



**Embassy of Sweden**  
**Seoul**

# **Democracy in the Times of Corona**

Experiences of Australia, Republic of Korea  
and Sweden

Webinar report, 9 June 2020





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International IDEA  
Strömsborg  
SE-103 34 Stockholm  
Sweden  
Telephone: +46 8 698 37 00  
Email: [info@idea.int](mailto:info@idea.int)  
Website: <<https://www.idea.int>>

Embassy of Sweden  
Danam Building, 8th Fl.  
10 Sowol-ro, Jung-Gu  
Seoul 04527  
Republic of Korea  
Telephone: +82 2 3703-3700  
Email: [ambassaden.seoul@gov.se](mailto:ambassaden.seoul@gov.se)  
Website: <<https://www.swedenabroad.se/en/embassies/south-korea-seoul/>>

DOI: <<https://doi.org/10.31752/idea.2020.64>>

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## Background

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The Embassy of Sweden to the Republic of Korea and the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA) co-organized a webinar on 9 June 2020 on 'Democracy in the times of Corona: Experiences of Australia, the Republic of Korea and Sweden'. The webinar combined on-site participation from the Embassy of Sweden in Seoul with a global audience online (International IDEA 2020b).

The COVID-19 outbreak has affected the world in all respects, including democracy and fundamental freedoms such as the freedoms of expression and movement, and the right to health. This presents a central challenge for democracies: how to balance mitigating the outbreak with respecting democratic principles such as accountability and transparency and respect for civil and political rights. Many countries have implemented stringent restrictions to contain the virus, which have implications for human rights and freedoms. The webinar examined the pandemic's potential consequences for democracy worldwide using the case studies of Australia, the Republic of Korea and Sweden.

According to International IDEA's Global State of Democracy (GSoD) report 2019 (International IDEA 2020a), these three countries are among the highest-performing democracies in the world (see Annex A), but their different strategies and responses to the virus reveal the nuances and importance of national contexts in assessing democratic performance. Variations were revealed as the webinar panellists explored questions such as: How important are the robustness of institutions, levels of societal trust and access to information when dealing with a pandemic without undermining democracy? What does COVID-19 reveal about political systems, leadership and citizenry? What are COVID-19's medium- and longer-term implications for democracy?

The webinar is part of the Swedish Government's Drive for Democracy initiative, which aims to provide support to the institutions, processes and defenders of democracy, while responding to the growing threats and challenges facing democracy. As part of this initiative, Sweden co-organizes 'Democracy Talks' with partners all over the world.

Session 1 of the webinar was a high-level panel discussion chaired by International IDEA's Secretary-General, Kevin Casas-Zamora. It featured H. E. Marise Payne, Foreign Minister of Australia; H. E. Kang Kyung-wha, Foreign Minister of the Republic of Korea; and H. E. Ann Linde, Foreign Minister of Sweden.

Session 2 was an expert discussion of COVID-19 and democracy, moderated by H. E. Jakob Hallgren, Ambassador of Sweden to the Republic of Korea. This session included Professor Cheryl Saunders, Professor Emeritus at Melbourne Law School, Australia; Professor Lee Sook Jong, Former President and current Distinguished Fellow of East Asia Institute, Professor at Sungkyunkwan University, Republic of Korea; Professor Staffan Lindberg, Director, V-Dem Institute, Department of Political Science, University of Gothenburg, Sweden; and Leena Rikkilä Tamang, Director for Asia and the Pacific, International IDEA.

## Highlights of the webinar

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The COVID-19 pandemic has functioned as an x-ray, exposing the strengths and weaknesses of institutions and societies. The webinar's discussions confirmed that all three countries have responded positively. Each can draw upon its institutional and societal strengths to face the current challenges.

### The pandemic as an x-ray

All three countries are relatively prosperous and have effective health systems and strong scientific communities and health care systems. Australia and the Republic of Korea arguably benefit from natural advantages, including their distance from the rest of the world. Both were also able to draw upon previous experience with emergencies. Australia learned lessons from its devastating bushfire season of 2019–2020; both the leadership and citizenry were aware of the need for crisis management and accepted that a state of emergency could disrupt the normal way of doing politics. Similarly, the Republic of Korea (along with number of other Asian countries) has applied lessons learned from the SARS and MERS epidemics; it understood early on that swift action, particularly testing, is required. Sweden relied on the people's high level of trust in state institutions and medical authorities.

The expert panellists pointed out how the pandemic revealed persisting inequalities within societies; vulnerable populations including migrant workers, immigrant communities, refugees and asylum seekers, and elderly people in hospices were the hardest hit by the pandemic. Other groups also scapegoated these populations. In the Republic of Korea, for example, religious minorities in particular were singled out in the early days of the pandemic for spreading the virus. The rising rates of unemployment and dependency on state welfare caused by the pandemic are also making more people vulnerable.

The pandemic is accelerating both positive and negative global democratic trends. Therefore it is critical to keep a close eye on aspects in which there have been declines. As during prior pandemics such as SARS and Zika, inequalities have increased as a result of COVID-19, and other risks are enormous, including economic unrest, increased surveillance and a rise in ethno-nationalism. Ministers on the high-level panel from Australia and Sweden pointed out that several countries have already experienced attempts to undermine democratic processes and institutions and consolidate abuses of power.

### Impact on state of democracy?

Before the pandemic, many democracy indicators, including the V-Dem and International IDEA GSoD indices, warned about growing authoritarianism and democratic decline, even in established democracies. In Australia, the GSoD has detected a decline in Media Integrity since 2017, and a



decline in Civil Liberties since 2016, especially the freedom of association and assembly. In Sweden, social group equality and access to justice have declined over the last decade. In the Republic of Korea, no democratic declines were noted between 2013 and 2018; it has made steady progress on all major aspects of democracy over the last five years, including fundamental rights and the absence of corruption. However, the performance of the Republic of Korea on free political parties, gender equality and independence of the judiciary remain behind many other high-performing democracies.

Even if democracy in Australia, the Republic of Korea and Sweden may survive the COVID-19 pandemic intact, the world is interconnected, and countries are interdependent. Each country's recovery will largely depend on how the socio-economic consequences of the pandemic are managed. The coronavirus pandemic will eventually be contained, but its effects will last for years. Regardless, all three countries discussed here have actively highlighted democracy and development support in their foreign policy objectives; this type of solidarity with developing countries and those in democratic transition will be needed now more than ever. The very concepts of resilience and fragility may need to be redefined—and applied beyond the so-called developing world. All countries have become aware of their fragilities and need to build their resilience.

## Learning from the crisis

The webinar discussions highlighted the fact that the pandemic provides a valuable opportunity to learn about how democracies respond to crises. Some of those lessons relate to the workings of institutions, ensuring accountability, organizing elections, and the importance of evidence and expert input for decision-making. For instance, the Republic of Korea organized successful elections and Australia's National Cabinet is as an example of institutional innovation to promote better coordination.

Courts have had to devise ways to ensure access to justice even during lockdowns. Many nations are examining whether their constitutions and legal frameworks can truly pass the stress test, or if amendments are needed.

Every pandemic endangers groups that are politically and economically weak. Awareness generated in the current context has highlighted the need to address issues that disproportionately affect minorities.

The pandemic has revealed that the social contract between states and societies requires renewal and reflection through deliberations. Democracies should be able to effectively deliberate; public scrutiny, public debate and discussions at all levels of society is required. Several critical questions are likely to shape the post-COVID-19 debate. For example, what story will people remember about this time: is this a war to be won, a sickness to recover from, or a moment of great transformation, as the head of the International Monetary Fund has suggested? Will people remember that they were looked after, or left alone? Were people treated equally, or were some more privileged than others?



## Panel discussions

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### **Kevin Casas-Zamora, Secretary-General, International IDEA**

*'The COVID pandemic is drastically changing the world, causing disruption of a magnitude not seen since World War II.'*

In his introductory remarks, Dr Casas-Zamora gave a brief overview of International IDEA's role in (1) developing cutting-edge comparative knowledge resources in the institute's priority areas and (2) helping to apply and use these resources in various contexts at the global, regional and local levels.

He noted that the COVID-19 pandemic is drastically changing the world, causing disruption of a magnitude not seen since World War II. In addition to a definitive global health crisis, the pandemic is likely to cause an economic crisis. In International IDEA's view, the pandemic will also continue to have political implications around the world. Political leaders have responded to the crisis with an unprecedented set of measures designed to contain the spread of the virus, address public health and keep economies afloat. Yet authoritarian regimes, and to some extent democratic countries, have used the pandemic as an excuse to tighten their control and political grip on power, restricting citizens' fundamental rights. The use of extraordinary measures and emergency powers can be justified to address the crisis to some degree, but some measures have also undermined principles of democracy such as accountability, transparency, rule of law, minority rights, freedom of expression and other civil liberties.

Casas-Zamora introduced the webinar, which he described as focusing on how democracies can best balance the principles of democracy and avoid undermining democratic processes and institutions, while addressing the pandemic effectively.

### **Session 1**

#### **Summary of the ministerial panel**

### **Marise Payne, Senator and Foreign Minister of Australia**

*'Democracies may look imperfect, but with the admission of mistakes where they are made, these challenges may be overcome.'*

Minister Payne said it is imperative to prevent the crisis from making countries forget the principles of democracy and human rights. Openness and transparency are essential in addressing the pandemic, but unfortunately some countries have exploited the situation to undermine democracy and put more authoritarian systems in place. For instance, China passed new national security laws that affected Hong Kong residents without consulting the people, which undermined the 'one country, two systems' agreement. The spread of disinformation has also been rampant, taking advantage of the need to communicate with one another during the pandemic.

Senator Payne remarked that the balance of respect for civil and political rights and public safety are currently under debate, including in Australia. Yet she reassured participants that ‘the pandemic has proven that together, we can work towards recovery’.

**Kang Kyung-wha, Foreign Minister of the Republic of Korea**

*‘We know what works: working closely with the media. Openness increases trust in the government.’*

Minister Kang said that the Republic of Korea was able to maintain and preserve the freedoms of movement and speech, and to hold parliamentary elections during the pandemic. The country managed to flatten the curve before the April elections and had a record high voter turnout. The National Election Commission has shared its experiences internationally. International IDEA has accounted for the Korean experience as well (International IDEA 2020).

