



Info brief

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## Creating the mandate of UN Special Rapporteur on Democracy

More than 150 civil society groups, think tanks and institutions from across the world endorse a joint statement calling for the appointment by the UN Human Rights Council (HRC) of a UN Special Rapporteur on Democracy (UNRoD). This info brief provides an overview.

### Background

Democracy is threatened and authoritarianism is on the rise. Civic space and freedoms are restricted in many countries. Democratic backsliding or a decline in the quality of democracy is occurring in newer as well as long-established democracies across different world regions. A retreat of democracy is worsening the situation of human rights and this needs to be investigated by the UN. Past and present UN resolutions and instruments confirm the UN's commitment to democracy, including the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the 1966 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights or the 1993 Vienna Declaration of the World Conference on Human Rights.

### Filling the gaps

The UN's Special Procedures system established under the HRC is covering many human rights that are cornerstones of democracy. However, important gaps remain. While mandated to investigate challenges and best practices of democratic governance from a broader perspective, a UNRoD would focus on covering the most critical ones.

Gaps to be considered in defining the mandate include constitutional and institutional arrangements related to checks and balances; effectiveness of parliaments; free, fair and competitive elections and election environments; political participation; direct and deliberative mechanisms; as well as civil society participation and civic space and related freedoms.

### What is required

Pro-democratic UN and HRC Member States need to consult on the exact scope of the mandate, build support, draft a resolution and introduce the resolution at the HRC. The HRC has 47 members and a majority vote will suffice to set up the mandate. The financial implications are comparatively small. Funds will be needed to increase staff support and cover travel expenses. The UNRoD would be a volunteer position as the other mandates.

### Endorse the campaign



Express your endorsement of the joint statement by submitting this online form: [www.democracywithoutborders.org/unrod-call/](http://www.democracywithoutborders.org/unrod-call/).

Further material at: [www.democracywithoutborders.org/unrod-campaign/](http://www.democracywithoutborders.org/unrod-campaign/)