

Beyond Ballots 2017

5th January

A LA UNE

In the new year of 2017, [five social, political, and economic developments in Latin America that might stay under the radar](#) are well worth considering. These include the upcoming presidential elections in Honduras, the humanitarian crisis in Haiti, or migration flows across Mexico's southern border.

What lies at the core of the Rohingya persecution in Myanmar? Saskia Sassen argues that [military and economic interests – and specifically the phenomenon of corporate land grabbing – are frequently overlooked](#).

Infamous for its violent clashes between rival neighbourhoods and the outbreak of terrorist attacks since the Syrian civil war, [the northern Lebanese city of Tripoli is now seeing several promising civil and cultural initiatives](#) that address young people and aim to prevent radical thought.

DEMOCRACY LIBRARY

Following the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the German Development Institute (DIE) delineates the concept of [SDG-sensitive development cooperation](#) and related implications for donors.

In view of the persisting use of targeted torture by the Egyptian state, [Maged Mandour's examination of the logic of state violence in the country paints a bleak picture](#): as long as the dominant political order does not see a fundamental change, state violence will remain an accessible mean for the regime to exercise control over the opposition.

COMING-UP

On 12 January 2017, the Erasmus University Rotterdam and the International Development Law Organization will organise the event "The Second Generation of Rule of Law Reform" in The Hague. Participants will discuss an alternative approach of understanding rule of law in the development field, giving more attention to domestic power structures, context, culture and other factors.

12th January

A LA UNE

Is the hashtag revolution in Sudan enough to foster political change? Since September 2013, the country is facing its [biggest show of public dissent](#), occurring for the first time through social media.

Although the EU declared an unchanged commitment to Ukraine, the still unsolved visa-free travel issue and the 2016 rejection of a landmark agreement establishing closer economic ties with the block have fuelled [Ukrainian disenchantment with the EU](#).

[Elections in Thailand have been postponed once again](#): although they should have taken place soon after the constitutional referendum of August 2016, it is rather unlikely that they will be held before Spring 2018.

DEMOCRACY LIBRARY

Ahead of the revision of the European Consensus on Development, the mid-term review processes for the EU's MFF, and the Fifth EU-Africa Summit, [ECDPM looks at the current challenges affecting EU-Africa cooperation](#).

Will Trump's presidency mean a break point for [US democracy promotion](#)? Thomas Carothers writes about the institutional and contextual constraints facing the administration of President elect Donald Trump.

As democratic values are facing major challenges worldwide, William A. Galston argues that greater attention should be addressed to the [threat of illiberal democracy](#).

Is another Arab Spring imminent? The [2016 Arab Human Development Report \(AHDR\)](#) shows that unemployment, political exclusion, and security challenges [continue to affect a more politically aware Arab youth](#).

COMING-UP

On January 19th the National Endowment for Democracy will host the conference "Latin America & the Liberal World Order", that will consider the Argentinian, Brazilian, and Peruvian foreign policies with respect to human rights norms and democracy standards, the quality of recent electoral observation missions, and the limits to civil society and NGOs.

19th January

A LA UNE

As further evidence of [Erdoğan's growing authoritarianism](#), the Turkish Parliament passed a [controversial constitutional reform enhancing the powers of the presidency](#) at the first reading.

For the first time after the Saudi-backed security forces crushed the Arab Spring-inspired uprising in 2011, [protests broke out in Bahrain](#) on Sunday, after the execution of three men convicted of a deadly bomb attack on police.

Is [Somalia's democratic process](#) moving forward or backward? The country is still striving to find long-term solutions to its recent civil war and to the jihadist insurgency.

Beyond Ballots 2017

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The new Journal of Democracy is out, with articles on the social shifts causing “[Brexit](#)” and the rise of the populist UKIP party, and on the [competitive authoritarian regime](#) defeating the coup attempt in Turkey in July.

25 years after the fall of the Soviet Union, Thomas de Waal considers the EU’s non-recognition and engagement policy in [Abkhazia, South Ossetia, and Transnistria](#), providing some insights for the years ahead.

When and how is democracy aid effective? A recent [V-Dem study](#) finds that aid is more likely to be successful when it does not pose a threat to regime survival and when it matches the particular democratic deficits in a country.

In the framework of the escalation of tension between Russia and the West, EPD member EESC questions the [ideology behind Russian Foreign Policy](#), and the implications it has on the Baltic countries and Eastern Europe.

COMING-UP

Between 2-4 February 2017 the think tank Denknetz Schweiz will organise the congress “Reclaim Democracy” at the University of Basel, gathering 23 institutes, activist groups, NGOs, labour unions, and journals to discuss how democracy and human rights can be strengthened against economic interests and racism.

26th January

A LA UNE

As Egypt celebrates the 6th anniversary of the Arab Spring uprisings that overthrew Hosni Mubarak, the revolution is still alive: despite [President Sisi positive self-assessment](#), the crack down on civic freedoms continues to foster [claims for democratic reform](#).

Is there hope for a change in North Korea? According to the country’s former deputy ambassador to London, [the North Korean elite is outwardly expressing its discontent towards Kim Jong-Un and his government](#).

Ahead of the parliamentary elections set for June 18th 2017, [the Albanian Bee anti-establishment political movement was recently launched](#), calling for institutional changes prior to joining the EU.

DEMOCRACY LIBRARY

As the focus in EU’s relations with its neighbours should be on building up their resilience, Sven Biscop questions the [credibility of the EU Global Strategy](#), arguing that sovereignty and equality would be a better leitmotiv than the sole national security.

Is Turkey heading to a president's system? Ahead of the nationwide referendum in Spring 2017, [the EPC looks at the controversial 18-article constitutional amendment package](#), calling for the EU to adopt a more vocal and constructive dialogue with Ankara.

Despite the numerous news-breaking humanitarian crises of 2016, CARE International looks at the [countries where national disasters and conflicts have been largely under-reported](#), providing several suggestions for a way forward.

Considering the [long-term disputed territory Nagorny Karabakh](#) between Armenia and Azerbaijan, Thomas de Waal argues that Donald Trump's presidency and the EU's on-going internal crises might negatively impact the much-needed pre-emptive diplomacy in South Caucasus.

COMING-UP

On February 1st the National Endowment for Democracy will launch the event "Stability and progress in the Western Balkans: threats, predictions, solutions", exploring new threats to stability and progress in the Western Balkans, assessing upcoming challenges and opportunities, and proposing ways forward.

2nd February

A LA UNE

In Sri Lanka [the creation of the new constitution provides an opportunity](#) to resolve the nationality conflict, repeal the Prevention of Terrorism Act, and abolish torture and detention facilities on the island.

Is there any solution to the impasse over Western Sahara? The readmission of Morocco to the African Union after a 33-year absence indirectly reopens [the international debate on this disputed area](#), calling for democracy, human rights, the rule of law, and a UN resolution.

After only [a few days of Trump's presidency](#), the US democracy is already put to the test: for its long-term survival it will be necessary that public indifference does not prevail over [continuous public scrutiny and public pressure](#).

DEMOCRACY LIBRARY

In the context of the on-going review of the EDF and of ACP-EU development cooperation, EPD released an [input paper](#) on improving domestic accountability, ownership, and aid effectiveness in ACP countries.

Ahead of the 2018 annual enlargement report, the EPRS looks at the [2016 EU enlargement package](#), showing how regional cooperation and good neighbourly relations are indispensable means of re-energising common reform priorities in the Western Balkans.

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Is a definitive peace still possible in Colombia? After the rejection of October 2016's referendum between the government and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, [International Crisis Group looks at the political battle ahead](#), providing some recommendations for the international community.

How can the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development deliver on its transformative promises? [The UNRISD 2016 Flagship Report](#) provides an insight on the policies and practices that will lead to social, economic, and ecological justice.

COMING-UP

Ahead of the United Nations Human Rights Council's main annual session, the 9th Geneva Summit for Human Rights and Democracy will take place on February 21st 2017, gathering human rights defenders, activists, and former political prisoners to discuss their personal struggles for human rights, democracy, and freedom.

9th February

A LA UNE

In the wake of the largest [anti-government protest](#) that has shaken Romania since the fall of communism in 1989, [opposition parties and activists all over the Balkans are echoing the call for rallies](#) against corruption, organised crime, and the poor state of the economy.

Alexei Navalny – [Russia's main opposition leader known for his anti-corruption campaign](#) – has been found guilty of embezzlement and handed a five-year suspended sentence, in a trial widely seen as a means of silencing him ahead of the 2018 elections.

After 38 years as head of state, President Jose Eduardo dos Santos has confirmed he will not run in the [coming Angolan presidential elections](#): yet, he will retain control of the ruling party, which is still expected to win.

DEMOCRACY LIBRARY

In the context of the current economic, political, and social crossroads in Latin America, the *Istituto per gli Studi di Politica Internazionale (ISPI)* questions the [type of change that is being brought about in the continent](#), and draws policy recommendations for the EU.

Is a socio-political change possible in Armenia? After the 2016 conflict with Azerbaijan and renewed discourse on national unity, Anna Zhamakochyan worries about [civic activists' attachment to the status quo of pro-regime politics](#).

By focusing on the management of the 2016 post-election impasse in Gambia, the African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes (ACCORD) examines [ECOWAS' interventions around the electoral processes of its member states](#), and draws up some lessons that could be relevant for other economic communities, the African Union, and the UN.

Lastly, democracy practitioners should check out the [World Bank's 2017 Development Report](#). It argues that governance can mitigate power asymmetries and bring about more effective policy interventions, in order to achieve sustainable improvements in security, growth, and equity.

COMING-UP

Between 27-28 February, the Jacques Delors Institute will launch the seventh European think tanks forum on the topic "The EU's neighbourhood: how to stabilise the ring of fire?" in Valletta, gathering national and European stakeholders and experts to arrive at policy recommendations for the EU's future approach.

16th February

A LA UNE

Is this the end of an era? In advance of crucial local elections in June, Sam Rainsy, [the embattled leader of Cambodia's main opposition party, resigned](#) on Saturday in the face of increasing government pressure.

Elections in Hong Kong are fast approaching and not without oddity: instead of reaching out to the public, contenders prefer to consult with seasoned politicians, business men and trade leaders. This goes to show [just how little the 2014 Umbrella Movement's pro-democracy campaign has changed the political realities of Hong Kong](#).

