

Asia Democracy  
Network

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# ANNUAL REPORT 2024



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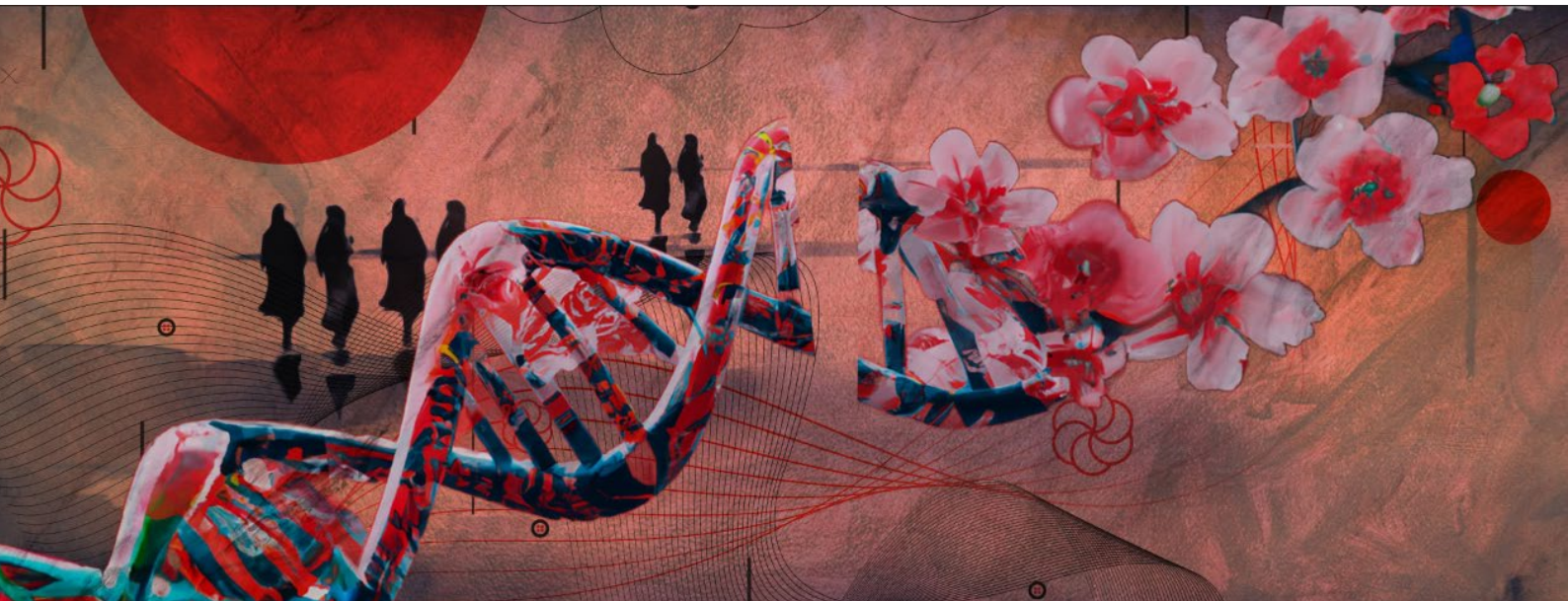
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These are the artwork attached to the Asia Democracy Chronicles stories, [JAPAN: A long wait for justice](#)

# 1

## About ADN

The Asia Democracy Network (ADN) is a regional coalition of civil society organizations and democracy advocates working to strengthen democracy, protect civic space, and promote inclusive governance across Asia. Since its founding in 2013 in Seoul, Korea, ADN has fostered cross-movement collaboration, supported grassroots activism, and built regional solidarity to address the region's evolving democratic challenges. With a network spanning 11 regional members and over 300 national organizations, ADN remains at the forefront of mobilizing democratic actors across Northeast, Southeast, and South Asia.

To achieve these goals, ADN focuses on four strategic programs:

**Democratic Consolidation** – ADN mobilizes democracy advocates at national and regional levels to counter democratic backsliding, protect civic space, and build resilient democratic movements through convenings, solidarity actions, and advocacy.

**Inclusive Democracy through Youth Leadership** – Recognizing the vital role of youth in sustaining democracy, ADN nurtures young leaders through education, capacity-building, and intergenerational collaboration to strengthen youth participation in governance and activism.

**Enabling Local-Global Ecosystems for Democracy** – ADN bridges grassroots movements with global initiatives, ensuring local voices shape international democracy and human rights frameworks while advocating for more inclusive global governance.

**Exploring New Frontiers in Democracy** – ADN addresses emerging challenges such as digital authoritarianism, disinformation, business and human rights, gender equality, and climate democracy by fostering partnerships and expanding regional discourse.

ADN's mission is to mobilize progressive civil society and democracy advocates while engaging with governments and international institutions to promote a resilient, civil society-led democratic network in Asia. Through solidarity, advocacy, and innovation, ADN works to safeguard civic spaces, empower new generations of democracy defenders, and advance a democratic future rooted in justice, dignity, and human rights.

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.

# 2

## Message from the Secretariat

This year marked an extension of the ongoing struggle for democracy, characterized by various challenges and the continued efforts of ADN to promote and uphold democratic values. With twenty-two elections held across Asia, 2024 has been widely recognized as an election year. However, the results were quite disappointing, reflecting the persistence of the status quo and the rise of leaders known for their lack of commitment to democratic principles.

Amid the complexities of global political competition affecting democratic conditions, ADN has remained steadfast in its contributions to the democratic movement, despite numerous difficulties. We have consistently worked towards consolidating Civil Society consolidation at regional, sub-regional, and national levels, while building impactful narratives through the Asia Democracy Chronicles and online discussions. Our efforts have been particularly significant in the context of Bangladesh's uprising and in highlighting critical democratic developments in the region. As part of our solidarity work, ADN has provided support to several activists, both within and beyond their countries, ensuring their safety and the continuation of their important work.

This year, ADN successfully renewed the Governing Council formation, and finalized our five-year strategy (2024-2028), which will serve as a roadmap for more productive and focused initiatives in the future. We extend our heartfelt gratitude to our members, partners, and donor organizations, for their continued guidance, support, and cooperation. Your belief in our mission has been instrumental in enabling us to persevere in this endeavor.

On behalf of the Secretariat,

*Ichal Supriadi*  
*Secretary General*



These are the artwork attached to the Asia Democracy Chronicles stories, [PHILIPPINES: A never-ending drug war story](#)

# 3

## Pursuing Democratic Unity through CSO Consolidation

### A. CONSOLIDATING CIVIL SOCIETY ON THE NATIONAL LEVEL

#### National Consolidations: Strengthening Democracy Across Asia

ADN's National Consolidations program aims to empower civil society organizations (CSOs), grassroots movements, and youth-led initiatives in addressing country-specific democratic challenges. Tailored to the unique political and social contexts of each country, these efforts focus on fostering collaboration, protecting civic spaces,

and advancing reforms. As a critical component of ADN's broader regional cooperation framework, these initiatives lay the groundwork for long-term democratic resilience and sustainable civic engagement. Below are highlights of ADN's impactful work in 2024:

#### Philippines

This year, ADN and its partners in the Philippines convened to find ways to identify priority areas the civil society can work on to advance democracy in the country. These priority areas were then presented to the donor agencies, through a briefing paper, to find convergences and highlight existing and possible efforts to promote democracy.

The "Intensifying Collaboration for Philippine Democracy" convening, organized by the Asia Democracy Network (ADN) and INCITEGov, was held on September 6-7, 2024, at The Hub, Cyberpark Tower 1 on the 1st day, and Ibis Styles Hotel in Cubao, Quezon City on the 2nd day. The event aimed to enhance collaboration among organizations committed to democracy in the

Philippines, assess the current state of Philippine democracy, and explore opportunities for joint initiatives. Over two days, the event featured four key parts: discussions on the challenges and priorities of Philippine democracy, an interface with democracy donors to align initiatives with available support, and networking opportunities through break-out discussions and cross-sectoral socials.

