



Parliamentarians for Global Action
Parlamentarios para la Acción Global
Action Mondiale des Parlementaires
برلمانيون من أجل التحرك العالمي

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

President

Ms. Margareta Cederfelt, MP, Sweden

Board

Dip. Carla Pitiot, Argentina

Sen. Valerie Woods, Belize

Dip. Tucapel Jimenez, Chile

Dep. Dieudonné Upiria Sunguma, DR Congo

Dip. Karina Sosa, El Salvador

Ms. Barbara Lochbihler, MEP (Germany), European Parliament

Dr. Suzi Barbosa, MP, Guinea-Bissau

Shri Tariq Anwar, MP, India

Mr. Kula Segaran, MP, Malaysia

Dep. Antonio Niquice, Mozambique

Dr. Hryhoriy Nemyria, MP, Ukraine

Mr. Mark Pritchard, MP, United Kingdom

Treasurer

Ms. Petra Bayr, MP Austria

INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL

Chair

Dip. Victor Orlando Bisonó, Dominican Republic

Councillors

Mrs. Albana Vokshi, MP, Albania

Dip. Cornelia Schmidt Liermann, Argentina

Ms. Maria Vamvakinou, MP, Australia

Dep. Jean Wyllys, Brazil

Dep. Reine Benao Sakande, Burkina Faso

Mr. Ali Ehsassi, MP, Canada

Dep. José Manuel Sanches Tavares, Cape Verde

Dep. Emilie Beatrice Epaye, Central African Republic

Sen. Thekys Mulaila, DR Congo

Ms. Carolina Magdalene Maier, MP, Denmark

Dip. Magda Rodríguez, Dominican Republic

Dip. Mario Tenorio, El Salvador

Ms. Ana Gomes, MEP (Portugal), European Parliament

Shri Supriya Sadanand Sule, MP, India

Mr. Faig Al Sheikh Ali, MP, Iraq

Ms. Lia Quartapelle, MP, Italy

Hon. Millie Odhiambo, MP, Kenya

Dep. Ana Rita Sithole, Mozambique

Ms. Jacqui Dean, MP, New Zealand

Mr. Syed Naveed Qamar, MP, Pakistan

Hon. Thilanga Sumathipala, MP, Sri Lanka

Mr. Patrick Kensenhuis, MP, Suriname

Hon. Jasson Rweikiza, Tanzania

Sen. Wade Mark, Trinidad and Tobago

Hon. Jacob Oboth-Oboth, MP, Uganda

Dip. Macarena Gelman, Uruguay

Dip. Armando Armas, Venezuela

SECRETARIAT

Secretary-General

Dr. David Donat Cattin

NGO in general consultative status
with the Economic and Social Council

London/New York-The Hague: Members of Parliamentarians for Global Action (PGA) in 140 countries of all regions of the world celebrate the [Universal Declaration for Human Rights](#) today, 10 December 2018, by urging all their colleagues who believe that the respect and fulfillment of human rights is a precondition for any effective democratic system of governance to sign on to the [“Parliamentary Call for Global Democratic Renewal”](#).

An initiative of the World Movement for Democracy, this *Parliamentary Call* represents a starting point towards concrete action in 2019-21 by PGA –the largest cross-party, NGO network of individual lawmakers– within the framework of its new **“Campaign for Democratic Renewal and Human Rights”**, which the Board and International Council of the organization unanimously adopted at its 40th Annual Forum held in Kiev, Ukraine, on 18 November 2018.

*“There is no meaningful exercise of democracy by citizens without effective access for all individuals, **not only** citizens, to fundamental human rights, as affirmed by the Universal Declaration 70 years ago. In particular, **no one shall be placed above the law**, no one shall be allowed to curb or to violate human dignity, and no one shall be allowed to transform the government of a democratically-elected majority into the dictatorship of the majority against any minority or group”*, the Secretary-General of PGA Dr. David Donat Cattin affirmed.

The PGA representative is attending a public conference with Mr. Akbar Khan, Secretary-General of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA), held at Middlesex University of London, on the pivotal role that global parliamentarism can play to protect and promote universal human rights. The CPA recently launched a comprehensive publication entitled *“The Global Human Rights Implementation Agenda: the role of National Parliaments”*, which provides Legislators worldwide with a blueprint for action to establish and reinforce effective checks and balances by Parliament on the Executive.

Human rights and meaningful democracy are under attack in many countries around the world, which is marked by profound divisions among States, especially among Permanent Members of the United Nations Security Council. Under the false and misleading dichotomies of national interest versus international cooperation, and national security versus international security, the International Community of States is repeatedly failing to prevent futile armed conflicts and the perpetration of mass-atrocities that are primarily victimizing innocent civilians from all sides in any relevant situation. The re-emergence of oppressive regimes, often sponsored by powerful foreign leaders and regional actors, has brought about a climate that could lead the planet into a new “cold war”, unless swift action is taken to remedy humanitarian crises and reform oppressive systems of governance.

