

THE BROOKINGS INSTITUTION

WEBINAR

DECLARATION OF DEMOCRATIC PRINCIPLES:  
CIVIL SOCIETY'S CRITICAL ROLE IN ACHIEVING THE SUMMIT FOR DEMOCRACY GOALS

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**NORMAN EISEN:** Good morning to my U.S. colleagues and good afternoon and good evening to those who are joining us around the world. My name is Norm Eisen. I'm a senior fellow in governance studies here at the Brookings Institution. This week, the United States, Costa Rica, the Netherlands, the Republic of Korea and the Republic of Zambia are co-hosting the second Summit for Democracy in December 2021. President Biden kicked off a year of action by hosting the first Summit for Democracy. Participating governments made about 750 commitments dedicated to strengthening the main pillars of democracy, which include toughening up democracy and defending against authoritarianism. One pillar addressing and fighting corruption. That's the second one. And promoting respect for human rights. The third main pillar and many, many other areas that were covered in our year of action as well. But advancing global democracy does not end after the second summit, which will have this week and today, our webinar will spotlight civil societies critical role in advancing these three pillars of democracy. Through the release of a civil society led Declaration of Democratic principles coordinated by Freedom House, the George W Bush Institute and the McCain Institute, some of our great democracy institutions. The declaration includes civil society contributions from 14 of the Summit for Democracy cohorts, which were established during the year of action following the first summit to push forward progress together in a partnership between government and civil society in each of these cohorts. One of those is the financial transparency and integrity cohort that works on critical anti-corruption issues, where Brookings and I are delighted to co-lead together with colleagues in the US government at the State Department and USAID and at the Open Government Partnership. Tomorrow, on March 28, there will be an all day event sponsored by USAID, Partnering for Democracy, New Approaches for Reform that will feature, among other things, the Financial transparency, Integrity, Cohort's work during the Year of Action, and I'm excited to be contributing to that tomorrow and to be discussing this all week long. But for today I'm speaking in my Brookings senior fellow capacity only rather than in a co-lead capacity. That brings me to another exciting announcement today. We at Brookings are delighted to announce the launch of our new signature anti-corruption initiative, AC DC, the Anti-Corruption Democracy and Security Initiative. We want to thank the BHP Foundation and our other donors for their support. ACDS is a multi-year initiative where we're going to catalyze the generation of knowledge and what works to push back on corruption. We're going to also explore the intersection with strengthening democracy and improving global security for the benefit of communities around the world. And as part of these acts, we look forward to continuing our research and our analysis around key anti-corruption issues. And this part is very exciting analyzing, tracking, charting and measuring progress on each and every one of the anti-corruption commitments made at the first Summit for Democracy. In the context of all the other anti-corruption work that's going on globally, FATF Unpacked and so many other areas. Thus far, we've analyzed more than 250 out of that 750 fully a third anti-corruption commitments made at the Summit for Democracy, according to our categorization. Moving forward, we'll update our working analysis based on ongoing consultations and the findings for the summit second Summit for Democracy this week. So a lot is going on. The year of Action is going to lead to years of action, and we're starting that with today's discussion. Our esteemed panelists come from organizations around the world and serve as civil society co-leads for several of those Summit for Democracy cohorts, those partnerships between government and civil society that we talked about. I am so excited to welcome Nicole Bibbins Sedaca, the executive vice president of Freedom House, which co-leads the resisting authoritarian pressure cohort. Another very important too, another one of those three pillars we talked about, Jeanne Bourgault, president and CEO of Internews, which co-leads the media freedom cohort. You can't have democracy without media freedom. That's a part of all three of those pillars and so much more. Cheikh Fall. The President of Africa Twist, which co-chairs the youth political and civic engagement cohort. We need that next generation of youth to take democracy to new heights all over the world. And Gretta Fenner, the managing director of the Brazil Institute on Governance, which co-leads the anti-corruption policies as a guarantee for national security, stability and sovereign policy cohort. That's a mouthful, but they're doing a lot of great work in the anti-corruption policies cohort and and the Ball Institute also co-leads the international cooperation. Anti-Corruption cohort. So between between us, we have all three of the anti-corruption cohorts represented. And last but not least, Ruslan Stefanov the program director and chief economist of the Center for the Study of Democracy, which also co-leads the anti-corruption policies cohort. Through your questions and our lively discussion, we're going to

examine and explore how government, civil society and the private sector can work together to strengthen democracy, fight corruption and promote respect for human rights. Beyond the year of action into years of action. As a reminder to our audience, I'm going to do one round of questions with our panelists. Then we are going to come to the over 300 of you who are here to do a round of questions from all of you in response to our first round. Then I'll do a second round of questions and then I'll open it up to all of you again. So please be ready with your questions as you listen, or you can even start them now. So many fantastic anti-corruption experts who are with us. Share your questions in the Zoom Q&A and or by using hashtag of Brookings Civil Society. Brookings Civil Society. That is your hashtag on Twitter for questions. Or you can put them in the Q and A. Now I'm going to ask each of our panelists to turn on their cameras and their microphones. And I am going to begin with some opening reflections. Nicole, I'm going to begin with you, and I want to start with this incredible civil society led declaration of democratic principles that we're so proud of. I know. I'm so proud to be a part of it. And you're and folks, you're going to be hearing a lot about it this week. There'll be some additional surprises in store for you on our declaration this week. But, Nicole, can you share with us a little more about the civil society leadership on this declaration of democratic principles? Why was it conceived? What was the process behind it? And what are the key principles? And more broadly, what Freedom House and the resisting authoritarian pressure cohort have been up to in this year of action. Over to you, Nicole.

**NICOLE BIBBINS SEDACA:** Excellent. Thank you so much, Norman. Thanks to the entire Brookings team for inviting Freedom House to speak on your panel this morning and to help kick off the Summit for Democracy Week. There's going to be so much happening this week, so it is great that Brookings has jumped in Monday morning to get the get all of the work started. I am delighted to share what Freedom House has been up to, both our Declaration for Democratic principles and our resisting authoritarian pressure cohort. So as many of you know and as many of those who are on the webinar know, we expect that the governments that are going to be gathering together, virtually unknown person, will release a joint declaration during the summit this week, and it'll reflect the views of several dozen governments and outline common principles that democratic governments should adhere to. But we felt it was really important to also elevate civil society voices around the world, because we know that the struggle for democracy is not just for governments or just for civil society. It's really about both of them coming together in partnership. So Freedom House, the George W Bush Institute and the McCain Institute, as you've said, Norm, three institutes that are deeply dedicated to freedom and democracy came together and we worked with 14 different cohorts. And those core cohorts were established during the year of action after the first summit. And we came together with those different cohorts that were all focused on key pillars of democracy to offer what's called the Declaration of Democratic Principles. And we believe that these that all governments, democratic governments, should uphold the 14 principles that are enshrined in our declaration. And we wanted to have a place where it is all pulled together in one in one place. We have been circulating this declaration for organizational sign on, and I am proud to say that over 99 organizations from around the world, this is not just one country or one place literally around the world have joined with us. I'm hoping that by the end of this conversation will be well over 100. Our civil society led declaration will be aired at the official Summit for Democracy this week. And so what I thought I would do is just give you a rundown of what those 14 principles are. And then I will talk a little bit about our resisting authoritarian pressure cohort, the 14 principles. I'll run through them. They are things which most of us. Work on every day, but it's really important that it's codified in one place. So government see, what are the principles, what are the bars that we're looking at as we're looking at how they are engaging support for fundamental freedoms and civic space, election integrity and political pluralism, the promotion of inclusive policymaking to really give citizens a greater voice, the maintenance of solidarity against authoritarian pressure and standing with those front line activists from around the world that are pushing for change in their country. The support for free media and resistance to misinformation and disinformation. As you mentioned, you cannot have democracy without free media, The upholding of human rights on digital platforms, the importance of that human rights focus for Internet freedom, rule of law and people centered justice and judicial systems that deliver for their people, safeguards against corruption at home and transnational corruption around the world. Gender equality and the promotion of women's political and civil civic participation. Youth