The second day of the event focused on analyzing the influences on Philippine democracy, with speakers assessing the impact of global and regional geopolitics, the administration of President Bongbong Marcos (PBBM), and the roles of local opposition, civil society organizations, and activists. This was followed by group and

plenary discussions on strengthening the Philippine Democracy Network, where participants explored ways to manage the network, potential issues to unite on, identify potential joint initiatives, and explore how the network and decision-making should be structured. The event provided a platform for meaningful dialogue and set the groundwork for continued collaborative efforts to support pro-democracy advocacy in the Philippines. At the end of the convening, 5 organizations with the support of ADN, volunteered to be part of an ad-hoc team that can

carry the initiatives of the Philippine Democracy Network moving forward: and they are - INCITEGovInciteGov, Young Public Servants (YPS), National Citizens' Movement for Free Elections (NAMFREL), Initiatives for International Dialogue (IID), and Peoples Alternative Study Center for Research and Education in Social Development (PASCRES).

Briefing Document: [https://drive.google.com/file/d/1IQzdVNV2L3q5fW0BCv3xZskb-PqV\\_nrj/view](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1IQzdVNV2L3q5fW0BCv3xZskb-PqV_nrj/view)





## Bangladesh

Recognizing an urgent gap in international attention to the worsening human rights and democratic crisis, ADN stepped in to fill this void through a series of targeted initiatives. Partnering with the Sydney Policy and Analysis Center (SPAC), ADN organized a series of webinars addressing critical democracy-related topics. These webinars explored pressing issues such as the quality of democracy, human rights, sustainable growth, development, and the role of youth in shaping Bangladesh's democratic future. The webinar was initially led by the Bangladeshi exile community due to security concerns. However, as the political landscape shifted following the collapse of Hasina's government, key figures from within the country including members of the ruling party, academics, student leaders, lawyers, and activists joined as speakers, bringing critical insights and firsthand perspectives to the discussions.

In the immediate aftermath of the student uprising, ADN demonstrated its commitment to timely action by convening an online meeting with students, activists, regional stakeholders, and

CSO actors. This platform allowed for real-time updates from the ground, fostering dialogue and identifying actionable ideas for regional cooperation and solidarity. By amplifying global awareness of Bangladesh's democratic challenges and facilitating these critical conversations, ADN has laid the groundwork for meaningful change while strengthening regional networks and partnerships.

Based on these discussions, ADN and SPAC produced four comprehensive policy briefs:

Briefing paper #1: *Quality of Democracy, Human Rights & Future Directions*;

Briefing Paper #2: *Democracy in Bangladesh – Sustainable Growth, Development, and Democracy in Bangladesh*;

Briefing Paper #3: *Bangladesh's Youth Uprising – Towards a Democratic Future*; and

Briefing Paper #4: *Is Bangladesh on the Right Track? People's Demands and Leadership's Response*.

## Sri Lanka

Supported by ADN, the Sri Lanka Democracy Network (SLDN) has become a coalition of activists addressing governance, human rights, and electoral reforms. SLDN was formed in response to gaps left by the People's Aragalaya, bringing together grassroots activists and second-tier CSO leadership to address economic and social issues. SLDN comprises grassroots activists, community leaders, and human rights defenders working on democracy, governance, economic justice, and social rights. Focused on participatory democracy and human rights, SLDN has conducted workshops, awareness programs, and public

consultations across provinces. Partnering with the Human Rights Hub (HRH), an emerging youth-led organization, SLDN ensures inclusive engagement in policy discussions and reform efforts.

In 2024, SLDN conducted extensive consultations across all nine provinces, gathering input from communities and civil society groups on democratic priorities and reform needs. This participatory process led to the development of a [summary document](#) outlining key areas for democratic reform.

Over the next several months, SLDN will use this summary to draft a Democracy Roadmap, engaging in further consultations with national civil society organizations and other stakeholders. Once finalized, the roadmap will serve as a key advocacy tool to lobby policymakers for meaningful democratic reforms.

SLDN has also been actively fostering dialogue on pressing national issues through a series of

webinars on priority topics, including Sri Lanka's presidential elections, the Prevention of Terrorism Act, and the Online Safety Act. The network continues to engage with marginalized communities, women, and youth while mobilizing legal professionals to support victims of rights violations. By amplifying underserved voices and fostering solidarity with regional democratic movements, SLDN is working to strengthen democracy across Sri Lanka.



## Pakistan

The "Democratic Consolidation in Pakistan: A Long Haul" initiative, facilitated by AwazCDS-Pakistan with support from ADN, sought to strengthen democratic governance through civic engagement, capacity building, and advocacy. Against the backdrop of Pakistan's declining democracy evidenced by electoral irregularities in the February 2024 elections and the country's classification as an "authoritarian regime" this effort focused on reinforcing democratic principles. A key aspect was a comparative analysis of political party manifestos against the Charter

of Democracy (CoD) 2.0, revealing gaps in commitments to electoral transparency, judicial independence, and local governance reforms. The findings underscored the need for stronger advocacy to push political parties toward genuine democratic commitments.

To mobilize multi-stakeholder engagement, the project conducted a series of sensitization sessions with civil society organizations, legal professionals, academia, political workers, and media experts. These sessions facilitated critical discussions on

legislative advocacy, judicial independence, and the enforcement of democratic norms. CSOs emphasized the importance of sustained engagement with political institutions, while legal experts highlighted the need for judicial reforms and stronger intra-party democracy. Academic participants stressed the necessity of data-driven research to inform policy reforms, recommending specialized university courses on governance and democracy.

A significant outcome of the initiative was the formation of the Joint Action Committee on

Democracy (JAC-D), which engaged in lobbying efforts with policymakers. The project culminated in the National People's Assembly on Democracy, bringing together diverse stakeholders to strategize on strengthening democratic institutions. Additionally, the publication of [The Road to Democracy](#) provided a comprehensive analysis of Pakistan's democratic challenges and reform strategies. Through its support for this initiative, ADN reaffirmed its commitment to fostering democratic resilience in Pakistan and across the region.

## Indonesia

ADN has maintained strong cooperation among diverse CSOs, ensuring connectivity across key sectors. Notable initiatives include supporting whistleblowers through the "Dirty Vote" campaign and monitoring political developments, including Prabowo's governance in its initial 100 days. These efforts contribute to sustained engagement and vigilance within Indonesia's

civic landscape. The Dirty Vote documentary has drawn the attention of 9.7 million views within a few days of release. The film was able to summarize the problematic aspects of the 2024 elections, mainly it being "controlled" for the benefit of the incumbent administration. This effort complemented the voice of the election monitors and concerns NGOs.

[Full Documentary Here](#)



## Regional Impact of National Consolidations

These national consolidations are the foundation for ADN's broader strategy of fostering regional cooperation. By building resilient networks within countries, ADN creates a ripple effect, enabling these efforts to connect and scale across Asia, reinforcing regional solidarity and democratic unity. The platforms created on the national level bolster democracy cooperation, strengthening

solidarity and trust building to better implement agenda setting and advocacy.

Through these targeted interventions, ADN continues to push the values of democracy, human rights, and inclusive governance, empowering local actors and ensuring that democratic progress remains sustainable and impactful.

## B. SUB-REGIONAL CONSOLIDATION

The sub-regional consolidations, are the next level of solidarity building. By sub-region, there are commonalities and shared interests that can better build solidarity and build trust. Through

already established sub-regional civil society processes, we worked together with our partners to expand the space for further collaboration.

### South Asia Sub-Regional Consolidation/Convening

On September 13, 2024, ADN, in collaboration with co-hosts SAHR, FORUM-ASIA, SAYN, SAAPE, PRIA, ADRF, and SANGAT, organized an online event titled "*The People's Sovereignty and Democratic Resilience in South Asia*," as part of a larger South Asia sub-regional consolidation effort. The event brought together over 40 participants representing a diverse array of civil society actors to strengthen collaboration and amplify collective impact on advancing human rights, fundamental freedoms, and democracy across South Asia.

During the webinar and open mic session, participants engaged in discussions centered on key challenges facing democracy and human rights in the region, including the shrinking civic space, government-led repression, and the rise of authoritarianism. Speakers underscored the importance of regional solidarity and cross-border collaboration

in addressing these critical issues, with a focus on protecting fundamental freedoms and ensuring accountability for human rights violations. The open mic provided a valuable platform for participants to share insights from their respective countries, voice concerns, and propose collective strategies to strengthen civil society's role in defending democracy across the region.