Six years after Shia-led protests were crushed by authorities, [Bahrain continues to be shaken by anti-government uprisings](#), demanding a constitutional monarchy and an elected prime minister to replace the current government dominated by the ruling Al-Khalifa family.

DEMOCRACY LIBRARY

Both the Arab Spring and Russia's assertiveness in Eastern Europe prompted reviews of the EU's European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) in 2011 and 2015 respectively. A literature review, recently published by CEPS, identifies the [factors explaining the lack of coherence and effectiveness of the ENP](#).

How does multiparty democracy fare among African citizens? Against the background of the one-party dominated political systems in Botswana, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, and Zimbabwe, a paper by Afrobarometer analyses [popular attitudes towards the political opposition in Southern Africa](#).

In 2016 not only autocracies and dictatorships have seen declines in freedom, but also several established democracies: why was this the case? Freedom House evaluates [the state of freedom, democracy, and human rights in 195 countries and 14 territories](#) and delineates some common trends.

COMING-UP

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On 16 and 17 March 2017 the Swiss Centre for Democracy in Aarau (ZDA) will organise the 9th Aarau Democracy Days; this year's topic, "The role of the media in direct democracy", will look at how the media can influence citizens' opinions and thereby different forms of direct democracy.

23rd February

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For the first time after the 2010 mass arrests, bloody crackdown, and isolation of regime, [several Belarusians are taking to the streets](#) on account of the introduction of a new law taxing the unemployed.

Nepal will soon be facing a key moment in its fraught democratic development: deep political divides will be tested when the secular republic holds its [first local elections in May 2017](#).

Officials in the Trump administration and EU leaders spent the last week eyeing each other up in Brussels, Bonn, and at the [Security Conference in Munich](#): despite the background politesse, it was what Vice-President Pence *did not* mention that [made EU representatives anxious](#).

DEMOCRACY LIBRARY

In the framework of the project "Preventing electoral Conflict in the SADC region" (PEV-SADC), EPD member ECES draws several recommendations for the international community on [how to prevent, mitigate, and manage electoral conflict and violence](#).

How and in what order do [different accountability mechanisms](#) evolve? Using data from 173 countries from 1900 to the present, V-Dem argues that most aspects of de facto vertical accountability precede other forms of accountability.

IFES has recently developed the [Violence Against Women in Elections \(VAWIE\) Framework](#) to specifically identify and address the unique issues related to gender-based election violence.

COMING-UP

Between 1-3 March 2017 the "Global Festival of Ideas for Sustainable Development" will take place in Bonn, developing strategies to achieve the SDGs.

2nd March

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In South Korea, hundreds of thousands of South Koreans protested in Seoul over [the impeachment of President Park Geun-hye](#) on the fourth anniversary of her swearing into office.

The visit of the Armenian President, Serzh Sargsyan, to Brussels marked the conclusion of [a new agreement](#) between the EU and Armenia, which seeks to deepen political and economic cooperation between the two.

Tensions in Cameroon are rising, as opposition parties [expressed their disapproval over the federalisation of the country](#) during the 6th Ordinary Congress of the National Union for Democracy and Progress (UNDP).

DEMOCRACY LIBRARY

In their latest paper, CEPS researchers Steven Blockmans and Sinem Yilmaz explore the [EU's actions towards the failed coup in Turkey](#) and the profound democratic crisis that has seized the country.

Did the Romanian protests light a beacon of hope for democratic resilience? In the framework of the Romanian people's civic mobilisation against the government's attempt to tackle anti-corruption achievements, the European Policy Centre provides an overview [of the protests and their impact on the state of European democracy](#).

To what extent does democracy contribute to good governance, development and growth? The Institute for Security Studies offers an in-depth [analysis of democratic development in Africa](#) from a multidisciplinary perspective.

COMING-UP

Between 28 March-3 April 2017, the 24th International Democratic Education Conference will take place in Hadera, Israel. Further information about the event can be found [here](#).

9th March

A LA UNE

Is Belarus following the footsteps of Ukraine? The recent protests in Belarus over the so-called "parasite tax" is just [one of several policies that the regime led by President Alexander Lukashenko uses to keep its citizens in line](#).

Bread remains political in Egypt: Protests have taken place in several cities against [the government's decision to cut bread subsidies](#) that is supposed to facilitate a \$12bn loan from the International Monetary Fund.

Poland's contribution to this year's International Women's Day: Inspired by the "Black Monday" strike that took place last year in more than 150 Polish cities and towns,

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thousands of women protested around the globe over the [country's current political situation of women's rights](#).

DEMOCRACY LIBRARY

The Westminster Foundation for Democracy has released a new research paper. Focusing on civil society, Susan Dodsworth and Nic Cheeseman explore the [challenges that democracy supporters face in putting their strategies into practice](#).

Does the low turnout reflect voter apathy and mistrust of the political process? Abdurashid Solijonov provides an overview of the [global negative trend in voter turnout](#) over the past two decades.

How is [corruption perceived in the Asia Pacific region](#)? This question is thoroughly analysed by Coralie Prings in her latest research paper, which is based on more than 21 000 interviews that were conducted throughout the region.

COMING-UP

On 20 March 2017, the Heinrich Böll Stiftung is organising the conference "Moving forward with Europe! The liberal democracy crisis and the future of the EU", which will take place in Berlin. More information can be found [here](#). Registration can be done through this [link](#)

16th March

A LA UNE

The Macedonian political crisis continues to stoke ethnic tensions: thousands of Macedonians protested against the [decision](#) of the Social Democratic Union of Macedonia to form a coalition government with three ethnic Albanian parties.

How can the democratic development in Pakistan benefit from the [empowerment of women](#)? Maryam Nawaz Sharif, the daughter of Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, highlighted the important role of women in strengthening democracy.

With one month to go until the Turkish constitutional referendum, the Venice Commission released a report in which it criticises the government's proposals, arguing that they [could weaken the country's democratic development](#).

DEMOCRACY LIBRARY

How can elections prolong dictatorships? An article on Washington Post explores [the costs and benefits](#) for autocratic regimes in holding elections.

In CIVICUS Monitor, the International Partnership for Human Rights and the Association for Human Rights in Central Asia (AHRCA) analysed the [worsening situation of civil society in Uzbekistan](#), despite the recent release of some government critics.

The ODIHR publication “ODIHR, Gender Equality and Women’s Rights” reflects the low level of [women’s political participation](#) in decision-making positions and during elections across the OSCE region.

COMING-UP

The Hertie School of Governance, the Faculty of Social Sciences at Charles University and the International Policy and Leadership Institute are organising the “European public policy conference 2017: Democracy in the digital age”, which will take place on 21-23 April 2017 in Prague, Czech Republic. Further information about the event can be found [here](#). Registration can be done by completing the form available [here](#).

23th March

A LA UNE

Will tax hikes solve Lebanon’s economic problems? [Thousands of Lebanese](#) protested in the streets of Beirut last Sunday against a government proposal to raise taxes that is meant to avoid a \$4bn budget deficit.

Democracy is under constant threat in Cambodia: ASEAN Parliamentarians for Human Rights (APHR) recently released a report that denounces the “[climate of fear](#)” generated by Prime Minister Hun Sen among opposition parties.

In Zimbabwe, opposition parties expressed their lack of confidence in the neutrality of the local election agency, demanding that the [next presidential elections](#) are conducted by a committee set up by the United Nations and the African Union.

DEMOCRACY LIBRARY

The National Democratic Institute released a [new publication on combating violence against women in politics](#). It is addressed to democracy practitioners and aims to provide guidance on developing programmes to tackle this problem.

To what extent can [economic growth undermine democracy](#)? V-Dem’s latest publication explores contrasting views on the economy-democracy nexus.

ECDPM’s new discussion paper examines [the potential of PCSD](#) (or “policy coherence for sustainable development”) as an approach to tackle major policy challenges posed by the 2030 Agenda.

A new report published by Carnegie Europe showcases [the rise of civic activism](#) across eight countries. On that basis, the document analyses possible implications for the future of civil society support.

COMING-UP

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Between 27-30 July 2017, the European Solidarity Centre and DRA-German-Russian Exchange are organising the annual Forum for Young Professionals “Europe Lab”, which will take place Gdansk, Poland. More information about the event can be found [here](#).

Applications can be submitted by completing the form available [here](#). The deadline for applications is 1 May 2017.

30th March

A LA UNE

In Liberia, representatives of 22 political parties and the Liberia National Police (LNP) agreed to work together to ensure the peaceful conduct of the [upcoming presidential and parliamentary elections](#).

The [biggest protest movement in Russia](#) since 2012 brought tens of thousands of Russians into the streets in more than 80 cities across the country to denounce government corruption.

In Chile, hundreds of thousands of citizens marched in order to put pressure on President Michelle Bachelet [to change Chile’s pension system](#), currently being managed by private funds.

DEMOCRACY LIBRARY

What is the current state of direct democracy in the world? The latest policy brief published by V-Dem shows that despite the increased potential of [direct democracy](#), this increase is not evenly distributed worldwide.

International IDEA’s new discussion paper outlines the advantages of involving [members of all age groups](#) in political process as a way to improve democratic development.

In a thought-provoking article in Open Democracy, WFD’S Anthony Smith highlights a number of [key traits](#) that democracies have in common with ecosystems.

COMING-UP

Between 21-24 June 2017, the International Society for Third-Sector Research (ISTR) and the West Africa Civil Society Institute (WACSI) will organise the conference “Civil Society and Philanthropy in Africa: Contexts, Contradictions, and Possibilities”. The event will be held in Accra, Ghana. More information about the conference can be found [here](#). Registration can be done by completing the form available [here](#).

6th April

A LA UNE

Is Serzh Sargsyan seeking to become Armenian prime minister in 2018? President Sargsyan's ruling Republican Party [won parliamentary elections](#) on Sunday, the first ever to be held under a new constitution, which will also effectively reduce the powers of the presidency when his term expires next year.

Opposition parties in the Democratic Republic of Congo protested in cities across the country, calling on President Joseph Kabila [to hold elections and adopt the power sharing deal](#) signed on 31 December 2016.