participation, as we also spoke about just a bit ago, and the importance of young voices in political and civil life, equal rights of persons with disabilities and their meaningful participation, equality of economic opportunity, freedom of conscience and religious belief in public and in private, and then a comprehensive freedom from discrimination and the protection of vulnerable populations. We really see those are the 14 principles, and we really see that this declaration is in the spirit of continuing a conversation, in some cases starting a conversation between governments and civil society about the principles that we really want to work on after this summit. If you want to if anyone listening wants to see it, it's on Freedom House's in the Bush Center and McCain Institute's websites. So that's our declaration that we've been working on with the Bush Institute and the McCain Institute. We'd love to also talk a bit about our cohort, which is focused on resisting authoritarian pressure. Freedom House has been leading that co-leading, that with two tremendous partners, the government of Lithuania and the Alliance of Democracies. And the reason that we wanted to really focus this cohort on resisting authoritarian pressure is because we have we are coming together at a time where authoritarians are pushing hard to close the space for those who believe and are committed to democracy and freedom. And there's never been a more important time for democracies to come together to push back on authoritarians. Our data and our recently released report shows that we're in the 17th year of democratic decline. And while while that decline is seems to be slowing or narrowing in the gap, we know that that continues and we need to look no further than the bravery of Ukrainians who are in the face, who are pushing back in the face of Putin's brutal invasion or the courageous women of Iran and those who are supporting them in pushing back on that regime. And what we've seen is their brave people around the world who've masterfully exposed the weaknesses and internal rot of the dictatorships. And these dictatorships are not as strong as they think they are. And so what we have to do is work with those allies who are really pushing back on authoritarian pressure. Our cohort is focused on four areas. So let me walk through those and then wrap it up and and turn it to my colleagues. We're focusing on the release of political prisoners, on the sheltering of human rights defenders, giving them safe haven as they continue to do their work, mitigating transnational repression, where authoritarians are exporting their repression to other countries, including democracies like ours, and resisting authoritarian economic coercion. Those are the four areas where we really want to see significant action and progress in the year of action, or, as you say, the many, many, many years of action that we hope to see following the summit. So with that, let me just thank again Brookings for convening us, and I look forward to the conversation with my colleagues.

**NORMAN EISEN:** Okay. Thank you, Nicole. And I want to remind everybody that you can find that declaration on the Freedom House website. And we will put the we will put the link for anybody who wants to see it in the chat. And we may even share the screen at some point. So you can so you can see the actual declaration. We're very proud of it and it's a reflection of the hard work that has taken place all throughout the year. One of the realizations that I had that stems from my work in anti-corruption for over three decades now, both in and outside of government. When I went to the White House, I realized that as committed as President Obama and his internal anti-corruption team was, which I had the honor to lead as the so-called ethics czar, we couldn't do the job alone. Part of the reason that we put our White House visitor records there's the link in the chart for you on the Declaration, folks. Part of the reason that we put our White House visitor records on the Internet, over 5 million of them by the end of the Obama administration. So everyone could see who was coming and going was to the White House was so that we could have the public and the press our critical info media areas without which the anti-corruption system does not work. Monitor and help us see if people within the White House, their own colleagues, were having meetings they shouldn't have been having. So we really rely in that regard and in a million other ways, anti-corruption does not work without a strong, free, independent media. That's why I'm so glad that we have Jeanne Bourgault, the president and CEO of Internews, which leads the media freedom cohort. Jeanne, will you tell us a little bit about what your cohort has been up to? By the way, the declaration we have 14 of the 17 cohorts who are represented on this declaration, which is truly amazing. Jeanne, Media freedom, cross cuts, all three of those main pillars and all of the other areas where we had cohorts and working groups. There were also three working groups in the Year of Action with civil society co-led effort. Tell us about your cohort and the critical role of free

media. If we want to hang on to our democracy, even as we're talking now, democracy, pro-democracy demonstrators are filling the streets in Israel to defend their democracy. And they are, of course, relying on a free media in that country and around the world to understand what's happening. Jeanne, tell us about the role of your cohorts and of media in preserving democracy and halting and reversing democratic backsliding and fighting corruption.

**JEANNE BOURGALT:** Fighting corruption. Thank you. I think you made the case beautifully for why media so important to democracy. The problem is and fortunately, according to Freedom House, our colleagues, approximately 85% of the world's population experienced a decline in press freedom in their countries between 2016 and 2020. So it's critically important as it is, it's also in decline at this point in the declines due to a lot of different factors. Most significantly, the Democratic backsliding, which is really marked by suppressing independent journalism, growing political polarization and the collapse of traditional journalists business models. And so the urgency of this threat really led to 28 governments and 117 civil society and media organizations, philanthropies and businesses to come together and commit to taking concrete action as part of this second summit for democracy. My organization, News, we were participating in two different ways, similar to many of you. We have two hats. One, we were the civil society lead of the media freedom cohort, which was chaired by the governments of the Netherlands and Canada, who importantly also co-chaired a long standing media freedom coalition of governments. So they're essentially serving as a host to this work. We're also partnering with U.S. Aid, one of the US government commitments from for both of democracy summits, the media viability accelerator, which I can talk about later. I'm going to focus right now on the work of the cohort itself. So knowing that the health of independent media doesn't really rest with only governments or civil society. We were really committed to a really big tent approach that would bring in private sector leaders, including news organizations and technology companies, as well as philanthropic partners, civil society and the rest. So as I said, 28 governments and 117 civil society businesses, philanthropies are part of our cohort. The first thing we did is issue a call to action, which invited all participants to make a public commitment to a policy action, a new initiative or support mechanisms that measurably and systemically advance media freedom. We don't want just one off training sessions. We want people to change their behavior moving ahead in ways that support media freedom. To advance this work, we created three working groups. Each were led by a government sponsor and a civil society facilitator. And importantly, the civil society facilitators of each of these groups themselves represented consortia or associations of group because we were really looking for the broadest reach possible. The three working groups included. The first one was protecting journalists safety and security, which focused on digital and physical and psychosocial safety measures and legal issues and insurances all designed to protect journalists and other media workers. And this was led by the government of Germany, the ICO's Alliance in Effects, which is an association of freedom of expression organizations. The second working group was focused on advancing freedom of expression, looking at the legal and regulatory reforms necessary to protect freedom of expression, as enshrined in Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. This working group was led by the government of Liberia and the Civil Society League was the high level panel of legal experts on media freedom, and they addressed issues such as access to information, cybersecurity laws, broadcast regulation and issues such as decriminalizing libel. The third working group was really focused on bolstering independent and diverse media. This is really getting up the media themselves, building funding models, industry standards, public policies that support the resilience and professional capacities of media outlets so they can survive and hopefully thrive in the coming decades. This working group was led by the United States and the UK and the Global Forum for Media Development, which is an association of hundreds of media development organizations like Internews from all around the world. So you can see this was a real global effort for us as well. And our cohort, the civil society leads of the Media Freedom cohort are releasing today have released today a findings report that that sort of summarizes everything that the working groups worked on. You can find this on our website and hopefully we can put that in the link as well. The report is broken down into a few sections. One is really focusing on recommendations and best practices. And in this area we didn't ask people to all sign up to one statement or one one piece, but we really wanted to amplify the good work of existing coalitions. Existing frameworks such as the Media Freedom Coalition, such as the U.N.

Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists or the 2022 Vienna Call for action. The government, the Windhoek plus 30 Declaration on information amongst many, many others. We didn't want to recreate the wheel. We wanted to amplify good, effective work happening in this space. The report also highlights particularly innovative commitments, particularly those that can be replicated by others, and also those are from nontraditional actors. We really wanted to focus on the business commitments and new government commitments, and the report includes an annex which documents 122 commitments made by participation to participants during this year of actions, as well as a full list of participating organizations. So let me just talk a little bit about some of the more innovative commitments that came in, again, from nontraditional actors. You can imagine all of us civil society groups, we all have have many things to say. But what we're really proud of is bringing in companies and news companies such as The New York Times, such as Amazon Press, France and the Associated Press, And these organizations are committed to their internal staffing systems, hiring new dedicated staff to help provide their duty of improve their duty of care for their teams and the journalists that they work with. We brought in the technology companies. Google and Microsoft are both part of this about this cohort, and they're looking at their own tools such as Project Shield and also building capacity building for media to use on their platforms. We brought in the ad industry WPP, the world's largest marketing and communications company and its media arm group, and they committed to offering news inclusion lists to their clients and drive industry awareness to the importance of investing in responsible journalism. We have some really great government commitments as well. The Czech Republic, which recently adopted the Magnitsky legislation, committed to utilizing the legislation to provide accountability for crimes against journalists. The Government of Malta committed to modernizing their Freedom of Information portal, and in Zambia, which is passing enacting an access to information law, the civil society organization Panos Institute, South Africa is committed to lobbying until that gets through in the first half of this year. And finally, Germany committed to support a new open source software which allows newsrooms there to plan, record and edit and publish radio broadcast news checks on their smartphones. We brought an investment fund, the Media Development Investment Fund, committed to raise \$55 million to invest in independent media companies in central, Eastern and south Eastern Europe. And finally, we felt it was really important for our cohort to represent the whole world and the United States. So we're really excited that the Organization Free Press came in and is advocating for policies to invest public funds into community center journalism in five U.S. states and cities. This is building from recent models of such public investments in California and New Jersey. And so while the work of the media freedom cohort will culminate at the summit, the global movement is going to continue under the auspices of the Media Freedom Coalition. As I mentioned before, it's a 51 country membership organization that was established in 2019 as a partnership of countries working together to proactively advocate for media freedom at home and abroad. This transition from cohort to coalition was explicit at the beginning of our work and reflective of our colleagues. So. Bits of Canada, the Netherlands, who also chair the Media Freedom Coalition. For this this handout, we're very grateful. There are many years of years of action coming. We have a home to live in and continue our good work. So thank you very much and I look forward to any questions.

**RUSLAN STEFANOV:** Norm. You're muted.

**RUSLAN STEFANOV:** Thank you, Jeanne, and thanks for all that you're doing. And the participants in the cohort and now in the coalition, as you push forward into the years of action that we hope will follow the democracy summit. Democracy is fragile. We need we can never take it for granted. And we need to constantly, really every day refresh its strength. I think some of the slippage we've seen in the Freedom House tracking and other metrics which also show global stress for democracy, comes from the friends of democracy being too complacent. But the good news is. We've had a wakeup call in these past years and these cohorts, 14 out of 17 of the cohorts participating in the declaration. The tremendous work we've seen this year, Brookings will in our area where fully 250, approximately 250 out of the out of the 750 of the commitments are in the anti-corruption area. We've as you'll see when we publish our our tracker soon. There have been some surprising successes and we intend in our new OECD's program to really, ah, keep the pressure on moving forward in that anti-corruption area. If you are a civil society group or a

government, we have a large number of both participating in this research we want. You are welcome. We want you to join us as well. So please you can let us know in the chat. If you're interested in doing that, you can put something in the Q&A and the other advertisement. I see that we are getting more action in the Q&A. Frank Vogel. Alan Silberman. Juan de Dios, Sin. Koenig. We, an anonymous attendee, have all put questions in there. That's great. I'm going to sort through the questions. We're going to do a first round of questions, tough questions. Frank is asking a very tough question. Friends of mine all get answering it when we finish this first round in the panel. Now it's on to Cheikh Fall, the president of our Free TV State, which co-chairs the youth political and civic engagement cohort. Cheikh. Your organization seeks to promote and defend democratic values, human rights and good governance through digital means. Can you tell us more about what you and your organization do to advance those goals?

**CHEIKH FALL:** You know I can shoot you for giving out of Africa to these two boys. We are a member of the leadership group of the co-ops on youth, Political and civic engagement has a network of change and organization in Africa. Africa is already working on citizen engagement and non political engagement. We are part of the court bringing our field experience on innovative approaches, on engagement, on participation of young people. Society, actors, especially the digital means. Like you say, our participation in the leadership court for the Democracy submit is therefore only natural. What we are doing and what we do in in Africa, we use the civic tech to strengthen participatory democracy. Since 2010, holding free and fair election has been on the outs on of the main challenge of democracy in Africa since independence in the 60. That is why the digital revolution has been an opportunity for us to address the issues of funding and electoral processes. Since 2012, we have been doing the observation of elections. We bring in citizen observers. We monitor the war electoral cycle to encourage youth voter registration, vote participation, develop and roll out vote and civic education program program and presentation of the candidates Parallel real time vote Tabulation using Citizen Observer on digital platform. For example, in West Africa we are touring 12 in Senegal, in a vote in Guinea, Mali, vote in Mali, Benin, but in Benin, Burkina, what, etc.. We also monitor campaign promises, advocate for presidential term limits, reform, etc.. After working on an approach for free and fair election, the second second task was to work on actions, citizenship, good governance and democratic transparency. We encourage active citizenship and participatory processes that involve youth, government and civil society in order to democratic structures of governance in violation of the African Governance Charter. We help revising and updates the democratic software in our countries. We equip and act to foster an African so that the best suit cyberspace serving democracy. And we encourage political authorities to be more attentive to the people. Today, we are running a massive online open courses on democracy, governance and election in Africa. More than two dozen people have access to education and technical resources to first and interest and chance. Citizenship. Man Where we are, we create and send young Africans to different countries to support local government in implementing open local government. Africa, which is on our Council of African Civil Society organization using innovative savoir faire and technique to consolidate democratic gains. And it is a combination of all the action. That has added To progress. The commitment to the political authorities So the court commitment, I mean, to empower and engage use around the world that Points are For participating governments to adopt as commitments, reforms and initiatives to improve youth's rights and participation in these national contexts. This commitment are important because they need to do more. We end them because they are political extension of our action. As pro-democracy. Activists. Asking young people to participate in democratic life should no longer confront them. Our discussion topic What it needs. What is needed is to get the opportunity to step onto the rights of innovators and reimagine democracy that young people have been building for over the decades. Spoke for concrete I would share with you. I shall review the 510 for four. Committeemen. There are policy points for government to enterprise commitment reform and initiative to improve youth rights and participation in national context. One is prioritizing youth voice in governance, supporting youth in governance, supporting youth, freedom of expression, promoting a culture of youth political participation, and the last one promoting the culture of human rights. Armen Sihanouk's. Thank you.

