

G7/G20 ADVOCACY ALLIANCE (U.S.)

G7 DEMOCRACY AND HUMAN RIGHTS RECOMMENDATIONS

2021 G7 Summit: Carbis Bay, Cornwall, United Kingdom

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Democracy and the rules-based international order are increasingly being challenged by authoritarianism and democratic backsliding. In the face of these challenges, democracies not only must deliver services and opportunities for all people, but also must better articulate how democracy at home and abroad generates economic, security, and health benefits. The U.S. Government should work with other G7 countries to advance democratic solidarity and counter transnational threats.

1. **Prioritize democracy, both at home and abroad.**
 - a. Elevate democracy and human rights within G7 diplomatic and development assistance efforts and ensure adequate funding therein.
 - b. Adhere to democratic values in COVID-19 response, emphasizing inclusive vaccine distribution and the pandemic's impact on democracy and elections (e.g., increased corruption and mis/disinformation).
 - c. Address the governance challenges associated with climate change, including the environmental displacement that increases the likelihood of insecurity, conflict, and marginalization.
 - d. Safeguard civic space, including the legal framework for civil society, at home and abroad.
 - e. Investigate, expose, and jointly mobilize against human rights violations.
 - f. Reaffirm commitment to ensuring a high level of transparency around elections, political financing, and political advertising.

2. **Reaffirm commitments to counter malign interference by state and non-state actors aimed at undermining democratic values and institutions.**
 - a. Seek commitments from G7 countries to participate in and contribute to the Summit of Democracies, as well as proactively engage social media/technology companies and civil

societies domestically and globally on identifying and countering foreign authoritarian interference.

- b. Recommit to establishing a G7 Rapid Response Mechanism to strengthen coordination to identify and respond to evolving threats to democracies through sharing information and analysis.
 - c. Commit to collaborating with the G7 members to counter global kleptocracy, such as by providing incentives for tax havens to adopt more transparent financial systems; increasing investigations and prosecutions of the professional enablers of transnational corruption; addressing election-related corrupt practices; and strengthening anti-corruption and oversight bodies and ethical, independent public institutions.
- 3. Reassert the primacy of democratic values and human rights in the information and technology space.**
- a. Engage social media and messaging platforms to affirm citizens' digital rights including user data privacy and ownership and platform data and algorithmic transparency.
 - b. Reaffirm commitment to promoting free, independent, and pluralistic media; a fact-based information sphere; and freedom of expression at home and abroad.
 - c. Dedicate public resources to media literacy and civic awareness within G7 countries to identify and counter malicious disinformation and information operations.
 - d. Promote universal internet access, commit to net neutrality, and reduce the digital divides that exacerbate socio-economic inequalities.

BACKGROUND

Three-quarters of the world's population now lives in countries where freedom is declining.¹ More than one hundred laws have passed in the last four years in 60 countries that restrict civil society, and more than 70 other such laws remain pending around the world. Transnational authoritarian repression is on the rise, targeting exiles and diaspora communities to silence dissent. Seeking to present an alternative to Western liberal democracy, authoritarians actively work to undermine democratic and electoral institutions and values by employing cyber tools, economic levers, dis/misinformation, military, and political influence. It is imperative that the G7 cooperate to counter malign authoritarian influence by prioritizing democracy both at home and abroad.

COVID-19 recovery is as much a governance challenge as a health challenge. With authoritarian opportunism and human rights abuses on the rise – with autocrats capitalizing on insecurity to seize more power and degrade democratic institutions – the G7 must be steadfast in its support to human rights defenders and democratic activists around the world. Marginalized populations are more likely to be negatively impacted by the pandemic; at the same time, COVID-19 compounds existing barriers to inclusion. To ensure sustainability, all people – including women, youth, LGBTQ+, and persons with disabilities – must be included in the pandemic response. Moreover, vaccine distribution must be equitable, inclusive, and transparent at home and abroad.

Information and technology represent a critical sector for joint G7 action as well. Mis/disinformation threatens democratic discourse and activists and motivates individuals to violence and illiberal values. The G7 should promote free, independent, and pluralistic media, as well as by equipping citizens with the ability to discern fact from fiction.

The challenges facing the community of democracies are rapidly evolving and complex; therefore, the G7 must work jointly in a spirit of democratic solidarity if it is to defend its interests. Now is the time for both humility and steadfast support for open and democratic societies at home and abroad.



ABOUT INTERACTION

InterAction is a convener, thought leader, and voice for NGOs working to eliminate extreme poverty, strengthen human rights and citizen participation, safeguard a sustainable planet, promote peace, and ensure dignity for all people.

¹ Repucci, S. and Slipowitz, A. (2021). "Freedom in the World 2021." Freedom House. <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2021/democracy-under-siege>.