



Democracy at a crossroads, according to new International IDEA report

29 November 2017 | GENEVA – Global democracy is at a crossroads and continuous actions must be taken to safeguard and protect it, according to the first edition of *The Global State of Democracy* publication from the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA), which was launched today at the United Nations Office at Geneva. The report finds that the world has experienced continued and steep democratic progress, however this progress has slowed down over the past decade, with challenges and threats emerging in specific countries and regions.

International IDEA's Global State of Democracy publication, based on the new Global State of Democracy indices, highlights that almost all aspects of democracy have advanced over the past four decades:

- Most electoral democracies established in this period survived, and the number and proportion of countries holding elections have increased.
- Governments are now more representative of (and responsive to) their constituencies, more countries respect the fundamental rights of their citizens, and social rights and equality feature sharp improvements.
- More importantly, governments are more constrained by checks from parliaments, the judiciary and the media.
- In addition, according to International IDEA's analysis, the value people give to democracy is strengthened when democratic backsliding occurs. The most difficult aspects for democracies to tackle are corruption and rule of law, which have not improved since 1975.

"We see the challenges to our democracy in our daily news. There are cases of national leaders attempting to retain power beyond constitutional limits, attacks on human rights, the rollback of civil liberties and freedom of the press, and the rise of populism...", said **Yves Leterme, International IDEA Secretary-General**. *"International IDEA is concerned about the rise of challenges to democracy. Our role—every citizen's role—is to protect democracy."*

At the launch event, **Kofi Annan, Chair of the Kofi Annan Foundation and former Secretary-General of the United Nations**, said noted that *"the ability of individual citizens, civil society organizations, political parties, electoral management bodies, and others to defend democratic ideals depends on a thorough understanding of the state of democracy. The findings and messages of this report are therefore a fundamental contribution to the empowerment of citizens on which the survival of democracy depends."*

The first edition of *The Global State of Democracy* publication analyses and assesses emerging challenges and threats. It is based on a new set of indices that collect data on key attributes of democracy across 155 countries from 1975 to 2015. The starting point of 1975 coincides with the ratification of the United Nations Conventions on Civil and Political Rights as well as Economic and Social Rights and the so-called 'Third Wave of Democracy'. Zooming-in on some of the most pressing crises for democracy today, the publication provides insights into the future of political parties and representation, corruption and money in politics, inequality, migration, and post-conflict peacebuilding. The publication provides actionable recommendations for citizens, politicians and technocrats worldwide in their efforts to combat these threats.

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The Global State of Democracy publication

In the framework of a series of global and regional launches, [The Global State of Democracy: Exploring Democracy's Resilience](#) will be launched in Geneva today. The publication is available in English, both in print and online. An overview of the publication is also available in English, Spanish, French and Arabic. Explore the publication's website and the [Global State of Democracy indices](#) to learn more about the quality of democracy, comparing countries and regions.

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The International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance

The International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA) is an intergovernmental organization that supports sustainable democracy worldwide. International IDEA's mission is to support sustainable democratic change by providing comparative knowledge, and assisting in democratic reform, and influencing policies and politics. International IDEA produces comparative knowledge in its key areas of expertise: electoral processes, constitution-building, and political participation and representation, as well as democracy as it relates to gender, diversity, and conflict and security. For more information, visit www.idea.int