The event was also aimed at promoting ADN's 2023 Assembly Outcome Document, which serves as a critical roadmap for democratic advocacy in the region. Participants were encouraged to endorse the document, aiming to increase its uptake and influence within civil society networks. This process aligns with ADN's broader strategy of securing ongoing support for the Assembly's priorities through targeted outreach and engagement.

The discussion emphasized the need for strengthening civil society collaboration across South Asia to counter democratic backsliding and authoritarian consolidation. Participants highlighted that civil society organizations, though vibrant, have become fragmented due to geopolitical challenges and state repression, necessitating stronger regional alliances and strategic coordination. A key focus was on revitalizing youth and grassroots movements, particularly in Bangladesh and Sri Lanka, where student-led protests have successfully mobilized resistance against state repression. These movements underscore the importance of grassroots engagement in reclaiming people's sovereignty and holding governments accountable.

Institutional and electoral reforms emerged as a major priority, with participants stressing the need to restore public trust in democratic processes. The decline in voter engagement and electoral integrity, compounded by the co-option of political institutions, calls for internal reforms within political parties and electoral mechanisms. There was also a strong emphasis on tackling the shrinking civic space, as government-led crackdowns on civil society actors, media, and activists continue to escalate. Participants called for innovative advocacy strategies, cross-border solidarity efforts, and collective resistance to protect fundamental freedoms and human rights.

## Southeast Asia Subregional Consolidation

ADN provided a space for civil society to dissect democracy-related issues plaguing Southeast Asia and helped provide some navigation on the approaches various stakeholders can take to alleviate the continuously shrinking democratic space in the region. ADN, in partnership with its members FORUM Asia, GPPAC and ASEAN SOGIE Caucus, will conduct a Southeast Asia subregional consolidation effort among pro-democracy stakeholders at the sidelines of the

Regional and global solidarity was underscored as a crucial strategy to address common democratic challenges. Participants advocated for the revival of regional cooperation mechanisms such as SAARC and emphasized the importance of fostering international alliances to amplify advocacy efforts. The discussions also highlighted the need for people-centered advocacy that goes beyond political rights and incorporates socio-economic rights, including access to food, work, and social security, as essential components of democratic resilience. Addressing structural inequalities was seen as fundamental to ensuring long-term stability and reducing the root causes of social unrest.

Another key recommendation was the promotion of inclusive political participation, particularly addressing the exclusion of marginalized communities, women, and youth from democratic processes. The conversation reinforced the urgency of ensuring that political movements and institutions reflect the diverse voices of society and actively work toward equitable representation. The event also provided a platform to gather valuable feedback, recommendations, and ideas from participants, which will be instrumental in shaping the planning and agenda for ADN's 2025 Assembly.

ASEAN Peoples' Forum held in Dili, Timor-Leste, on September 19-21, 2024.

The sessions opened with words from the Election Commission of Timor-Leste regarding the efforts of the government of Timor-Leste to encourage the growth of electoral democracy in the country. This was then followed by a discussion on the state of democracy, narrating challenges and opportunities in Southeast Asia from the perspectives

of human rights defenders and peacebuilders, as presented by FORUM Asia and GPPAC, respectively. ADN followed up with a presentation on the outcomes of the 2023 Asia Democracy Assembly, which highlighted various priority areas to accelerate democratization in Asia. The session then opened a breakout session, which provided highlights on possible approaches and other

sideline topics that the regional and national civil society ought to address. Identified areas include the influence of populist and securitized rhetoric on democratic space, the growth of oligarchic and dynastic politics, the impact of technology and artificial intelligence on fundamental freedoms, the shrinking resources for democratic efforts, and youth involvement in movement building.



## Asia Pacific Social Forum

ADN actively participates in the processes initiated by the World Social Forum (WSF), and its representation in the region, the Asia Pacific Social Forum (APSF). APSF is a nexus of grassroots to the broader democracy movement. Reflecting on the situation of democracy in the region, there is an essential and urgent need to continue the process of the WSF and consider future steps in Asia's pro-democracy and human rights solidarity. The momentum gained at the WSF2024 in Nepal should be maintained and further developed. CSOs and Social Movements must have a platform to come together to deliberate on the mentioned

issues amidst the current social-political context and express their concerns and demands for a Peaceful, Just and Sustainable world order. As such the Democracy and Human Rights Thematic Pillar will be holding a discussion on the situation of Asian democracy and the struggle for human rights. ADN has co-hosted events with the APSF to expand the discussion of democracy and human rights in various social circles. The online event was held on November 20, 2023, where speakers from various states experiencing various challenges to democracy and human rights will be presenting on the situation in their respective spaces.

**Asia Pacific Social Forum Thematic Workshop on Democracy and Human Rights - EP1**

## Re-examining State of Human Rights and Democracy in Asia Pacific

**17 November 2024 at 3 – 5 p.m. Bangkok time (GMT+7)**



**Potential speakers**

Burma/Myanmar	- Kyi Nyein (Queers of Burma Alternativ)
Bangladesh	- Dr. Kazi Maruful Islam (Professor, University of Dhaka)
India	- Apoorvanand (academic and political columnist, India)
Korea	- Kim Chanho (Korean Democracy Foundation)
Palestine	- Basel Al Siurani (Palestine Center for Human Rights)
Philippines	- Rose Trajono (iDEFEND)
Pakistan	- Ammar Ali Jann (Haqooq e Khalq)
South Asia	- Gauri Pradhan (Senior Human Rights Advocate – Nepal)
Taiwan	- James Yuan (Assoc. Professor at National Chengchi University)

And speakers from Cambodia, China, etc.

**Co-Moderators:** - Karel Jiaan Antonio Galang and Sushovan Dhar

**Zoom Link: <https://bit.ly/thematicforum>**

Contact: Asia Democracy Networks (ADN), Asian Cultural Forum on Development (ACFOD)  
Campaign for Popular Democracy (CPD), or Human Rights and Development Foundation (HRDF)



# 4

## Sustaining the Democracy Movement

### A. RESPONDING TO REGIONAL DEMOCRACY CRISIS

#### i. Bangladesh Campaign

In the immediate aftermath of the student uprising, ADN demonstrated its commitment to timely action by convening an online meeting with students, activists, regional stakeholders, and CSO actors. This platform allowed for real-time updates from the ground, fostering dialogue and identifying actionable ideas for regional

cooperation and solidarity. By amplifying global awareness of Bangladesh's democratic challenges and facilitating these critical conversations, ADN has laid the groundwork for meaningful change while strengthening regional networks and partnerships.

#### ii. Myanmar

In light of this overall democracy and humanitarian crisis in Myanmar, conveners of the Burma Solidarity-Philippines, (BSP) a network of civil society, peace advocates and solidarity activists in the Philippines, the Initiatives for International Dialogue, Progressive Voice and the Asia Democracy Network held a solidarity dialogue/forum dubbed "Challenges to Democracy and Prospects for Peace and Justice in Myanmar" on 23 of July 2024 to be held at the UP School of Labor and Industrial Relations (UP SOLAIR), with invited guests and resource persons from Myanmar and members of the Myanmar National Unity

Government (NUG).

The dialogue/forum brought together 100 members and leaders of the broad civil society and solidarity movement in the Philippines to foster a robust solidarity for the people of Myanmar today. Part of this series of activities are dialogue/lobby meetings of members of the NUG and Myanmar CSOs with key Philippine government officials and agencies, specifically the National Human Rights Commission, members of the House of Representatives and the Senate, and the Department of Foreign Affairs.

### iii. Statements Released in 2024

#### Statements Published by ADN in 2024

In 2024, the Asia Democracy Network (ADN) continued to be a vocal advocate for democracy, human rights, and fundamental freedoms across Asia. Through a series of impactful statements, ADN addressed critical issues ranging from political repression and civil rights abuses to the erosion of democratic principles in the region. These statements reflect ADN's commitment to standing with the people of Asia in their struggles for justice and accountability. Whether condemning violent crackdowns, supporting democratic movements, or calling for international action, ADN's statements have served as a crucial platform for speaking out against threats to democracy and supporting the aspirations of citizens across the continent.

