

Asia Democracy Network
ANNUAL REPORT
2023

Asia Democracy Network

ANNUAL REPORT

2023

© Asia Democracy Network (ADN)

Asia Democracy Network

100, Cheonggyecheon-ro, Junggu, Seoul, Korea

Signature Tower, West Wing, 10F, PO 1026

www.adnasia.org

Contents

1	About ADN	1
2	Message from the Secretariat	3
3	ADN's 10 Year Anniversary	4
4	A New ADN - Rebranding the Network	6
5	Pursuing Democratic Unity Through CSOs Consolidation	8
	A. Movement through Narratives and Community Research	8
	B. Consolidating Civil Society on the National Level	11
	C. Sustaining the Democracy Movement	20
	D. Responding to Regional Democracy Crisis	25
	E. Media Intervention and Cooperation	26
6	Looking Forward in 2024	27
7	Financial Report	29
8	Governing Council and Advisors	31



1

About ADN

The Asia Democracy Network (ADN) is a regional coalition of democracy advocates led by civil society organisations across Asia dedicated to defending and promoting democracy. Established in 2013 in Seoul, Korea, ADN is unique in its ability to unite diverse thematic and sub-regional networks under the common goal of advancing quality democracy in Northeast Asia, Southeast Asia, and South Asia. ADN has an extensive network, 11 regional members and over 300 national members, working together to strengthen democratic unity and solidarity.

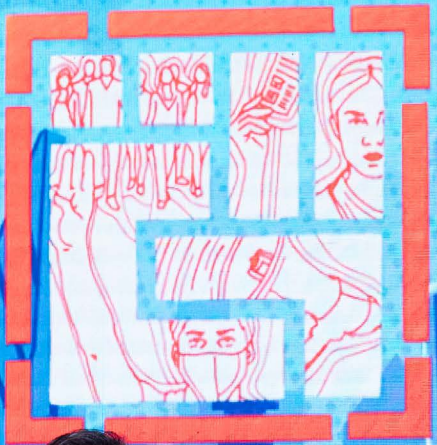
To achieve the goals of the ADN, we have three overarching priorities:

1. Democratic Unity and Solidarity
2. Next Generation Democracy Advocate Empowerment
3. Strengthening Quality Local Democracy

ADN develops and implements activities and campaigns to strengthen *Democratic Unity and Solidarity* in Asia. As a region that does not have an effective accountability mechanism to resolve the

threats to fundamental rights by states, we convene a network of civil society organisations to work together on a regional democracy agenda and to keep threats to democracy accounted for. *Next Generation Democracy Advocate Empowerment* is our work with youth. To sustain the democratic movement and to spread democracy widely, it is vital that we involve the youth and provide them with the tools and space to understand democracy and human rights. *Strengthening Quality Local Democracy* aims to implement programs that encourage a local process in the accountability of fundamental rights. Mainly, we use the SDG process to engage local governments in monitoring and implementing programs that are democracy and human rights-focused. We found this process valuable, as many times working with central governments pose overly bureaucratic challenges with no immediate trickle-down change to benefit the people's everyday lives.

The ADN is headquartered in Seoul, Korea with a Secretariat of 5 staff members located in the Philippines, Sri Lanka, Indonesia, and Thailand. ADN also has a media arm called the [Asia Democracy Chronicles](#) where we elevate Asia's democracy and human rights stories from the ground up.



Fostering Democracy Movement

Nov 1-22 2016, Bangkok, Thailand



2

Message from the Secretariat

Asia and the rest of the world faces unprecedented challenges to democratic norms, institutions and values – from the shrinkage of civic spaces, the domestic and transnational repressions experienced by activists, to the spread of malign influences and disinformation. Without a doubt, our present condition calls for greater efforts to confront democracy’s regression that negatively impacts communities and undermines the realisation of freedoms and just development. There are no quick fixes to these challenges. It is imperative that we recognize, support and augment efforts of civil society organisations and their allies in consistently demanding progress.

The Asia Democracy Network, in its mandate to consolidate pro-democracy endeavours and alliances in Asia, highlights in this report the importance of uniting national and regional players, and enabling and empowering an inclusive democratic movement, towards the singular goal of just and sustainable democracies. This report reflects critical interventions that ADN initiated to shape better coordination and cooperation among the democratic actors in the region, and indicates stronger commitments for meaningful intersectoral engagements and solidarity.

I thank the hard work and dedication demonstrated by the Secretariat Team, the Governing Council, members, and partner organisations. I also offer gratitude for the support extended by the donors. We hope to continue the mutual support and cooperation, as ADN continues to forge ahead in its mission in the years to come.

