



## **THE DECLINE OF DEMOCRACY: A THREAT TO INTERNATIONAL STABILITY**

Welcome delegates to the United Nations Security Council of SharkMUN 2026.

In this committee, delegates will debate one of the most pressing political and security concerns of the modern era: the global decline of democracy and its consequences for international peace and stability. Around the world, democratic institutions are increasingly challenged by authoritarianism, political polarization, electoral manipulation, disinformation campaigns, military coups, and restrictions on civil liberties. These developments not only affect domestic governance but also generate regional instability, humanitarian crises, and international conflict.

Delegates are expected to analyze the relationship between democratic backsliding and global security while balancing national sovereignty with international responsibility. The Security Council will serve as a platform for intense geopolitical debate regarding intervention, sanctions, cyber influence, election integrity, and the role of international organizations in protecting democratic systems.

We encourage delegates to engage in dynamic discussion, realistic diplomacy, and strategic negotiation throughout the committee.

### **Introduction**

Democracy has historically been considered one of the pillars of political stability, human rights protection, and peaceful governance. However, in recent years, multiple regions around the world have experienced democratic erosion. Governments have concentrated power, weakened judicial independence, limited freedom of the press, manipulated elections, and suppressed political opposition.



The decline of democracy creates significant risks for international stability. Weak democratic institutions often contribute to corruption, civil unrest, refugee crises, violent repression, and regional conflicts. In some cases, democratic collapse has resulted in military coups, civil wars, or authoritarian regimes that challenge international law and global cooperation.

The rise of digital misinformation, cyber interference, and political extremism has further complicated democratic governance. Social media platforms and artificial intelligence technologies have accelerated disinformation campaigns capable of influencing elections and increasing political polarization.

The international community faces an important dilemma: how can states protect democratic values while respecting national sovereignty? Some nations advocate for stronger international pressure and sanctions against authoritarian actions, while others argue that democracy promotion may be used as a justification for foreign intervention.

The Security Council must therefore examine whether democratic decline constitutes a threat to international peace and security and determine what role the United Nations should play in responding to democratic crises worldwide.

### **Timeline of Key Events**

| Year | Event                                                                                               |
|------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1945 | UN Charter signed; promotes "fundamental human rights" and "dignity and worth of the human person." |



| Year          | Event                                                                                                                |
|---------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1948          | The Universal Declaration of Human Rights was adopted; it includes the right to take part in government (Article 21) |
| 1990s         | Third wave of democracy; post-Cold War democratic transitions in Eastern Europe, Africa, Latin America               |
| 2000          | The UN Millennium Declaration emphasizes democracy, good governance, and human rights.                               |
| 2005          | UN Democracy Fund (UNDEF) was established to support democratization projects.                                       |
| 2010–<br>2014 | Arab Spring uprisings; democratic transitions and subsequent backsliding                                             |
| 2017          | First-year multiple democracy indexes report a global net decline in democratic governance.                          |
| 2021          | Military coup in Myanmar; Security Council addresses democratic collapse                                             |
| 2022          | Global state of democracy reports indicate 13th consecutive year of democratic decline.                              |
| 2023          | Niger, Gabon, and Sudan experience military coups; regional democratic backsliding accelerates.                      |
| 2024          | Over 50% of the world's population lives in countries with declining democratic scores.                              |
| 2025          | AI-generated disinformation campaigns target elections in over 30 countries.                                         |
| 2026          | Multiple electoral crises trigger Security Council consultations on democratic stability.                            |



## Key Terms

### **Democracy**

A system of governance in which political power is exercised through representative institutions, free elections, and citizen participation.

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### **Democratic Backsliding**

The gradual weakening of democratic institutions, processes, and norms within a political system.

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### **Rule of Law**

The principle that all individuals and institutions are subject to and accountable under the law.

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### **Electoral Integrity**

The extent to which elections are conducted freely, fairly, transparently, and without undue interference.

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### **Civil Liberties**

Fundamental freedoms, including freedom of expression, assembly, association, religion, and the press.



## Current Situation

According to multiple international democracy indexes and research institutions, democratic governance has declined globally over the past decade. Numerous countries have experienced reductions in political freedoms, constraints on civil society, and increased concentration of executive power.

Political polarization has intensified in many democracies, leading to declining public trust in institutions and growing social divisions. Disinformation campaigns, foreign interference in elections, and the rapid spread of misinformation through digital platforms have further complicated democratic governance.

In some regions, democratic decline has been linked to protests, political violence, disputed elections, and constitutional crises. Weak democratic institutions may struggle to peacefully manage political disagreements, increasing the risk of instability and conflict.

The issue also intersects with human rights concerns. Restrictions on media freedom, limitations on civil society organizations, and the suppression of political opposition can reduce government accountability and increase tensions within societies.