The Republic of Korea was one of the first countries to be affected by COVID-19, but thanks to effective government action and civic cooperation, it handled the first wave well. Robust testing and managing the infection have been key to the country’s success in managing the virus. Facial mask supplies were difficult to come by at first, but this problem was overcome with the help of the private sector. Panic buying can be caused by distrust in the government, but this was not a problem in the Republic of Korea. Public trust in government also made individual location tracing possible without collecting private information. However, concerns about the surge in the use of digital surveillance tools for contact tracing have also been raised, especially their effect on human rights.

Minister Kang mentioned three main areas of concern for democracy in relation to the pandemic: freedom of movement, freedom of information and elections. The government of the Republic of Korea paid utmost attention to these issues and took care to uphold these rights and freedoms. It sought to balance maintaining (economic) activities without a full lockdown while keeping its borders open. Unfortunately, the country’s battle with COVID-19 is not over as there has been a recent rise in cases, thought to be due largely to the opening of nightclubs and other recreational businesses. This demonstrates that there is no room for complacency in this pandemic.

Governments are there to keep the public safe; that has been the South Korean government’s primary purpose during the pandemic. Minister Kang mentioned that COVID-19’s impact has been overwhelming at a global level and has exposed political and economic fault lines. Democracy and human rights have undoubtedly been compromised. Some observers have noted that authoritarian countries have been more successful at managing the virus, but have used tools that are detrimental to human rights to do so. Therefore, it is critical to think about the costs associated with choosing such methods of governance.

**Anne Linde, Foreign Minister of Sweden**

*‘We cannot let democratic principles and human rights standards slip.’*

Minister Linde began by discussing how countries have used different strategies to respond to the pandemic, and how it is important for all countries to learn from each other. Sweden’s global priorities include strengthening civil society, addressing inequalities, supporting freedom of (and access to) information, and promoting health and labour rights. Sweden views countering disinformation as a particular priority, since it weakens public trust in democratic institutions.

Regarding Sweden’s foreign policy, the Drive for Democracy initiative (Swedish Ministry of Public Affairs n.d.) remains relevant in the context of the pandemic: upholding democratic principles, the rule of law and human rights are critical. People in several countries around the world are already experiencing the pandemic’s negative effect on civil society, media freedom and human rights. It is critical to remain vigilant to ensure that democratic principles and human rights standards do not slip.

Minister Linde concluded that there is a need to think and act together, as international cooperation is the key to addressing the COVID-19 crisis.

## Questions and answers with foreign ministers

### **Dr Kevin Casas-Zamora in conversation with Senator Marise Payne, Foreign Minister of Australia:**

**KCZ:** One of the things that sets Australia apart is that it is a federal country, where decision-making powers related to COVID-19 are a shared responsibility between the federal and state/sub-national governments. How did the federal and state governments come together to address the pandemic? How did they deal with the inevitable friction that emerged from those interactions?

**MP:** The states and territories typically have responsibility for delivering services—including hospitals, schools and employing frontline workers. The best way to coordinate has been through the creation of the National Cabinet, which includes the prime minister (PM) and the state and territory premiers, which has been successful so far. In fact, due to its effectiveness, the PM decided to continue this institutional innovation beyond the pandemic, especially for the post-COVID-19 work on economic planning and recovery.

The PM shares a political affiliation with several (but not all) state and territory premiers, which highlights Australia's robust multi-party democracy.

The states' different approaches to easing restrictions have been a point of friction. The National Cabinet agreed on a three-step framework for reopening, but the agreement is that the states will make their own decisions and plans on restrictions depending on local conditions. While there are still differences in approaches, overall, this mechanism has worked well so far.

**Question to Kang Kyung-wha, Foreign Minister of the Republic of Korea:** Can you share more about the lessons learned from the South Korean elections to the National Assembly—especially those related to communication with the public and voters?

**KK:** The South Korean Government organized twice daily briefings by the Korea Center for Disease and Control (KCDC) to make people understand that this is an unprecedented situation: no one knows what is right, and the country is not out of the woods yet. Messaging and transparency go together well. While preserving the electoral management body's independence, providing information to the public was everyone's responsibility, including the Government's.

The elections had always been planned to go ahead. By the time of the elections, the number of cases had plateaued, and trust in the Government's handling of the virus had already been established.

Close coordination with regional governments was necessary despite not being a federal country, because regional governments have jurisdiction over certain services; the Government's approach with regional governments was effective. Importantly, no positive cases can be attributed to the elections, and the country had its highest turnout in 30 years.

### **Question to Anne Linde, Foreign Minister of Sweden:**

**KCZ:** The Swedish approach to dealing with the pandemic has received a lot of attention. Could you please explain the philosophy behind this approach and its results?

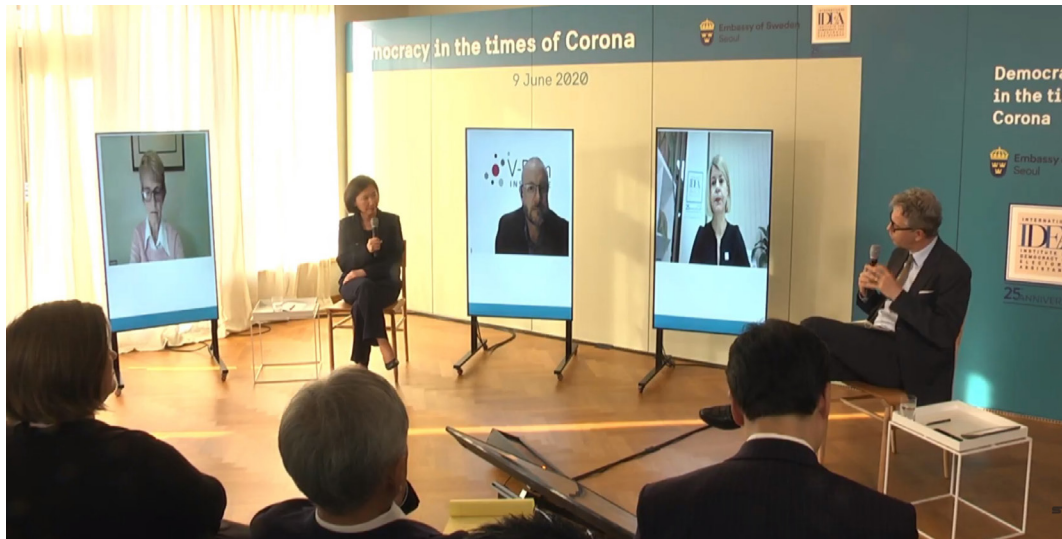
**AL:** Indeed, there has been a high degree of interest, especially when President Trump referred to Sweden's approach.

It is important to emphasize that Sweden's approach is not based on a 'herd immunity' strategy. It shares the same goals as other countries, such as: ensuring citizens' wellbeing, flattening the curve of the virus, reducing the pressure placed by the pandemic on the country's health care system, and avoiding fatalities and the transmission of the virus.

In Sweden, the infected were mostly in the capital. The virus also mostly affected the elderly: over 90 per cent of those who contracted it were over 70 years of age, and 82 years was the average age of death. The approach has not succeeded entirely: attempts to keep the virus out of care homes have failed.

Unlike other countries, Sweden did not shut down its schools for students under 16, or force citizens to stay home. It instead encouraged them to be responsible about maintaining social distancing, washing their hands and staying home if showing COVID-19 symptoms. Sweden has small ministries and big authorities, and is trusted by the people; its philosophy has allowed people to stay outdoors.

## Session 2



### Summary presentation of expert panel and conversation with Ambassador Jakob Hallgren

**Professor Emeritus, Melbourne School of Law, Cheryl Saunders:** *'For the future, the big issue will be winding back the concentration of executive powers both within jurisdictions and between jurisdictions.'*

Unlike Sweden and the Republic of Korea, Australia is a federation, which means the state is structured into a minimum of two levels of government, each of which is accountable to its parliament and constituencies. Assessing the democratic impact of the pandemic requires considering both levels as each has some authorities that are relevant to the pandemic response. For example, Commonwealth (federal) responsibilities include quarantine and external border restrictions, while state and territory responsibilities include transport, schools and hospitals. Each jurisdiction declared its own state of emergency and exercised and legislated its own powers.

In part to manage relationships between these two levels of government, the federal government created a coordination body called the National Cabinet comprised of the prime minister and all state and territory premiers and chief ministers, and advised by the chief health officers from each jurisdiction. The National Cabinet has developed agreed solutions on key matters, but differences in local matters were addressed at the local jurisdictions. For instance, internal border access and restrictions were relaxed at different times, reflecting different situations around the country. Tensions between levels of government emerged, as expected, but quickly dissipated. At the height of the pandemic, leaders from all levels of government delivered daily press conferences and clearly explained what is being done.

Emergency powers legislation conferred extensive powers on the state and territory premiers; parliamentary functions at both levels of government were truncated, both in terms of the number of members present and because some sittings did occur to pass necessary and enabling legislation. Some members used parliamentary committees to scrutinize government actions. Courts continued but without juries and smaller caseloads; some hearings were conducted online.



Overall, Australia's response to the crisis has been highly effective. Its success depended on public trust in what each level of government was doing. Despite a relatively stringent lockdown, there was significant voluntary compliance. Australian institutions seem to be governing well when the emergency arose, which can be built upon in the future. The pandemic response has enabled and encouraged extraordinary powers that must be watched closely.

**Ambassador Jakob Hallgren:** Do you anticipate any changes to federal–state constitutional arrangements in the future?

**Cheryl Saunders:** It is not a matter of changing the constitutional arrangements. Any federation has intergovernmental relations, and Australia has always had that. But the National Cabinet was a *new* institution, set up by the exercise of executive powers—a 'meeting of equals' style example of intergovernmental arrangements.

Now there is a proposal to continue the National Cabinet. The relevant question is whether that arrangement worked simply due to the seriousness of the crisis, or whether it can be continued and prove successful in other scenarios.

It is important to highlight that the intergovernmental collaboration represented by the National Council not only crossed borders but also worked across political divides in a way that in normal times would not be possible.