On behalf of Secretariat Team,
Ichal Supriadi
Secretary-General

3

ADN's 10 Year Anniversary

Ten years ago, on October 21, 2013, the Asia Democracy Network (ADN) was officially launched in Seoul, Korea, after months of deliberation and planning among Asian democracy advocates. The ADN was created to hold on to the democratic wins that Asia was experiencing during the 2000s to continue the momentum and to progress democracy in Asia. The network started out without a secretariat but only with the idea of building a network of committed advocates ready to come together to promote and defend democracy in Asia. What started as a small idea has grown into a 10-regional and 300+ national member network with a five-person Secretariat team and a four-person media arm for the network called the Asia Democracy Chronicles.

Looking back at the past decade, ADN has been at the forefront of the democracy and human rights crisis in Asia, working with partners and members to be the voice for the voiceless. ADN has strived to be the convening body of regional organisations to coordinate campaigns around significant issues. We made it further than we ever expected, and we strive to continue for at least another ten years!

ADN will release two special 10th-anniversary reports: one on the democratic situation in Asia and the other on a collection of reflections on the past ten years from key figures of the ADN. Make sure to check out both reports!



2013 Founding Assembly



2023 10th Anniversary ADN Assembly

4

A New ADN - Rebranding the Network

In a landmark moment marking its 10th anniversary, the Asia Democracy Network (ADN) underwent a comprehensive rebranding initiative in 2023, reinforcing its enduring commitment to advancing democratic ideals throughout the Asian continent. At the heart of this transformation is the unveiling of the all-new ADN logo—an emblematic representation of the organisation’s unwavering dedication to democracy and human rights.

The upgraded logo, aligned with contemporary trends, intricately weaves together distinctive shapes to craft a visual journey—the “pathway to democracy.” Symbolising progress and inclusivity, it stands as a testament to ADN’s evolution and renewed vigour in championing democratic principles.

As ADN embarks on this rebranding journey, our core values—transparency, cooperation, action, vision, information, inclusion, and justice—remain unwavering. These principles permeate every aspect of our work, reflecting the essence of the revitalised ADN.

Our vibe, simple yet intriguing, caters to a diverse range of mindsets. ADN epitomises authenticity, information, and passion. Whether you are a seasoned advocate, a game-changer, or just starting your journey, ADN stands as your ally in the pursuit of democracy.

This isn’t just a logo; it embodies the relentless pursuit of human rights and democracy. Join us in shaping a future where these ideals aren’t just talked about but lived. ADN: Where passion meets the purpose for a democratic world. Welcome to the movement! Let’s keep it real and make democracy the coolest it’s ever been. Welcome to the new ADN!



OLD



NEW

ASIA DEMOCRACY ASSEMBLY 2023 ADNU

Fostering Democracy Movements

Nov 21-22 2023, Bangkok, Thailand



5

Pursuing Democratic Unity Through CSOs Consolidation

A. MOVEMENT THROUGH NARRATIVES AND COMMUNITY RESEARCH

ADN's Media Arm

Asia Democracy Chronicles

For the first quarter of 2023 (January to April), ADC published thirty-eight (38) stories. We highlighted environmental issues in Japan, Vietnam, and India; Japan's death penalty; the 2nd year of the Myanmar

junta; refugee rights across Asia; Indigenous People's rights in the Philippines, Nepal, and Indonesia, and World Health Day in Asia.



For the mid-quarter of 2023 (May to July), ADC published forty-eight (48) stories covering the politics of water on the Mekong spanning the

countries of China, Myanmar, Laos, Thailand, Cambodia, and Vietnam; women's issues such as gender inequality in Japan, the forming of feminist

communities in China's cyberspace, female agricultural workers in Pakistan; and the effects of climate change on the reproductive health of women in the Indian Sundarbans. Modern slavery issues were also tackled, encompassing debt bondage in India's brick factories, Filipino migrant workers drowning in debt, and slavery on our oceans.

In the third-quarter of 2023 (August to October), ADC published thirty-five (35) stories of the marginalised, media freedom concerns across Asia in countries such as Indonesia, Singapore, India; China's influence on its neighbours, with controversial dam projects in the Philippines and brokering attempts with ethnic armed organisations in Myanmar.

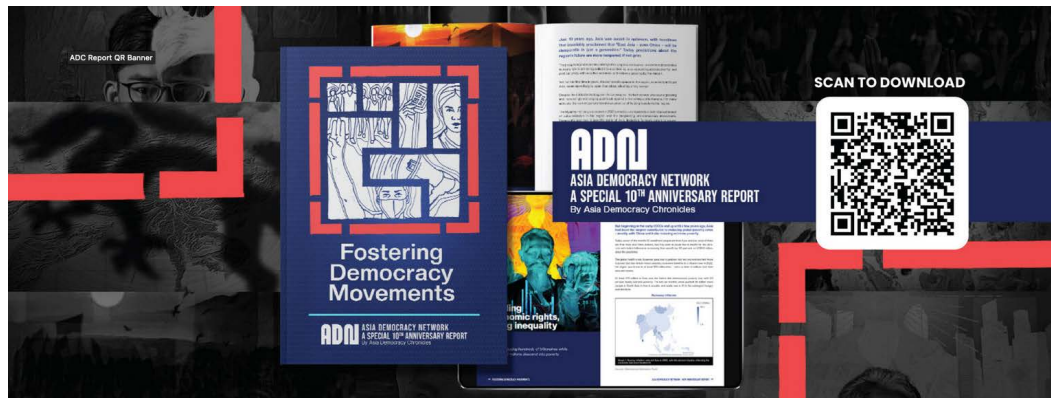
The last quarter (November to December) included nine (9) stories published and a 10-part, data-driven special anniversary report on democracy movements in Asia, for a total of nineteen (19)