In Venezuela, [thousands of demonstrators clashed](#) with government security forces, as they tried to rally against the decision of the Supreme Court to seize power from the National Assembly.

DEMOCRACY LIBRARY

The research paper "Social Media: Advancing Women in Politics?", published by Women in Parliaments, highlights the [role of social media as a political equaliser](#) in facilitating the work of female lawmakers.

In an article in Washington Post, Rob Jenkins outlines India's [political and institutional obstacles](#) that prevents it from descending to autocratic rule, despite the existing challenges to the country's democratic development.

A new report developed by CIVICUS Monitor provides an in depth analysis of the [current situation of civic activism](#) in the world. The study shows that fundamental human rights such as freedom of expression and assembly are under threat in 106 countries.

COMING-UP

On 7-8 June 2017, the European Commission will organise the "European Development Days". The event will take place in Brussels under the theme ["Investing in Development"](#). More information about EDD 2017 is available [here](#). Registration can be done through this [link](#).

13 April

A LA UNE

South African President Jacob Zuma received his birthday gift from the opposition: [Thousands gathered in the streets of Pretoria](#), demanding the resignation of the President, following his decision to dismiss Finance Minister Pravin Gordhan.

To what extent can electoral reforms boost democracy in India? President Pranab Mukherjee has called for [strong reforms of the electoral system](#), coupled with an increased number of seats in the parliament, in order to strengthen the country's democratic development.

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In the Gambia, the United Democratic Party (UDP) [has won the recent parliamentary elections](#), while the Alliance for Patriotic Reorientation and Construction (APRC), the party of former President Yahya Jammeh, lost more than 30 seats in the National Assembly.

DEMOCRACY LIBRARY

Is Serbia moving towards autocracy? An article in The New York Times [analyses the latest developments](#) in the aftermath of the recent presidential elections.

What is the role of digital democracy in today's world? NIMD's Innovation Advisor, Will Derks, [reviews](#) a report that focuses on pioneering innovations in digital democracy that take place on a global scale.

A report published by the Center for Public Policy and Democracy Studies (PODEM) explores the Kurds' views on the [political and social developments](#) in Turkey over the past year. The study aims to shed light on Kurdish expectations and demands for the country's future.

How is the Ghani-Abdullah dispute affecting Afghanistan's reform process? The International Crisis Group offers [an in-depth analysis of the tense relationship](#) between Afghan President Ashraf Ghani and Chief Executive Officer Abdullah Abdullah.

COMING-UP

On 10 May 2017, the European Endowment for Democracy along with International Media Support, the Danish Foreign Policy Society and the Danish Institute for Parties and Democracies will organise the event "Security or Democracy – Do we need to make a choice?". The event will take place in Copenhagen, Denmark. The full agenda of the conference is available [here](#). In order to register, please send an email to joanna@democracyendowment.eu.

20 April

A LA UNE

Was Turkey's constitutional referendum truly free and fair? Turkish citizens voted to increase the powers of the presidency, but opposition parties and international observers [sighted irregularities](#) during Sunday's referendum.

In Brazil, President Michel Temer agreed to make new concessions in order to assure the safe passage of [a controversial pension reform bill](#), as police unions attempt to invade the building of the National Congress during the latest protest of a labour group.

The ["mother of all protests"](#) has taken place in Venezuela: Thousands of Venezuelans rallied in the streets of Caracas against the regime of President Nicolás Maduro, demanding that the government hold new elections, free political prisoners and remove supreme court judges who recently tried to shut down the country's parliament.

DEMOCRACY LIBRARY

What does it take to be an [ambitious woman in politics](#)? NIMD published the book “Dancing Backwards in High Heels: Women, Leadership and Power”, authored by Virginia García Beaudoux, that outlines the difficulties encountered by women active in politics in several countries.

How is the internet shaping modern democratic practices? Focusing on the 2016 US presidential elections and the rise of several populist parties in Europe, Nathaniel Persily explores the [potential of digital tools](#), in particular social media, to enable campaigners to push voter outreach beyond traditional limits.

In an article on Carnegie Europe, Judy Dempsey provides [an overview of the protest movements in Belarus and Russia](#) and examines the EU’s role in supporting citizens in these countries.

International IDEA recently released the publication “Open Data in Electoral Administrations”. The study argues [that open data](#) can enable more inclusive, transparent and trusted elections.

COMING-UP

Between 19-21 June 2017, Deutsche Welle will host the “Global Media Forum 2017” under the theme “Identity and Diversity”. The event will take place in Bonn, Germany. The full agenda of the conference is available [here](#). Registration can be done through this [link](#).

27 April

A LA UNE

The [upcoming parliamentary elections in Albania](#) will be held without opposition parties: The governing Socialist Party and its coalition partners are the only parties to compete in the upcoming elections while opposition parties decided not to enter the race as a means of protest.

Is the government of Hong Kong [eliminating its opposition](#)? Politically motivated persecutions continue in Hong Kong with the arrest of nine democracy activists in connection with anti-government protest last year.

An update on “press freedom” in Ecuador: [seven media companies were fined](#) by the government for not covering a story on the supposed offshore dealings of Guillermo Lasso, an opposition politician and candidate in the recent presidential elections.

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To what extent will [social activism shape the future of Egypt](#)? Amr Hamzawy explores the impact of various activist groups, focusing on their success since 2013 in holding the Egyptian government accountable for human rights abuses.

In an article originally published in Foreign Affairs, Thomas Carothers and Richard Youngs from Carnegie Endowment for International Peace [analyse current developments that threaten the future of global democracy](#) but advise against conceiving of an antidemocratic counterrevolution.

An opinion piece published by the Centre for European Policy Studies [questions the viability of continuing the accession negotiations between the EU and Turkey](#). Following the recent constitutional referendum in Turkey, the authors argue that the EU should reset its relationship with Turkey and increase pressure to support democracy and tackle human rights abuses.

In an article on openDemocracy, Betty Sue Flowers [promulgates that the idea of democracy is in crisis](#) and proposes to find a new narrative for Western democracies that would move from the values of economic growth to those of global well-being.

COMING-UP

Between 5-9 July 2017, the ae-Centre will organise its annual International Academy and Forum on Peace Mediation and Dialogue in North Africa under the theme “Tunisia: building a lasting peace”. The event will take place in Caux, Switzerland. The full agenda of the seminar is available [here](#). Registration is possible through this [link](#).

4 May

A LA UNE

The Polish President [proposed a constitutional referendum to be held in 2018](#), a plan denounced by the opposition as an attempt of the ruling party to move towards authoritarianism.

Is Barbados becoming an [example for other CARICOM countries](#) in promoting gender equality? The Caribbean island nation developed a draft gender equality protocol for magistrates and judges that aims to ensure equal access to justice for both men and women.

Mauritanians demand an end to slavery: [hundreds rallied in the streets of Nouakchott](#), the capital of Mauritania, calling on the government to prosecute slave owners and ensure the proper integration of former slaves into society.

DEMOCRACY LIBRARY

A research paper released by CIVICUS explores the current situation of civil society in 22 countries. The study outlines that in most states [the ability of CSOs to carry out their activities is limited by government intervention and restrictions](#).

International IDEA has released a Constitution Brief that is addressed to [constitution-makers and other democratic actors and stakeholders](#) in Myanmar. The document provides a basic guide on the functioning of constitutional courts focusing on their role, powers and the issues that they raise in constitution-building processes.

To what extent will the creation of an anti-corruption unit improve the work of the South African Police Service (SAPS)? [The latest policy brief](#) developed by the Institute for Security Studies showcases the main benefits of establishing an anti-corruption unit within SAPS.

COMING-UP

On 26-28 June 2017, the Institute for Political Studies of the Catholic University of Portugal will host the Estoril Political Forum 2017, under the theme “Defending the Western Tradition of Liberty Under Law”. The event will take place in Estoril, Portugal. The full agenda of the conference is available [here](#). Registration can be done through this [link](#).

11 May

A LA UNE

What impact will the new South Korean president have on his country’s relations with North Korea? Democratic Party candidate [Moon Jae-in has won the presidential elections](#) that took place on Tuesday, promising a more conciliatory approach towards Pyongyang.

During his visit to Ethiopia, the [UN Humans Rights Commissioner Zeid Ra’ad Al Hussein](#) called on the Ethiopian government to free political prisoners and open up civic space, as well as to allow the UN to assess the situation in the regions where anti-government protests took place.

Uganda ranks 112 in the 2017 World Press Freedom Index: The African country has dropped 10 places compared with last year’s report, one of the main causes being related to the [media freedom violations](#) that occurred during the 2016 presidential elections.

DEMOCRACY LIBRARY

In an opinion piece in the Washington Post, Matthew Olsen and Edward Fishman showcase that [Russia’s cyberwar with the west will continue](#), despite Emmanuel Macron’s victory in the recent French presidential elections. The authors argue that western democracies should adopt a strategy that focuses on deterrence and resilience, in order to counter Russian propaganda.

In the report “Together for Human Rights: 2016 – A Year in Review”, the International Partnership for Human Rights provides [an overview of its activities](#) last year that included

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fact-finding missions, engaging in international advocacy, publishing reports and briefing papers.

Are Western and non-Western powers capable of reforming the liberal international order? A new policy paper prepared by the German Marshall Fund of the United States explores [the concept of the liberal international order](#), focusing on three elements: security, economics and human rights.

COMING-UP

On 19-20 May 2017, the Legislative Openness Working Group of the Open Government Partnership and Open Parliament Initiative in Ukraine will organise the “Global Legislative Openness Conference”. The event will take place in Kyiv, Ukraine at the Verkhovna Rada. The full agenda of the conference is available [here](#). Registration is possible through this [link](#).

18 May

A LA UNE

In the [conclusions adopted by the Foreign Affairs Council](#) on Monday, EU foreign ministers call on the Venezuelan government to hold elections and to engage in dialogue with the opposition in order to find [a solution to the ongoing crisis](#).

Azerbaijan blocks the websites of [several opposition newspapers](#): An Azerbaijani court ruled in favor of the request submitted by the Ministry of Transport, Communications, and High Technology to block access to websites that “pose a threat” to the country’s national security.

Are the recent [Nepalese local elections](#) a sign that the country is moving towards full democracy? Nepal held its first local elections in 20 years, a period in which local positions have been occupied by government-appointed bureaucrats.