**Professor Lee Sook-jeong, Distinguished Fellow of East Asia Institute, Professor at Sungkyunkwan University**

**Ambassador Jakob Hallgren:** Why were the Republic of Korea's elections successful?

**Lee Sook-jeong:** It depends on what you mean by success. If you mean just the normal implementation of an election, sure. No South Korean ever believed the elections would be delayed because of COVID-19. But success also could be seen from the ruling party's perspective due to their landslide victory.

The success of the elections is due to three main factors. First, the timing was lucky, since by 15 April the curve was already flattened so people felt less threatened. Had elections been scheduled for March, when it was worse, the turnout rate might have been lower than 66 per cent. Second, the electoral system supported mass participation. The early voting system introduced in the 2014 local election helped in this regard. In the April 2020 election, the early voting rate was 27 per cent, twice that of the previous general election. The government ensured that effective safeguarding measures were in place and there was sufficient protective equipment on hand to make people feel safe to vote in the 2020 election. Lastly, there was increasing national pride, with a belief that South Korea had done a great job combating COVID-19. So people wanted to support the incumbent government: the current ruling party won 176 out of 300 seats in a landslide victory.

**Ambassador Jakob Hallgren:** How about the ongoing discussions on political reforms such as the political party law and campaigning, and an increase in the accountability of un-elected institutions. Do you think this may be postponed due to the crisis and a new situation?

**Lee Sook-jeong:** Korea's new national parliament is focusing on how to revive the economy and protect those who have been affected by talking about basic services, wages and how to support the less privileged class. However, COVID-19 will not discourage politicians from discussing the political reform law. The parliamentary research team has already identified several laws to discuss in the upcoming session.

**Professor Staffan Lindberg, Director, V-Dem Institute, Department of Political Science, University of Gothenburg**

Professor Lindberg referred to the V-Dem report (V-Dem n.d.), which determined that 2019 was a 'bad' year for democracy, recording a decline in democracy and a surge of 'autocratization'. One-third of the world's population lives in a failed democracy or a country that is experiencing a decline

in democracy. The COVID-19 outbreak has worsened the situation globally. The virus has given autocrats the opportunity to tighten their grip on power.

**Ambassador Hallgren:** What role did experts in Sweden play in dealing with the COVID-19 outbreak?

**Stefan Lindberg:** This goes back to Swedish tradition and the relationship between the government, the ministries and state authorities. Sweden has a different constitutional setup that gives strong powers to state authorities; this works well and does not endanger democratic accountability.

**Leena Rikkilä Tamang, Director for Asia and the Pacific Programme, International IDEA**

In many ways this pandemic continues to expose the strengths and weaknesses of institutions and societies. All three case studies examined in this event are high-performing democracies with many strengths to draw on, including during the pandemic. Yet there are still issues to watch out for. Before the pandemic, many democracy indicators, including the V-Dem and International IDEA Global State of Democracy indices, warned about the trend of democratic decline, including in established democracies. These declines, some of which are very slight, often relate to civil liberties and access to justice.

As occurred during the SARS and Zika pandemics, COVID-19 is revealing deep-rooted inequalities in many societies around world. Other risks are enormous, including economic unrest and a rise in surveillance and narrow nationalism.

There is a great opportunity to learn from this crisis. Some of those learnings are very practical and relate to the workings of institutions and organizing elections. Others are more systemic, related to societies' social contracts, and therefore require deliberation and reflection.

**Ambassador Jakob Hallgren:** What do you think are some of the learnings from this pandemic from a democracy point of view?

**Leena Rikkilä Tamang:** Lessons learned from previous crises were applied. Australia's leadership had recently managed the bushfire emergency, and thus was able to maintain a sense of crisis awareness, which paved the way for a leadership transformation. Similarly, the Republic of Korea applied lessons learned from the SARS epidemic; it understood early on that quick action, particularly testing, is required. While Sweden has experienced no large calamities, the people's trust in political leaders and institutions has been a great help.

There have been several practical democracy-related learnings, including institutional innovations. For instance, parliaments around the world have discovered there are alternative ways of working, including remote voting and committee work. Special voting arrangements (absentee voting, early voting, postal and e-voting, alternative campaigning) are likely to become more prominent. Professor Saunders discussed the example of the National Cabinet as way of coordinating federal decision-making.

Hopefully the return of evidence-based decision-making and listening to experts are here to stay. Courts need to think about how to ensure access to justice even during lockdowns. Many nations are examining their constitutions and legal frameworks, including those related to elections, to determine whether these can truly pass the stress test, or if amendments are needed.

## Questions to expert panel from the on-site audience

**Question:** What do you think of the tension between protecting people's health and various rights/civil liberties highlighted by, for example, the Black Lives Matter movement?

**Answer from Cheryl Saunders:** There is a tension between protecting peoples' health in these extraordinary circumstances and peoples' right to movement. In Australia, that trade-off was accepted without too much quibble because people put faith in the system; there was acceptance of the handling of the crisis.

The real conflict only emerged recently due to the Black Lives Matter movement demonstrations across Australia. These posed a question for the government: how hard and how far they would clamp down on the demonstrations, given the health situation? Would the demonstrations go ahead? If they did, would it complicate the pandemic requirements and health protections put in place? How the local governments reacted to the demonstrations in Australia deserves further study.

**Answer from Lee Sook-jeong:** Every country is struggling with this dilemma, but the case of the Republic of Korea is different due to its experience with both SARS and MERS. The government already had the necessary infrastructure and procedures in place to monitor people's movements (collected data is deleted after 14 days). There was, however, widespread criticism of the religious sect that first spread the virus, and of gay night clubs, so the protection of religious freedom and other minority rights is required.

**Answer from Staffan Lindberg:** A key principle is that all measures taken must be proportional. People's fear of the virus has made them accept restrictions to human rights without questioning them. For instance, the use of surveillance mechanisms is a worry, as are concerns that personal data collected to contain the pandemic will not be permanently deleted. The pandemic risks derailing human rights and freedoms.

**Question:** How has the pandemic affected democracy? There has been a 'return of weak states' through quarantine control with high spending, bigger government and protectionism, thus feeding the populists and the extremists; this threatens democracy. Is a new type of democracy emerging? What is the likely roadmap? There are two choices: returning to how democracy was pre-coronavirus, or moving to a new type of democracy.

**Answer from Staffan Lindberg:** Before COVID-19, democracy was already backsliding; the world was already experiencing ugly nationalism and the toxic polarization of societies. The pandemic has the potential to feed these pre-existing trends.

**Answer from Leena Rikkilä Tamang:** A great worry is how the increasing surveillance constitutes an invasion of privacy, and what type (and how much) private information should be voluntarily supplied to the government. For instance, downloading a COVID-19 tracking app represents a trade-off between public health and private information. The question is what is an acceptable trade-off? Such apps have been largely well received in both Australia and the Republic of Korea.

It is also unclear whether the data are truly used in the public's best interest. In a democracy, any invasion of privacy should always be justified, including by demonstrating the security measures taken to protect the information. The use of such information should include accountability and ensure that decision-making is robust and open to independent review.

## Questions to eminent experts from the public

**Question from Iran:** In a pandemic, regimes may hide the truth, and lack transparency about how they are dealing with the crisis. What is the appropriate response to this?

**Staffan Lindberg:** It is a general problem with authoritarian regimes. They can hide and cheat the numbers much more than democracies can. In democracies, the people must keep on pushing them to be honest.

**Leena Rikkilä Tamang:** One way to respond to this challenge is to support regional actors, the media, civil society organizations, academia and independent researchers to produce objective information and try to find entry points for regional cooperation.

**Cheryl Saunders:** Regimes are not able to cover up the pandemic. They can cover up the numbers, but not the actual suffering. The fact that there is a big problem is evident to everyone—a reality that puts pressure on regimes.



**Question from Sweden:** Could we take advantage of this pandemic to strengthen democracy around the world? Is there something we could do?

**Answer from Cheryl Saunders:** The countries that pride themselves on being democratic role models should indeed act as democratic role models. The reality, however, is that some of them are backsliding, too. Rather than backsliding, democracies should seize this moment to think hard about other ways to strengthen democracy. Institutions can use the pandemic to regain public trust and build a new—or stronger—social contract.

**Answer from Professor Lee:** Every pandemic puts politically and economically weak people in trouble. Through this awareness, more attention is now being paid to the need to address the issues of minorities: more voices to demand the rights of minority groups have appeared.

**Answer from Staffan Lindberg:** 2019 was not only a year of democratic backsliding. It was also a year of protests: 44 per cent of countries around the world had pro-democracy protests in 2019, including Hong Kong and Sudan. This wave of pro-democracy mobilization may bounce back after the worst of the pandemic is over.

**Answer from Leena Rikkilä Tamang:** Bring back the experts to support evidence-based decision-making—not only epidemiologists but also sociologists, psychologists and democracy experts to advise political leaders to navigate this pandemic and beyond.

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## Annex A. Global State of Democracy country profiles












### Australia





Regime Type	Democracy
State of emergency	<a href="#">States of Health Emergency</a> have been declared separately by Australian states
Summary	Decisions are made at the state level, which might cause some difficulties when trying to provide an accurate picture of the situation in the country. Each state has its own regulations and has declared states of emergency separately. Also, decisions regarding the closing and re-opening of venues and schools, are made state by state. Social cohesion and citizens' trust in the competency of the federal and state governments has helped the country fight the crisis.