stories. The narratives included those of Mongolia's herders affected by mining activities, the struggle of Thai berry pickers in the Nordic countries, and cross-border tensions in Pakistan and Afghanistan.

The 10-part series is collectively themed "Fostering Democracy Movements," an **Asia Democracy Network Special 10th Anniversary Report** produced by the Asia Democracy Chronicles. The series was released incrementally to commemorate this year's Human Rights Day on December 10.

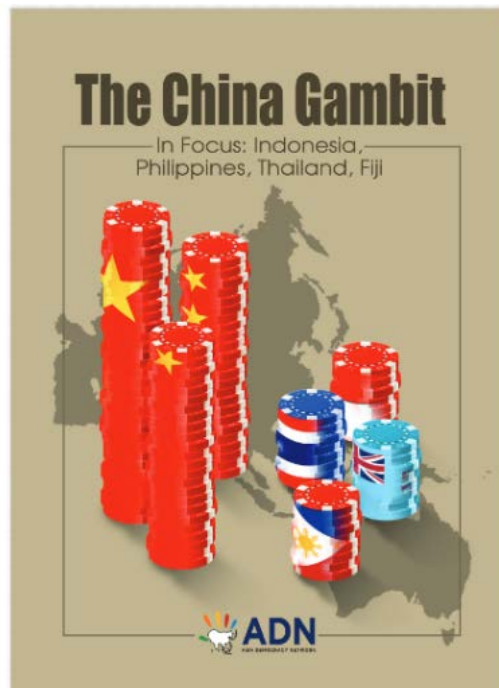
We continued our weekly Democracy Digest and Calls to Action, wrapping up human rights and democratic developments across the region and spotlighting actions to be done from pro-democracy and human rights groups.

In summary, ADC published one hundred and twenty-one (140) stories for the period covered.



Publication

“The China Gambit” and In-country Engagements about Anti-democratic Influencing



This year, the Asia Democracy Network published a seminal work, “The China Gambit”, which focused on tracking China’s interventions’ negative impact and influence in four democratising states – Indonesia, the Philippines, Thailand and Fiji. The work emphasises on the importance of strengthening and empowering democratic institutions, especially at a time when illiberal influencing has become more potent in corroding institutions and undermining democracies.

The China Gambit aims to surface local narratives that reveal how China’s actions have affected efforts of democratic forces to promote and defend democracy and human rights. It presents Asian voices behind the narratives that seek to enable effective advocacy, both formally and informally. It also presents the tools and mode of operations Chinese actors used such as economic and infrastructure bargaining, cooptation of domestic actors, mis- and

disinformation efforts, undermining of political and other governmental processes, corruption, and other sharp power tools, in order to achieve China’s interests, at the expense of local communities and freedoms.

The publication was written by four researchers from the four countries, led by an investigative journalist to ensure that contexts are captured properly, while ensuring standards of veracity and data gathering and analysis are followed. After the publication was launched, the team conducted a series of engagements in the four target countries to present the report, and gather recommendations from the actors themselves on how to mitigate such illiberal influencing impacts. This provided an opportunity for ADN to meet stakeholders directly affected by such sharp power tactics and equip them with platforms to consolidate and create democracy-centred advocacies addressing such challenges.

B. CONSOLIDATING CIVIL SOCIETY ON THE NATIONAL LEVEL

Over the period of 2021 to 2023, the Asia Democracy Network (ADN) supported civil society initiatives in Asia with the aim of facilitating national-level solidarity and strategies to advance democracy. Much progress has been made in Indonesia, Pakistan, the Philippines, Sri Lanka and Mongolia in navigating their paths toward national consolidation to complement existing local actions in promoting and defending democracy. Despite facing similar challenges, observing these nations persevere, collaborate, and strategize for pro-democracy initiatives is truly inspiring.

This period has marked a notable surge in civil society networks and collaboration initiatives,

exemplified by the establishment of national democracy networks in the Philippines, Sri Lanka, and Indonesia. These networks, driven by the unity of civil society organisations, actively address a spectrum of challenges, ranging from restricted civic spaces to issues of elections, money politics, and press freedom. The strategic collaboration showcased by these networks has the potential to play a transformative role, fostering a collective and influential voice for democracy. They generate significant political pressure for reform, promoting genuine democratic principles and contributing to the resilience of democratic institutions across the region.