[December 27, 2024 - Asia Democracy Network Condemns Hong Kong's Escalating Cross-Border Assault on Democracy Advocates](#) - The Asia Democracy Network condemned Hong Kong's latest act of transnational repression, including arrest warrants and HK\$1 million bounties for six exiled pro-democracy activists: Tony Chung, Carmen Lau, Chung Kim-wah, Chloe Cheung, Joseph Tay, and Victor Ho. This move escalates the Hong Kong government's ongoing campaign to suppress dissent and crush democratic aspirations, using the 2020 national security law to target activists, journalists, and democracy advocates. The revocation of passports and threats against supporters reflect Hong Kong's growing authoritarian reach, violating international norms and threatening global democratic principles. The individuals targeted are not criminals but brave defenders of democracy and human rights. The statement emphasized that repression cannot erase the demand for freedom and urges global action to hold Hong Kong authorities

accountable for this blatant attack on human rights and democracy. Silence in the face of these actions is seen as complicity.

[December 4, 2024 - South Korea Stands Firm: Defending Freedom and Democracy Against Martial Law](#) The Asia Democracy Network (ADN) commended the people of South Korea for their strong rejection of the martial law order declared by President Yoon Suk-yeol on December 3, 2024. The swift and unanimous overturning of this order by the National Assembly on December 4 highlighted the importance of institutional checks and balances in safeguarding democracy. The mobilization of citizens across the country to oppose the martial law order underscored the crucial role of an engaged and active citizenry in defending democratic values. The lack of credible justification and imminent danger associated with the martial law declaration raised constitutional concerns, as it violated Article 77 of the South Korean Constitution. ADN stood in solidarity with the people of South Korea and celebrated their commitment to protecting democracy. This event served as a reminder of the need for vigilance and accountability in upholding democratic governance.

[December 2, 2024 - ADN Denounces Escalating Crackdown on Protests in Pakistan](#) The Asia Democracy Network (ADN) expressed serious concern and condemned the crackdown on protests in Islamabad by Pakistani authorities, which included excessive use of force, arbitrary detentions, and internet shutdowns. These actions represented clear violations of democratic principles and human rights. The protests, which began on November 24, 2024, were calling for the release of former Prime Minister Imran Khan and the reversal of constitutional amendments undermining judicial independence. The authorities'

violent response escalated on November 26, with supporters of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party being dispersed during a midnight raid. Reports of casualties and arbitrary detentions raised transparency concerns, and ADN called for an end to the suppression of dissent, transparency on casualty numbers, and the release of detainees. The Peaceful Assembly and Public Order Act 2024, which curtails peaceful assembly rights, must be repealed. ADN urged the international community to hold Pakistan accountable for its human rights obligations and stood in solidarity with the people of Pakistan against violence, censorship, and repression.

[November 20, 2024 - \[Statement\] Standing with the Hong Kong 47: Condemnation of Unjust Sentencing and Call for Global Action](#) The Asia Democracy Network strongly condemned the sentencing of 45 members of the Hong Kong 47 under Hong Kong's National Security Law, calling it a severe attack on democracy, freedom of expression, and the rule of law. These individuals, including activists, academics, and community leaders, were prosecuted for participating in a primary election aimed at increasing representation in Hong Kong's Legislative Council. The use of the NSL to suppress peaceful democratic aspirations set a dangerous precedent for political pluralism. ADN expressed solidarity with the Hong Kong 47 and the broader pro-democracy movement, urging the international community to denounce these sentences and hold the Chinese and Hong Kong governments accountable for their erosion of freedoms. ADN called for the immediate release of all individuals imprisoned for their democratic beliefs in Hong Kong.

[August 4, 2024 - Open Letter with Urgent Action Required regarding the Condemnation of Bangladesh Government's Brutal Crackdown and Manipulation Efforts](#) In response to the escalating crackdown on civilians in Bangladesh, civil society organizations from across the

Asia Pacific region collaborated to send an open letter to international leaders, including the UN Secretary General, OHCHR High Commissioner, EU Secretary General, and Bangladeshi Missions worldwide. The letter condemned the Bangladesh Government's manipulation efforts and brutal crackdown on student demonstrators. These efforts included spreading misinformation, using internet shutdowns, and repressing dissent through violence and military deployment. The letter called for immediate international intervention, an independent investigation into human rights abuses, and the restoration of internet access. It emphasized the need to support the democratic rights and freedom of expression of Bangladeshi citizens and hold accountable those responsible for violence and repression.

[July 25, 2024 - Asia Civil Societies Condemn Brutal Crackdown on Bangladesh Student Demonstrations](#) Civil societies across Asia strongly condemned the violent crackdown on student demonstrators by Bangladesh Chhatra League activists at Dhaka University on July 15, 2024. The protests, which began on July 1 following a High Court ruling reinstating a job quota system, resulted in at least 400 injuries, including many female students. The attackers, including Chhatra League members armed with sticks and iron rods, disrupted critical medical services at Dhaka Medical College Hospital. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's inflammatory comments likening protesters to collaborators from Bangladesh's liberation war heightened tensions. The police's inaction raised serious concerns about the government's strategy to suppress dissent. ADN called for immediate accountability and urged Bangladeshi authorities to uphold the right to peaceful protest and protect citizens' safety.

[May 6, 2024 - \[Joint Press Release\] Hong Kong: International community must come together in opposition to Article 23](#) In a joint press release, ADN along with other advocates

voiced their concerns regarding Hong Kong's new Safeguarding National Security Ordinance (SNSO), also known as 'Article 23.' The statement urged the international community to

consolidate efforts to publicly voice opposition against the passage of this law, which poses a direct threat to fundamental freedoms and democratic rights in Hong Kong.

## B. NEXT GENERATION DEMOCRACY LEADERS

### i. Gwangju Youth Democracy Forum.

The ADN, partnered with the May 18th Memorial Foundation based in Gwangju, Korea and co-organized the annual **Gwangju Youth Democracy Forum (GYDF)**.

In 1980, under a military dictatorship a brute use of force was used upon the people of Gwangju demanding democracy resulting in one of the most horrible acts of state violence in Korean modern history. The May 18th Memorial Foundation, a longtime partner of the ADN, is vital in the memorialization and truth-finding of the Gwangju People's Uprising of May 1980. May 18th Memorial Foundation's work is important in the journey of transitional justice and healing from state-forced trauma.

Taking these rich resources of Gwangju and the May 18th Foundation, ADN worked together to develop a youth leadership program that focuses on resilience, peoples' movements, and democracy progress.

For three days from 14-18 May 2024, we invited activists from all across the globe currently studying in South Korea to take part in the program.

Objectives:

- Strengthen solidarity among global democracy advocates

- Establish cross-border connections and cooperation

South Korea has several university campuses with higher education programs focusing on global citizenship, peace, non-governmental organization management, good governance, democracy, and human rights. With the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) supporting several higher education degree programs in these areas, the country had a large and diverse pool of activists. This allowed us to bring together youth activists not only from the Asian region, but also from Africa, South America, Europe, the Pacific, and the Middle East.

The participants had an opportunity to learn about the current challenges to democracy and human rights in their respective countries and have a frank dialogue about our various perceptions. Naturally, discussions progressed to how these gaps in differences can be overcome and solidarity strengthened.

In addition to indoor sessions consisting of presentations, sharing, and dialogue the participants also took part in the 2024 Gwangju Democracy Forum organized by the May 18th Memorial Foundation. The forum provided an opportunity for the participants to connect with human rights and democracy activists from across the Asia region.

Another highlight of the program was the participants taking part in the Gwangju Uprising Eve Protests, which is a city-wide celebration on the eve of the 17th where the city's people come to the streets to commemorate the Uprising through concerts, songs, and performances. Then on May

18th itself, the participants took part in the National Ceremony of the May 18th Uprising organized by the Korean Government, memorializing the sacrifices of the people for democracy on May 18th, 1980.

## ii. Nurturing the South Asian Youth Network

### Nurturing the South Asian Youth Network

In 2024, ADN continued its commitment to supporting the South Asian Youth Network, building on the foundation laid during its launch at the Asia Democracy Assembly 2023. As an incubator and advisor, ADN has provided ongoing guidance, assistance, and opportunities for SAYN to engage in regional advocacy and collaboration.

This year, SAYN issued several key statements, including:

- Condemnation of violent attacks on students in Bangladesh.
- A solidarity statement supporting the people of Palestine.
- A call to action for collective engagement and accountability in Pakistan.

- An appeal for free and fair elections in India.

ADN also involved SAYN in South Asia's regional consolidation efforts through online convenings, inviting the network as a stakeholder to discussions on regional collaboration. These opportunities have helped SAYN remain engaged in conversations about democratic accountability and youth mobilization in the region.