■ High performance (0.70 – 1)
 ■ Mid-range performance (0.40 – 0.69)
 ■ Low performance (0 – 0.39)

<div>  Representative Government </div> 0.81		
GSoD dimension	Measures adopted in the context of COVID-19 crisis with an impact on Democracy and Human Rights	COVID-19 impact
<div>  Clean Elections </div> 0.88	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Elections went ahead in late March in Queensland even though some experts referred to the election as a 'lethal risk'. In Australia, voting is compulsory. 570,000 people said they applied for postal votes before the deadline but many did not receive them.</li> <li>New South Wales postponed its <a href="#">September elections</a> due to COVID-19.</li> </ul>	

<div>  Fundamental Rights </div> 0.85		
GSoD dimension	Measures adopted in the context of COVID-19 crisis with an impact on Democracy and Human Rights	COVID-19 impact
<div>  Access to Justice </div> 0.88	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hearings deemed 'non-urgent' have been <a href="#">postponed</a>.</li> <li>Court decisions are being made 'on the papers', meaning that courts are basing their decisions on documented and that verbal evidence and oral submissions are not permitted.</li> <li>These decisions <a href="#">may impact</a> the right of access to justice, long court date waiting periods, and a person's right to an in-person trial.</li> </ul>	
<div>  Civil Liberties </div> 0.85	<div>  Freedom of Association and Assembly </div> 0.89	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In mid-March, <a href="#">non-essential gatherings</a> were limited to fewer than 500 people.</li> <li>As of mid-May, the government continued to recommend <a href="#">physical distancing</a>.</li> <li>Each state has different physical distancing guidelines, a breakdown of each state can be found <a href="#">here</a>.</li> <li>In early May, the National Cabinet agreed on a <a href="#">3-Step framework</a> to ease restrictions.</li> </ul>
	<div>  Freedom of Religion </div> 0.90	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As of mid-May, up to 10 people are permitted inside a <a href="#">place of worship</a>. This number will generally <a href="#">increase to 20 people</a> around mid-June depending on the state.</li> </ul>
	<div>  Freedom of Movement </div> 0.80	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In mid-February, the government has <a href="#">restricted entry</a> to the country for people other than citizens, permanent residents, and their families, with a review in 7 days.</li> <li>As of mid-May, up to 10 patrons are permitted in <a href="#">food establishments</a> and other stores.</li> </ul>
	<div>  Personal Integrity and Security </div> 0.67	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">COVIDSafe app</a> has been introduced to slow the spread of COVID-19. It is voluntary and not enforced.</li> </ul>
<div>  Social Rights and Equality </div> 0.72	<div>  Social Group Equality </div> 0.67	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Aboriginal health organizations say the Queensland government is holding back a \$3.3m national rollout of rapid COVID-19 testing in remote Aboriginal communities, putting concerns for health worker safety ahead of conducting what they say is a 'gold stand'.</li> <li>All personal visits to prisons have been suspended.</li> </ul>
	<div>  Basic Welfare </div> 0.89	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As of 2 June 2020, there were <a href="#">0.41 deaths per 100,000 inhabitants</a>.</li> <li><a href="#">Human Development Index</a>: 0.94/1</li> <li><a href="#">High income country</a></li> </ul>

<div>  <b>Checks on Government</b> </div>		
0.87		
GSoD dimension	Measures adopted in the context of COVID-19 crisis with an impact on Democracy and Human Rights	COVID-19 impact
<div>  <b>Effective Parliament</b> </div> 0.83	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Parliament passed laws on mid-March that <a href="#">allowed state governments to postpone</a> elections due to COVID-19.</li> <li>In early May, the government <a href="#">announced key indicators</a> that would be used to determine when measures could be lifted.</li> <li>The Prime Minister <a href="#">provides regular</a> statements on updated measures and steps to reopening.</li> <li>The COVID-19 response is coordinated by the <a href="#">Australian Health Protection Principal Committee</a> in association with state and territory governments.</li> <li>The <a href="#">National Federation Reform Council</a> will be created in the near future, thanks to the coordination between federal and state level decision-making through the National Cabinet.</li> </ul>	

<div>  <b>Impartial Administration</b> </div>		
0.83		
GSoD dimension	Measures adopted in the context of COVID-19 crisis with an impact on Democracy and Human Rights	COVID-19 impact
<div>  <b>Predictable Enforcement</b> </div> 0.82	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Not all states have specified how it is possible to <a href="#">challenge a fine</a> issued for breaking any COVID-19 regulations.</li> </ul>	






  

V-Dem Pandemic Backsliding Index	Low
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■ High performance (0.70 – 1)    
 ■ Mid-range performance (0.40 – 0.69)    
 ■ Low performance (0 – 0.39)

## Australia 2018

Regime Type 2018					
1975–2018					
Democracy					

Democratic performance by attribute					
	Representative Government 	Fundamental Rights 	Checks on Government 	Impartial Administration 	Participatory Engagement 
2008	0.84	0.88	0.87	0.95	High
2018	0.81	0.85	0.87	0.83	High

Advances and Declines		
<b>Declines</b> 2013–2018 ↓	0 Attributes	
	1 Subattribute	Predictable Enforcement
	0 Subcomponent	
<b>Advances</b> 2013–2018 ↑	0 Attributes	
	0 Subattributes	
	0 Subcomponents	

Global and Regional Comparison				
World's Top 25%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Representative Government</li> <li>Clean Elections</li> <li>Inclusive Suffrage</li> <li>Free Political Parties</li> <li>Elected Government</li> <li>Fundamental Rights</li> <li>Access to Justice</li> <li>Civil Liberties</li> <li>Checks on Government</li> <li>Effective Parliament</li> <li>Judicial Independence</li> <li>Media Integrity</li> <li>Civil Society Participation</li> <li>Electoral Participation</li> <li>Freedom of Expression</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Freedom of Association and Assembly</li> <li>Freedom of Religion</li> <li>Personal Integrity and Security</li> <li>Social Rights and Equality</li> <li>Social Group Equality</li> <li>Basic Welfare</li> <li>Gender Equality</li> <li>Impartial Administration</li> <li>Absence of Corruption</li> <li>Predictable Enforcement</li> <li>Direct Democracy</li> <li>Local Democracy</li> </ul>	World's Bottom 25%	None







 Democracy	 Hybrid regime	 Non-democracy
 High performance (0.70 – 1)	 Mid-range performance (0.40 – 0.69)	 Low performance (0 – 0.39)

Figure 1. The Global State of Democracy Indices: Australia, 2018

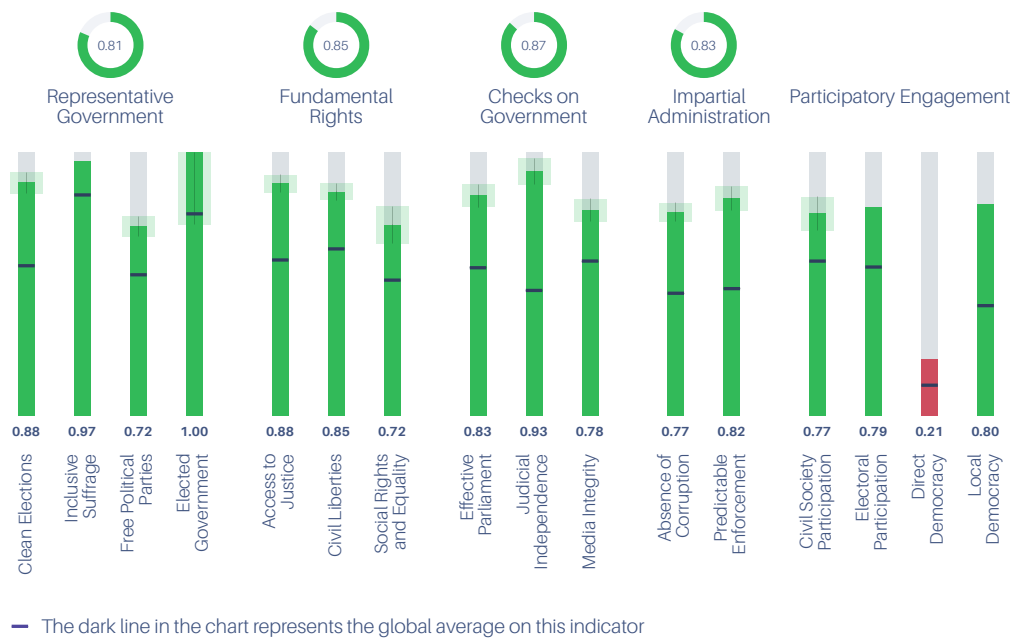
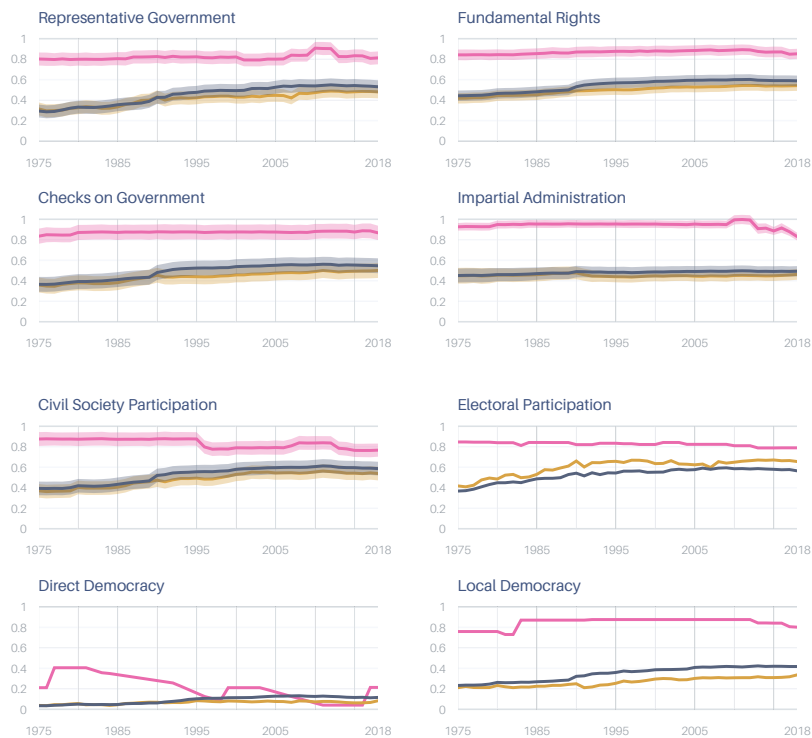



Figure 2. Australia—Trends over time





■ High performance (0.70 – 1) ■ Mid-range performance (0.40 – 0.69) ■ Low performance (0 – 0.39)