Indonesia



In anticipation of the upcoming general elections scheduled for February 14, 2024, Indonesia grapples with controversies surrounding power abuse and questionable practices by authorities.

The Asia Democracy Network (ADN), in collaboration with national partners, initiated the National Consolidation 2.0, a multifaceted effort to address these challenges and fortify democratic values. Recognizing the authoritarian stance of Jokowi, the

consolidation strategically adjusted its agenda to align with the prevailing situation. This concerted effort played a pivotal role in realigning the mindset of civil society organisations (CSOs), overcoming previous divisions, and fostering unity in the face of electoral competition.

Through a series of impactful activities, including meetings, focus group discussions, brainstorming sessions, and campaigns, the consolidation heightened awareness among CSOs, empowering them to respond to electoral anomalies and resist Jokowi's

authoritarian tendencies. Crucially, the initiative expanded its reach to include students and grassroots movements, acknowledging the imminent threat to democracy. ADN's active role in facilitating collaboration among election groups further enhances the collective effort for comprehensive electoral assessment. This consolidated approach, underscored by ADN's support, reflects a robust response to the challenges posed by the electoral landscape, marking a significant stride toward safeguarding democratic principles in Indonesia.

Pakistan



In 2023, the endeavour to establish the 2nd Generation Charter of Democracy (COD) in Pakistan reached significant milestones, propelled by AwazCDS-Pakistan and collaborative efforts with civil society organisations. This impactful initiative saw the formation of a National Advisory Group,

instrumental in crafting a National Democratic Consolidation Strategy, and the approval of an alternative draft Civil Society Charter of Democracy. National and sub-national dialogues reinforced consensus building, fostering inclusivity and garnering endorsements from political parties.

A strategic social media campaign and extensive press outreach generated widespread awareness, showcasing a commitment to strengthening civil society, facilitating policy advocacy, and laying the groundwork for a more democratic and inclusive future for Pakistan.

As Pakistan approaches the 2024 general elections, the 2nd Generation COD emerged as a crucial tool

in addressing political challenges and building a foundation for sustained democratic impact. Looking forward, the focus will shift to mass sensitization, engagement with political parties, and advocacy campaigns to ensure the effective implementation of the new COD, underscoring the strides made in advancing democracy throughout the year.

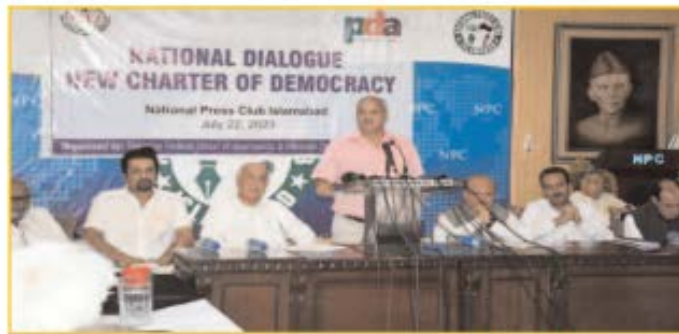
IQTIDA REPORT: While advocating for an inclusive and participatory development process in Pakistan, Pakistan Development Alliance (PDA), Pakistan Federal Union of Journalists (PFUJ), and the National Press Club (NPC), organized a National Dialogue on New Charter of Democracy in Islamabad.

In this dialogue, the civil society called upon the political parties to initiate a dialogue and meaningful deliberations for the 2nd generation Charter of Democracy. They urged that this process should be inclusive and participatory and shall involve all relevant stakeholders.

The event was presided by President National Party Balochistan Dr. Abdul Malik Baloch. Other speakers and senior leaders of different political parties included renowned politician Senator Farhatullah Babar, Dr. Pervez Tahir, Senator Saifullah Abro, President PFUJ Mr. Afzal Butt, General Secretary PFUJ Nasir Zaidi, President NPC Anwar Raza, National Convenor of Pakistan Development Alliance Zia ur Rehman, Constitutional Expert Zafarullah Khan, Pakistan Bar Council representative Mr. Shah Khawar, Civil Society leaders Samina Nazeer, Inshtiaq Gillani and others.

Dr. Abdul Malik Baloch said Political parties are considered as the nurseries of democracy. Their vibrancy and inclusiveness enrich na-

Civil Society Calls for New Charter of Democracy



tions' democratic experiences. We call upon the political parties to consider creation of 'National Commission for Democracy' as envisaged in the CoD-2006 to support civic education, study circles and training of future leaders and cadre through the political parties".