DEMOCRACY LIBRARY

Is the International Criminal Court (ICC) the only international instrument that provides justice to victims of war? In an [opinion piece](#) released by the South African Institute for International Affairs, Mélanie Rondreux highlights the key role of the ICC in assisting the civilians exposed to the atrocities of war.

The EU-Russia Civil Society Forum recently released the [“2016 Report on the State of Civil Society in the EU and Russia”](#), which focuses on the following cases studies: Germany, Spain, Poland, Hungary and Russia.

The latest Briefing Paper developed by Democracy Reporting International (DRI) explores [the current state of decentralisation reform in Lebanon](#). The findings of this research are based on the outcomes of an expert meeting between politicians, lawyers,

academics and representatives of Lebanon's civil society, held by DRI in December 2016 in Beirut.

COMING-UP

Between 13-17 September 2017, Greece will host the The New York Times Athens Democracy Forum, which aims to bring together leading policy makers, business leaders, scholars and other experts. The event will include a number of prominent speakers, such as: Kofi Annan (former Secretary General of the United Nations), Irina Bokova (Director General of UNESCO) and Prokopios Pavlopoulos (President of Greece). The full agenda is available [here](#). Registration is possible through this [link](#).

25 May

A LA UNE

To what extent will the re-election of Hassan Rouhani lead to [reforms in Iran](#)? President Hassan Rouhani won the presidential elections by a landslide, receiving 57% out of more than 40 million votes cast, promising to expand individual and political freedoms.

UN Women Executive Director Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka acknowledges [Rwanda's achievements towards gender equality](#), outlining the confidence placed in women regarding their contribution towards the country's development.

Following the EU-Armenia Cooperation Council on Tuesday, the [EU called on the Armenian government](#) to ensure an impartial, credible and effective investigation of all [alleged human rights violations](#), as well as to tackle challenges in the judicial system.

DEMOCRACY LIBRARY

The new [European consensus on development](#) outlines the EU's commitment to invest in sustainable development, as well as to promote gender equality, good governance, democracy, rule of law and human rights.

How is the "closing space phenomenon" affecting the [activity of civil society organisations](#)? A recent publication by Carnegie Endowment for International Peace explores the constant efforts of the governments in Russia, Egypt and Ethiopia to narrow civil society activism in their countries.

In an article on openDemocracy, Mihai Popșoi provides an overview of the [current political climate in Moldova](#), focusing on the recent proposed changes to electoral legislation and its potential impact on the country's next parliamentary elections.

Through the Working Paper "Constraining Governments: New Indices of Vertical, Horizontal and Diagonal Accountability", V-Dem aims to develop new methods to conceptualize and measure the [accountability of governments](#) to their citizens, other state institutions, the media and civil society.

Beyond Ballots 2017

COMING-UP

On 22 June 2017, the Political Studies Association and the University of Westminster are organising the “Democracy in a post-truth age” workshop in London. Additional information about the workshop can be found [here](#). Registration is possible through this [link](#).

1 June

A LA UNE

The EU expresses its concerns over the [current situation in the Democratic Republic of Congo](#): In a declaration adopted by the Council on Monday, the EU calls on the DRC authorities to manage the [ongoing crisis in the Kasai Province](#) in compliance with the principles of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

In Brazil, a corruption scandal surrounding [President Michel Temer](#) sparks protests, as thousands of Brazilians took to the streets of Rio de Janeiro on Sunday, demanding early elections to elect a new head of state.

Is Moldova heading towards a [new political crisis](#)? The junior Liberal Party in the pro-European government decided to withdraw from the ruling coalition following the recent arrests of two high-ranking party members.

During the [G7 Summit, which took place last week](#), leaders adopted a roadmap on delivering gender equity through enabling women’s labour force participation, entrepreneurship, and economic empowerment.

DEMOCRACY LIBRARY

To what extent can the UN and international civil society organisations support the right to protest? A report prepared by CIVICUS examines the [sustainability of contemporary protest](#) movements, focusing on three case studies: Bahrain, Chile, and Uganda.

A briefing paper developed by the International Partnership for Human Rights (IPHR) and the Legal Prosperity Foundation (LPF) showcases [the current situation of civil society and freedom of speech](#) in Kyrgyzstan. The paper contains a number of recommendations, which aim to tackle the country’s most pressing issues related to democracy and human rights.

Can fake news pose a threat to Canada’s democracy? An article in The Globe and Mail showcases [Canadians’ fears](#) that the possible breakdown of democratic discourse in several liberal democracies could have a negative impact on their own country.

COMING-UP

Between 24-27 August 2017, the University Women of Europe (UWE) is organising its Annual General Meeting under the theme “Changing Cultures”. The event will take place in

Graz, Austria. Further information about the event can be found [here](#). Registration is possible through this [link](#).

8 June

A LA UNE

What will it take to ensure freedom of expression in Myanmar? [Two journalists were arrested](#) for allegedly defaming the military by publishing a satirical story, an act which is considered to be an offence under the country's telecommunications law.

An anti-corruption protest took place in Slovakia on Monday: [thousands of Slovak citizens rallied in the streets of Bratislava](#), demanding the resignation of the interior minister Robert Kalinak over his alleged ties with a controversial real estate developer, who is under investigation for tax fraud.

In an interview for TIME magazine, [Chilean President Michele Bachelet](#) outlined that modernising state institutions, as well as investing in social policies, and opening the spaces for civil society are some of the facts that have contributed to the country's democratic development.

DEMOCRACY LIBRARY

The National Democratic Institute (NDI) developed the report "Reflect, Reform, Reengage: A Blueprint for 21st Century Parties", which [showcases the fact that political parties](#) should prioritise gender equality, transparency and accountability, within their internal organisation.

Should other [South American states](#) be more involved in the Venezuelan crisis? In an article in HuffPost, human rights activist Lilia Tintori argues that the fall of democracy in Venezuela could have a negative impact on the region.

The OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) released [an interim report](#) on the upcoming parliamentary elections in Albania, scheduled for 25 June 2017. The report highlights a lively media environment, which is perceived as politically aligned.

COMING-UP

On 21 June 2017, the European Partnership for Democracy (EPD) and the World Bank are organising the launch of the "World Development Report 2017"

15 June

A LA UNE

Beyond Ballots 2017

In Russia, opposition leader [Alexei Navalny has been jailed](#) for calling one of the biggest anti-government protests since 2012, as thousands demonstrated in the streets of Moscow and other cities across the country.

To what extent will the release of Pakistani prisoners influence India-Pakistan relations? Following a meeting between the prime ministers of both countries, which took place last week in Astana, the [Indian government agreed to release 11 Pakistani prisoners](#) as a gesture of goodwill.

Is [freedom of expression](#) under attack in Hungary? The Hungarian parliament approved a series of strict regulations on foreign-funded NGOs, a move which critics described as an attempt to silence independent voices in society.

DEMOCRACY LIBRARY

A report developed by [CIVICUS analyses the major events of 2017](#) related to the activity of CSOs around the world. The report focuses on the phenomenon of shrinking civic space and outlines the benefits of improved cooperation between civil society and the private sector.

In an article originally published in Foreign Affairs, Steven Feldstein, from Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, argues that the efforts of the [DR Congo's government to conduct surveillance of the Internet](#) showcases a growing trend among states to increase control over the online sphere.

What does it take to organise a successful constitutional referendum in Sri Lanka? A briefing paper prepared by Democracy Reporting International (DRI) suggests that the island nation needs a secured [regulatory framework](#) for the referendum, which would address issues relating to campaign finances and media conduct.

COMING-UP

On 5 July 2017, Chatham House is hosting the research event "Ukraine's Transformation: Assessments and Solutions" in London. Two members of the Ukrainian government, namely Ivanna Klymush-Tsintsadze (Vice Prime Minister for European and Euro-Atlantic Integration) and Oleksandr Danyliuk (Minister of Finance), are among the speakers invited to this event. More information is available [here](#). Registration is possible through this [link](#).

22 June

A LA UNE

To what extent will political reforms enable full national reconciliation in Iraq? In the conclusions adopted by the [Foreign Affairs Council on Monday](#), the EU underlines the importance of the [rule of law for the country's stability](#).

Surprisingly perhaps, Morocco again ranks first in this year's [Arab Democracy Index](#), followed by Tunisia and Jordan – [the report](#) developed by the Arab Reform Initiative emphasises the shortcomings of the democratisation process in the region.

In Turkey, prime minister Binali Yildirim urged Kemal Kilicdaroglu, the leader of the opposition Republican People's Party, to put an end to his [protest march from Ankara to Istanbul](#), which began following the arrest of one of the party's lawmakers.

DEMOCRACY LIBRARY

Has Venezuela ceased to be a democracy? In its latest briefing paper, the International Crisis Group provides an [in-depth analysis of the current situation in the South American country](#), in an attempt to identify the root causes of the ongoing crisis.

Is Bolivia moving [towards authoritarianism](#)? Oliver della Costa Stuenkel analyses the country's democratic development under the leadership of President Evo Morales, and its impact on the region.

A new paper released by the Atlantic Council [explores the most pressing issues facing Islam today](#), focusing on its relationship with democracy, human rights, gender and minority rights, as well as notions of legitimate governance.

COMING-UP

On 3 July 2017, the Leuven Centre for Global Governance Studies and United Nations Association Flanders Belgium (VFN) are organising the lunch lecture "Challenges and Opportunities for the UN and the New Secretary-General" at the UN House in Brussels. More information about the event is available [here](#). Registration is possible through this [link](#).

29 June

A LA UNE

While addressing the UN Security Council on Tuesday, Farid Zarif, head of the UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL), declared that the [country's democratic future](#) is linked to the successful conduct of the upcoming presidential and legislative elections in October.

Under what conditions will Macedonia be capable of ensuring the [independence of the judiciary and media](#)? During a visit to Skopje on Monday, EU Commissioner for Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations Johannes Hahn, called on the Macedonian government to make reforms in key areas, in order to open accession talks by the end of this year.

Hong Kong activists [protested ahead of the Chinese President's visit](#) – dozens of campaigners gathered in front of China's representative office in Hong Kong to protest

Beyond Ballots 2017

against the detention of human rights lawyers on the mainland, while another group sang for democracy in the city centre.