Table 1. Australia—Tracking the development of SDG 16

SDG 16	GSoD Aspect	Year 2015	Year 2018	Gains/ Declines
<b>SDG 16.1</b> Significantly reduce all forms of violence and related death rates everywhere	Personal Integrity and Security	0.72	0.67	↓
<b>SDG 16.3</b> Promote the rule of law at the national and international levels and ensure equal access to justice for all	Access to Justice	0.90	0.88	↓
	Judicial Independence	0.84	0.93	↑
	Predictable Enforcement	0.88	0.82	↓
<b>SDG 16.5</b> Substantially reduce bribery and corruption in all their forms	Absence of Corruption	0.83	0.77	↓
<b>SDG 16.6</b> Develop effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels	Judicial Independence	0.84	0.93	↑
	Effective Parliament	0.86	0.83	↓
	Free Political Parties	0.77	0.72	↓
	Civil Society Participation	0.76	0.77	↑
<b>SDG 16.7</b> Ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels	Elected Government	1	1	=
	Clean Elections	0.88	0.88	=
	Electoral Participation	0.79	0.79	=
	Effective Parliament	0.86	0.83	↓
	Local Democracy	0.84	0.80	↓
	Social Group Equality	0.66	0.67	↑
<b>SDG 16.10</b> Ensure public access to information and protect fundamental freedoms, in accordance with national legislation and international agreements	Freedom of Expression	0.88	0.82	↓
	Media Integrity	0.84	0.78	↓
	Freedom of Movement	0.81	0.80	↓
	Freedom of Religion	0.91	0.90	↓
	Freedom of Association and Assembly	0.89	0.89	=

 High performance (0.70 – 1)

 Mid-range performance (0.40 – 0.69)

 Low performance (0 – 0.39)



## Links to information

<http://www.idea.int/gsod-indices>

<https://www.health.gov.au/news/australian-health-protection-principal-committee-ahppc-resolution-on-travel-restrictions-and-coronavirus-covid-19-13-february-2020>

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<https://www.pm.gov.au/media/update-coronavirus-measures-1may20>

<https://www.pm.gov.au/sites/default/files/files/attachc-precedent-conditions-relaxation-restrictions.pdf>

<https://www.pm.gov.au/media/update-coronavirus-measures-08may20>

<https://www.health.gov.au/news/easing-the-covid-19-restrictions-no-time-for-complacency>

<https://www.health.gov.au/news/health-alerts/novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov-health-alert/government-response-to-the-covid-19-outbreak>

<https://www.health.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/2020/03/australian-health-sector-emergency-response-plan-for-novel-coronavirus-covid-19-short-form-the-australian-health-sector-emergency-response-plan-for-novel-coronavirus-short-form.pdf>

<https://www.health.gov.au/news/health-alerts/novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov-health-alert/easing-of-coronavirus-covid-19-restrictions/easing-of-coronavirus-covid-19-restrictions>

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2020-03-19/coronavirus-queensland-council-local-elections-may-postpone/12064268>

<https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2020/may/18/queensland-criticised-for-holding-back-rapid-covid-19-testing-in-remote-aboriginal-communities>

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<https://www.brisbanetimes.com.au/politics/queensland/queensland-parliament-may-not-sit-for-six-months-20200318-p54bjo.html>

<https://justiceconnect.org.au/resources/accessing-courts-during-covid-19/>

<http://www.familycourt.gov.au/wps/wcm/connect/fcoaweb/about/covid/>

<http://www.jatl.org/blog/2020/4/14/court-closures-how-covid-19-could-affect-access-to-justice>

<https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2020/may/29/coronavirus-australia-lockdown-covid-19-restrictions-how-far-can-travel-social-distancing-rules-nsw-victoria-queensland-qld-wa-sa-act-how-people-over-house>

<https://www.health.gov.au/news/health-alerts/novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov-health-alert/how-to-protect-yourself-and-others-from-coronavirus-covid-19/limits-on-public-gatherings-for-coronavirus-covid-19>

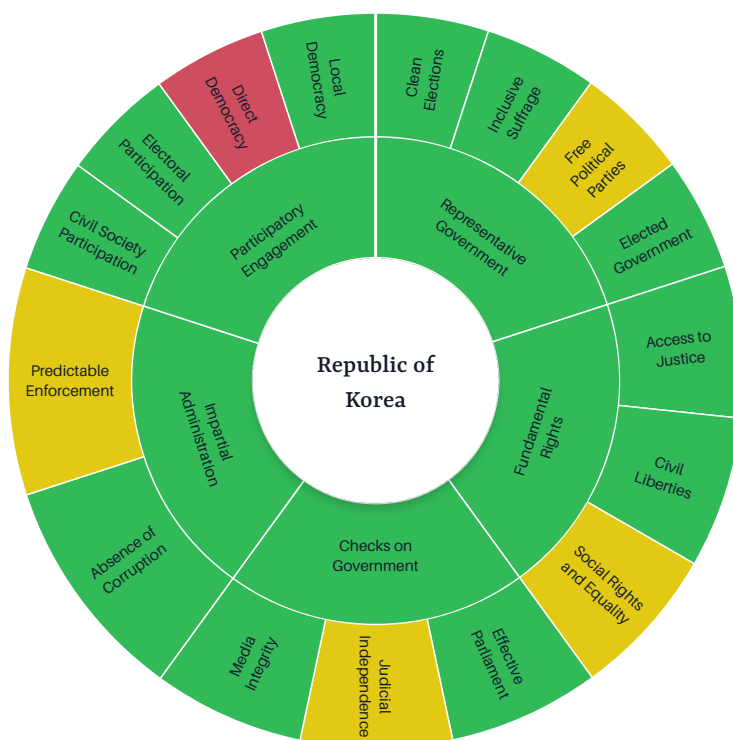
<https://www.corrections.sa.gov.au/family-and-friends/supporting-a-prisoner/visiting-a-prisoner/coronavirus-visiting-restrictions>

<https://www.pm.gov.au/media/update-following-national-cabinet-meeting>



<https://coronavirus.jhu.edu/data/mortality>

<https://www.health.gov.au/resources/apps-and-tools/covidsafe-app#about-the-app>










## Republic of Korea







<b>Regime Type</b>	<b>Democracy</b>
<b>State of emergency</b>	No state of emergency has been declared
<b>Summary</b>	The response from the government and the public health system have been praised by several countries. No state of emergency was declared, and no major lockdown or harsh movement restrictions were enforced in the country. Elections were held in April and no new infections arose from them. Though the outbreak seemed controlled and restrictions started to ease in early May, by the end of the month most restrictions were re-implemented as the number of infections spiked again.

<div>  <b>Representative Government</b> </div> <b>0.77</b>		
GSoD dimension	Measures adopted in the context of COVID-19 crisis with an impact on Democracy and Human Rights	COVID-19 impact
<div>  <b>Clean Elections</b> </div> <b>0.86</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In April, approximately 29 million people voted in parliamentary elections with no outbreaks of the virus linked to in-person voting activities.</li> <li>National elections were held and the incumbent party-maintained power.</li> </ul>	

■ High performance (0.70 – 1)    
 ■ Mid-range performance (0.40 – 0.69)    
 ■ Low performance (0 – 0.39)

<div>  Fundamental Rights </div> 0.83		
GSoD dimension	Measures adopted in the context of COVID-19 crisis with an impact on Democracy and Human Rights	COVID-19 impact
<div>  Civil Liberties </div> 0.86	<div>  Freedom of Association and Assembly </div> 0.80	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Large <b>gatherings were banned</b> in February.</li> <li>Museums, parks and other cultural/entertainment venues <b>reopened in early May</b> after being closed for several weeks, due to the restrictions imposed by the government. By the end of May, the restrictions were <b>re-imposed</b> and venues were closed for another 2 weeks.</li> </ul>
	<div>  Freedom of Religion </div> 0.91	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A religious group that is <b>generally unpopular</b> within the Korean public has been linked to one of the largest outbreaks of COVID-19 in Korea. Seoul's mayor filed a lawsuit against the group for 'murder' and 'injury'.</li> </ul>
	<div>  Freedom of Movement </div> 0.86	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The government <b>never considered a full lock-down</b>.</li> <li>As of mid-March, the government is <b>enforcing a ban</b> on foreigners arriving from Hubei province in China and is strengthening screenings of travelers from various other countries.</li> <li>All those arriving in the country are required to undergo a <b>14-day mandatory quarantine</b>. Guidelines for self-quarantine are found <a href="#">here</a>.</li> <li><b>No region or city was placed</b> on lockdown or isolation.</li> </ul>
	<div>  Personal Integrity and Security </div> 0.69	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Authorities have used <b>sweeping digital surveillance</b> to assist in containing the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2015, digital privacy laws were relaxed following the MERS outbreak in the Republic of Korea. Authorities have been releasing information, such as travel logs, to the public on confirmed cases, potentially dissuading individuals from coming forward for fear that their information will be disclosed to the public, too.</li> <li><b>Tracing apps</b> have been introduced to try to slow the spread of COVID-19, but they are not mandatory.</li> </ul>
<div>  Social Rights and Equality </div> 0.68	<div>  Social Group Equality </div> 0.64	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Structural group inequality reportedly worsened</b> the COVID-19 situation in the Republic of Korea.</li> </ul>
	<div>  Basic Welfare </div> 0.91	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Schools were closed</b> in February. Though they reopened by the end of May, they were <b>closed again</b> due to a spike in the number of COVID-19 cases.</li> <li>As of 2 June 2020 there were <b>0.52 deaths per 100,000 inhabitants</b>.</li> <li><b>Human Development Index:</b> 0.91/1</li> <li><b>High income country</b></li> </ul>






■ High performance (0.70 – 1)   
■ Mid-range performance (0.40 – 0.69)   
■ Low performance (0 – 0.39)

<div>  <b>Checks on Government</b> </div> <div>0.77</div>		
GSoD dimension	Measures adopted in the context of COVID-19 crisis with an impact on Democracy and Human Rights	COVID-19 impact
<div>  <b>Effective Parliament</b> </div> <div>0.78</div>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Authorities made information about the spread of the <a href="#">virus public and the public information</a> campaigns began early.</li> <li>The authorities utilized the <a href="#">national mobile phone alert system</a> when a new COVID-19 case was detected and contact tracing was necessary.</li> </ul>	
<div>  <b>Participatory Engagement</b> </div> <div>High</div>		
GSoD dimension	Measures adopted in the context of COVID-19 crisis with an impact on Democracy and Human Rights	COVID-19 impact
<div>  <b>Civil Society Participation</b> </div> <div>0.78</div>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Authorities reportedly <a href="#">engaged civil society actors in the COVID-19 response</a> process for a holistic approach.</li> </ul>	
<b>Additional information</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The country's infectious disease alert level was raised to '<a href="#">highest</a>' on February 2020.</li> <li>The country has been praised for <a href="#">acting quickly</a>.</li> <li><a href="#">Mass testing</a> was essential in the Republic of Korea's successful quick response.</li> </ul>	
<b>V-Dem Pandemic Backsliding Index</b>	Low	