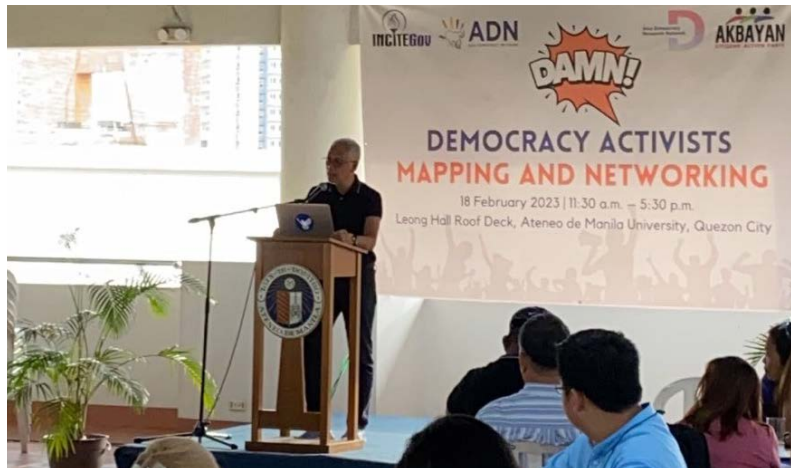
Zia ur Rehman said "we the members of civil society would like to emphasize that only a futuristic democratic compact among all major political parties can offer us a better future. Therefore, the new Charter of Democracy must agree on stable and predictable rules of the game to make democratic culture and values

work for 250 million Pakistanis.

Constitutional Expert Zafarullah Khan emphasised the importance of centrality of Parliament and demanded that constitutional supremacy should be accepted by all. Farhatullah Babar said that article 32-36 of the COD 2006 were not given priority in the past years. The political parties should focus on leftover clauses of COD 2006 in new COD.

PFUJ President Afzal Butt said that for better functions of state it is important to work towards establishment of self-governing independent accountability commission and free and independent media.

The Philippines



In 2023, the Philippines made remarkable progress in consolidating democracy. Building on the foundation laid during the July 2022 Civil Society National Consolidation Workshop, establishing the National Democracy Network emerged as a standout achievement. This network serves as a vital platform for uniting diverse organisations in the shared goal of upholding democratic values.

and basic services, transitional justice, accountability, peace, and security. Innovative strategies were proposed by participant groups, leaving attendees with a renewed sense of purpose. These achievements reflect a collective commitment to fortifying democracy, overcoming challenges, and fostering collaboration for a more resilient democratic future in the Philippines in the year 2023.

The subsequent Democracy Activists Mapping and Networking (DAMN) forum in February 2023, organised collaboratively, provided a vibrant space for democracy advocates to strategize and connect. Accomplishments included dynamic discussions on crucial agenda topics such as disinformation, narrative change, political and electoral reform, housing

Looking ahead, plans to extend consolidation efforts beyond Metro Manila, especially in Northern Luzon and Mindanao, and the development of a briefing paper on civil society priorities signal a promising future for sustained collaboration and progress in the Philippine democratic landscape.



Sri Lanka

In 2023, ADN played a significant role in supporting civil society consolidation efforts in Sri Lanka, spearheaded by the Human Rights Hub, an up-and-coming youth-led human rights organisation.

The initiative focused on addressing the existing challenges of a vibrant yet fragmented civil society landscape in Sri Lanka. Throughout the year, key achievements and highlights included the establishment of the Sri Lanka Democracy Network (SLDN), a platform designed to foster collaboration among diverse stakeholders committed to promoting democracy and human rights within the country. ADN's support facilitated strategic meetings, discussions, and workshops, culminating in the formation of SLDN, which strategically addresses critical issues through a diverse membership

covering various societal aspects. Notably, the inaugural meeting in August and the subsequent workshop in September were key milestones in shaping the network's foundation and objectives. The discussions also reflected a broader vision for a unified civil society movement in Sri Lanka.

Recognizing the need for collaboration and synergy, ADN's assistance and guidance have been instrumental in steering efforts towards a more inclusive, accountable, and cooperative civil society network formation in Sri Lanka. This initiative is a cornerstone for ADN's commitment to strengthening second-tier civil society leadership, bridging divides, and fostering a networked approach for a more impactful and united pursuit of democracy in the region.



Asia Democracy Assembly 2023

November 21-22, 2023 | Bangkok, Thailand

ASIA DEMOCRACY ASSEMBLY 2023 HIGHLIGHTS

- 250+ PEOPLE**
Activists, Artists, Academics, Government Officials, Business, Students
- 30+ COUNTRIES**
Represented by people from countries across the globe
- PRE-ASSEMBLY EVENTS**
13 Thematic Sessions were held before the assembly covering issues on Human Rights, Freedom of Assembly, Parliamentarians and Democracy, Activists in Exile, Elections, etc
- 3 RISE TALKS
4 RISE HUDDLES**
3 plenary sessions on critical democracy issues with over 13 speakers and 4 small group sessions where we went in depth on issues
- SOUTH ASIAN YOUTH DEMOCRACY NETWORK LAUNCH**
At the Assembly, South Asian youth activists came together and launched the South Asian Youth Democracy Network to commit to working together for democracy
- INTER-REGIONAL COOPERATION BETWEEN ASIA AND LATIN AMERICA**
ADN signed an MoU with Red-Lad to increase cooperation between the two regions
- ADN 10 YEAR ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION**
ADN turned 10 so we celebrated!
- ADN REBRANDING LAUNCH**
10 years, a new ADN going forward!