While SAYN continues to grow at its own pace, ADN remains committed to fostering its development and ensuring the network has the support and resources needed to contribute to regional democracy efforts. Through this partnership, ADN seeks to empower youth voices to address shared challenges and work toward a more democratic and equitable future for South Asia.

## C. PROMOTING ACCELERATING ASIAN DEMOCRACY: PERSPECTIVES FROM ADVOCATES AND PRACTITIONERS ON NAVIGATING PRO-DEMOCRACY DEFENSE AND PROMOTION

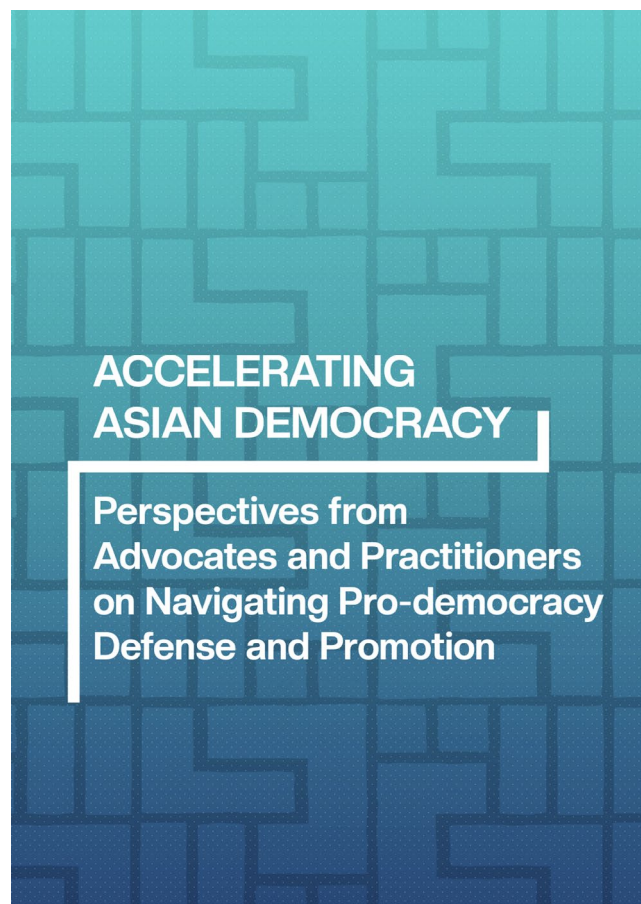
Link: <https://adnasia.org/asia-democracy-assembly-2023-outcome-document/>

ADN presents the Asia Democracy Assembly 2023 outcome document, **“Accelerating Asian Democracy: Perspectives from Advocates and**

### **Practitioners on Navigating Pro-democracy Defense and Promotion”.**

*Accelerating Asian Democracy: Perspectives from Advocates and Practitioners on Navigating Pro-democracy Defense and Promotion* discusses contemporary democracy contexts and aims to trigger united and effective responses to democracy challenges. This endeavor aims to serve as a navigational tool for the Asian pro-democracy sectors as they endeavor to promote and protect democratic institutions and processes amid the sociopolitical shifts that transpired at the start of the 21st Century. The document, constructed after months of consultations and national and regional pro-democracy consolidation exercises, compiles recommendations and identifies priorities from the point of view of on-the-ground democracy practitioners and advocates.

This endeavor identifies key priority issues that stakeholders should prioritize to ensure inclusive and responsive democratic programming and advocacy, identified through prior consultations culminating in the conduct of the Asia Democracy Assembly held in November 2023 in Thailand. It presents a set of recommendations tackling the identified challenges and priority issues. The content also builds on the contexts and discussions of issues explored in prior guidance documents such as the *Recession to Resilience: Road to Democracy Renewal in Asia and Shaping a Better Regional Cooperation for a Better Democracy*. It also incorporates key recommendations from processes specific to various areas of democracy promotion, spearheaded by some of the region’s pro-democracy networks tackling SDGs, human rights, marginalized sectors, and elections, among others. This document aims to steer the direction of stakeholder cooperation that assists democracy building in the region.



# 5

## Uplifting Asia's Democracy Narrative

### A. ASIA DEMOCRACY CHRONICLES

The Asia Democracy Chronicles (ADC) is an online publication of the Asia Democracy Network that aims to elevate Asia's democracy narrative as an extension of democracy advocacy in the Asia region. ADC seeks to shine a spotlight on important but still untold stories from the ground, tackling the state of human rights and democracy on the world's largest, most diverse, and most populous continent. ADC publishes narrative articles, op-eds, analytical pieces, essays, and other similarly oriented types of content on relevant themes to keep readers abreast of critical issues and challenges unfolding in the region.

As a region reeling from unrelenting challenges to democratic institutions and fundamental freedoms such as free speech and freedom of information, and right to public assembly.

Asia Democracy Chronicles (ADC) remains witness to these stark realities hounding a roughly 5-billion-strong region, or 60 percent of the global population.

ADC remains committed to documenting these challenges through narratives that give voice to marginalized communities and segments of societies that are constantly in the crosshairs of authoritarian states and populist governments

leery of challenges — real or imagined — to their unfettered power, not least of which is dissent from concerned sectors, notably pro-democracy advocates.

From the rural villages of India, Laos, and Mongolia beset by social inequity and marginalization or so-called development projects that perpetuate dispossession and injustice, to the conflict-riven ethnic communities of military junta-ruled Myanmar, ADC sought to shine a spotlight on stories, totaling close to a hundred, penned by independent journalists who continue to demonstrate passion for their work amid risks.

In the days ahead, and as resources allow, ADC will seek to put together more stories (alongside other types of content) that need to be told. This much it owes to its readers, whose unwavering interest in the collective struggles of the peoples of Asia inspires ADC to stay in pursuit of its editorial mission.

As ADN's media arm, the ADC has worked to amplify the voices and narratives of the people, tirelessly fighting for fundamental rights and democracy. This year we have released the following feature articles covering the Asia region.

**STORY LIST ( Jan to Dec, 2024)**

1	PHILIPPINES: Indigenous protest songs(Painting portraits with music)	Jan 7
2	INDIA: Halal Food in China/T.Khoula	Jan 9
3	TIBET: Ever-expanding great firewall/Cristina Chi	Jan 14
4	PAKISTAN: Periods of distress/Gafira Qadir	Jan 20
5	NDONESIA: Price of nickel profits/Adi Renaldi	Jan 21
6	INDIA: A law that terrorizes the people/Jayant Pankaj	Jan 26
7	PHILIPPINES: Without a trace (desaparadicos)/Sherwin de Vera	Jan 28
8	JAPAN: Sordid scenes behind the curtain/Suwendrini Kachuchi	Feb 2
9	VIETNAM: Media's twilight zone/Nguyễn Công Bằng	Feb 2
10	THAILAND: Museum of Popular History/Anon Chawalawan	Feb 7
11	MYANMAR: Showing up the junta/Jesua Lynn	Feb 11
12	INDONESIA: Toward a win by all means/Cristina Chi	Feb 14
13	INDIA: Kashmir saffron/Aamir Ali Bhat	Feb 13
14	On the Front Lines #1: Aoi Hiroi_From Osaka to the World/Suwendrini Kakuchi	Feb 19
15	SINGAPORE: Singapore's one-percent illusion/Hui Hui Han	Feb 21
16	INDIA: A valley of silent screams/Baqir Ali	Feb 21
17	On the Front Lines #2: Sunny Cheung (Hong Kong)/Andrew Shum	Feb 23
18	BANGLADESH: Deadly Neighbor Troubles/Piyas Biswas	Mar 8
19	JAPAN: Fundraising parties trump policy-making/Satoshi Kusakabe	Mar 3
20	ON THE FRONTLINES OF DEMOCRACY: Rooted Like Trees, Expansive Like Forests: How Pro-Democracy Work Persists/Gus Miclat As Told To Glenn Diaz	Mar 13
21	PAKISTAN: A prickly HIV problem/Haroon Janjua	Mar 13
22	HONG KONG: A silenced majority?/Andrew Shum	Mar 18
23	BANGLADESH: Waiting in pain/S. Sangram (Stephan)	Mar 20
24	INDIA: Peacocks harming agriculture/Kavitha Yarlagadda	Mar 24
25	PAKISTAN:Marital rape in Pakistan(One foot forward, but other foot stuck)/Jamaima Afridi	Mar 27
26	JAPAN:In constant search for support(Hong Kong activists in Japan)/Suwendrini Kakuchi	April 7