DEMOCRACY LIBRARY

Is strengthening state capacity undermining democratic change in authoritarian regimes? A recent study prepared by V-Dem [analyses 460 elections](#), which took place in 110 authoritarian regimes in the past four decades, with some thought-provoking results.

The strategy brief “Why Democracy Matters”, developed by Freedom House, explores the [democratisation process in Kenya](#). This document argues that civil society should take a leading role in promoting democratic values in the African country, in order to ensure the safety of Kenyan citizens, as well as tackle corruption and poverty.

In an article in openDemocracy, Jason Strakes provides an overview of Georgia’s attempts [to build a new civic identity](#), explaining to what extent the development of this project is influenced by the political interests of the Russian minority in the country.

COMING-UP

Between 16-20 August 2017, the Institute for Cultural Diplomacy will organise the “International Symposium on Cultural Diplomacy in Africa: The Political, Economic and Cultural Dimensions” in Berlin. Additional information about the conference is available [here](#). Registration is possible through this [link](#).

6 July

A LA UNE

Is the progress made by Myanmar in press freedom at risk of being reversed? International actors, [including the EU](#), urged the Burmese authorities to ensure the freedom of opinion and expression in the country, following [the arrest of three reporters last week](#).

Will increases in wages prevent new protests in Venezuela? President Nicolás Maduro [announced that the minimum wage will rise by 50% this month](#), in what is described as an attempt to overcome major protests, as well as to gain support for his plans to change the constitution.

In Ghana, Attorney General Gloria Akuffo [called on all stakeholders to speed up the process](#) of creating the Office of the Special Prosecutor, in order to strengthen anti-corruption efforts in the country.

DEMOCRACY LIBRARY

NIMD released its Annual Report 2016, which [showcases its work in the field of democracy support](#) in 24 countries in Africa, Latin America, the Middle East, Southeast Asia and Eastern Europe, in particular in Kenya, Burundi, Myanmar and Colombia.

Is biometric technology [a solution to prevent electoral fraud](#)? A new publication developed by International IDEA is addressed to all stakeholders involved in debates on the application of biometrics in elections, both for voter registration before an election and for voter verification at polling stations on election day.

Should internet access be [considered a human right](#)? In a thought-provoking article, which was initially published in Foreign Affairs, Steven Feldstein of Carnegie argues that “offline rights”, such as the right to free speech and the right to peaceful assembly, should be applied online as well.

COMING-UP

On 13 July 2017, European Centre for Electoral Support, the European Institute of Peace, European External Action Service, European Peacekeeping Liaison Office, and the European Parliament are organising the seminar “Preventing election related violence: What Role for Political Mediation and Dialogue” in Brussels. The full agenda of the event is available [here](#). Registration is possible through this [link](#).

13 July

A LA UNE

In Zimbabwe, Robert Mugabe’s third trip to Singapore this year for medical treatment has raised accusations that the [Zimbabwean leader](#) is ruling his country from a hospital bed.

As Kemal Kilicdaroglu, leader of Turkey’s main opposition party, completed his “march for justice” on Sunday, [hundreds of thousands of Turks](#) gathered in the streets of Istanbul to protest against the regime of President Recep Tayyip Erdogan.

The [Cambodian parliament passed a law](#) which bars political parties from having ties with convicted citizens – which critics say that this move aims to prevent the opposition Cambodia National Rescue Party from associating itself with its former leader, Sam Rainsy.

DEMOCRACY LIBRARY

The latest report developed by the International Partnership for Human Rights (IPHR) provides an analysis of the demonstrations which took place between 17 February and 26 March 2017 in Belarus, in which it showcases the [human rights violations](#) committed by the Belarusian authorities during these events.

In the new [Journal of Democracy](#), Sheri Berman looks at the [relationship between democracy and liberalism](#) by analysing the history of liberal democracy in the United States and Europe.

Under what conditions can Ukraine become a vibrant democracy? In an article in openDemocracy, Mikhail Minakov outlines the fact that, despite a series [political and](#)

Beyond Ballots 2017

[economic reforms](#) carried out by the Ukrainian government in the aftermath of the Euromaidan Revolution, the country seems to be following regional authoritarian trends.

COMING-UP

On 20 November 2017, Chatham House, Al Sharq Forum and the International Crisis Group are organising the third annual conference “Europe and its Neighbourhood: Conflict Prevention and Crisis Management in the 21st Century” in London. More information about the event can be found [here](#). Registration is possible through this [link](#).

20 July

A LA UNE

Following the [Foreign Affairs Council on Tuesday](#), the EU urged the [Pakistani government](#) to follow up on the recommendations from previous EU Election Observation Missions in order to improve its electoral process for the next legislative elections, which are scheduled to take place in 2018.

The EU is pushing Ukraine to increase its [efforts in fighting corruption](#) – during the recent [EU-Ukraine Summit](#), EU leaders and Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko agreed on a plan to establish a special anti-corruption chamber within the country’s Supreme Court.

[Thousands of Poles rallied](#) in the streets of Warsaw and other cities across the country against the government’s decision to initiate a controversial reform which could weaken the independence of the judiciary and undermine democracy.

DEMOCRACY LIBRARY

To what extent will Colombia’s peace accord boost [democratic change in the country](#)? Andreas E. Feldmann explores provisions of the peace accord signed between the Colombian government and FARC, arguing that despite the fact that this document may have stimulated citizen participation, it still raises the question of whether a true democracy can be built in the near future.

In the second issue of this year’s [International Reports](#), produced by the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung, Christopher Walker of the National Endowment for Democracy (NED) [suggests that democratic states](#) should not underestimate the challenges that authoritarian regimes, in particular those in Russia, China, and Iran, pose to the global political order.

Reporters Without Borders (RSF) examines the [worsening situation of press freedom](#) in Turkey following the attempted coup of 2016, showcasing the growing number of detained journalists in the past year.

COMING-UP

Between 14-15 September 2017, the Centre for European Policy Studies (CEPS) and the Open Society Initiative for Europe (OSIFE) are organising the event “The Rule of Law: Where are we heading?” in Skopje. Additional information about the event can be found [here](#). In order to register, please fill in the form available at this [link](#).

27 July

A LA UNE

In an article from The Washington Post, Klaudia Kocimska and Isaac Stanley-Becker, provide [an overview of the political situation in Poland](#), where the Polish President, Andrzej Duda, wielded his veto power on Monday by rejecting two of the three judicial reform measures proposed by the ruling right-wing Law and Justice party (PiS).

The count in [Papua New Guinea’s troubled general election](#) has been delayed following accusations of “sorcery”, and recounts have been ordered in two constituencies in the country’s East Sepik province.

At [the EU-Egypt Association Council](#), which took place in Brussels on Tuesday, the EU and Egypt discussed a broad range of issues and agreed on new partnership priorities for 2017-2020, despite further examples of [continued state torture of citizens](#).

DEMOCRACY LIBRARY

Will Venezuela slide into [the first outright civil war in the American hemisphere this century](#)? Francisco Toro provides his opinion on the street protests that have convulsed Venezuela, including the most surprising aspect of the movement, which is not the rampant violence, but its restraint.

In a new article in Carnegie Endowment, Arthur Larok assesses [the new face of civic activism in Uganda](#), which could have a greater impact than any traditional civil society organisation (CSO) has recorded in the country in recent times.

In a [Forum Q&A published by the National Endowment for Democracy](#), professor Philip Howard talks about computational propaganda, or the use of algorithms and social media to influence politics, and how it is an emerging challenge to democracy in the digital age.

COMING-UP

On 7 & 8 September 2017, Bruegel is organising its flagship event “The Annual Meetings” in Brussels, which will offer a mixture of large public debates and small private sessions on various European and global topics. Additional information about the event can be found [here](#). In order to register for the public sessions on 7 September, please fill in the form available at this [link](#).

3 August

Beyond Ballots 2017

A LA UNE

[In a statement](#) released on Wednesday, the EU expressed its concerns regarding [the recent events in the ongoing crisis in Venezuela](#), and called on President Nicolás Maduro and his government to suspend the effective installation of the Constituent Assembly.

South Africa's biggest [civil society movements](#) are mobilising for an anti-government march, which is scheduled to be held on 7 August, one day before the parliament will vote whether to remove President Jacob Zuma from office.

In Moldova, [hundreds of citizens](#) protested in the streets of Chisinau against the controversial changes to the electoral system, recently approved by the Moldovan parliament, which, according to critics, favour the country's two main political parties.

DEMOCRACY LIBRARY

How can Georgia [remain a success story](#) in an authoritarian neighbourhood? Thomas de Waal of Carnegie Europe looks at the current political landscape in Georgia, and suggests that certain trends, such as the growing xenophobic discourse, can have a negative impact on the country's recent achievements.

A policy brief prepared by International IDEA [focuses on the island nations](#) in the Pacific, arguing that accountability to citizens through democratic political processes is essential to ensure the effective implementation of the SDGs.

In a report published by The Project on Middle Eastern Democracy (POMED), Mohamed El-Ansary analyses [the role of the Public Prosecutor](#) in the repression of dissent in Egypt since the establishment of military rule in July 2013.

COMING-UP

On 17 August 2017, the Democracy Forum is organising the event "Withered democracy in Pakistan: the role of the Deep State" at the Senate Room in London. Further information about the event can be found [here](#). In order to register, please fill in the form available at this [link](#).

10 August

A LA UNE

In Kenya, [protests erupted in several areas](#) of the country following the electoral fraud claims made by opposition candidate Raila Odinga, who said that the electoral commission's IT system has been hacked to manipulate the results of the presidential elections, which took place on Tuesday, in favour of incumbent President Uhuru Kenyatta.

As [Iranian President Hassan Rouhani was sworn in for a second term](#) on Sunday, the Los Angeles Times wrote that he will have to face mounting opposition from religious hard-

liners, who control key centres of power in the country, in order to deliver political and social reforms.

An update on [freedom of expression in Vietnam](#) – the Vietnamese authorities arrested a member of an online democracy advocacy group on Friday, on alleged charges of working to overthrow the government.

DEMOCRACY LIBRARY

Under what conditions can [decentralisation be successful](#)? In its latest Briefing Paper, Democracy Reporting International (DRI) highlights a series of key factors for designing effective decentralisation reforms.