The Asia Democracy Network held the 2023 Asia Democracy Assembly, from November 21 and 22, in Bangkok, Thailand. The two-day event, centred on the theme “Fostering Democracy Movements: Strategic Partnerships and Sustainable Cooperation in Asia”, gathered more than 250 democracy

advocates and civil society representatives from over 30 countries. President of Timor-Leste, Dr. Jose Ramos-Horta, opened the event, while the region’s democracy advocates participated in discussions that sought to dissect issues and present action points aimed at advancing democratic progress.



The Assembly not only acknowledges a decade of ADN's unwavering commitment to democracy and human rights in Asia but commemorates the stakeholders' enduring struggle for democratic values in our region.

Prior to the Main Assembly, two pre-assembly events were conducted: A one-week youth training program, which gathered 17 youth leaders from all

over the region to learn about contemporary democracy issues, and to reflect on how the youth can be further integrated into the region's democratic movements; and the conduct of 13 Thematic discussions, in which various organisations focusing on specific facets of democracy, gathered to think of ways on how to enable effective advocacy and coordination within their respective communities.



Assembly Day 1 was dedicated to reflection, finding inspiration, and discovering relevant responses to challenges, drawing upon the accumulated wisdom of a decade of advocacy. Participants engaged in insightful discussions, shared experiences, and sought inspiration to fortify their commitment to democracy in Asia. The RISETalk topics included reflections on the borderless democracy challenges we faced, as well as how to improve our democratic institutions to make it more responsive to citizens' priorities and aspirations.

Assembly Day 2 focused on ideas that centred on consolidation through strategy building, where attendees work collaboratively to chart the future

course of democracy in Asia. Various pro-democracy leaders engaged in a reflection on how effective our actions have in enhancing democracy in the region. Meanwhile, the RISEHuddles which followed provided an opportunity for participants to engage in strategic planning, forge partnerships, and lay the groundwork for sustained democracy movements in the region. The RISEHuddles covered topics which aimed to enable inclusive democracy and movements, the intensification and protection of pro-democracy narratives, how to promote cooperation between civil society and governments, and how to sustain diaspora communities amid transnational repression.

At present, ADN is in the process of consolidating the recommendation presented throughout the entire Assembly processes, and will be publishing such in a document which will benefit the region's pro-democracy sector.



C. SUSTAINING THE DEMOCRACY MOVEMENT

Activism in Asia: Elevating Social Impact and Sustaining Movements in Exile

September 2023

The ‘Activism in Asia: Elevating Social Impact and Sustaining Movements’ event was organised in collaboration among the Asia Democracy Network, the Japan NGO Center for International Cooperation, and the Japan Hong Kong Democracy Alliance. The event convened exiled activists from Hong Kong, Taiwan, Tibet, and Uyghur communities. The event served as a pivotal platform for activists to exchange ideas and formulate exciting plans. What’s truly remarkable is that the energy and collaboration didn’t fizzle out after the event concluded.

Following the gathering, Hong Kong activists from Taiwan embarked on a meaningful trip to

Dharamsala. Their purpose was to engage with Tibetan civil society and the government in exile, fostering mutual understanding and building connections. Furthermore, Hong Kong activists from Taiwan and their counterparts in Japan collaborated on a 10-day Hong Kong solidarity art exhibit in Taipei. This initiative, born from their shared commitment, transformed the dynamics among participants, fostering unity, building trust, and creating valuable opportunities for ongoing collaboration. The emphasis on sustaining activism and cultivating strategic alliances has not only resonated strongly with participants but has also translated into tangible, positive changes in the dynamics of the regional landscape.

Solidarity for Hong Kong Exhibit 2023

November 21-22, 2023 | Bangkok, Thailand

In collaboration with Hong Kong Lady Liberty and the Japan Hong Kong Democracy Alliance ADN installed a solidarity exhibit on Hong Kong during the Asia Democracy Assembly 2023 in Bangkok, Thailand. A select few pieces from the “Hong Kong Liberty Art Prize 2023 World Tour Exhibit” were brought to Bangkok for the assembly participants to view.

The theme of the exhibit was “Glory to Hong Kong” which is the anthem of the protest against the Hong Kong government. Through artistic expressionism, the art pieces portrayed the Hong Kong movement and aimed to sustain it and raise awareness.