The recent decision by former UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Prince Zeid Ra’ad Al Hussein to resign from his position ahead of time and, above all, not to seek a second term of office underscores the gravity of the current situation.

Prince Zeid *inter alia* stated: “After reflection, I have decided not to seek a second four-year term. To do so, in the current geopolitical context, might involve bending a knee in supplication; muting a statement of advocacy; lessening the independence and integrity of my voice — which is your voice.”

The year 2019 will offer to States, civil society and other actors a unique opportunity to address the challenge of oppression and violent repression generating human rights’ abuses and, at times, crimes against humanity: Such an opportunity is the UN agenda centered on Sustainable Development Goal 16, which focuses on the construction of peaceful, inclusive and stable societies under the Rule of Law.

Without an effective and intransigent struggle for human rights using all possible and available tools under International Law, PGA believes that the object and purpose of SDG 16 may be defeated, and democratic renewal may remain an unfulfilled aspiration. PGA therefore calls on all Parliamentarians of the world, as well as on all institutions and individuals, to take action to honour the statement that 70 years ago united all nations in the almost unanimous adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, namely, that “*all human beings are born equal in rights and dignity*”.

ANNEX:

Parliamentary Call for Global Democratic Renewal

We, the undersigned parliamentarians, call upon our peers to take urgent action to defend democratic norms and values around the world. Increasingly, aggressive authoritarian regimes are tightening repression at home, while also seeking to expand their power abroad. In addition to using more traditional hard power mechanisms, authoritarian regimes are using a growing arsenal of “sharp power” tools, such as disinformation and computational propaganda, politically motivated investment strategies, and the use of corrupt practices to advance political influence. Increased authoritarian aggression must not go unchallenged. At the same time, weakened democratic leadership and changing international democratic norms have also emboldened growing illiberalism in many countries around the world. Globalization, migration, and income inequality have heightened social tensions in many societies — tensions which authoritarian regimes have often sought to exacerbate to further weaken the global influence of democratic countries. Political leaders in democratic countries must redouble their efforts to counter growing intolerance, uphold international human rights, and work to counter the erosion of democratic norms.

To address global threats to democracy, the undersigned current and former members of parliament, call upon their global peers to urgently take the following actions:

- **Counter authoritarian aggression and disinformation.** Authoritarian aggression and hybrid warfare designed to undermine democracies, if allowed to go unchallenged, simply invites escalation. We call upon our peers to take protective and preventive actions to counter hostile information operations, cyber-attacks, and the weaponization of social media, while protecting freedom of expression.
- **Defend democratic norms and political inclusion.** The democratic norms that have guided the international system since World War II are under systemic threat from authoritarian and illiberal actors, who are seeking to sow political division and fuel ethnic, religious, and racial tensions to cultivate illiberal responses. We call upon our peers to redouble efforts to defend liberal democratic norms and advance political inclusion,

including values of multi-culturalism, and ethnic and religious tolerance. In particular, we call upon our peers to support the full inclusion of women and other historically marginalized groups in political life.

- **Stand up for human rights and fight corruption and kleptocracy.** Abuses of human rights and the erosion of ethical standards in democratic governments play into a false authoritarian narrative that all political systems are equally corrupt. We call upon our peers to hold accountable government officials, in their countries and abroad, who commit human rights violations or acts of corruption, or who benefit from money-laundering and tax evasion. We also encourage our peers to demand an end to attacks on parliamentarians and civic activists who are targeted for their efforts to uphold human rights and ethical standards in their countries.
- **Secure genuine elections.** We call upon our peers to ensure that elections are genuinely democratic by using their legislative, budgetary and oversight powers to: 1) guarantee that election management bodies are politically impartial; 2) implement open electoral data principles to build public confidence; 3) combat disinformation; 4) make policy decisions about adopting electoral technologies and other procurements in an inclusive, transparent and accountable manner; and 5) establish political finance regimes that foster fair pluralist competition and allow for public monitoring of political finance.
- **Insist on accountable government.** We call upon our peers to encourage and support the strengthening of public institutions in order to promote government transparency and accountability. We also encourage our peers to use their legislative, budgetary, and oversight powers to ensure a foreign policy that differentiates between states and political leaders who abide by international democratic and human rights norms, and those who routinely violate these norms. Lastly, we encourage our peers to incorporate more constructive opposition relations, in addition to robust foreign assistance funding designed to improve, democracy, human rights, and governance.
- **Mobilize peers to advance democratic renewal.** We call upon our peers to mobilize their colleagues in support of the aforementioned actions through such measures as: heightened advocacy within the parliament and at the international level; the formation of a democracy caucus or all-party group in parliament to promote global, democratic renewal; or support for democratic commitments and initiatives, such as the Prague Appeal.

* * * * *

Democratic solidarity is essential in countering authoritarian aggression and promoting the growth of democratic values around the world. Together, through a unified effort, democratic renewal can be achieved.