Freedom House recently published a report, in which it [analyses the current state of media freedom in Poland](#), suggesting that the country has emerged as a battleground for authoritarian-minded leaders, who aim to gain control over the political discourse and erode media pluralism.

In an opinion piece in The Boston Globe, Stephen Kinzer [argues that if Rwanda's President Paul Kagame is re-elected next month](#), the country is likely to follow the path of "development first, then democracy".

COMING-UP

On 11 October 2017, ALDA and the partners of the MEANING consortium are organising the workshop "Metropolitan governments shaping EU Urban policy" in Brussels. The event is organised in the framework of the European Week of Regions and Cities, and the European Local Democracy Week. More information about the event can be found [here](#). Registration is possible through this [link](#). Please note that the registration process is open until 30 September 2017.

17 August

A LA UNE

Is freedom of expression at risk in Thailand? A Thai [student activist was sentenced](#) to two and a half years of prison for violating the country's lèse-majesté law, after sharing on Facebook a BBC article which was deemed offensive to the king.

The price of providing "[misleading information](#)" in Hong Kong – a democracy activist who claimed that he was abducted and tortured by mainland Chinese agents, was arrested on suspicion of misleading the police.

On the National Women's Day in Tunisia, which took place on Sunday, President Beji Caed Essibi [announced the formation of a committee](#) to study the issue of individual rights, which aims to achieve gender equality in all fields, including inheritance.

Beyond Ballots 2017

DEMOCRACY LIBRARY

A recently released Information Brief, prepared by International IDEA, argues for a [new developmental approach](#) to natural resource governance in Africa, focusing on an inclusive, participatory and owner-based socio-economic transformation of African countries.

What will it take to tackle the problem of the shrinking civic space? In its latest report, CIVICUS showcases that [the space for civil society](#) is under constant threat in a large number of member countries of the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI).

In a thought-provoking article in openDemocracy, Ziyaad Bhorat [discusses the potential impact of artificial intelligence \(AI\)](#) on the judicial decision-making, suggesting that the idea of AI judges may raise important ethical issues regarding bias and autonomy.

COMING-UP

Between 30 September and 1 October 2017, Civil Society Europe is organising the European Civic Academy in Brussels. The event will be held under the theme “NGOs as Drivers for Enhanced Civic and Democratic Spaces in Europe”. The agenda of this event can be found [here](#). In order to register, please fill in the form available at this [link](#). Please note that the registration process is open until 5 September 2017.

24 August

A LA UNE

How will the upcoming elections influence Nepal’s turbulent journey to democracy? On Monday, the Nepalese [government announced](#) that new general elections will take place this year on 26 November.

Under what conditions can freedom of expression be applied to Myanmar’s military? A former Myanmar child soldier was arrested on Friday for [allegedly defaming the military](#), an act which violates the country’s telecommunications law.

Maldives [will reintroduce the death penalty](#), despite international pressure from the UN and Amnesty International – the Maldivian government argues that this measure aims to tackle the rising number of murders and stop drug trafficking.

DEMOCRACY LIBRARY

The National Democratic Institute (NDI) prepared [a report on Albania’s parliamentary elections](#), which took place on 25 June. This document provides an in-depth analysis of the electoral process, as well as the political landscape surrounding these elections.

What will it take to restore democracy in Venezuela? [In a statement released on Tuesday](#), the International Crisis Group emphasises the importance of supporting human rights and democracy activists in the country.

In an article in the Washington Post, Nicholas Danforth [discusses the current situation in Turkey](#), arguing that the ongoing crackdown on those opposing the regime of President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has left the country unprepared for the shocks it is likely to face in the near future.

COMING-UP

On 12 October 2017, ALDA and its partners are organising the workshop “YouthMetre – an innovative tool for e-participation of youngsters across Europe” in Brussels. The event is organised in the framework of the European Week of Regions and Cities, and the European Local Democracy Week. More information about the event can be found [here](#). Registration is possible through this [link](#). Please note that the registration process is open until 30 September.

31 August

A LA UNE

Russians protested over the government’s attempts to [tighten controls on internet use](#) – around 1,000 citizens took part in the capital city of Moscow in a demonstration against these restrictions, during which dozens were arrested by the police.

In Cambodia, recent developments, such as the suspension of radio programmes, [have sparked the United Nations](#) to call on the Cambodian government to guarantee the respect of political and civil rights.

What will it take [to ensure press freedom in Azerbaijan](#)? The independent Turan News Agency reported that its director has been jailed by the authorities as a suspect in a tax-evasion and abuse-of-power investigation.

DEMOCRACY LIBRARY

A thought-provoking report developed by V-Dem [analyses the progress made by a number of new democracies](#), which have emerged in the past several decades, towards deepening democratic institutions.

Under what conditions can [internet freedom be defended in Thailand](#)? Janjira Sombatpoonsiri of the Thammasat University in Thailand showcases the attempts of the Thai government to control the internet and online dissent.

In the Atlantic, Shadi Hamid [looks at the events in Cairo](#) from 2013, which led to the fall of the post-revolutionary government of the Muslim Brotherhood, and paved the way for the regime of President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi.

COMING-UP

Beyond Ballots 2017

On 18 September 2017, ECES is hosting a book launch and debate on “Mechanisms of Citizen Participation and Direct Democracy” at the Bozar Centre for Fine Arts in Brussels. The main theme of the publication is the different direct democracy mechanisms that have been carried out in 25 countries around the world. A detailed agenda will be available soon. In order to register, please send an email to monica.frassoni@eces.eu and victoria.florinder@eces.eu.

7 September

A LA UNE

After a crackdown on independent press in Cambodia last week, the police have now [arrested the leading opposition](#) politician Kem Sokha on charges of treason – which the EU has said is yet another government [effort to curb democratic space](#).

Millions of Cameroonian schoolchildren were absent on their first day of school, due to the [ongoing teacher strikes](#) over the marginalisation of Anglophone citizens, whose discontent is intensifying in the run-up to next year’s elections.

On a brighter note, the [annulment of Kenya’s presidential elections](#) by the Supreme Court was an unprecedented victory for democracy in Africa. It has, however, sparked [criticism of the election observers](#) who had endorsed the now annulled election.

DEMOCRACY LIBRARY

How democratic are international institutions and organisations? Three researchers from the External Democracy Promotion network (EDP) enter the [debate on international democratisation](#) in an article in the Swiss Political Science Review.

As communal violence in Myanmar is escalating, the International Crisis Group has published a report on the difficulties of striking a [balance between democratic governance and Buddhism](#) in Myanmar.

Whilst democracy is one of the EU’s core principles, the EU has not taken any serious legal steps to hold member states like Poland and Hungary to this principle. The Carnegie Foundation explains the reasons why in a [compelling in-depth analysis](#).

COMING-UP

How can we bring the demos back into democracy? This year’s **conference for the International Day of Democracy** will be held on 27 September in Brussels and will focus on the state of democracy in Europe and beyond. EPD and its partners welcome you at 10.30 at the European Parliament. Additional information about the event can be found [here](#).

14 September

A LA UNE

The Togolese government [shut down the internet](#) this week, in an attempt to repress ongoing street and online protests demanding that the Gnassingbé family step down at the next elections after 50 years in power.

Halimah Yacob has been declared [Singapore's first female and first Muslim Malay president](#), after an "election" without contenders, as others were denied candidacy for failing to meet the stringent requirements.

Taiwanese pro-democracy activist [Lee Ming-che confessed](#) to charges of threatening Chinese national security with his pro-democracy campaign in his trial on Monday, which supporters say he was coerced to do.

DEMOCRACY LIBRARY

At a time of crisis for democracy, renowned democracy scholar [Pippa Norris publishes a book](#) with evidence of the success of electoral assistance programmes, making a strong case for reinforcing democracy support worldwide.

Like most referenda lately, the upcoming referendum on Kurdish independence on 25 September is highly controversial. In an [in-depth article in the New York Times](#), Tim Arango explores the points of contention and motivations behind the referendum.

With violence slowly decreasing in Syria, the [European Council on Foreign Relations](#) points to the need to establish a democratic political framework, suggesting Europe should push for decentralisation to allow for some autonomy for opposition regions.

COMING-UP

In the week of 25 to 28 September, the Socialists and Democrats in the European Parliament (S&D) hold their annual Africa Week, this year focusing on the youth's role in, amongst others, online political activism, political empowerment of women and political mobilization. Additional information about the various events can be found [here](#).

21 September

A LA UNE

It has been a rough week for Tunisia's fragile democratisation process, with a controversial cabinet reshuffle, a [corruption amnesty law](#) sparking street protests, and [yet another delay](#) in the first local post-revolution elections.

In response to calls for peaceful protest by the "[September 15 Movement](#)" on socio-economic issues and sovereignty last Friday, the Saudi Arabian government [arrested prominent clerics](#) and activists.

Beyond Ballots 2017

There has been [significant unrest in Kenya](#) following the annulment of elections, with protesters accusing the Supreme Court of bias, insecurity concerning the election re-run date, and opposition parties demanding more drastic reforms.

DEMOCRACY LIBRARY

Is democracy good for peace? To mark the International Day of Democracy, a [Washington Post](#) article explores the opportunities and challenges of democracy in insecure countries.

At a time of disillusionment with present-day democratic procedures, [International IDEA published an elaborate guide](#) on tools for direct democracy and recommendations on the usage of referendums and the like.

The Fight for Democracy – that is the theme of the [latest issue of the Konrad Adenauer-Stiftung's](#) report series, exploring topics like civil society strength, peaceful conflict-resolution and the International Criminal Court.

COMING-UP

On 26 September 2017, the Westminster Foundation for Democracy, EPD, the University of Birmingham and the European Endowment for Democracy will host a discussion on how to resist attempts to close political space and restrict civil society. The discussions will focus on parliamentarians' role in protecting political space, activist responses and 'politically smart' democracy support. More information can be found [here](#).

28 September

A LA UNE

Former Thai Prime Minister [Yingluck Shinawatra has been sentenced](#) to 5 years in prison over corruption charges, which some interpret as an attempt by the military regime to erase her pro-democracy red-shirt movement in light of next year's elections.