Youth Democratic Solidarity and Leadership Training November 15-20, 2023 | Thailand

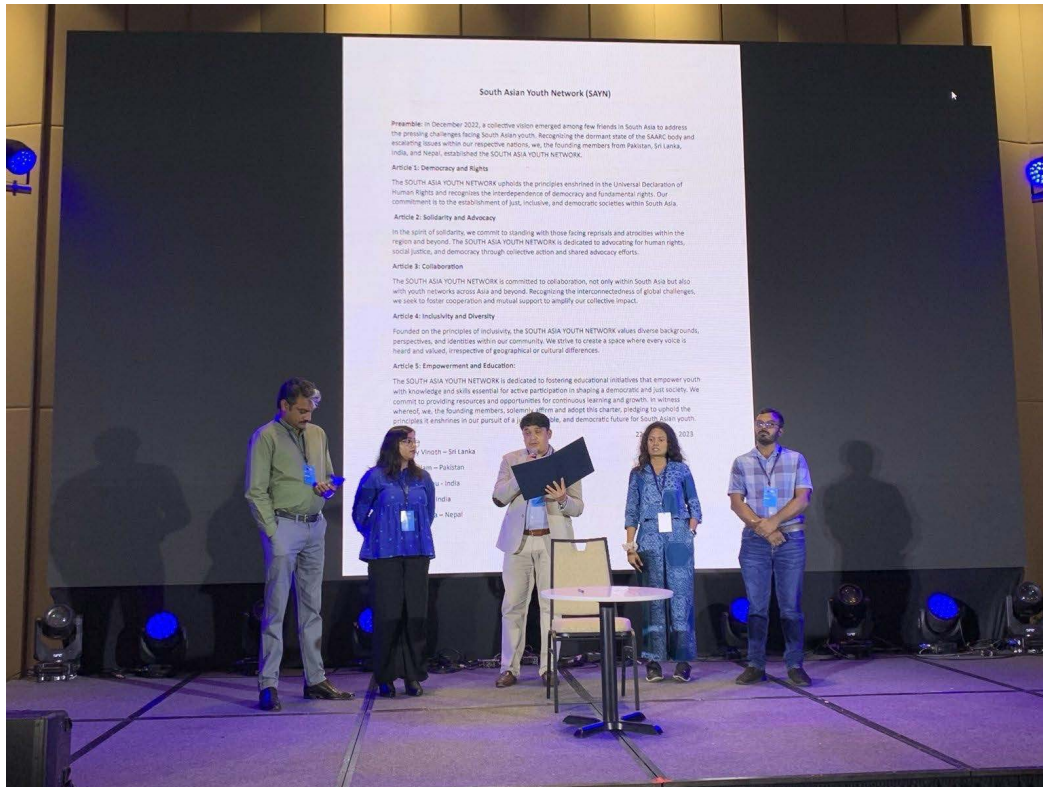


The Youth Democratic Solidarity and Leadership Training 2023, organised by the Asia Democracy Network (ADN) in collaboration with Forum Asia and the People's Empowerment Foundation, proved transformative for its youth participants. Held in Bangkok and Mae-Sot, the training aimed at enhancing democratic knowledge, raising awareness, and fostering advocacy. The theoretical sessions in Bangkok equipped participants with a comprehensive understanding of democracy and human rights. Sessions included an orientation on conflict and exiled movements, discussions on

the role of women in political movements in exile, and field visits to organisations actively working towards democracy and human rights restoration. The solidarity night and meetings with local activists further enriched participants' understanding of the complexities of democracy and activism in Myanmar. Participants also highlighted the successful establishment of the South Asia Youth Network and the continued engagement post-event, exemplifying a commitment to ongoing collaboration.



Incubation of the South Asia Youth Democracy Network



ADN played a key role in bringing to life the South Asian Youth Network (SAYN), an initiative designed to empower and mobilise young leaders across South Asia. Unveiled during the Asia Democracy Assembly 2023, ADN facilitated a platform where representatives from India, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka endorsed the SAYN Charter. This foundational document reflects the network's shared principles, emphasising commitments to democracy, human rights, solidarity, advocacy, cross-regional collaboration, inclusivity, diversity, and educational empowerment.

Since its inception, SAYN has begun addressing pressing regional challenges and issuing powerful statements, including a call for free and fair elections in Bangladesh. Looking ahead, SAYN envisions active participation in upcoming regional elections and aims to foster collaborations with youth networks beyond South Asia. ADN's crucial support in establishing SAYN has translated into tangible outcomes, propelling a collective movement toward a more democratic, inclusive, and empowered future for South Asian youth. We wish SAYN all success in their journey ahead!

D. RESPONDING TO REGIONAL DEMOCRACY CRISIS

Campaign for activists under criminalization (in Bangladesh)

Adilur Rahman Khan and Nasiruddin Elan, activists associated with the Odhikar human rights organisation in Bangladesh, were unjustly imprisoned on fabricated charges. This egregious violation of their fundamental rights and a blatant attack on democratic principles occurred in September 2023, following a decade of relentless judicial harassment. Adilur Rahman Khan and ASM Nasiruddin Elan had previously endured arbitrary detention in August 2013, lasting 62 and 25 days, respectively, after Odhikar published a fact-finding report on civilian killings by security forces.