■ High performance (0.70 – 1)    
 ■ Mid-range performance (0.40 – 0.69)    
 ■ Low performance (0 – 0.39)

## Republic of Korea, 2018

Regime Type 2018		
Democracy		
1975–1979	1980–1987	1988–2018

Democratic performance by attribute					
	Representative Government 	Fundamental Rights 	Checks on Government 	Impartial Administration 	Participatory Engagement 
2008	0.77	0.75	0.70	0.72	High
2018	0.77	0.83	0.77	0.71	High

Advances and Declines		
<b>Declines</b> 2013–2018 ↓	0 Attributes	
	0 Subattribute	
	0 Subcomponent	
<b>Advances</b> 2013–2018 ↑	0 Attributes	
	6 Subattributes	Clean Elections; Civil Liberties; Effective Parliament; Judicial Independence; Media Integrity; Absence of Corruption
	2 Subcomponents	Freedom of Expression; Freedom of Association

Global and Regional Comparison				
World's Top 25%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Representative Government</li> <li>Clean Elections</li> <li>Inclusive Suffrage</li> <li>Free Political Parties</li> <li>Elected Government</li> <li>Fundamental Rights</li> <li>Access to Justice</li> <li>Civil Liberties</li> <li>Media Integrity</li> <li>Impartial Administration</li> <li>Absence of Corruption</li> <li>Predictable Enforcement</li> <li>Civil Society Participation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Freedom of Expression</li> <li>Freedom of Religion</li> <li>Personal Integrity and Security</li> <li>Social Rights and Responsibilities</li> <li>Social Group Equality</li> <li>Basic Welfare</li> <li>Gender Equality</li> <li>Checks on Government</li> <li>Effective Parliament</li> <li>Judicial Independence</li> <li>Electoral Participation</li> <li>Local Democracy</li> </ul>	World's Bottom 25%	None







 Democracy	 Hybrid regime	 Non-democracy
 High performance (0.70 – 1)	 Mid-range performance (0.40 – 0.69)	 Low performance (0 – 0.39)

Figure 1. The Global State of Democracy Indices: Republic of Korea, 2018

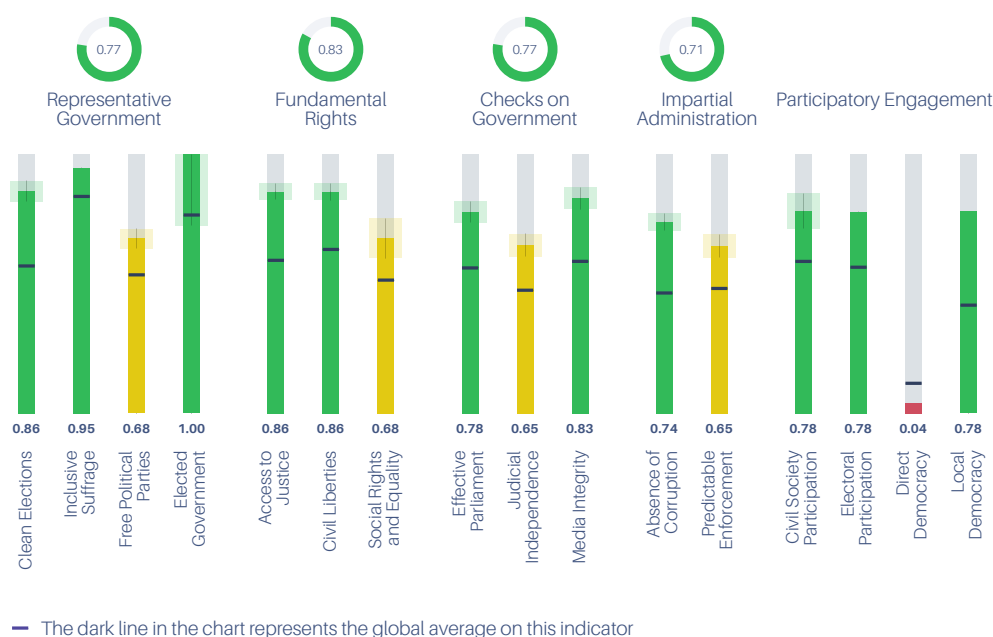


Figure 2. Republic of Korea—Trends over time

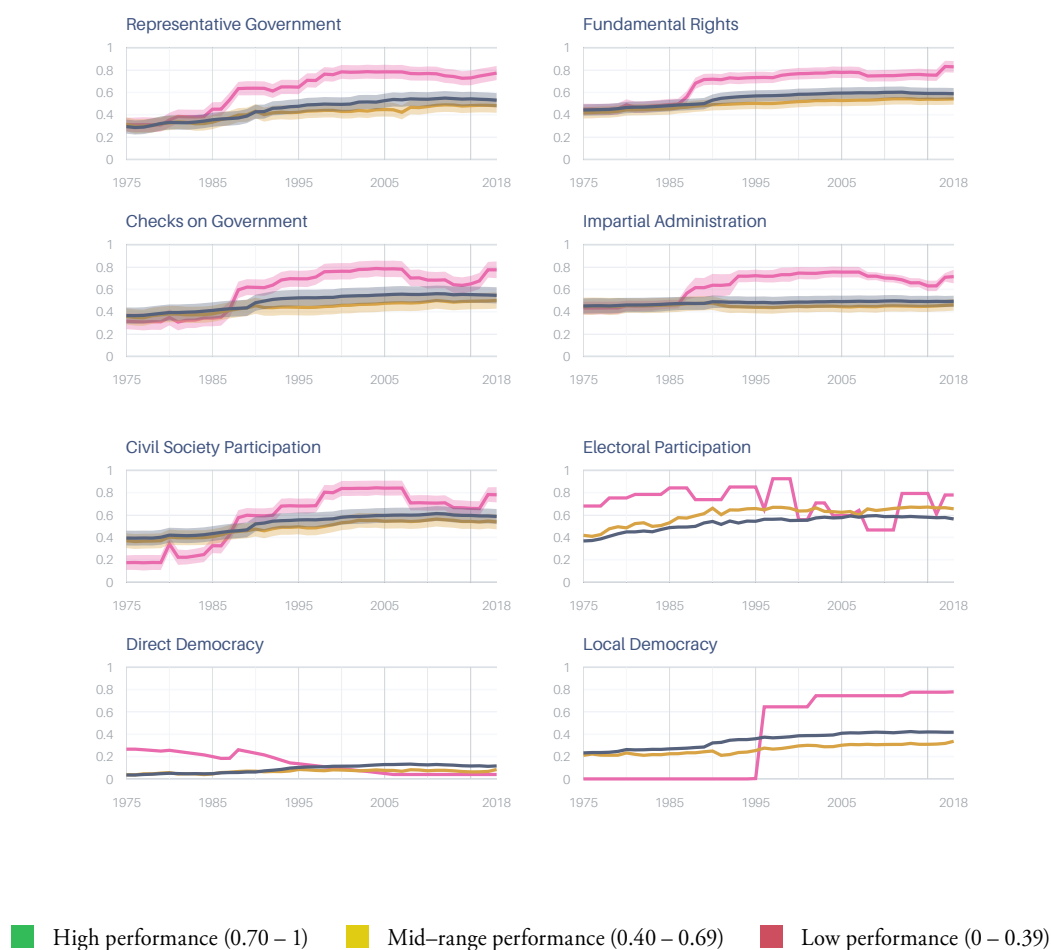




Table 1. Republic of Korea—Tracking the development of SDG 16

SDG 16	GSoD Aspect	Year 2015	Year 2018	Gains/ Declines
<b>SDG 16.1</b> Significantly reduce all forms of violence and related death rates everywhere	Personal Integrity and Security	0.64	0.69	↑
<b>SDG 16.3</b> Promote the rule of law at the national and international levels and ensure equal access to justice for all	Access to Justice	0.80	0.86	↑
	Judicial Independence	0.59	0.65	↑
	Predictable Enforcement	0.65	0.65	=
<b>SDG 16.5</b> Substantially reduce bribery and corruption in all their forms	Absence of Corruption	0.56	0.74	↑
<b>SDG 16.6</b> Develop effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels	Judicial Independence	0.59	0.65	↑
	Effective Parliament	0.67	0.78	↑
	Free Political Parties	0.67	0.68	↑
	Civil Society Participation	0.66	0.78	↑
<b>SDG 16.7</b> Ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels	Elected Government	1	1	=
	Clean Elections	0.73	0.86	↑
	Electoral Participation	0.79	0.78	↓
	Effective Parliament	0.67	0.78	↑
	Local Democracy	0.78	0.78	=
	Social Group Equality	0.61	0.64	↑
<b>SDG 16.10</b> Ensure public access to information and protect fundamental freedoms, in accordance with national legislation and international agreements	Freedom of Expression	0.70	0.84	↑
	Media Integrity	0.66	0.83	↑
	Freedom of Movement	0.83	0.86	↑
	Freedom of Religion	0.86	0.91	↑
	Freedom of Association and Assembly	0.66	0.80	↑

 High performance (0.70 – 1)

 Mid-range performance (0.40 – 0.69)

 Low performance (0 – 0.39)

## Links to information

<http://www.idea.int/gsod-indices>

[http://ncov.mohw.go.kr/en/baroView.do?brdId=11&brdGubun=111&dataGubun=&ncvContSeq=&contSeq=&board\\_id=](http://ncov.mohw.go.kr/en/baroView.do?brdId=11&brdGubun=111&dataGubun=&ncvContSeq=&contSeq=&board_id=)

[http://www.mohw.go.kr/eng/nw/nw0102vw.jsp?PAR\\_MENU\\_ID=1007&MENU\\_ID=100703&page=1&CONT\\_SEQ=353729](http://www.mohw.go.kr/eng/nw/nw0102vw.jsp?PAR_MENU_ID=1007&MENU_ID=100703&page=1&CONT_SEQ=353729)

[http://ncov.mohw.go.kr/en/tcmBoardList.do?brdId=12&brdGubun=125&dataGubun=&ncvContSeq=&contSeq=&board\\_id=](http://ncov.mohw.go.kr/en/tcmBoardList.do?brdId=12&brdGubun=125&dataGubun=&ncvContSeq=&contSeq=&board_id=)

[http://www.mohw.go.kr/eng/nw/nw0101vw.jsp?PAR\\_MENU\\_ID=1007&MENU\\_ID=100701&page=1&CONT\\_SEQ=354551](http://www.mohw.go.kr/eng/nw/nw0101vw.jsp?PAR_MENU_ID=1007&MENU_ID=100701&page=1&CONT_SEQ=354551)

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## Sweden



<b>Regime Type</b>	<b>Democracy</b>
<b>State of emergency</b>	No State of Emergency has been declared
<b>Summary</b>	Unlike most European countries, the Swedish authorities have opted for a laxer strategy towards combating the coronavirus pandemic. There are no lockdown measures in place, but the government relies on the people to abide by its recommendations and instructions. There are voices of concern for this strategy, but it seems that so far the authorities continue to enjoy the trust and confidence of the majority of the population.