Millions of [Iraqi Kurds voted for independence](#) in the historic referendum this week, at the dismay of Iraq, Turkey, Iran and other regional powers who pressure the Kurdish leadership with strong language and an air traffic boycott.

Unseen [chaos erupted between Ugandan parliamentarians](#) this week, with a gun allegedly entering the parliament, over a constitutional amendment on the presidential age-limit, enabling another term for President Yoweri Museveni.

DEMOCRACY LIBRARY

Whereas globally democratic progress has stagnated in the past decade, democracy is deepening and spreading in Asia, according to a compelling [article in The Diplomat](#) which specifies contemporary challenges to democracy in Asia.

A new [working paper by Varieties of Democracy](#) (V-Dem) explains the uneven successes of democratization in Sub-Saharan Africa by considering the late colonial legacy of introducing democratic elements as a determining factor for success.

In a [provocative article on Open Democracy](#), Alina Rocha Menocal explores why democracy has struggled to deliver on peace and prosperity, and why it is nevertheless worthwhile for the international development community to support democracy.

COMING-UP

On 17 October 2017, the European Citizen Action Service (ECAS) organises a conference on young European citizens' e-participation in democratic life. Two panels of experts will explore the challenges for youth participation in policy-making and suggest some digital tools that can help overcome these challenges. More information about the event can be found [here](#). Please register [here](#).

5 October

A LA UNE

Crimean Tartar leader Ilmi Umerov has become the latest victim of [repression of speech in Russian-annexed Crimea](#), as he was sentenced to prison on charges of separatism after a trial deemed [politically motivated](#) by human rights groups.

This year's Gandhi commemoration day in India was marked by [hundreds of journalists protesting](#) the murder and intimidation of numerous journalists this month, demanding peace, media freedom and government protection.

Unrest continues in Cameroon, as [Anglophones symbolically declared independence](#) during a march last Sunday, amid restrictions on public gatherings and forceful police intervention which has resulted in 7 deaths this week.

DEMOCRACY LIBRARY

An [in-depth article in International Politics and Society Journal](#) analyses the limitations of EU election observer missions in Africa, arguing democracy must be built on existing traditional African decision-making processes instead of EU models.

The European Union Institute for Security Studies has published an [elaborate report](#) on resilience in the Western Balkans, including chapters on democratisation through EU integration, civil society space and institutional fragility in the region.

A [comparative analysis of regime change indicators by Varieties of Democracy](#) uncovers some highly problematic issues of conceptualisation in regime change research, which leads to a lack of reliable, cumulative knowledge on the phenomenon.

COMING-UP

Beyond Ballots 2017

On 20 October, the College of Europe will hold a workshop on civil society in the Eastern Neighbourhood Policy, assessing the changing situation of civil society in the Southern and Eastern neighbourhood countries in relation to the political transformations in the region. The workshop will look into the institutional and socio-political conditions needed for civil society to be a powerful actor in democratisation, as well as related security risks. More information about the event and registration is available [here](#).

12 October

A LA UNE

The Cambodian government has taken the first steps to [dissolve the opposition party](#) by taking it to the Supreme Court on charges of plotting a coup, thereby crushing hopes for competitive elections next year and a democratic future more generally.

Zimbabwean President [Mugabe has strengthened his grip on power](#) with a cabinet reshuffle, whereby he created a ministry to crack down on social media activism and stripped the Vice President, a contender for succession, from his competencies.

In Turkey, human rights activists and journalists continue to be the target of repressive jurisdictions on questionable charges of “terrorism”, with this week’s targets including the [Turkish Amnesty International director](#) and a journalist from the [Wall Street Journal](#).

DEMOCRACY LIBRARY

An [absorbing article in Open Democracy by Richard Youngs](#) analyses the worldwide rise in protest, arguing that today’s protests are defined by their eclecticism, the uneasy coalitions of protesters, and the trend towards community-level protests.

To bridge the literature on electoral integrity and political regime types, a new [book edited by Holly Ann Garnett and Margarita Zavadskaya](#) looks into questions of political efficacy and turnout, the threat of electoral violence and protest, and regime change.

An [investigation by Philip Kleinfeld from IRIN](#) sheds light on the ongoing political crisis in the DR Congo, presenting a bleak picture of President Kabila, adamant about his seat in government, and citizens increasingly willing to fight him with violence.

COMING UP

On 20 October 2017, EuroMed Rights will celebrate their 20th anniversary with an event reflecting on 20 years of defending human rights and creating cooperation and dialogue between both sides of the Mediterranean. The event will centre around the question whether 20 years of EuroMed Rights work has resulted into a EuroMed civil society. Please confirm your participation with [Alvaro Lagresa](#), or call +32 2 503 06 86.

19 October

A LA UNE

Journalists worldwide grieve over the [murder of investigative journalist](#) Daphne Caruana Galizia, known for leading the Panama Papers investigations in Malta – she is the [28th journalist to be killed](#) this year.

Disillusionment with politics is rife amongst opposition-supporting Venezuelans after the [ruling party's victory in the regional elections](#), which the opposition has rejected amid irregularities and polling station relocations the day before the vote.

The Kyrgyz opposition candidate for presidency accepted his defeat in last Sunday's elections, paving the way for the country's [first peaceful transition of power](#) through competitive elections despite some concerns over vote-buying.

DEMOCRACY LIBRARY

In the [latest issue of the Journal of Democracy](#), [Prof. Paul Howe argues](#) Europeans and Americans' decreasing commitment to democratic norms and institutions reflects a broader social malaise that needs to be challenged by reengaging people in the social contract.

A [research paper by the Institute for Security Studies](#) argues corruption through party finance is hampering democracy and development in Africa, elaborating on different disclosure methods, the need for democracy within parties and resources for dialogue.

A [Human Rights Watch report](#) reveals Kenya's recent elections were not only marked by procedural irregularities, but also by excessive police violence costing the lives of 67 citizens – thereby stressing the urgency of democratic reforms.

COMING UP

From 8 to 10 November 2017, the Council of Europe will host the World Forum for Democracy 2017 in Strasbourg. Given the rising threat of populism worldwide, this annual 3-day forum will focus on the role of political parties and media in the rise of populism. Through plenary sessions, panel discussions, labs and cultural events, this forum will provide a holistic understanding of populism from many different perspectives. More information and a detailed programme are available [here](#). [Online registration](#) is open until 25 October 2017.

26 October

A LA UNE

Argentina's legislative elections last Sunday were marked by the [discovery of the body of a missing indigenous rights activist](#), sparking public outrage at the security forces and the state of the rule of law in the country.

Beyond Ballots 2017

Fundamental human rights are at risk in Tajikistan, as the government has drawn up a [register of 367 homosexual citizens](#) who will be subjected to mandatory examinations for sexually transmitted diseases, as part of operations called “purge” and “morality”.

All eyes are on Kenya this week as [citizens once again return to the polls](#) in a contentious election rerun which the opposition party has boycotted, making many Kenyans question the legitimacy of the vote even before ballots are cast.

DEMOCRACY LIBRARY

Is citizen participation actually good for democracy? In his new book [The Participation Gap](#), [Professor Russell Dalton](#) argues citizen participation strengthens democracy only if it is equal, as opposed to the current inequality in non-electoral participation.

A [V-Dem working paper](#) has found that the most effective way for the EU to promote democracy is through a combination of civil society aid and sanctions, as this introduces both upward and downward pressures for democratic changes.

[Concord's newly published AidWatch report for 2017](#) stresses that progress in EU development cooperation is too slow and too limited to meet the 2025 targets, as the increase in total EU aid in 2017 is offset by an increase in the share of inflated aid.

COMING UP

On 6 and 7 December 2017, Transparency International will hold a conference in Brussels on the influence of money in politics. The conference will bring together policy-makers, political and civil society actors and international institutions to discuss political corruption, parliamentary ethics, lobby transparency, and party and campaign finance. More information on the event and a registration form are available [here](#). A detailed programme is available [here](#).

2 November

A LA UNE

At a time of international outcry over the Rohingya crisis, tens of thousands of [Myanmar citizens came out on the streets](#) last Sunday in support of Myanmar's army, which is gaining in popularity at the expense of the pro-democracy government.

Just weeks after similar developments in Kenya, the [Liberian Supreme Court has now halted preparations](#) for next week's presidential run-off after both opposition and ruling party candidates have taken to the Supreme Court to challenge the results.

Students and parents from a Muslim private school [took to the streets in Asmara](#) on Tuesday to protest restrictions imposed on the school by the autocratic Eritrean government, which forcefully repressed the rare protest, killing 28 citizens.

DEMOCRACY LIBRARY

A [publication by the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung](#) analyses the role of social movements in processes of democratic renewal in Southeastern Europe, examining country-specific dynamics and providing recommendations for organisations in the field.

International IDEA has published a [new edition of the Constitution-Building Primer](#) which focuses on the different government formation and removal mechanisms in parliamentary democracies.

In contrast to initial optimism for Kyrgyzstan's democratic progress after the recent elections, a [comprehensive report by the International Partnership for Human Rights](#) uncovers a list of irregularities, like misuse of public resources and media restrictions.

COMING UP

On 30 May 2018, Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem) will hold the Annual Policy Dialogue Day at the Wallenberg Conference Centre in Gothenburg, Sweden. Together with the Quality of Government Institute (QoG), Governance and Local Development (GLD), and the Uppsala Conflict Data Programme (UCDP), V-Dem invites practitioners, policy-makers and academics to exchange views on issues of democracy, governance, conflict and corruption. More information will be made available in due course on the V-Dem website.

9 November

A LA UNE

After months of repressing protests, the [Togolese government has now changed tactics](#) by asking for dialogue with the opposition, releasing 42 protesters, dropping charges against the opposition leader and lifting the ban on weekday protests.

Tuesday was a good day for pluralism in Indonesia, as the Indonesian Constitutional Court [recognised native religions](#) on official identification cards, thereby protecting adherents of such faiths from prosecution under the blasphemy law.

Over [ten thousand Romanians came out to the streets](#) on Sunday to protest a law change that is said to undermine anti-corruption efforts, by weakening the anti-corruption prosecutor's office and strengthening the position of the justice minister.

DEMOCRACY LIBRARY

Latin American democracy is at a crossroads, risking sliding back into authoritarian populism if politicians do not become more transparent and representative while actively involving citizens, concludes the [analysis by Sandra Weiss in International Politics and Society](#).