27	HONG KONG: [Explainer] How Hong Kong's New Security Ordinance tramples upon fundamental rights and freedoms/FORUM-ASIA	April 5
28	PHILIPPINES: Tagged and gagged/Sherwin	Apr 10
29	INDIA: India's spiral of hate/Gafira Qadir	Apr 14
30	THAILAND/MYANMAR: Living in limbo/Jesua Lynn	Apr 18
31	INDIA: Citizenship Act/Aamir Bhat	Apr 18
32	INDIA: Technology's long-awaited reboot for women/Cristina Chi	Apr 19
33	PAKISTAN: Rural women farmers bearing the brunt of climate change in Pakistan/Saba	April 28
34	VIETNAM: Amid Presidential Shakeup, Wrongful Death-Row Prisoners in Vietnam Still Await Execution/The Vietnamese	April 28
35	SOUTHEAST ASIA: AI Bias/The Conversation	May 2
36	INDONESIA: Prabowo's remarkable political reincarnation/Reno Surya	June 3
37	SOUTH ASIA: Collaborate or keep choking/Khalida Niaz, Diwash Gahatraj, Meenakshi J, Amit Baijnath Garg	May 7
38	G/R: World Press Freedom Day/Krixia	May 3
39	INDONESIA: I sprayed poisons PART I/By Adi Renaldi, Daniela Sala, and Budi Baskoro	June 12
40	INDONESIA: Transformed lives and landscapes PART II/By Adi Renaldi, Daniela Sala, and Budi Baskoro	June 12
41	SINGAPORE: Show us the money/Han Hui Hui	May 7
42	SOUTHEAST ASIA: Unsafe at home and abroad/Nguyễn Công Bằng (TRANG)	May 15
43	INDIA: United we stand/ Zaid Bin Shabir	June 16
44	HONG KONG: Hong Kong's banned pro-democracy song/Andrew Shum	June 20
45	INDIA: The power of the ballot/Kanika Gupta	May 20
46	NEPAL: Helping hands or hindrances?/Marty Logan	May 23
47	(Nepal) Songs for saving/Tanka Dhakal	June 28
48	JAPAN: A long wait for justice (Eugenics law)/Suvendrini Kakuchi	July 1
49	INDIA: Aftermath of election/Kaustuv Bandyopadhyay	july 5
50	THAILAND: A seasonal burning issue/Pravit Rojanaphruk	May 27
51	AFGHANISTAN: Killing media not so softly/Khudai Noor Nasar	May 25
52	INDIA: Kashmir's ignored community/Aamir Ali Bhat	July 7

53	LAOS: Uncivil supression/Nguy n Công B ng (TRANG)	July 7
54	INDIA/AFGHANISTAN:A diplomatic limbo/Kanika Gupta	July 14
55	PHILIPPINES: Sex, stigma, and HIV transmission/Diana G. Mendoza	July 13
56	PHILIPPINES: Protection from prejudice/Diana G. Mendoza	July 24
57	ASIA: Good intentions can have bad results/Qurratul Ayen (invoice c/o Mam Tess)	July 26
58	MYANMAR: The art of resistance/Jesua Lynn	July 27
59	PAKISTAN: No minor matter/Zain Gul	Aug 1
60	PAKISTAN: The sit-down standoff/ Somaiyah Hafeez	Aug 3
61	THAILAND: Democracy on the dock/Pravit Rojanaphruk	Aug 5
62	SOUTH KOREA: Principles before politics, please/Hyun-phil na	Aug 9
63	LAOS: Mine leak has villages wary of riverwater/Lamxay Duangchan (Mnyphone)	Aug 12
64	PAKISTAN: Where words can kill/ Tehreem Azeem	Aug 17
65	BANGLADESH: Boots behind the scenes/Piyas Biswas	Aug 24
66	INDIA: False news lead to real violence/Gafira Qadir	Aug 28
67	BANGLADESH: Time to reassess and recalibrate relations/Kanika Gupta	Aug 30
68	MYANMAR: War reaches Myanmar's urban areas/Jesua Lynn	Sep 14
69	BANGLADESH: Flawed recognition/Piyas Biswas	Sep 15
70	AFGHANISTAN: Failing Afghanistan's female population/Kanika Gupta	Sept 24
71	HONG KONG: Firing the messenger/ Andrew Shum	Sept 26
72	PAKISTAN: Protection or pressure?/Saba Chaudhary	Sept 30
73	MYANMAR: Myanmar's two terrors/Jesua Lynn	Oct 1
74	INDIA: Voicing out through votes/Adil Kumar	Oct 5
75	INDONESIA: The perils of protesting in Indonesia/Reno Surya	Oct 13
76	INDIA: Shut out of India/Diwash Gahatraj	Oct 14
77	SOUTH ASIA: Learning from the youth/Krixia Subingsubing	Oct 20
78	VIETNAM: Death by a flawed system/Nguyen Cong Bang (Eliza Trang)	Oct 23
79	PHILIPPINES: All in the family/Sherwin de Vera	Nov 7
80	INDIA: Gathering for justice/ Jamaima Afridi	Nov 8

81	CHINA: The cost of defending the defenseless in China/Cristina Chi	Nov 9
82	BANGLADESH: A fish called hilsa/Diwash Gahatraj	Nov 14
83	PAKISTAN: The bad and the bad about Pakistan's internet/Jamaima Afridi	Nov 17
84	PHILIPPINES: A terror of a law/Sherwin de Vera	Nov 27
85	INDONESIA: Nickel be damned/ Garry Lotulung	Dec 1
86	SOUTH ASIA: Struggling to weather through/Anmol Irfan	Dec 1
87	PHILIPPINES: Formidable dynasties in Philippine politics/PCIJ	Dec 13
88	MONGOLIA/VIETNAM: Lives in the shadows/Myagmarjargal Dashdorj, Enkhbayar Zorigbaatar, Ichinkhorloo Arivsan	Dec 13
89	BANGLADESH: Empty villages, crowded jungles/S. Sngam	Dec 17
90	PAKISTAN: Lives lost, interrupted/ Zain Gul	Dec 21
91	ASIA: How to trump trumpian impacts in Asia/Soo Suh	Dec 26

## B. WEBINARS

### Webinar Series on Bangladesh

#### Bangladeshi Election 2024: Quality of Democracy, Human Rights, and Future Directions

**Bangladesh after the 2024 elections**  
Future directions and impacts on the society

**ADN** SYDNEY POLICY & ANALYSIS CENTRE  
ASIA DEMOCRACY NETWORK

April 5, 2024  
1200 GMT

**Panelists**

**Ali Riaz**  
Distinguished Professor, Department of Politics and Government, Illinois State University

**Geoffrey Macdonald**  
Senior Advisor, Asia Division, International Republican Institute

**Jami Spykerman**  
Senior Program Adviser, International Republic Institute (IRI), Washington DC

**Smruti S Pattanaik**  
Research Fellow, Manohar Parrikar Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses, New Delhi

**Opening Remarks**

**Ichal Supriadi**  
Secretary General, Asia Democracy Network

**Moderator**

**Mubashar Hasan**  
Post Doctoral Fellow, University of Oslo

The Asia Democracy Network's first webinar on Bangladesh examined the deeply flawed nature of the country's recent parliamentary elections. Discussants characterized the electoral process as "hegemonic electoral authoritarianism," where the ruling party manipulated elections to legitimize its control, suppress dissent, and marginalize opposition parties. The boycott by the main opposition party, BNP, and widespread political repression underscored the lack of electoral integrity. Participants highlighted the use of state machinery to persecute opposition figures, suppress protests, and curb free expression, all contributing to an authoritarian drift in governance.

The discussion also addressed the implications of these trends on Bangladesh's political system and its relationships with key global partners. Concerns about human rights violations, shrinking civic space, and the targeting of minorities were raised, alongside recommendations for fostering competition and implementing reforms to safeguard democratic norms. The webinar concluded with a call for greater advocacy by civil society and international actors to promote accountability, support fair electoral processes, and address governance challenges in Bangladesh.