**NORMAN EISEN:** Thank you. Cheikh. We appreciate it and we appreciate all you're doing. And the questions are pouring in. So we love to see that I have seven and the Q and A and keep them coming. The more the better friends. And now for our next panelist, we want to talk about the anti-corruption work. The another of the three main pillars of the summit for democracy. And to do that, I want to turn to my friend Gretta, who is the civil society, one of the civil society representatives and co-leads for not one but two of the anti-corruption cohorts. The anti-corruption policies cohort, the international cooperation for anti-corruption cohort, with Brookings holding down that role together with Ogbe for the third, the Financial Transparency and Integrity cohort. Gretta, tell us about some of the greatest successes, but also challenges of doing this anti-corruption work during the Year of Action in your two cohorts.

**GRETTA FENNER:** Thanks, Norman. And first of all, thank you very much for having us. I mean, a lot of it relates so, you know, dominantly to all the points that were raised from media to youth and so on, civil society engagement. So it's kind of hard to pinpoint the most important ones. But I just want to talk about the Moldovan led cohort at this point, because my colleague Ruth left from the Center for the Study of Democracy was co-leading with us, the Bulgarian word. So I'll focus on on international cooperation for anti-corruption, though we really focused on the enforcement part, on the asset recovery part as as part of the anti-corruption package. And I don't think I need to explain to anyone in this group, certainly and among the audience what the importance of asset recovery is. But I still want to actually stress one point when we talk about international cooperation, international investigations, complex investigations and asset recovery, it's not just about getting the money back for the countries. That is very, very important, but it's usually a long term game. So when we talk about this whole work related to international investigations, it's really also about a form of prevention. It's of course, a form of punishment, but it's also really about strengthening the entire sort of criminal justice and anti-corruption chain. So I think it's really an important point to make when we talk about international cooperation, investigation as to recovery. So the focus of our cohort, which we call it, by the way, with Transparency International and of course the Office of the President and the Anti-Corruption Committee of Moldova was very strongly on the enforcement component. And and I would dare to say that not much of what we came up with in the form of recommendations, four pages is brand new. And you could say that's boring. And I think it's not. But it's frustrating because we do have to see the same of the same things over and over again, but it's necessary to see it. And I think this time around been able to see it in such a really as a as a coalition of very equal, you know, of civil society, technical experts and governments all in truly equal footing in our cohort is different. So that was really a different experience for me, who's been in this business for over 20 years. And I think it's kudos to Moldova for letting Transparency International and the Basel Institute on Governance, on all the 15 other CSOs that participate, having an equal voice. I really want to stress that because if nothing else, that was a truly different experience. I think the baseline of where we came from is that we do see a bit of improvement when it comes to, you know, investigating complex cases and asset recovery and so on. But frustrating still that we're talking about the same thing. So Frank Vogel put in a chat. We need more resources. I couldn't agree more with you, Frank. We always talk about under capacity in enforcement agencies in the poor countries. But in fact, when you look at our our advanced jurisdictions, at least I'm in one. We don't have enough resources. We are not dedicating enough resources to this to this work at all, not even remotely enough. So that was one of the frustrations as well as, you know, the usual continued difficulties with mutual legal assistance, which is really slow, very bureaucratic. And you cannot tell me that for 20 years we've been talking about it and and there was nothing one could do if governments had truly wanted to, they could have improved it and so on and so forth. So the recommendations are ongoing and I don't want to go into every detail, but it since we're talking a lot about civil society, I do want to just highlight a few of the key points in this regard. One of them was the role of victims and. I came out very, very strongly of victims. That's not necessarily civil society, but civil society representing victims and what their legal standing can be and should be in large international investigations. If you look at the Glencore or Gunvor cases recently where there was not even, you know, too late or never really any consideration for who the true victims are. There is a lot of debate internationally about how to define a victim in that we were proceeding and so on. So that was a very, very important point. I think another really key issue raised and widely discussed in relation to enforcement and the role



of civil society was the fact that and media in fact, the fact is that amongst civil society and the media, there is a huge amount of information available made publicly available. If you think of the work of the, you know, the consortiums of journalists and so on. But we don't see enforcement authorities actually using this information very actively. And that was truly frustrating. It's all out there. So organizations like mine have to go and extract it and then give it give it to them. It's like, you know, how much more do we need to do to get enforcement to really use the information? I think that's that's truly and if you look at the scandals that arose out of Ukraine, for example, they would probably not have been made public if the journalists hadn't revealed them six months ago already, just just by way of an example. Then there is this this very complicated relationship between CSOs and enforcement where and media and enforcement where this confidentiality of an investigation is used in a wrong way of not engaging in conversations. You don't have to reveal information about investigations to engage constructively with civil society and media partners. And so these are really areas where I think there needs to be a lot a lot more done. And last but not least, something that civil society has also been saying for many years is that when we do, for example, in a large international case, recover assets, be through a recovery, confiscation or fines and so on, Talk to us people of the countries where this corruption has happened, where the damages were done, to consider how this money should be more usefully employed and protected from future stealing. So in a very you know, I'm neglecting two thirds, if not more of the recommendations. But I thought these were the really important salient points when it comes to civil society and media participation in this. So with that, I just want to thank again the governments of Moldova, our partners, T.I and and I guess probably the next speaker, Ruslan and the Government of Bulgaria. It's been a very interesting experience and I think the biggest bit, as I said at the beginning, we worked on equal footing and I think that was almost revolutionary despite the fact there were already 20, 23 norms. Back to you. Thank you.

**NORMAN EISEN:** Greta, it's so valuable, so important to establish the baseline and consolidate the successes, acknowledge the challenges you've articulated, but serve as a compass as we go forward. I'm going to come back to Jerusalem, then I'm going to end by talking about this first segment of the panel, by talking about what we're going to do in our new anti-corruption democracy and security program at Brookings to complement this by really picking up the gantlet and forging ahead. And then I'm going to put the challenge in some of the questions, wonderful questions. We're getting to each of the panel members. But first, over to Ruslan to talk about your experience in co-leading the anti-corruption policies cohort and the successes and the challenges of this year and the time that lies ahead. Ruslan.

