

PLATFORM FOR AFRICAN DEMOCRATS

CAPE TOWN STATEMENT

23 MARCH 2024

The Platform for African Democrats (PAD) met in the Parliamentary Precinct in Cape Town on 22-23 March 2024, bringing together over 50 political and civil society leaders, most from Africa, but including the former president of Ukraine and leader of the Orange Revolution, Viktor Yushchenko, and the Venezuelan leader Leopoldo Lopez.

The Platform is the outcome of a inclusive process started four years ago, initially bringing African opposition leaders together around election monitoring missions, first in Somaliland, and later in Kenya, Lesotho and Liberia. Several workshops have accompanied this process, including in Hargeisa and Cadenabbia, and culminating in a gathering in Poland which produced the [Gdansk Declaration](#). The Platform recognises the ongoing struggle between autocracy and democracy, the heroic democratic campaigns exemplified by the colour revolutions, and the central role of Iran, Russia and China in promoting autocracy, and rejects the jaded caricature of democrats as counter-revolutionaries, neo-liberals or western proxies.

The Cape Town PAD event was co-hosted by The Brenthurst Foundation, the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung and the World Liberty Congress, and took place in a year with 64 polls world-wide of which 19 are in Africa.


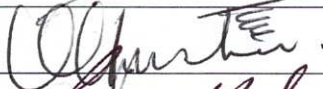
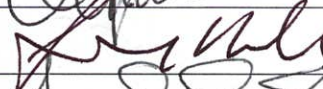

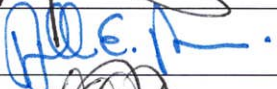

THE PAD MEETING OBSERVED THAT:

1. Free, open and accountable democracy is a necessary pre-condition for the improvement of the lives of the people, enabling inclusive economic growth, jobs, health, education and security.
2. The [overwhelming majority of Africans polled](#) continue to prefer democracy to other forms of government.
3. While there are more elections than ever before, many of these lack open and free contestation and transparent counting. Three-quarters of Africa's 2024 elections will be held in countries considered by Freedom House to be 'partly' or 'not free'.
4. Attacks on democracy anywhere, such as the invasion of Ukraine, the largest humanitarian crisis of our time in Sudan, and the conflict in the eastern DRC, have costs for democrats everywhere.
5. Former liberation movements are, in many instances, failing to live up to the promise of replacing oppressive systems with thriving democracies and are, instead, actively collaborating to hollow out democracy, manipulate the outcome of elections to stay in power and capture the state.
6. Electoral manipulation is taking place through the weaponization of media, fake news, AI-assisted propaganda, and other technological interventions in voting and counting.
7. The construct of the 'Global South' is being abused by autocrats to suggest that Africans and others in the less developed world do not support democracy while credible research clearly shows that the majority favour free elections and democracy, and there is a clear correlations between development performance and the quality of democracy.
8. Even though autocrats play a malign role in support of each other, democrats can expect little help from outside. Success has to come from local ownership and organisation.

RECOGNISING THIS REALITY, PAD CALLS ON ALL DEMOCRATS TO:

1. Set their own agenda in standing with those who want to build free, open, accountable societies where governance is directed at improving the lives of all the people.
2. Unite against the rising tide of authoritarianism, military dictatorships and hollowed democracies where elections are abused to preserve power and economies captured to benefit an illegitimate elite.
3. Be vigilant at home and abroad by observing elections and reporting fairly on their outcomes, accepting the legitimacy only of those which can be confidently said to have taken place freely and fairly.
4. Take action against those who abuse elections to retain power illegitimately including by:
 - Speaking out loudly against electoral abuses.
 - Targeting the perpetrators of such abuses with economic and political isolation.
 - Applying diplomatic pressure on such countries to reform and hold proper elections.
5. Support and defend democracy across the world, from Ukraine's struggle against violent invasion, to the fight of the Sudanese people against the rise of authoritarianism.
6. Recognise the difference between countries of the 'Free South' where democracy is honoured through free elections and peaceful transfers of power and the 'Oppressed South' where democracy is illegal or fails to allow for free elections and open, transparent and accountable societies.
7. Ensure internal party process of democracy, transparency and leadership terms limits, get better organized, hold each other to account, set priorities, hold each other to account, develop a clear narrative and put people first to make a difference.
8. Entertain coalitions built on transparency, trust and shared values, signalled by clear boundaries and red-lines, and which are steered by compromise and communication.
9. Aim to build a wider 'magnetic field' drawing in democrats beyond formal political parties, strengthening solidarity around key principles and concerns.
10. Collaborate across regions inter alia to produce a 'playbook for democrats' by the time of the next PAD meeting.

SIGNATORIES: PAD STATEMENT, 23 MARCH 2024

Name	Organisation	Signature
VIKTOR YUSHCHENKO	UKRAINE	
KATERYNA YUSHCHENKO	UKRAINE	
GREG MILLS	BLINDHURST FOUNDATION	
John Steenhuisen	Democratic Alliance	
Leopoldo López	World Liberty Congress	
Melera Gudina (Pep)	Open Federalist Congress (OFC)	

Nic Cheeseman	Democracy in Africa	
Souleymane COULIBALY	own capacity	
FELIX NKONGHO	CHRODA	
UWANASHA ZILALI MUBARE	ACT-WAZAMENDO	Moderne
Zitto Kabwe	ACT wazamendo	
DOROTHY SEMU	ACT WAZAMENDO	
ABEL CHINUKUNYU	PPA-FA-SERUIRANGOLA	
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Habisa Velenkosini	Torkatha Freedom Party	
Adalberto Junior	UNITA	
Geordin Hill-Lewis	DA	
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FRANCIS ZAAKE	YOUTH LEADER NATIONAL UNITY PLATFORM Uganda.	
NORMAN ISHIMWE SHAMENYE	JAMBO ASBC	
HENRY SANOS	SABI GROUP	
KIZZA-BESICME	PEOPLES FRONT FOR TRANSITION	
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Alypale Muluzi	United Democratic Front	