## Challenges for Sustainable Growth, Development, and Democracy in Bangladesh



**Webinar 02**

**Challenges of sustainable growth, development, and democracy in Bangladesh**

June 4, 2024 1200 GMT

**Panelists**

**Dr Fahmida Khatun**  
Executive Director, Centre for Policy Dialogue

**Dr Syed Akhtar Mahmood**  
Economist, formerly with the World Bank Group

**Professor Naomi Hossain**  
Department of Development Studies, SOAS University of London

**Opening Remarks**

**Ichal Supriadi**  
Secretary General, Asia Democracy Network

**Moderator**

**Jyoti Rahman**  
Director, Sydney Policy and Analysis Centre

The second webinar in ADN's Bangladesh series, focused on the country's ongoing economic and governance challenges. Discussants highlighted the severe stress on Bangladesh's economy, attributed to internal factors like fiscal mismanagement and poor governance, as well as external shocks from the COVID-19 pandemic and the Ukraine War. Issues such as declining foreign exchange reserves, high

inflation, and stagnant private sector investments were explored, along with concerns over growing income inequality and insufficient employment opportunities. Participants stressed the need for policy coherence, diversification of exports beyond the ready-made garments sector, and attracting efficiency-seeking foreign direct investment.

The webinar also underscored the critical link between democracy and sustainable development. It was argued that the lack of accountability and the weakening of democratic institutions have exacerbated economic mismanagement and allowed crony capitalism to flourish. The diminishing ability of citizens to express concerns

freely and the absence of institutional checks and balances were identified as barriers to equitable growth. Discussants called for greater political accountability, institutional reforms, and policies that prioritize inclusive development to ensure sustainable economic progress and social equity.

## Bangladesh's Youth Uprising: Towards a Democratic Future

Webinar 04

### Bangladesh's Youth Uprising Towards a democratic future

August 23, 2024 | 1100 GMT | Register at: [bit.ly/BangladeshWeb4](https://bit.ly/BangladeshWeb4)



The third webinar in ADN's Bangladesh series, focused on the unprecedented youth-led protests that toppled Sheikh Hasina's regime in 2024. The movement began as a demand for fair recruitment in public sector jobs, driven by frustration over widespread unemployment and discriminatory hiring practices. The protests escalated when government forces and ruling party cadres responded with violence, killing dozens of demonstrators. Women played a pivotal role in breaking

the environment of fear, inspiring more citizens to join the protests. The uprising culminated in the resignation of Sheikh Hasina, marking a historic shift towards renewed democratic aspirations.

Discussions in the webinar highlighted the role of cultural activism, particularly rap and hip-hop, which mobilized and sustained the youth movement by providing emotional and mental strength. The session also addressed the ongoing

reforms initiated by the interim government, led by Nobel laureate Muhammad Yunus, including efforts to investigate enforced disappearances, review draconian laws like the Cyber Security Act, and ensure accountability for human rights

violations. The webinar underscored the importance of fostering youth engagement, promoting gender equality in education and leadership, and creating safe spaces for creative expression to sustain democratic momentum.

## Webinar 4 - Is Bangladesh on the Right Track? People's Demands and Leadership's Response

Webinar 05

### Is Bangladesh on the Right Track? People's Demands and Leadership's Response

November 28, 2024 | 0900 GMT or 1500 Dhaka time

Register at: [bit.ly/Bangladeshdisc5](https://bit.ly/Bangladeshdisc5)



The webinar focused on the widening gap between public expectations and the leadership's response to the country's pressing challenges. Participants discussed the economic strain marked by inflation, declining job opportunities, and fiscal mismanagement, emphasizing the need for urgent reforms to address structural inefficiencies. The erosion of democratic

governance was a central theme, with concerns over weakening state institutions, shrinking civic space, and the lack of accountability within the leadership. Participants highlighted the public's increasing disillusionment with the political class, as evidenced by widespread protests demanding transparency and equitable policies.

The session also addressed the role of grass-roots movements in driving change, noting how youth-led uprisings and civic activism have called for an overhaul of governance systems. Speakers emphasized that sustainable progress depends on bridging the trust deficit between citizens and the government by ensuring institutional accountability and inclusive leadership. Recommendations included strengthening democratic norms, promoting civic engagement, and implementing people-centric policies to rebuild confidence in governance and set Bangladesh on a path of equitable development and democratic stability. The webinar underscored the urgency of leadership responding proactively to people's demands to safeguard the nation's democratic and socio-economic future.

#### Webinar Outcome - Briefing Papers

1. [Bangladesh Briefing Paper #1] Quality of democracy, human rights & future directions
2. [Bangladesh Briefing Paper #2] Democracy in Bangladesh: Challenges for sustainable growth, development and democracy in Bangladesh
3. [Bangladesh Briefing Paper #3] Bangladesh's Youth Uprising: Towards a Democratic Future
4. [Bangladesh Briefing Paper #4] Is Bangladesh on the Right Track? People's Demands and Leadership's Response

## Sri Lanka's Presidential Elections 2024 – Post-Election Landscape and Democratic Prospects

**Webinar**

**SLDN**  
SRI LANKA DEMOCRACY NETWORK

**Human Rights Hub**

**ADN**  
ASIA DEMOCRACY NETWORK

### Sri Lanka's Presidential Elections 2024: Post-Election Landscape and Democratic Prospects

**Speakers:**

-   
Marlon Ariyasinghe  
PhD Student & Political Analyst
-   
Bhavani Fonseka  
Senior Researcher  
Centre for Policy Alternatives
-   
Balasingham Skanthakumar  
Co-Editor  
Polity Magazine
-   
Dr. Manjesh Rana  
Senior Program Officer  
Election Observation Mission  
ANFREL

**Moderator:**

-   
Mahishaa Balraj  
Attorney-at-Law  
Co-Founder-Hashtag Generation

**4 October 2024**

**4 pm Colombo /IST**

**[bit.ly/LKAelections](https://bit.ly/LKAelections)**

This webinar provided a comprehensive analysis of Sri Lanka's 2024 presidential elections, focusing on the dramatic shift in political power and its

implications for the country's future. Discussions unpacked the rise of the National People's Power (NPP) as a challenger to traditional elites,

driven by public discontent, youth engagement, and the influence of grassroots movements. Social media's role in amplifying anti-establishment narratives and mobilizing voters was a key point of discussion. Panelists emphasized the historical context of political power dynamics and how the elections signal a potential turning point for governance and reform in Sri Lanka.

The conversation also delved into Sri Lanka's pressing economic challenges, including the

complexities of debt restructuring and the viability of the new leadership's economic policies. Participants discussed the critical role of civil society in fostering democratic accountability, ensuring transparency, and safeguarding the independence of institutions during this transitional period. Regional implications were explored, highlighting lessons for other pro-democracy movements in Asia and the potential for stronger regional solidarity to address common challenges and advance democratic values.

## People's Sovereignty and Democratic Resilience in South Asia

SOUTH ASIA DEMOCRACY CONSOLIDATION SERIES:  
**People's Sovereignty and Democratic Resilience in South Asia**

📅 September 13, 2024      📍 [bit.ly/DemCon2024](https://bit.ly/DemCon2024)  
 🕒 11 AM - 12:30 PM IST



**Speakers:**

- Sarah Atiq, Journalist, BBC
- Meena Menon - Convenor, Working People's Coalition
- Ferdows Lisa - Human Rights Activist, Bangladesh
- Aiman Rasheed - Deputy Director, International Republican Institute, Maldives

**Moderator:**

- Deekshya Illangasinghe - Executive Director, SAHR



The webinar, *People's Sovereignty and Democratic Resilience in South Asia*, held as part of consolidation efforts in South Asia, convened civil society actors from across the region to discuss pressing challenges to democracy and human rights. Participants highlighted the fragmentation of civil society in South Asia due to geopolitical tensions and emphasized the importance of rebuilding collaboration to strengthen collective efforts. Discussions explored the declining trust in electoral politics, the rise of grassroots

movements, and the critical role of youth-led protests in reclaiming sovereignty and holding governments accountable. Key examples include student movements in Bangladesh and Sri Lanka and civil-led protests in India, which have demonstrated the potential of civic engagement in demanding democratic reforms.