**NORMAN EISEN:** Thanks, Norman. Hello, everyone. I really appreciate it. Essentially, all the previous speakers in particular took a big chunk of the weight off my shoulders because the things that I've heard is actually what we've been grappling with. And I think looking at corruption as a weapon. So as weaponized corruption or corruption or whatever you want to call it, I think we need to to clarify this, of course, first. You made this made all the issues a little bit more difficult because essentially I also saw it already and in the questions, but it came out in the work of the court. The corruption is anyway complex and it makes the work of civil society with the government, with the media, with all other stakeholders. Anyway, difficult. But when you add the external adversary or authoritarian power and as we all know and heard, these have been multiplying and they've actually been looking at disinformation and weaponizing different tools that we take for granted as part of the beneficial outcomes of globalization. They've been weaponizing these, and I've been thinking about them in a really military strategic terms. And I think we've been awfully unprepared, too woefully unprepared to to face that. And I've been really, very thankful to the government of Bulgaria, the spirit of justice in particular. They've been a caretaker government. So we we've been in five elections. But I think what really come out of the work of the end of the card is that there seems to be or at least I think so, you know, there seems to be a kind of unification behind purpose. You know, the the bravery of the Ukrainian people and the brutality of Russia's attacks have, I think, made people rethink what's at stake. And that we need to come up with end up quickly with ideas how to not only protect ourselves internally. So start from us and look at our own issues. Look at the state capture, look at the oligarchy networks within our countries, but also think about how working with those same institutions that are impacted with this or infected with this

state can actually work to defend our societies of such authoritarian strategic corruption. I think this is important and we came up with a certain but idea of an actual agenda follow on through. And I'm really happy that it's exactly Brookings that takes the Goldblatt forward. So we look forward to really seeing what your thoughts are automatic corruption and and security. But we came up with basically four ideas. One is we need to find instruments that give us an idea of where we are, where we're going, how this is impacting our societies, including that, you know, this would mean in a way looking at a different ways of measuring strategic corruption. Secondly, prevention, prevention, prevention. I mean, essentially working in a public private partnership in regional for months. I think one of the call it I'm sure it exists all over the world, I'm just don't know it. But one of the ideas that was born in this cohort was the regional approach. So we were working with regional civil society organizations called Saladin and a regional intergovernmental organization called the Regional Oligarchs Initiative to come up with ideas of action that apply for the region. And that and looking at the region of Southeast Europe as a laboratory, that we could share ideas globally. And again, it's not a it's not the perfect region to to wish to work for an on on on that on that domain. And then let me conclude by saying that we need to focus on on on making or adapting our tactical tools because corruption so far has been primarily a technical issue, you know, capacity building and so on, so forth. We need to adapt them to work in a much more policy heavy environmental political environment, and that is including and we focus on three specific instruments. One was the declarations. I think I thought it exciting to know that this is fundamental, but how do we work on exchanging that information of declaration so that it leads to a transnational on a targeting of already got to networks? Second was collective action. How do we bring all the different stakeholders to tackle issues that are more even more complex than what they already are judicial tackling of corruption. And the third is essentially strengthening the integrity of our institutions. So having a new approach where we look at the institutional level and try to figure out those critical institution for economic security. And mind you, that's that's a little bit different from what we've been preaching for a while on the benefits of globalization, of actually making sure that our institutions are. Are able to withstand such strategic corruption. I'm sure I'm missing a lot. I think we have already started with our colleagues just published what we've we had a large event last week here in Sofia and a lot of people took to part online. But we'll be taking further action as we speak. And I hope that will also link to what Brookings and other colleagues are doing. All great stuff. And I hope that we could really come up with with ideas how to build that, because essentially what we'll be seeing after the end of the war in Ukraine is, I think, even more vicious attacks on what we're trying to build as democracies like.

**NORMAN EISEN:** Thank you, Ruslan. Since you set me up that way, I'm gonna now take us through that first round of questions, and I'm going to start since he was first out of the box with Frank Vogel, my friend, the co founder of Transparency International, now. Leading the Partnership for Transparency. And he throws down the gantlet. The time for nice rhetoric must give way. Action and action will be meaningless unless there is a dramatic increase in the budgets for anti-corruption enforcement in the U.S. and all other summit participating countries. Do you agree, Frank? Our fate is not just in our stars, and I'm going to ask everybody on the panel to jump in on this. It is in ourselves. Certainly, we must continue to press our governments, both the jurisdictions in which we reside. For me, that's the United States and governments that we engage with multi laterally or in multi-stakeholder groups. We must press them to do more and to increase budgets. That is very important. But that is not ultimately that's not in our power. Take the example of the Biden administration. Very aggressive budget commitments. But in this Congress, a divided Congress. The budget that he submitted is not going to be adopted. But Biden did what he could do. The most powerful We had the privilege to help announce it at Brookings last year to kick off the year of action. The first time in United States history there was an integrated domestic and international anti-corruption strategy and all the work that's been done. Again, we've been tracking them and we're going to put them up online. The 250, approximately out of the about 750 anti-corruption commitments, thanks to pushing for the summit for democracy. So we have to yes, look to budgets. We have to ask what else governments can do. But we also need to look in the mirror. What can each and every one of us do? Over 300 of you on this zoom. Representatives of dozens and dozens of civil society are among our panelists around the world. Things like the Declaration of Principles to set a new course. I will say for my part and Frank, really following your example, look

at how much T.I and the Partnership for Transparency have done. In our new AC DC program that we've just announced. This was the first announced not only kicked off this webinar, anti-corruption, not just for its own sake, not just as a financial transparency matter, that's very, very important. Some estimates range as high as \$2.5 billion a year being stolen. You know, we can't quite apart from the intrinsic wrong of corruption, the harm that it causes, we can't do so many things we want to do for the people of this world food, housing, meaningful employment, education, health care. You can't deliver it with this level of global kleptocracy. The number is disputed, but some estimates ranging around 2.5 trillion annually. So what we're doing and Robin has just put in all of our email address as well, we're doing an ACDS is we are partnering, working together, I should say, working together with government and civil society around the world to show that these 250 anti-corruption commitments that have been made in the Democracy summit can be measured and we're going to provide a very granular measure of implementation of each of these commitments and that civil society and governments and business businesses, a very important part of this three legged stool. I include media among civil society. But if you want to do media separately, four legs of the stool that we can work together to show measurable, demonstrable, provable progress. So the partnership with civil society, government, business, the media all holding each other accountable over the next three years, that's what we're going to be driving towards with this ACDS project and an open invitation. If you want to consider participating, If you want more information, how can we measure the progress in these commitments? How can we show year over year improvement on anti-corruption and on democracy metrics now that that democracy summit years of action are actually producing progress? That's what we're going to be doing in ACDS, starting with putting all the commitments out there and independent, very clear eyed view at the successes and the and the treading water and the failures. Let me tell you, there's more successes than you might think, but we're not just going to do blah, blah, blah, we're going to measure with concrete indices. So that's my answer to Frank. I'm going to go around now and ask some of the questions have poured in. I love that. So we may not even I may substitute your questions for my second round of questions because they're better. That's why I have such faith that civil society can help government to show measurable improvement over in the next three years. Remember, reach out. The email address is there now in the chat if you want to participate in that ACDS So I am going to I'm going to go through these questions. Gretta, I am going to ask you are grand words and good sounding proclamations. Now, Alan Silberman asked this question before I said how we're going to have through the B.S. and Frank is going to call me afterwards and tell me if I if my plan is a good one or not. But Alan asked this question before a similar, similar thing grand words and good sounding, good sounding proclamations. But in the meantime, we're losing ground to those who support authoritarianism. Turkey. They point to Turkey, Hungary, Iran, even in the USA, where there have been some very concerning, some very concerning signs where we had an attempted coup. I never thought I would see such a thing in the United States of America. Honestly, I couldn't have imagined it. On the other hand, editorial comment in some places we're pushing back very effectively on this and the United States triumphed in 2020, triumphed in 2022 over the partially triumphed in 2022. The authoritarians did see some levers of power, but were very, very broadly rejected in many places. So, Gretta, coming to you, since you straddle these anti-corruption are commitments, where are the forces working and failing for democracy? Yeah, go ahead. And then I'm going to open it up to the panel to give a reflection as well. On the overall overall prospects. How is democracy faring?