Technological developments present both opportunities and risks. While digital platforms can increase political participation and civic engagement, they may also facilitate surveillance, censorship, foreign influence operations, and the spread of disinformation.

The international community remains divided regarding how to respond. Some states advocate for stronger international support for democratic institutions, while others emphasize non-interference in domestic political affairs and the sovereign right of states to determine their own political systems.



## Main Countries and Regions Involved

### Myanmar

Myanmar's political crisis following the 2021 military takeover has generated significant concerns regarding democratic governance, human rights, and regional stability.



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### Venezuela

Political polarization, contested elections, and governance challenges have contributed to one of the largest migration crises in the Western Hemisphere.



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### Hungary

Hungary has frequently been discussed in international debates regarding democratic backsliding, judicial independence, and media freedom.



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### Sudan

Political instability following transitions of power has complicated democratic development and contributed to ongoing security challenges.





## Belarus

Controversies surrounding elections, political opposition, and civil liberties have made Belarus a significant case study in discussions of democratic governance.



## Additional Stakeholder Positions

| Country/Entity                                  | Position on Democratic Decline and UNSC Action                                                                                                |
|-------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>United States</b>                            | Historically advocates democracy promotion; supports sanctions for coups; criticized for inconsistent application.                            |
| <b>China</b>                                    | Emphasizes non-interference; opposes using democracy as a justification for intervention; defends the sovereign right to the political system |
| <b>Russia</b>                                   | Similar position to China; rejects UNSC role in domestic governance; uses veto to block democracy-related resolutions.                        |
| <b>United Kingdom</b>                           | Supports democratic governance; advocates for election monitoring and anti-disinformation measures                                            |
| <b>France</b>                                   | Active in former colonies facing democratic crises; supports regional organization (AU, EU, ECOWAS) leadership.                               |
| <b>European Union (non-member, key partner)</b> | Strong democracy promotion mandate; can coordinate sanctions with the UNSC.                                                                   |
| <b>African Union</b>                            | Promotes democratic governance through the African Charter on Democracy; condemns unconstitutional changes; supports regional solutions       |



| Country/Entity                                                               | Position on Democratic Decline and UNSC Action                                                                      |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Organization of American States (OAS)</b>                                 | Active in responding to democratic crises in the Western Hemisphere; invokes the Inter-American Democratic Charter. |
| <b>ASEAN</b>                                                                 | Maintains "non-interference" principle; criticized for weak response to Myanmar coup                                |
| <b>UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)</b>           | Monitors democratic rights abuses; provides early warning                                                           |
| <b>International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA)</b> | Provides technical expertise and democratic resilience frameworks                                                   |
| <b>Freedom House / V-Dem / Economist Intelligence Unit</b>                   | Provide data and indexes frequently cited in UN debates.                                                            |

## Previous Attempts to Address the Problem

The United Nations has promoted democratic governance through electoral assistance, peacebuilding operations, human rights mechanisms, and institutional capacity-building programs.

The United Nations Development Programme supports democratic governance initiatives, electoral assistance, and institution-building projects in numerous countries.

Regional organizations such as the European Union, Organization of American States, and African Union have implemented election observation missions and democratic governance frameworks.





The Security Council has occasionally addressed democratic crises when they have escalated into threats to international peace and security, particularly in situations involving civil conflict, unconstitutional changes of government, or large-scale humanitarian emergencies.

Despite these efforts, significant disagreements remain regarding sovereignty, intervention, and the role of international organizations in promoting democratic governance.

## **Possible Solutions**

### **Strengthening Democratic Institutions**

Supporting independent judicial systems, electoral commissions, and legislative institutions capable of maintaining checks and balances.

### **Protecting Electoral Integrity**

Expanding election observation missions, technical assistance, and measures to combat electoral fraud and foreign interference.

### **Combating Disinformation**

Promoting media literacy, fact-checking initiatives, and international cooperation against malicious influence operations.

### **Supporting Civil Society**

Protecting independent media, non-governmental organizations, and human rights defenders.



## **Promoting Peaceful Political Dialogue**

Encouraging mediation and inclusive political processes during periods of political crisis and polarization.

## **Enhancing International Cooperation**

Strengthening cooperation between the United Nations, regional organizations, and national governments to address democratic instability before it escalates into conflict.

## **Addressing Root Causes**

Reducing corruption, inequality, exclusion, and governance failures that contribute to democratic erosion and political unrest.

## **Questions a Resolution Should Answer**

1. Does democratic decline constitute a threat to international peace and security?
2. How should the Security Council respond to democratic backsliding while respecting national sovereignty?
3. What measures can strengthen democratic institutions and electoral integrity?
4. How can the international community address disinformation and foreign interference?
5. What role should civil society and independent media play in democratic resilience?
6. When should democratic crises become matters for Security Council action?
7. How can democratic governance contribute to long-term international stability?



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