<div>  Representative Government </div> 0.84		
GSoD dimension	Measures adopted in the context of COVID-19 crisis with an impact on Democracy and Human Rights	COVID-19 impact
<div>  Clean Elections </div> 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The people's trust in the government and the health authorities regarding their no-lockdown strategy towards the pandemic remains high.</li> </ul>	






■ High performance (0.70 – 1)
 ■ Mid-range performance (0.40 – 0.69)
 ■ Low performance (0 – 0.39)



<div>  Fundamental Rights </div> 0.89		
GSoD dimension	Measures adopted in the context of COVID-19 crisis with an impact on Democracy and Human Rights	COVID-19 impact
<div>  Civil Liberties 0.87 </div>	<div>  Freedom of Association and Assembly 0.91 </div>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Since early March, everyone with symptoms of COVID-19 has been urged to avoid social contacts, both at work and in private, and throughout the country. On 16 March, the health authority recommended as much as possible isolating people over 70 and working from home.</li> <li>In 12 March the Parliament issued an ordinance prohibiting events and assemblies larger than 50 people 'for the time being,' on account of the epidemic, and allows local officials to restrict smaller gatherings as well.</li> </ul>
<div>  Social Rights and Equality 0.88 </div>	<div>  Basic Welfare 0.89 </div>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As of 2 June 2020 there were 43.16 death per 100,000 inhabitants on of the highest rates worldwide.</li> <li>Human development Index: 0.94</li> <li>High income country</li> </ul>
<div>  Checks on Government </div> 0.77		
GSoD dimension	Measures adopted in the context of COVID-19 crisis with an impact on Democracy and Human Rights	COVID-19 impact
<div>  Effective Parliament 0.87 </div>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Riksdag (Parliament) of Sweden is holding plenary and committee meetings as normal. But party group leaders agreed that from 16 to 30 March, the number of MPs required to vote is just 55 (out of 349).</li> </ul>	
V-Dem Pandemic Backsliding Index		Low

■ High performance (0.70 – 1)   
 ■ Mid-range performance (0.40 – 0.69)   
 ■ Low performance (0 – 0.39)

## Sweden 2018

Regime Type 2018					
Democracy 1975–2018					

Democratic performance by attribute					
	Representative Government 	Fundamental Rights 	Checks on Government 	Impartial Administration 	Participatory Engagement 
2008	0.87	0.97	0.91	0.95	High
2018	0.84	0.89	0.96	0.91	High

Advances and Declines		
Declines 2013–2018 	0 Attributes	
	0 Subattribute	
	1 Subcomponent	Freedom of Movement
Advances 2013–2018 	0 Attributes	
	0 Subattributes	
	0 Subcomponents	

Global and Regional Comparison				
World's Top 25%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Representative Government</li> <li>Clean Elections</li> <li>Inclusive Suffrage</li> <li>Free Political Parties</li> <li>Elected Government</li> <li>Fundamental Rights</li> <li>Access to Justice</li> <li>Civil Liberties</li> <li>Effective Parliament</li> <li>Judicial Independence</li> <li>Media Integrity</li> <li>Impartial Administration</li> <li>Absence of Corruption</li> <li>Predictable Enforcement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Freedom of Expression</li> <li>Freedom of Association and Assembly</li> <li>Freedom of Religion</li> <li>Personal Integrity and Security</li> <li>Social Rights and Equality</li> <li>Social Group Equality</li> <li>Basic Welfare</li> <li>Gender Equality</li> <li>Checks on Government</li> <li>Civil Society Participation</li> <li>Electoral Participation</li> <li>Local Democracy</li> </ul>	World's Bottom 25%	None







 Democracy	 Hybrid regime	 Non-democracy
 High performance (0.70 – 1)	 Mid-range performance (0.40 – 0.69)	 Low performance (0 – 0.39)

Figure 1. The Global State of Democracy Indices: Sweden, 2018

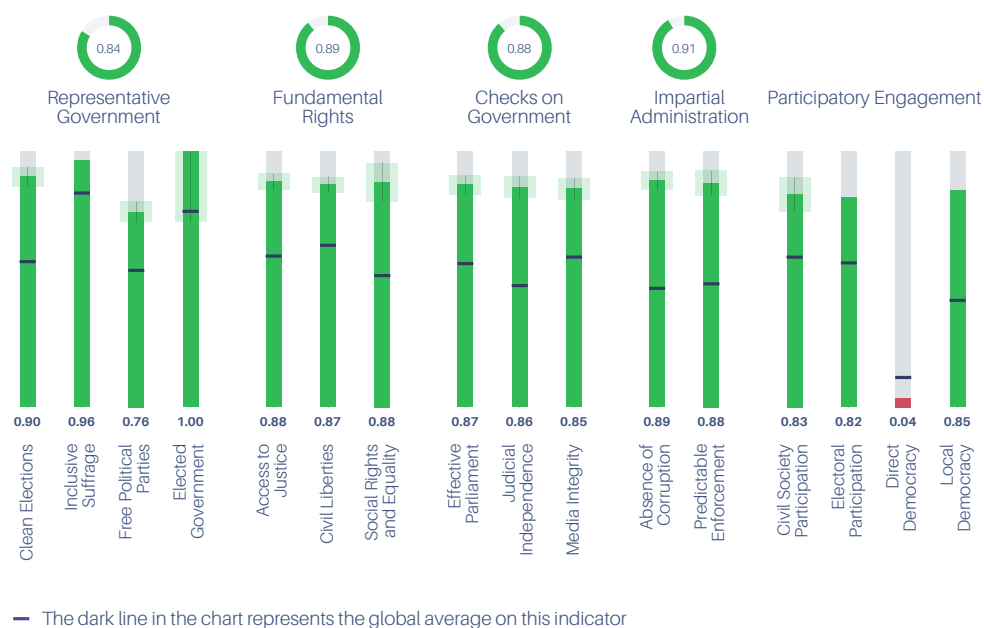


Figure 2. Sweden—Trends over time





■ High performance (0.70 – 1)    ■ Mid-range performance (0.40 – 0.69)    ■ Low performance (0 – 0.39)

Table 1. Sweden—Tracking the development of SDG 16

SDG 16	GSoD Aspect	Year 2015	Year 2018	Gains/ Declines
<b>SDG 16.1</b> Significantly reduce all forms of violence and related death rates everywhere	Personal Integrity and Security	0.90	0.88	↓
<b>SDG 16.3</b> Promote the rule of law at the national and international levels and ensure equal access to justice for all	Access to Justice	0.90	0.88	↓
	Judicial Independence	0.91	0.86	↓
	Predictable Enforcement	0.84	0.88	↑
<b>SDG 16.5</b> Substantially reduce bribery and corruption in all their forms	Absence of Corruption	0.89	0.89	=
<b>SDG 16.6</b> Develop effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels	Judicial Independence	0.91	0.86	↓
	Effective Parliament	0.92	0.87	↓
	Free Political Parties	0.76	0.76	=
	Civil Society Participation	0.85	0.83	↓
<b>SDG 16.7</b> Ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels	Elected Government	1	1	=
	Clean Elections	0.91	0.90	↓
	Electoral Participation	0.83	0.82	↓
	Effective Parliament	0.92	0.87	↓
	Local Democracy	0.88	0.85	↓
	Social Group Equality	0.79	0.81	↑
<b>SDG 16.10</b> Ensure public access to information and protect fundamental freedoms, in accordance with national legislation and international agreements	Freedom of Expression	0.88	0.82	↓
	Media Integrity	0.88	0.85	↓
	Freedom of Movement	0.91	0.84	↓
	Freedom of Religion	0.91	0.90	↓
	Freedom of Association and Assembly	0.92	0.91	↓

 High performance (0.70 – 1)

 Mid-range performance (0.40 – 0.69)

 Low performance (0 – 0.39)

### **Links to information**

<https://www.v-dem.net/en/our-work/research-projects/pandemic-backsliding/>

<https://www.ipu.org/country-compilation-parliamentary-responses-pandemic#A>

<http://www.oecd.org/coronavirus/en/#country-tracker>

<https://www.businessinsider.com/sweden-why-people-are-happy-with-no-lockdown-coronavirus-plan-2020-5?r=US&IR=T>

<https://www.icnl.org/covid19tracker/>

<http://hdr.undp.org/en/countries/profiles/SWE>

<https://data.worldbank.org/country/sweden>

<https://coronavirus.jhu.edu/data/mortality>

## Annex B. About the Speakers

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### **H. E. Jakob Hallgren**

Ambassador of Sweden to the Republic of Korea

Jakob Hallgren served as Deputy Director of the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) from 2012 to 2018. He previously worked at the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs as Head of its Humanitarian Division and Head of its Division for Conflict Issues. He has undertaken assignments at the Swedish Embassy in Sarajevo, the Swedish Permanent Mission in Geneva, for the Folke Bernadotte Academy and the Swedish Armed Forces. He has worked closely with the EU and the UN and a variety of organizations in the fields of mediation, peacebuilding, security systems reform, disarmament, humanitarian operations and disaster risk reduction. His regional expertise covers Northeast Asia, Europe and sub-Saharan Africa.