**GRETta FENNER:** I guess you chose the easy one for me, right? Thank you, Norman. I'm going to hand over immediately to Ruslan. No, I'm kidding. But I think you should really come in on this one as well. Look, I think it's not, statistically speaking, only about anti-corruption, but I think ultimately when you look at it, corruption has been undermining our societies for much longer than we've recognized. And it took us literally until the 2020s to finally loudly say that corruption has been undermining even the most advanced jurisdictions, the oldest of democracies. And I think it's at a point where we are really, really on the brink of losing that battle because with corruption, with through the laundering of proceeds or even filtering money into illegal activities, we have seen the capture of democracy and the state by by ill. I don't even know what the right word is. You know, in some countries it's just captured by individualistic interests, as in, you know, the businesses having an unbelievable hold on politics, as we can sometimes see in the United States and in my

jurisdiction and in others, businesses have this unbelievable hold, not always through illegal means, sometimes through legalized forms of corruption. I think we really, really need to look at this because our votes nowadays in many jurisdictions don't actually count all that much anymore. And you can be as educated as you want. You will not really understand what's behind the political process anymore. And maybe that's where the median income. And so part of it is the illegal money. Part of it is the legality of certain forms of corrupting the system, not the financial corruption, but corrupting democracy. And then I think it's the inability of even the very educated people I was just chatting with Ruslan on, we said we don't even know anymore sometimes where to start. It's so complex for people who've worked for 20 or 25 years. So I think we need to really acknowledge that, you know, that that we've dropped the ball or haven't picked it up soon enough. So I'll leave it here because others have more interesting things to say. Probably on top of that.

**NORMAN EISEN:** I'm going to, if you'll allow me, just because it's a broad democracy question, rather I'm going to ask Nicole to reflect on that. And then, Ruslan, I am coming to you with an anti-corruption question. Jeanne. I have a media one and Cheikh I have one for you too. Okay, Nicole, what about this, the broad democracy lens?

**NICOLE BIBBINS SEDACA:** Absolutely. And thank you for thank you for the for the question. I think it's the exact right one to be asking. There is no doubt that there are serious challenges within democracies and also in countries which for many years have been not free or partly free. And what we know is that there are leaders who are choosing to use undemocratic means to maintain their power. That is the story of human history. And what we're seeing is that those autocratic forces or those undemocratic forces are getting more sophisticated in their means, in the tools that they're using to hold on to power, because they recognize that if they had to actually give the choice to their citizens or others, that there would be no way that they could maintain their power. But I do think we need to look at a broader picture while we're seeing a real collaboration among autocrats. We're seeing a real manipulation of of media and and the use of corruption and any number of other tools, political imprisonment. We're also seeing a really good picture in the forces that are pushing back on that. And so I want us to just look that it's both at the same time, which tells me that there are very, very strong forces on the side of democracy and freedom. What we're I mean, when you look at the story, what we're seeing unfolding in Iran, there's we're not out of the woods. We have a long way to go because the people have gone to the streets and are asking for a very, very big, courageous change. But you see people who are not willing to back down, right? You're seeing people who continue to push. You see the fight in Ukraine. You see people in Nicaragua, in Venezuela, in Cuba who are continuing to push for the democratic change. So what we're seeing is both dynamics happening at the same time. And what we're also seeing is that autocrats are not as as resilient or as impenetrable as people have thought they are. And part of it is when we go after things like corruption. I appreciate the comments that Gretta and Ruslan have made and the initiative that Brookings is advancing now. That is the lifeblood for many of these autocrats. And the more that democracies and civil society are coming together to tighten the screws, to look at ways to strengthen the effort against the corruption, we will be able to to. Shift that tide. And in our latest report on Freedom House, we did see that there is actually a shift going on. We're one year into that analysis, so we don't know what next year will bring. But what we're seeing is previously in this decline that we've been seeing in for over the last 17 years, we saw a big gap, a lot more countries that are backsliding than countries that are moving forward. We've seen the most the narrowest gap this year that they're almost the exact same of countries that are moving forward as countries that are rolling back. That's good news, despite the fact that we're still in a decline. And what we need to do is figure out how we tip it into more countries that are progressing in the right direction.

**NORMAN EISEN:** I. Nicole, I just had an idea. I'm going to put you on this. It's only in front of about 300 of your club.

**NICOLE BIBBINS SEDACA:** Good, good, good.

**NORMAN EISEN:** Is there a table where people sit like where you. Freedom House does quantitative indicators every year? Tie Does the corruption perception indicators the media freedom in the world? Is there a place where all the people who do quantitative measures talk to each other about the cross-cutting? Question is a measurement that you just raised.

**NICOLE BIBBINS SEDACA:** We are in conversations with lots of our partners who are doing measurement of different pieces of it. And so those conversations come we have those conversations regularly. I don't know that there's one fora where we all come more and more together.

**NORMAN EISEN:** Let's have a webinar for the next in this series in what I am calling the years of Action, or maybe just a lunch where we talk to each other about these measurement questions because I'm so excited by that, that the trend you've seen in the data that at least we've stopped the hemorrhaging. And I want to think about how that tracks with unfortunately in many places, the you know, there's been a reversal on the I'm some of the subsidiary, the anti-corruption measures. Okay. Jeanne, I'm going to come in now on a media freedom question because I'm getting a bunch of different questions on on media freedom. How do you deal with the fact that in so many places there are media who are complicit in driving this information in a way that hurts democracy here in the United States? Now we've got a massive libel action and normally media doesn't like libel, but isn't that a good thing to hold Fox accountable? They seem to have completely. Allegedly busted through all of our First Amendment protections on actual malice was broadcasting disinformation about a voting company, Dominion. Just what appear to be what they admit in the internal now we and our now eyes or COVID disinformation or other things in the United States, but around the world where the media is not the solution. They are undermining democracy through broadcasting disinformation. How do media how do democracy advocates within the media ecosystem globally? Think about that problem, Jeanne.

