DEMOCRATIC RENEWAL CAMPAIGN

Mobilizing Legislators as Defenders of Democracy

"WE SUPPORT THE POLITICAL ROADMAP TO END THE DICTATORSHIP, THE PERSECUTION OF DISSIDENTS, AND THE VIOLATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN VENEZUELA."

Mr. Armando Armas, member of the National Assembly of Venezuela, Chairman of PGA’s National Group, on the systematic attacks against parliamentarians in the country.

PROBLEM

The annual Freedom House “Freedom in the World” report found 2018 to be the thirteenth consecutive year of deteriorating freedoms across the globe.¹

As human rights infractions amass, political discourse deteriorates, democratic practices erode, and justice retreats for the most vulnerable populations, including opposition leaders, journalists, human rights defenders, and persecuted classes such as members of indigenous populations and LGBTI individuals, parliamentarians have an essential and indispensable role as the legitimate democratically-elected representatives of the people.

Alarming, parliamentarians themselves also are increasingly subject to abuses of the rule of law and miscarriages of justice. Members of opposition parties, including advocates for human rights, gender justice, and LGBTI equality are subject to intimidation, including repression, detention, and even exile. Even as they fight to defend democracy, legislators are finding themselves in need of protection and support.

GOAL

To fight against democratic decay.

The more than 1,300 Member-Parliamentarians that comprise PGA’s global network recognize the urgent menace of closing political space globally and stand poised to take action to directly address this threat.

PGA’s newest campaign for democratic renewal, which was inaugurated by its Executive Board of Member-Parliamentarians in Kyiv, Ukraine, in November 2018, enlists, equips, and empowers members of parliament to:

+ Take concrete action to reinforce and protect civil and political democratic space by promoting norms, regulations, and legislation, and
+ Protect the human rights of democracy activists, especially parliamentarians in opposition, women in politics, minorities, and vulnerable groups.

ACTIVITIES

PGA’s campaign for democratic renewal comprises five core pillars:

1) Sensitizing legislators to recognize and oppose legislative initiatives to curtail civil and political rights such as freedoms of association and expression, which frequently indicate the early stages of democratic decline, and supporting them to develop pro-rights alternatives.

2) Empowering MPs to identify and resist political and structural attempts to dismantle or erode fundamental democratic principles such as the separation of powers, the independence of the judiciary, and the autonomy of prosecutorial authorities through targeted outreach, and cultivating “champion” Members of Parliament to advocate with their peers to repeal/change laws, policies, or practices which threaten democratic norms and institutions.

3) Providing a “rapid response” coordinating mechanism when the human rights of elected parliamentarians are compromised, and drawing attention to and condemning government efforts to silence and intimidate members of the opposition, human rights activists, journalists, legal professionals, and judicial officials through both national legislative initiatives and international platforms.

4) Emboldening MPs to demand political dialogue that is respectful of all, resist hate speech and derogatory language, and expose disinformation.

5) Enlisting parliamentarians to join a voluntary pledge to serve as democracy defenders, enshrining the above commitments to uphold democratic principles, human rights, and respectful political discourse.

"I am grateful that Parliamentarians for Global Action saw through the lies of the Duterte administration and chose to support and fight for my right to fair treatment in spite of the government’s effort to peddle fake news against me to taint my integrity."

Senator Leila M. de Lima (The Philippines) on PGA’s PR calling for her immediate and unconditional release after being detained on politically motivated charges. Sen. de Lima is a fierce critic of President Rodrigo Duterte.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

Honoring our name, we have materialized our goal through concrete actions with significant results.

To date, PGA has contributed to:

Advocating for Democratic Transitions by:
+ Releasing a statement welcoming the stepping-down and house-arrest of President Omar al-Bashir in Sudan and calling upon all relevant parties engaged to help promote a democratic transition to a government protective of the rights of citizens and respectful of the rule of law.
+ Contributing to the withdrawal of charges against Hon. Ahmed Mahloof in the Maldives, who was on trial for fabricated and politically motivated charges.

Combatting Sexism, Harassment, and Violence Against Women Parliamentarians by:
+ Issuing a Declaration in Argentina giving visibility to the issue of sexism, harassment, and violence against women in Parliaments under the #NotInMyParliament campaign.

Denouncing Politically Motivated Arrests and Persecution of Opposition Leaders by:
+ Condemning the arrest and forced exile of PGA’s National Group Chair and LGBTI rights activist in Brazil, Dep. Jean Wyllys.
+ Condemning the continued detention in The Philippines of PGA member Sen. Leila de Lima, including through a joint motion for a resolution adopted by the European Parliament, co-authored by former PGA’s Board member, Barbara Lochbihler, MEP (Germany).
+ Demanding an end to the political persecution of members of the parliamentary opposition by the Maduro regime in Venezuela.

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