the grassroots level to improve the living conditions of vulnerable populations in rural and urban settings. It also actively engages, lobbies, and advocates for those populations on the international stage.

## Forum Civil

Created in 1993, Forum Civil's mission is to promote participatory democracy. Composed of volunteer members without party affiliation, Forum Civil and its partners seek to bring issues of transparency, good governance, and corruption to the forefront of public discussion in Senegal. Since 2000, it has served as Transparency International's Senegalese Chapter.

## Gorée Institute

The Goree Institute Center for Democracy, Development, and Culture in Africa was founded in 1992. It is a Pan-African civil society organization, whose mission is to support peacebuilding initiatives, electoral reform, and arts and culture in Africa. The Institute operates in partnership with state and inter-state authorities, as well as with diverse members of civil society.

## Mouvement Citoyen

Mouvement Citoyen works to empower women and youth to take civic and political action in Senegal. It aims to build a new citizenship centered on the values of democracy, responsibility, justice, transparency, and solidarity. To stimulate an active dynamic of grassroots citizenship, the Mouvement offers trainings, a multipurpose center, and a research unit.

## Partners West Africa

Partners West Africa - Senegal works with a network of global partners and change leaders to strengthen democratic institutions, promote sustainable development, and resolve conflict throughout the region. The team leads several projects that prevent terrorism, support capacity-building, promote access to justice, foster social entrepreneurship, and engage civil society in peace and governance.

## La Rencontre Africaine pour la Défense des Droits de l'Homme (RADDHO)

Since 1990, RADDHO has promoted, protected, and defended human rights in Senegal and in Africa. The organization facilitates meetings on human rights issues, conducts field investigations of human rights abuses, and participates in electoral monitoring. RADDHO has operated a counseling and legal services center for refugees and internally displaced persons since 1997.

## Union Nationale des Commerçants et Industriels du Sénégal (UNACOIS)

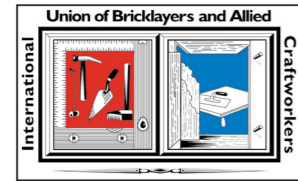
UNACOIS is Senegal's National Union of Merchants. The organization, which serves and represents a diverse membership, seeks to initiate policy dialogue and propose concrete solutions to the problems faced by small and informal businesses.





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Eileen Donahoe & John Donahoe

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