Beyond Ballots 2017

The Institute for Economics and Peace has published the [2017 Positive Peace Report](#), which details levels of positive peace worldwide through governance, corruption and free information indicators, and provides policy advice to strengthen positive peace.

An [African Arguments article](#) analyses Zambian President Lungu's recent threats to the Constitutional Court and argues this marks a shift from publicly supporting democracy to full-out state capture without a democratic façade.

COMING UP

On 30 November 2017, the Netherlands Institute for Multiparty Democracy (NIMD), International IDEA and Enable.ist hold the third edition of Innovating Democracy. The topic of this year's conference is the transforming political landscape, with a special focus on technological innovations and their impact on democratic processes. More information, a detailed programme and the registration form are available [here](#).

16 November

A LA UNE

The succession struggle within the Zimbabwean ruling party is escalating, as the [army has now seized state TV](#) and has come out in support of Emmerson Mnangagwa, the former Vice President who was ousted last week to pave the way for President Mugabe's wife.

Somaliland's [Presidential Elections](#) last Monday proceeded without too many disturbances, according to international election observers, although the government did [shut down social media](#) during the vote in order to quell rumours of false results.

A [large march in Warsaw](#) attracted as many as 60.000 people in celebration of Poland's Independence Day, amongst whom many far-right groups proclaiming anti-democratic values and messages.

DEMOCRACY LIBRARY

In an article in Perspectives on Politics, Sarah Bush [questions the neutrality of the Freedom in the World ratings](#) – widely used as a guideline in political and investment decisions – emphasising the ideological nature and power relations inherent in these ratings.

In an in-depth analysis on Open Democracy, Helen Margetts assesses the different responses to the way [social media is changing the democratic landscape](#), arguing a multifaceted and collaborative response to social media pathologies is needed.

A Discussion Paper by European Centre for Development Policy Management (ECDPM) reviews [Tunisia's decentralisation process](#), arguing they are taking the right steps towards local democracy, but should not postpone municipal elections any further.

COMING UP

On 5 December, Friends of Europe will host a discussion on the future of the Western Balkans. The region is at a crossroads at present, with on the one hand the prospect of accession to the EU, but on the other hand instability, ethnic tensions and insecurity. Which path will the Western Balkans take? The discussion will focus on the prospects of peace, democracy and reconciliation, on private sector reforms, and on the role of local governments in those issues.

A detailed programme and registration information can be found [here](#).

23 November

A LA UNE

Even though the Cambodian Supreme Court's decision to [dissolve the country's main opposition party](#) did not come as a surprise after the party leader's arrest in September, it is an unprecedented, potentially fatal, blow to democracy in Cambodia.

Zimbabweans have been dancing in the streets these past few days and Vice President [Emmerson Mnangagwa will be sworn in as the new President](#) on Friday, after the military forced President Robert Mugabe to resign after 37 years in office.

Kenya's Supreme Court has voted to [uphold President Kenyatta's victory](#) in the controversial election rerun, thereby ending the political impasse that [cost 54 lives](#) these last few months, but leaving the country deeply divided.

DEMOCRACY LIBRARY

Current developments in Zimbabwe beg the question, can military coups bring forth democracy? In his new book [The Democratic Coup d'Etat](#), Professor Ozan Varol tackles precisely this question and clarifies why some coups lead to democracy.

In this week's [long read in The Guardian](#), editor Katharine Viner aptly analyses the current political, economic and social environment, calling upon journalists to take up their responsibility of reporting in a fact-based, citizen-focused, and multi-perspective way.

In an [article in the New Yorker](#), Adrian Chen provides a unique insight into the current state of democracy and human rights in the Philippines, detailing the lived reality of the war on drugs as well as President Duterte's personal and political background.

COMING UP

From 4 to 8 December 2017, CIVICUS will hold their International Civil Society Week in Suva, Fiji. This global gathering will focus on issues of the global crisis of democracy and clampdown on people's freedoms, as well as environmental sustainability and the future of civil society.

More information is available [here](#).

Beyond Ballots 2017

30 November

A LA UNE

Whilst the [Honduran Presidential elections](#) were already controversial before the vote due to the change of the presidential term limits, tensions have now risen even further as people are still waiting for half of the results and both candidates have already proclaimed victory.

After a highway [sit-in paralysed Islamabad for 3 weeks](#), Pakistan's army has brokered an agreement between the government and the protesting religious conservatives, acceding to protestors' demands in ways that [threaten democracy](#), according to some.

Days after 4 UN peacekeepers were killed, Mali's government has announced they will [postpone regional elections](#) scheduled for December to April 2018 due to security concerns, while remaining silent on the date of the Presidential elections in July 2018.

DEMOCRACY LIBRARY

What next for democracy? The [Fondation pour l'innovation politique](#) aims to answer that question in a book of analyses of their new data from 26 countries on trust in institutions and support for democratic procedures and values.

Even though India is often praised as the world's largest democracy, a [CIVICUS report](#) reveals India's vibrant civil society is increasingly being restricted through burdensome legislation on registration and funding since the election of Prime Minister Modi.

In an article in the International Politics and Society Journal, Anchrit Wille and Mark Bovens argue the [over-representation of hyper-qualified politicians](#) in governments constitutes a major democratic deficit and creates the conditions that enable populism.

COMING UP

On the evening of 5 December 2017, Carnegie Europe will present their research findings on the widespread corruption in Tunisia and its impact on the country's fragile democratic transition. The presentation will be followed by a moderated discussion panel on the issue of Tunisia's corruption contagion. More information and a registration form are available [here](#).

7 December

A LA UNE

Gambian president Barrow launched the country's [first independent broadcaster](#) this week, signaling an important change of course for media freedom in The Gambia, after 22 years of journalist harassment and state-directed media during Jammeh's Presidency.

Despite a plebiscite last year in which Bolivians rejected a [constitutional amendment on presidential term limits](#), the Bolivian supreme court has overruled the constitution and popular vote, enabling President Evo Morales to stand for reelection in 2019.

After announcing his candidacy for the 2018 Presidential election on social media, Egyptian Colonel Ahmed Konsowa was [detained for stating his political views](#) as a member of the army – which he has been trying to resign from for years.

DEMOCRACY LIBRARY

International IDEA has published a report on the [Global State of Democracy](#), which explores democracy's resilience to backsliding, the crisis of representation, migration, inequality, post-conflict transitions and corruption.

An International Crisis Group report analyses the [political stalemate in the DR Congo](#) and calls on Western and regional powers to engage the opposition, build confidence between all parties and hold President Kabila to the agreed-upon electoral timeline.

In an article in Foreign Policy, Sebastian Strangio takes a grim view on the [state of Cambodia's democracy](#) in an analysis of recent events, arguing Chinese support is strengthening the regime to crush down opposition and cement autocratic rule.

COMING UP

On 20 February 2018, the Geneva Summit for Human Rights and Democracy will take place. For this 10th edition, the summit will give the floor to pro-democracy actors from Venezuela, Zimbabwe, Russia and Turkey, amongst others. More information about the speakers and programme of the summit are available [here](#). A registration form is available [here](#).

14 December

A LA UNE

Tensions in Honduras are dangerously high 2 weeks after the [Presidential elections](#), with 14 casualties from protests, no officially declared winner, a rejection of results by the opposition candidate Nasralla, and [irregularities according to election observers](#).

After months of protests calling for an end to the Gnassingbe dynasty, the Togolese government has made another move to appease the opposition by [freeing two politically engaged Imams](#) whose arrests in October led to [deadly clashes](#).

The self-declared republic of Somaliland has set an example of a [peaceful and democratic transfer of power in the Horn of Africa](#), as a new President is sworn in after relatively incident-free elections last month.

DEMOCRACY LIBRARY

Beyond Ballots 2017

The Iraqi people have a history of inter-communal harmony and civic engagement, and should therefore be given real agency in political processes, argue the authors of the new [book on state-society relations, citizenship and democratisation in Iraq](#).

In an article for the Shorenstein center, Professor Claes de Vreese looks at [populism as a communication phenomenon](#) which challenges journalism in an unprecedented way, providing 10 guidelines for journalists covering populist movements.

The National Endowment for Democracy has released a report that analyses [Chinese and Russian influence in four nascent democracies](#), arguing their “sharp power”, as opposed to EU soft power, is targeted at manipulating information flows to citizens of these countries.

COMING UP

On 25 January 2018, the College of Europe will hold a conference in Bruges on the EU’s relations with its neighbours from an institutional perspective. The conference will focus on the institutional challenges and lessons learned from the various types of relations. More information and a registration form are available [here](#). Please register by 22 January 2018.

21 December

A LA UNE

Malaysia’s Election Commission has been given the green light to [redraw the voting district boundaries](#) of over half of the constituencies, in a move criticised for creating ethnic majorities and favouring the ruling party ahead of the 2018 elections.

With a crowd reminiscent of the protests 4 years ago, up to 10.000 supporters of former Georgian President Saakashvili rallied in Kiev last Sunday, [demanding the impeachment of Ukraine’s President](#) Poroshenko on corruption charges.

After a heated – and at times violent – debate, the [Ugandan Parliament has now passed a bill](#) which scraps presidential age limits, increases terms of office from 5 to 7 years and restores the 2-term limit, making it possible for Museveni to rule until 2037.

DEMOCRACY LIBRARY

With polling data on demographics, digital access and political engagement in India, Cuba, the US, Israel and Germany, a new Bertelsmann Foundation report entitled [Disrupting Democracy](#) examines the impact of digital innovation on these 5 countries.

A paper by Democracy Reporting International warns against talk about [“populism”, “illiberal democracy” and the “crisis of democracy”](#), as these frames only strengthen those who have appropriated the terms and embedded them in their own ideology.

Crisis Group has published a report on the [current political situation in Zimbabwe](#), stressing the importance of international pressure regarding electoral and political reform as well as inclusive national dialogue on economic reforms.

COMING UP

On 17 January 2018, the Chatham House in London holds a debate on the Future of the Liberal World Order. With a panel of international relations professors from the University of Amsterdam, Sussex, Exeter and the City University, the debate will consider the challenges to the liberal world order in 2018, with special attention to the position of the Trump-led United States and China. More information is available [here](#).