**JEANNE BOURGALT:** Well, let me just stress actually was a.

**NORMAN EISEN:** Combination of a bunch of these questions. That's a combination. Go ahead.

**JEANNE BOURGALT:** I want to you sort of get to a point that I wanted to say. When we think about the broad themes of how democracy is going and we've been talking a lot about the rise of authoritarianism and and how that's hurting democracy. Unfortunately, in a parallel moment, there's also a collapse of the business model for the news media. So one of the problems, Norm, is that we've lost much of our local media, state level media, the media that would provide that plurality of voices, and we're consolidating down into too few. And so the answer to too much of this is you need a plurality of media that is reaching and responding to the local concerns of their communities. And that's collapsing because the advertising industry has changed. The digital and entertainment platforms have picked up all sorts of all sorts of resources. And I want to also challenge you a little bit. It isn't the media that is necessarily the source of missing this information. The vast majority of that comes from private sector interests right there, private sector interest generated on social media platforms and just muck up, muck up the conversations about these things. And so I just when you think about the myths and disinformation pieces, like so many things are no silver bullets for how you handle this, but you do need good, effective, independent media as as reliable sources of information. You need to starve that nasty market of disinformation. That, again, is because of the algorithms can make money by driving disinformation. So you need to starve that and have some market forces to do that. We need to invest in critical thinking by populations. That is, you know, people are people matter and people are learning actually to do that, to handle and understand these different sources of information. And there are regulatory issues that we need to look at as well, both, you know, around the world without tampering and trying to try to legislate content. So that's a bundle of things that I've said. Back to your bundle of things, Norm. I don't think I've answered things directly, but I, I do think that the the collapse of the business model and the decline of the news industry around the world is part of the problem. Answering the missing disinformation.

**NORMAN EISEN:** This is desert, says my friend Ambassador Mark Gittenstein, and his wonderful team at the U.S. Mission to the EU and Brussels have been doing work on this pillar of democracy, really important work to try to come up with ways that news deserts in the transatlantic relationship, whether it's in the United States, it's in Europe, or any part of Europe, because it when when there is a void, when media, with all of its flaws, it has its standards. And we need a vibrant, free, fair, independent media. When that falls down, when that vanishes, because the business model has changed in the in in this new era of social media. When that falls down, I agree with you. It creates a void. And into that void, disinformation flows. But sometimes we do have our media actors who embrace and even drive the disinformation game, and that is a very thorny problem. The first in the United States, the Constitution protects them, but you can go beyond the constitutional limitations. And I dare say there are serious allegations that happened in the Dominion versus Fox News case. You know, I have a question now for Cheikh, because we're talking and then, Ruslan, I'm going to circle I'm going to circle back to you. And then I think I'm just going to skip my questions. I'm going to do another round of questions from the audience for the panel. The questions are so terrific and share. We're talking about a set of concerns that are very important and they're important for political figures. They're important for members of my generation, of the generation represented here on screen. But what about the young people share? How do we capture the largest demographic in the world, young people, and how do we with all of these changes in the era of Instagram and Tik Tok and the ways that young people get their news and information? How do we make a connection between young people and political figures, politicians and and do everything we can to make the case for democracy to the youth of the world? Cheikh.

**CHEIKH FALL:** I think, you know, first of all, it's we need to encourage such as the Summit for Democracy. And bringing a new item will support and encourage construction. Between civil society and administration. So we need to ask donors to require that states involve civil society in the implementation of public policies. Particularly in Africa. And for we need to encourage global partnership for an open, global civic cyberspace. And for the last one, you introduce civic and digital education in school. For young and helpless to be a citizen. Different citizen like black like. Thank you.

**CHEIKH FALL:** Thank you, Cheikh. And thank you for speaking for the young people. And for all the work you and your cohort have done. And we're very we want to make sure that we're thinking about how the world looks in our democracy. For those youngsters, they are the ones that are and to have to carry the torch. And if I may say, part of the beauty of having 14 of the 17 cohorts represented in this Declaration of Principles is that we do have the youth voice and we don't only focus on the procedures of democracy as important as they are shared, talked earlier about the work he does on elections and voting. If you don't have free and fair elections, the fundamental moral and political basis of democracy does not exist. And Ruslan, I'm coming to you with the next question. But you also have to focus on the substance of democracy, on a democracy that delivers, that makes all of our lives and young people's lives better. And the cohorts deal with that too. That's the beauty of this cohort system that we've had, and I certainly agree with you share. We need to keep it going. It's been a I think it's had a number of successes, it's had challenges, but we need to keep it going. And that, of course, is what all of us are going to try to do in different ways. Ruslan. Now I'm going to come to you with a more of a hardcore anti-corruption question, if I may, and the question that that I want to ask you. I'm going back to my list of questions. I've been keeping track of them. They're exploding. It's so terrific to have to have this this many this many questions from our audience. Can you talk to us a little bit about enablers and the role? We are allies of the fight against corruption here, but so often we deal with enablers, whether it's financial institutions, lawyers, accountants, consultants who are driving corruption forward. And can you talk to us? What can be done about that, maybe starting with financial institutions? The question or asks what what new steps can we take? Ruslan.

**RUSLAN STEFANOV:** Well, I feel strongly that and I mentioned several times, you know, the but I do not think that yet. We understand the size of the issue. And actually, I don't think that there is still an agreement on the macro level. You know, how do we deal with those matters, particularly talking about the 1 trillion of capital that Russia is part of or different groups in Russia parked in our

financial system? And that's just the nominal value. You know, these are much in terms of networks that are created. And clearly there is also the the aspect of how these money have created all these enabling agents that are part of our own ecosystem. So that is the real difficulty of going up to this enabling system, because then we inadvertently have to target our own parts of our own systems, so parts of our own immunity. So we have to be very careful when addressing these issues. And I feel very strongly that the cases we have to take on first are the ones that are very obvious that I could see them going on, you know, like companies or banks that have enabled a lot of these money flowing into our systems and these have not produced immediate results, you know, actually with thought that it would be a look at 2014 when we first had the incursion in Crimea. I mean, essentially we gave it a pass. And by we I mean the European Union in particular, and then and and our countries around I mean, essentially we thought business will go as usual. So the question is, what are we going to do now? Are we going to do decoupling? Because I don't see that decoupling and it should happen. If we are to go up to those enablers, then this is exactly what we'll see in those certain networks. There will be a decoupling from authoritarian oligarchic circles that we have. We've seen in the case of Russian in some sense in energy, where it was most obvious that this has been weaponized. But at the same time, we have the cases of Austrian banks that still keep and look after their profits in in Russia and then going with just with the tools of criminal justice. It's also very difficult because it's complex to take a little time. So we need to find a way to really bring together all these different tools monitoring that you mentioned. You know, I think we still do not understand we still do not have an idea of how much all the or each of the different. Member states of the EU or the G7 or of the US, of the summits of democracy, if you wish. How much are they exposed and where are the biggest vulnerabilities? The energy crisis in Europe was very clear. I mean, it was very visible that where the issues are and still we haven't really, really tackled the networks. You know what's tackled the problem itself with all the networks. So I'm thinking there is the different levels and also the policy level. Speaking about decoupling or de-risking, I don't see Europe actually speaking of decoupling, and when we talk about decoupling with China, I don't see it happening. So and we could go in front of that. Thank you.

