

Club de Madrid and democracy defenders call for greater solidarity amongst democracies against the disquieting rise of authoritarianism

Madrid, 3 April. - In recent weeks and with the support of the U.S. Embassy in Spain, [Club de Madrid](#) has hosted a series of discussions on 'Protecting Democracies from the Seeds of Authoritarianism'. These virtual and hybrid discussions analysed the growing threat of authoritarianism around the globe, calling on democracies to join forces and take a stronger stand against the critical backsliding being experienced in democratic practice.

The three sessions were organized throughout March with the participation of several Members of Club de Madrid. The last of the three sessions took place on March 27th at the Fundación Carlos de Amberes in Madrid, with the participation of Club de Madrid Members Mehdi Jomaa and Hanna Suchocka, former Prime Ministers of Tunisia and Poland, and democracy defenders Bianca Jagger from Nicaragua, Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya from Belarus, Carolina Barrero from Cuba, Isadora Zubillaga from Venezuela, Sanam Naraghi Anderlini from Iran and Thinzar Shunlei Yi from Myanmar. Participants shared their often similar but also very different experience as democracy and human rights defenders in regions as varied as Latin America, Eastern Europe, Southeast Asia and the broader Middle East where authoritarian leadership, civilian and military, has intensified in recent years.

"Democracy is in danger right now in the world. Human rights violations in Nicaragua are systematic, constant and horizontal. The regime remains in power by repression of the entire population, without exception", explained Bianca Jagger, who described the Ortega regime as "terrorist".

Cuban activist Carolina Barrero called on Europe to avoid normalizing the political situation in Cuba, calling on democracies to "strengthen an alliance for freedom," reminding participants that Cuba is one of the oldest dictatorships in the world. Her countryman, Yunior Garcia Aguilera underscored the importance of using culture to encourage and strengthen civic values.

The regression of democracy in Latin America was specifically highlighted as an example of situations where individuals that gained political power through democratic processes have then dismantled it from within.

"Democracy is a process, not just a destination. We cannot build democracy by leaving aside the rule of law". With these words, Club de Madrid Member and former Prime Minister of Poland, Hanna Suchocka, underlined the need to comply with and respect the rule of law, citing her own country Poland as a place where this is sadly no longer the case.

Through this project on 'Protecting Democracies from the Seeds of Authoritarianism', democracy defenders joined formers with Club de Madrid Members who are committed to supporting their struggles drawing on their own hands-on experience in democratic governance. All agreed on the need for greater coherence from the international community when it comes to confronting authoritarian tendencies and the importance of upholding the rule of law, fundamental and human rights.

For more information:

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