### **Dr Kevin Casas-Zamora**

Secretary-General, International IDEA

Kevin Casas-Zamora has more than 25 years of experience in democratic governance as a researcher, analyst, educator, consultant and public official. He embodies the rare combination of a distinguished academic career—strongly focused on electoral systems and democratic institutions—with practical experience as a high-level public official in his home country as well as multilateral organizations.

Casas-Zamora is Senior Fellow at the Inter-American Dialogue, a Washington, D.C.-based policy research centre. Until recently, he was a member of Costa Rica's Presidential Commission for State Reform, and managing director at Analitica Consulting (Analitica Consultores). Previously, he was Costa Rica's Second Vice President and Minister of National Planning; Secretary for Political Affairs at the Organization of American States; Senior Fellow at the Brookings Institution; and National Coordinator of the United Nations Development Programme's Human Development Report.

He has taught at Georgetown University, George Washington University and the University of Texas at Dallas, among many higher education institutions. He holds a Law degree from the University of Costa Rica, a master's in Government from the University of Essex and a PhD in Political Science from the University of Oxford. He has authored several studies on campaign finance, elections, democratization, citizen security and civil–military relations in Latin America.

### **H. E. Marise Payne**

Foreign Minister of Australia

Marise Payne was appointed Australia's Minister for Foreign Affairs on 28 August 2018. A Senator for New South Wales (NSW) since 1997, she has more than two decades of parliamentary experience,

including 12 years on the Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade. She is a former Minister for Human Services, and has held several shadow ministries.

Senator Payne was appointed Minister for Defence in September 2015. Since then, she has delivered the 2016 Defence White Paper, the Integrated Investment Plan, and Defence Industry Policy Statement. She oversaw a major renewal of the Australian Defence Force's capabilities and led the organization's increased international engagement program with allies and partners.

She has been a member of the Liberal Party since 1982, serving on the NSW State Executive for 10 years, and was the Young Liberals' first female president. She holds a Bachelor of Law and a Bachelor of Arts from the University of NSW.

### **H. E. Kang Kyung-wha**

Foreign Minister of the Republic of Korea

Kang Kyung-wha is the first woman to serve as the Republic of Korea's Foreign Affairs Minister. Prior to this appointment, Kang was the Senior Advisor on Policy to the United Nations Office of the Secretary-General. Kang is a veteran diplomat in multilateral diplomacy, serving both the Republic of Korea's government and the United Nations. She has served in key United Nations posts since 2006 and is the only person to be given positions in the organization by three successive secretary-generals since Kofi Annan. Kang was appointed by Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon as Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Deputy Emergency Relief Coordinator in the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in 2013 and has served as the Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights at the level of Assistant Secretary-General since 2007.

Before entering the UN in 2006, Kang served in various positions in the National Assembly and Foreign Ministry. She was appointed Director General of International Organizations at the Foreign Ministry in 2005, becoming the second female diplomat to serve at the director level. She also served as Minister in the Republic of Korea's Permanent Mission to the UN from 2001 to 2005, during which she chaired the Commission on the Status of Women. Kang entered the Foreign Ministry in 1999.

Before her public service career, Kang taught at the English department in Sejong University after receiving her PhD in Intercultural Communications from the University of Massachusetts. She received her bachelor's degree in Political Science and International Studies from Yonsei University.

### **H. E. Ann Linde**

Foreign Minister of Sweden

Ms Ann Linde was appointed Minister for Foreign Affairs in September 2019. Prior to that, Ms Linde served as Minister for European Union Affairs and Trade. She was State Secretary for the Ministry of Home Affairs from 2014 to 2016. Ms Linde earlier held the position of Head of the International Unit, Party of European Socialists, based in Brussels. During 2000–2013, she was International Secretary of the Swedish Social Democratic Party. During the 1980s, she worked in non-governmental organizations, and in the 1990s in Swedish Government Offices, in both political and non-political positions.

Among numerous assignments, she has served as Board member in the Olof Palme International Centre and the Anna Lindh Memorial Fund. Ms Linde has a bachelor's degree in Political Science, Sociology and Economics from Stockholm University.

Ms Linde was born in 1961. She is married, has two children and lives in Stockholm.

### **Professor Cheryl Saunders**

Professor Emeritus at Melbourne Law School, Australia

Cheryl Saunders has more than 40 years' experience as an academic and practitioner, with specialist interests and knowledge in comparative constitutional law, including multi-level government. Professor Saunders has published numerous books and articles on constitutional law and related



fields. She also provides expert advice to support constitutional processes around the world, most recently in Myanmar, the Philippines, Fiji, Tuvalu, Somalia and Syria, including by developing research reports and policy papers. Professor Saunders serves as Senior Technical Adviser to International IDEA's Constitution-Building Programme and Co-Convenor of the Constitution Transformation Network.

**Professor Sook Jong Lee**

Former President and currently Distinguished Fellow of East Asia Institute  
Professor at Sungkyunkwan University, Republic of Korea

Sook Jong Lee is a Professor at the Graduate School of Governance at Sungkyunkwan University and directs the East Asia Collaboration Center. She created the Asian Democracy Research Network in 2015 for collaborative studies on Asian democracy. Her research interests include global governance, democracy, non-governmental organizations and citizen participation. In addition to numerous articles, her recent book publications include *Populism in Asian Democracies* (eds. forthcoming 2020), *Transforming Global Governance with Middle Power Diplomacy* (ed. 2016), *Keys to Successful Presidency in South Korea* (ed. 2013 and 2016) and *Public Diplomacy and Soft Power in East Asia* (eds. 2011). Dr Lee received her PhD in Sociology from Harvard University.

**Professor Staffan Lindberg**

Director, V-Dem Institute, Department of Political Science, University of Gothenburg, Sweden

Staffan I. Lindberg is Professor of Political Science and Director of the V-Dem Institute at the University of Gothenburg, founding Principal Investigator of Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem), Wallenberg Academy Fellow, and the author of *Democracy and Elections in Africa* as well as over 50 articles on issues such as democracy, elections and democratization, accountability, clientelism, sequence analysis methods, women's representation and voting behaviour. Professor Lindberg also has extensive experience as a consultant and advisor to international organizations.

**Leena Rikkilä Tamang**

Director for Asia and the Pacific, International IDEA

Leena Rikkilä Tamang joined International IDEA in 2002. Between 2004 and 2013, she managed International IDEA's programme on Supporting the Constitution-Building Process in Nepal. She created and supported initiatives designed to forge a consensus on political reform and to develop the capacity of Nepalese stakeholders on constitutional options. Prior to her time in Nepal, Tamang worked at the South-Asia Programme, including on Myanmar, at International IDEA.

Tamang is the former Secretary-General of Finland's Advisory Board for Relations with Developing Countries (Ministry for Foreign Affairs). She is a member and former Chair (2001–2002) of the Network Institute for Global Democracy (NIGD). Her work with NIGD has included coordinating projects promoting North–South Dialogues on democracy and globalization; she was also involved in the World Social Forum process.

She is also a former Board Member of the Asia–Europe Foundation and has been teaching at the University of Tampere in the Department of Political Science and International Relations, Finland, from where she graduated, as well in the department of Environmental Politics.

Tamang has worked in India, Sri Lanka, Nepal and Vietnam and on Myanmar, and has published about democracy at the global level, women's political participation and inclusive democratic processes.

## Annex C. Programme

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### Democracy in Times of Corona 9 June 2020

- 16:45      **Welcome remarks**
- **H. E. Jakob Hallgren**, Ambassador of Sweden to the Republic of Korea
- 16:50      **Introductory remarks**
- **Dr Kevin Casas-Zamora**, Secretary-General, International IDEA

#### **Session 1: High-Level session on COVID-19 and Democracy**

- 16:55–17:10      Presentation by High-Level Panellists
- **H. E. Marise Payne**, Foreign Minister of Australia
  - **H. E. Kang Kyung-wha**, Foreign Minister of the Republic of Korea
  - **H. E. Ann Linde**, Foreign Minister of Sweden
- 17:10–17:30      Discussion moderated by Dr Kevin Casas-Zamora
- 17:30      **Concluding remarks by Ambassador Jakob Hallgren**

#### **Session 2: Expert discussion on COVID-19 and democracy**

- 17:45      Introduction by Ambassador Jakob Hallgren
- 17:48–18:10      Presentation by expert panellists
- Professor **Cheryl Saunders**, Professor Emeritus at Melbourne Law School, Australia
  - Professor **Lee Sook Jong**, Former President and currently Distinguished Fellow of East Asia Institute, Professor at Sungkyunkwan University, Republic of Korea
  - Professor **Staffan Lindberg**, Director, V-Dem Institute, Dept. of Political Science, University of Gothenburg, Sweden
  - **Leena Rikkilä Tamang**, Director for Asia and the Pacific, International IDEA
- 18:10–18:40      Panel discussion and Q&A moderated by Ambassador Jakob Hallgren
- 18:40      Concluding remarks by Ambassador Jakob Hallgren



The COVID-19 outbreak has affected the world in all respects, including democracy and fundamental freedoms such as the freedoms of expression and movement, and the right to health. This presents a central challenge for democracies: how to balance mitigating the outbreak and at the same time respecting democratic principles such as accountability, transparency and respect for civil and political rights. Many countries have implemented stringent restrictions to contain the virus, which have implications for human rights and freedoms.

The Embassy of Sweden to the Republic of Korea and International IDEA co-organized a webinar on 9 June 2020 to examine the pandemic's potential consequences for democracy worldwide using the case studies of Australia, the Republic of Korea and Sweden.

International IDEA  
Strömsborg  
SE-103 34 Stockholm  
Sweden  
Telephone: +46 8 698 37 00  
Email: [info@idea.int](mailto:info@idea.int)  
Website: <https://www.idea.int>

Embassy of Sweden  
Danam Building, 8th Fl.  
10 Sowol-ro, Jung-Gu  
Seoul 04527  
Republic of Korea  
Telephone: +82 2 3703-3700  
Email: [ambassaden.seoul@gov.se](mailto:ambassaden.seoul@gov.se)  
Website: <https://www.swedenabroad.se/en/embassies/south-korea-seoul/>