**NORMAN EISEN:** Nicole, did you want to come in?

**JEANNE BOURGALT:** Yeah. I just wanted to add to the Ruslan's great points and tie it to the earlier conversation, particularly Frank's question to the group. I really am delighted to see that Brookings is framing the issue of anti-corruption as anti-corruption, democracy and security. And I think it's a lesson for all of us also to know that as we're in these conversations and we're engaging others, it's going to be really important that we frame so many of the issues that are on this call, in this conversation in terms both of democracy, but but in terms of security and economic growth around the world, because we there are too long, there has been this idea that, oh, these are nice issues. We'll deal with things like media freedom or corruption or all of these other issues after we deal with these other issues. But the reality is all of these issues that we're talking about so deeply penetrate to the core security issues that we have around the world right now. If you look at the countries that are manipulating media, as if you look at the countries that are aggressive towards it's towards their their their neighbors, If you're looking at the countries that are fueling their repression at home and abroad through kleptocracy, it's all tied together. And and so therefore, like the conversation that we're having has to bring in a broader set of actors also to realize that attacking corruption, attacking the limitation of media freedom and all of the other authoritarian action that we're seeing is part and parcel of a much larger conversation that is about the global security, the global stability that all of us are interested in.

**NORMAN EISEN:** And that is exactly why for the next generation of our anti-corruption work, we are tying it to democracy and and security and prosperity. It could be equally said and inclusive capitalism. And okay, now I'm going to come I'm going to come back through the panel one last time in a call. That was an excellent concluding statement. We have 7 minutes left. It's been such a vibrant conversation. I'm so glad I threw out my questions and just the questions from everybody who's watching. And how about that gantlet that that Frank threw down that Nicole is talking about, that we're trying to deal with, We're going to measure, are we seeing what these indices like the Freedom House indicator are, these commitments that were made in the Democracy summit

actually leading to concrete, tangible, measurable progress over the next three years or not working with global governments and civil society and business and media to do that. Is progress possible, do you think, on the media front such challenges that global media is facing? Can we get actual progress? Your closing statement, you have 60 seconds.

**NICOLE BIBBINS SEDACA:** I'm always an optimist and there are a lot of clouds on the horizon when it faces the media. And I'll address one of the questions of the chat. When it comes to artificial intelligence, we have all the reasons why this could just pollute everything even more. But on the other side, new technologies such as I could also potentially bolster these wildly under-resourced organizations so they can play their role in a democracy, thinking,.

**NORMAN EISEN:** Give one specific example. How can AI vote?

**NICOLE BIBBINS SEDACA:** They set this core background data and information and then build a story on top of it? If you requires, you can produce your labor, your business operations and your market by building your digital presence, you can monetize it and get to get it more, more streamlined. There's so many ways I can be good for media, so let's focus there so we can open up the media space again to be the play the role it needs to in a democracy.

**NORMAN EISEN:** I'm going to tell those people working on media freedom in in Europe, they have to have a I That's very.

**NICOLE BIBBINS SEDACA:** Definitely, definitely.

**NORMAN EISEN:** Gretta. Do you think we can. We're at an inflection point where we can accelerate and really get demonstrable progress against anti-corruption in the years ahead.

**GRETTA FENNER:** You know, I think the one point that briefly was alluded to is the inclusive capitalism. I think that's an important point that we need to really rethink our economies. It's not just a technical anti-corruption and democracy theme. The other point, it probably wasn't raised, but if we talk about corruption in the same sentence with security, it's having a good look at ourselves and see that what do we accept for geopolitical or so-called geopolitical reasons by way of actually complicity in enabling kleptocratic regimes because it is geopolitically convenient? You know, do we do we at least have the audacity to admit truly that some of the geopolitical choices we make in the short term actually have been the ones that have been enabling kleptocracy to to prosper? And that would be my concluding statement. Norm, thank you very much.

**NORMAN EISEN:** That's just something that Europe has dealt with keenly since the aggression against Ukraine as trying to balance the the oil and gas imports and their cut off from Russia and and deal with the kleptocracy, but also don't destabilize every government in Europe. How do you strike that balance? Okay. Cheikh I'm going to come to you. Are you fund and then Ruslan will get the last word. Are you fundamentally optimistic Cheikh that the youth are going to take up? Will the youth answer the call? Will they take up the fight? Will the youth of the world rise to defend democracy?

**CHEIKH FALL:** Yes. Thank you. For me, since the digital revolution is no longer one to be a problem, they are become a solution in Africa. We always ask that so much of younger people then, are the group in society. We are not attentive to them or do not want to put them. This creates extreme and physical and ambulance use perspective in running state often contributes to stability, consolidates and democracy continues. Jun Junction of different generation views of democracy create a balance in the present way, building a future in line with the expectation of the youths. That's my conclusion. Thank you.

**NORMAN EISEN:** Thank you. Cheikh. Ruslan Do you think we are actually going to see some concrete progress as the summer for democracy plays out after 2023? It seems like there's a lot of initiatives coming from civil society and and you lead one. Will we will this summit for democracy



be a springboard for us in civil society as I said before, to take our responsibilities? You get the last 60 seconds.

**RUSLAN STEFANOV:** I think. I think so. Thank you. I think it was not just a springboard. It was reinvigorating and also just rethinking all the ideas, but also getting a fresh perspective. And actually, it gave us an opportunity to come together with in a public private partnership with ReEngage, with governments, with the private sector. And I look very much forward to the follow up session. I think even today's session demonstrated that we are all looking forward to keeping the flight. I mean, we know it's not a destination, it's a journey, and we should be there all the time, all the while always, you know, because it just doesn't go in a straight line. There's something corruption in security, like you.

**NORMAN EISEN:** As the president once said to me on your point, it's like mowing the lawn no matter what you do, the corruption comes back. But democracy, that metaphor works for democracy, too, because like a garden, it needs to be cultivated. And what we've learned is we can't just let it. The lesson of the post-Cold War era, of the false sense of triumph with the fall of the Iron Curtain is that we can't take democracy for granted. And some of those energies that we use to turn on external adversaries within democracies, we've turned on each other and we've seen in places that democracy fails, but we've also seen the incredible vigor of democracy, how civil society, allies in government, business, media, but also the people. The people. That's the that's the the indices in indispensable asset. They saved us in the United States. And and they have been so important to democracy all over the world. They're in the streets now in Israel to defend their democracy. So the role of the people is so terribly important. I'm confident with leadership like that exhibited on our panel today, that we the democracy's best days lie ahead and that we'll look back on the democracy summit as helping do that acceleration that Ruslan talked about. I want to thank everybody for participating with us here today. Have a great summit for Democracy Week. So fun to help kick it off. And I look forward to working with everyone in our anti-corruption, democracy, Security and Prosperity project here at Brookings to make the year of action into years of action. Thanks, everyone.