The event also underscored the need for institutional reforms, stronger regional cooperation, and the revival of bodies like SAARC to address

common challenges. Participants raised concerns over shrinking democratic spaces, the erosion of public trust in elections, and the co-opting of technology by right-wing forces. Civil society leaders called for deeper cross-border solidarity, enhanced engagement with youth, and a renewed

focus on socioeconomic rights to counter structural inequalities. The discussions concluded with a call for progressive movements to reclaim their active role in social and political change while fostering inclusivity and diverse representation.

## Unpacking India's 2024 Lok Sabha Elections: Voter Sentiments, Democratic Shifts, and Future Trajectories

The graphic is a dark blue rectangular banner. In the top right corner is the ADAN logo, which consists of the letters 'ADAN' in a large, bold, white font, with 'ASIA DEMOCRACY NETWORK' in a smaller, white font below it. On the left side, there is a white box with the word 'Webinar' in blue. The main title of the webinar is centered in a large, white, sans-serif font. Below the title, there are two columns of speakers and moderators. Each person is represented by a circular portrait photo, followed by their name and title in white text. At the bottom right, there are three white boxes with icons and text: a calendar icon for the date '13 June 2024', a clock icon for the time '4 pm IST', and a location pin icon for the URL 'https://bit.ly/IndiaWeb1'.

**Webinar**

**ADAN**  
ASIA DEMOCRACY  
NETWORK

### Unpacking India's 2024 Lok Sabha Elections: Voter Sentiments, Democratic Shifts, and Future Trajectories

**Speakers**

**Moderated by**

**Meena Menon**  
President  
Working People's  
Coalition

**Dr. Vipul Mudgal**  
Director & Chief Executive  
Common Cause

**Dr. Niranjan Sahoo**  
Senior Fellow  
Observer Research  
Foundation

**Ruhi Tewari**  
Senior Journalist

**Dr. Kaustuv Bandyopadhyay**  
Asia Democracy Network  
Vice Chair

13 June 2024

4 pm IST

<https://bit.ly/IndiaWeb1>

The webinar, *Unpacking India's 2024 Lok Sabha Elections: Voter Sentiments, Democratic Shifts, and Future Trajectories*, explored the election's key outcomes and their broader implications. The discussions highlighted the significant reduction in the BJP's seat count, signaling growing voter dissatisfaction with centralized power and divisive politics. The India Alliance's emphasis on issues like unemployment, inflation, and social justice resonated strongly, reflecting a shift in voter priorities toward substantive governance. The maturity of the Indian electorate was evident in the nuanced verdict, demonstrating a clear demand for more inclusive and accountable leadership.

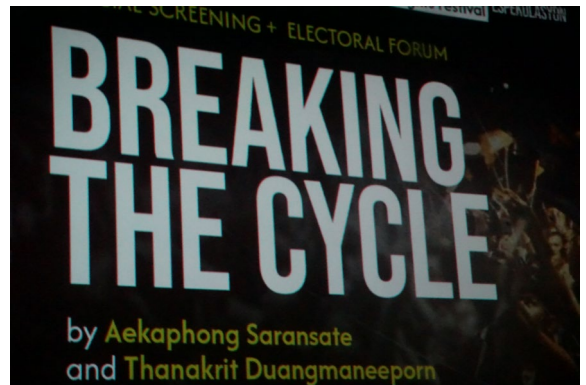
The webinar also examined concerns over the erosion of democratic institutions during the BJP's tenure, raising questions about the health of India's democracy. The election results were seen as a potential turning point, offering hope for the revitalization of civil society and social movements that have faced significant challenges. Discussions underscored the importance of addressing economic and social issues, rejecting polarizing politics, and recognizing the critical role of state leadership in shaping future political trajectories.

### C. ARTIVISM INITIATIVE

#### Film Showing: **Breaking the Cycle**

ADN partnered with DAKILA and ActiveVista in the 12th ActiveVista Human Rights Festival's Screening and Forum for the film "Breaking the Cycle," directed by Thanakrit Duangmaneepon and Aekapho Saransateon, October 5, 2024, Saturday, from 1:00 pm to 5:00 pm at Gateway Cineplex, Quezon City, Metro Manila, Philippines. ADN was represented in the Forum by Senior Program Officer, Karel Galang.

Breaking The Cycle captures the political awakening among Thais after the rise and fall of Thanathorn, a young politician who calls to end the cycle of coups d'état. The film explores the 2019 election in Thailand, which marked the end of five years of full military rule and a new group of young politicians campaigning against an authoritarian constitution, sparking hope and a once-in-a-generation youth movement.



# 6

## ADN 5-Year Strategy

### A. ASIA DEMOCRACY NETWORK STRATEGIC PLAN

In 2024, we took a major step forward by developing a Strategic Plan for 2024–2028, a roadmap to address the pressing challenges facing democracy in Asia. This plan reflects ADN’s decade-long journey and is shaped by the realities of shrinking civic spaces, rising authoritarianism, and the pervasive impact of disinformation. Its creation was a collaborative process grounded in the insights and experiences of those actively working to defend democracy in the region.

The process began with a thorough reflection on ADN’s achievements over the past ten years. Key milestones—such as fostering solidarity across movements, empowering youth leaders, and protecting civic spaces—served as the foundation for envisioning what more could be done. Crucially, the plan was informed by consultations and interviews with ADN’s partners, members, and advocates, ensuring it responds to the realities on the ground and the challenges facing democratic movements today.

The Strategic Plan identifies four key program strategies. The first is **Consolidating Democracy**, which focuses on strengthening civil society networks by fostering solidarity at national, subnational, and regional levels. It also emphasizes developing authentic Asian democracy narratives, supporting media cooperation, and

protecting democracy champions who face significant risks.

The second strategy, **Inclusive Democracy Through Youth Leadership**, highlights the role of young people in shaping the future. ADN will expand initiatives like the Asia Democracy Academy and South Asian Youth Network to equip youth with the tools, networks, and opportunities to become effective advocates and leaders for democracy.

**Enabling Local-Global Ecosystems for Democracy** forms the third strategy. This involves bridging grassroots movements with global initiatives, ensuring that local realities influence international decision-making. By engaging with platforms such as the Summit for Democracy and the Open Government Partnership, ADN aims to amplify regional voices and foster collaboration.

Finally, **Exploring New Frontiers in Democracy** addresses emerging issues at the intersection of democracy and areas like climate change, digital governance, and gender equality. This strategy focuses on building partnerships and creating educational opportunities to equip advocates with the knowledge and tools to tackle these complex challenges.

**ASIA DEMOCRACY  
NETWORK (ADN)  
STRATEGIC PLAN**

**2024-2028**

# 7

## Financial Report

<b>2024 Grant Funds</b>		<b>932,350</b>
Operational Expenditures (Salaries, Benefits, Office Space, Office Supplies, Communications)	304,318	
Program Expenditures	376,515	
Balance of December 31, 2024		251,517



These are the artwork attached to the Asia Democracy Chronicles stories, [INDONESIA: The perils of protesting in Indonesia](#)



These are the artwork attached to the Asia Democracy Chronicles stories, [AFGHANISTAN/ PAKISTAN: Squeezed on all sides](#)

# 8

## ADN Governance and Membership

In April 2024, the General Assembly meeting took place in Jakarta, Indonesia where we invited ADN's members and governing council members to discuss and decide on governance issues. With the COVID pandemic,

significantly delaying the rotating of governing council members and the addition of new members, during this assembly a new governing council has been elected and new members added.

### 2024-2026 ADN Governing Council Members

1. Forum Asia
2. Asia Democracy Research Network
3. GPPAC
4. SafeNet
5. Asian Muslim Action Network
6. Asia Dalit Rights Forum

### New Members to ADN

We also welcomed new members to the ADN network.

[Asian Indigenous People's Pact \(AIPP\) – Regional network of organization working on Indigenous people's rights](#)

[ASEAN Sogie Caucus – ASEAN network of LGBTIQ activists and organizations working on gender equality and LGBTIQ rights.](#)

Council of Asian Liberals and Democrats – CALD was welcomed into the ADN network as an Associate Member – CALD unites local and democratic political parties across Southeast Asia, promoting dialogue and collaboration.

Notably, since 2023 the ADN secretariat and the governing council members have been working on developing a new five-year strategy. The final draft of the plan was approved at the general assembly meeting.



These are the artwork attached to the Asia Democracy Chronicles stories, [INDIA: Meet the solar sisters of India](#)