In response to their arrests, ADN swiftly issued a statement condemning the injustice, calling for their immediate release, and challenging the dubious convictions. Advocacy efforts were mobilised at the country level, involving protests before the Bangladeshi High Commission and the submission of

statements demanding their release. Additionally, ADN took part in a global social media campaign on September 26, 2023, amplifying the call for justice. Bangladeshi embassies were targeted with letters urging the release of Adilur Rahman Khan and Nasiruddin Elan. The successful outcome of Adilur Rahman Khan and Nasiruddin Elan's release on bail in October 2023 resulted from collaborative efforts from various individuals and organisations, both locally and globally. This triumph underscores the significance of collective activism in the face of adversity, highlighting the joint commitment of various groups in defending human rights and justice in the region. The coordinated advocacy and global social media campaign on September 26, 2023, were crucial components of the broader movement that played a role in securing their freedom, demonstrating the power of unified action in the pursuit of justice.

Continuing Support for the Myanmar Democracy Movement

In 2023, ADN continued its involvement and support for Myanmar pro-democracy activists and initiatives. Concurrently, ADN diversified its engagement by offering a broader range of activities to reinforce the existing efforts and ensure the sustainability of activists. Nevertheless, ADN continues to provide limited support to

organisations and individuals along the border who have been exiled for their safety and well-being. Furthermore, ADN actively collaborates with its members and partners in Asia to address concerns pertaining to the democracy and human rights situation in Myanmar.

E. MEDIA INTERVENTION AND COOPERATION

Phil Star Global, March 16, 2023, *“Civic Space in the Philippines ‘Repressed’ Global Civil Society Study Says”*

The Wire, Sept 9, 2023 , *“Myanmar: 44 Global Orgs Urge G20 Countries to Pay Urgent Attention to Pressing Rights Issues”*

Rapplar, Sept 18, 2023, *“Eyes on Taiwan”*

The Daily Star, Oct. 3, 2023. *“Book down,” indeed!*

NewAge Bangladesh, Sept 15, 2023, *“Condemnation of Sentence of Rights Activists Adilur, Elan Pour In”*

Bangkok Post, Jan 31, 2023, *“Pheu Thai Pressed on Royal-Insult Law”*



6

Looking Forward in 2024

Democratic Consolidation Initiatives

In 2024, we envisage continuing our commitment to democratic consolidation by implementing a multifaceted strategy. Firstly, we aim to conduct sub-regional consolidations, disseminating the valuable outcomes derived from the Regional Assembly to actors within specific subregions in Asia. This targeted approach ensures a more nuanced and localised understanding of the challenges and

opportunities faced by civil society organisations and democracy activists.

Simultaneously, we will continue to consolidate democracy at the national level, focusing on key countries such as Pakistan, Mongolia, Indonesia, The Philippines, South Korea, Japan, and Timor Leste.

Democracy Narrative Campaigns

Our commitment to promoting democratic ideals extends to 2024 through an expansive Democracy Narrative Campaign. This initiative will leverage articles, stories, and discussions to engage a broad audience in meaningful dialogues on

democracy-related issues. By harnessing the power of narrative, we aim to inspire, educate, and mobilise individuals, fostering a collective understanding of the importance of democracy.

Cross-Country/Movement and Regional Solidarity

In the coming year, we will reinforce our dedication to cross-country and regional solidarity by collaborating with other non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to respond promptly to urgent needs faced by human rights defenders and those in crises. By participating in coordinated efforts with like-minded organisations, we hope to provide

support and assistance wherever needed. This collaborative approach reflects ADN's recognition of the interconnectedness of democracy and human rights, emphasising the importance of a united front in addressing challenges and championing the principles of democracy across borders.



7

Financial Report

Grant Funds		1,266,322 USD
Operational Expenditures (Salaries, Benefits, Office Space, Office Supplies, Communications)	319,863 USD	
Program Expenditures	608,787 USD	
Balance of December 31, 2023		337,671 USD



8

Governing Council and Advisors

GOVERNING COUNCIL MEMBERS

1. Asian Network for Human Rights and Development (FORUM-ASIA)
2. Asian Network for Free Elections (ANFREL)
3. Migrants Forum in Asia (MFA)
4. Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict (GPPAC Asia)
5. Asian Muslim Action Network (AMAN)
6. Asian Dalit Rights Forum (ADRF)
7. Southeast Asia Freedom of Expression Network (SAFENET)
8. Asia Democracy Research Network (ADRN)
9. Asia Development Alliance (ADA)
10. International NGO Forum for Indonesia Development (INFID)

ADVISORS

1. Nimalka Fernando
2. Sushil Pyakurel
3. Hyungsik Shin

