

**Forum: The Special Conference on Democracy**

**Issue: Addressing the democratic deficit during emergency like the coronavirus pandemic**

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## INTRODUCTION

Democratic deficits have occurred many times throughout the years all over the world. Throughout history, one can see many different ways democratic deficits took place: from propaganda to taking advantage of civilians during fearful times and even coup d'états.

The word democratic Deficit was first used in 1977 by the Young European Federalists in their manifesto. In this Document, the Federalists explain that there is a lack of communication between the ruling government and the civilians. However, Democratic deficits existed long before that. One of the most prominent examples of a democratic deficit in recent years is the European Union. Many say that the European Union's decision-making suffers from a lack of democracy. Furthermore, citizens seem to be very absent from this supposedly democratic decision making, seeing as it is very complex and hard to understand.

The Coronavirus pandemic has had a great effect on everyone's lives, whether it is physically, mentally, or economically. Not only individual citizens, but whole governments have suffered because of this. The abuse of power, not taking accountability, or ignoring important situations are some of the actions governments have done in the last year to respond to this global and threatening pandemic, which resulted in rights being violated, such as the right of movement through the numerous lockdowns and the right to protest.

To conclude, democratic deficits are a very serious topic. Regardless of whether they are caused by an emergency or not, democratic deficits should be tackled as soon as possible, seeing that Governments can exploit these kinds of Situations, thus disregarding civil and human rights such as the right to protest, freedom of speech and the right of movement among others for their own advantage. It is generally understood by the public that solving such an issue is rather difficult, nevertheless, it is not impossible.

## DEFINITION OF KEY-TERMS

### Democratic Deficit

A democratic deficit occurs when political parties or governments do not live up to their expected democratic beliefs.

### State of Emergency

An emergency is generally described as a sudden, serious situation, which would need a fast reaction to minimize harmful results.<sup>1</sup> A State of Emergency is a situation where governments can pass policies that it usually would not be allowed to do, to ensure the safety of its citizens. Natural disasters, Civil unrest, armed conflict, a medical pandemic or epidemic or other biosecurity risks are classified as such a state.

### Manifesto

A manifesto is a written document, which documents someones, usually a political party, ideologies, aims and policies.<sup>2</sup>

### Democracy

Democracy is the belief of a system that promotes freedom and equality between people. In this system civilians are able to choose their governing legislators.<sup>3</sup>

### Young european federalists

The Young european Federalists is a political youth organisation formed in 1972. Their aim is to promote European integration by democratising the European Union.

### European economic community

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<sup>1</sup> "Emergency." *Cambridge Dictionary*, [dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/emergency](https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/emergency).

<sup>2</sup> "Manifesto." *Cambridge Dictionary*, [dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/manifesto](https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/manifesto).

<sup>3</sup> "Democracy." *Cambridge Dictionary*, [dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/democracy](https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/democracy).

The aim of the regional Organisation European Economic Community (EEC) was to enforce economic integration among its member states. After the creation of the European Union (EU) in 1993, the EEC was renamed European Community (EC) and was incorporated into the EU. In 2009 the EC ceased to exist, which made the EU the successor institution of the Community.

### **United nations parliamentary assembly**

The United Nations parliamentary assembly (UNPA) is a system in the United Nations that authorizes for more members of the Parliament to be heard.

### **World Health Organisation**

The World Health Organisation, or in short the WHO, is a UN specialized agency that was formed on the 7th of April 1948 and its aim is to ensure public health.

### **The United Nations Democracy Fund**

The United Nations Democracy Fund, or in short the UNDEF, is a United Nations trust fund created in 2005 to support democratization efforts around the world.

### **Democratic legitimacy**

Under the term Democratic legitimacy one can understand that through the quality of the consent of the citizens a legitimacy of democracy is achieved.<sup>4</sup>

### **Coup d'état**

A Coup d'état, or in short Coup, is a sudden, illegal conquest of a government by the military, a political faction or a dictator.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> "Democratic Legitimacy Explained." *RESuME*, [resume.uni.lu/story/democratic-legitimacy](https://resume.uni.lu/story/democratic-legitimacy).

<sup>5</sup> "Coup D'état." *Cambridge Dictionary*, [dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/coup-d-etat?q=coup%2Bd%27%C3%A9tat](https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/coup-d-etat?q=coup%2Bd%27%C3%A9tat).

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

### The coronavirus pandemic

The first recording of a coronavirus case was on New Year's Eve 2019 in Wuhan, China. Since then the disease has spread worldwide and was declared an ongoing pandemic. There have been many speculations on how covid started, but it is most likely linked to the Huanan Seafood Wholesale Market, which at the time also sold live animals.

In the early 2020s the US made some serious accusations against China, saying that China withheld information on their reports and coronavirus numbers. Moreover, the U.S.'s former president Donald Trump has spread much misinformation regarding Covid-19. He has said things such as, "suggesting the injection disinfectant to treat Covid-19"<sup>6</sup> and has called the coronavirus "the Chinese Virus"<sup>7</sup> which could be classified as a racist comment. Throughout and after the many lockdowns economy and democracy have suffered.

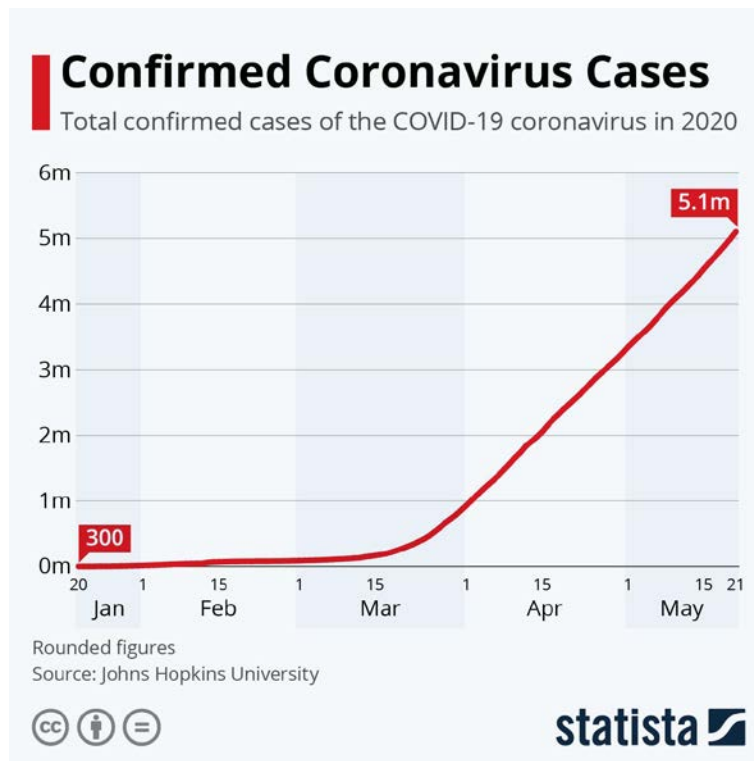


Figure 1: Chart depicting the spread of the virus throughout the course of the first months after its outbreak<sup>8</sup>

<sup>6</sup> "Coronavirus: Outcry after Trump Suggests Injecting Disinfectant as Treatment." *BBC News*, BBC, 24 Apr. 2020, [www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-52407177](http://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-52407177).

<sup>7</sup> \_DanMangan. "Trump Defends Calling Coronavirus 'Chinese Virus' - 'It's Not Racist at All'." *CNBC*, CNBC, 18 Mar. 2020, [www.cnbc.com/2020/03/18/coronavirus-criticism-trump-defends-saying-chinese-virus.html](http://www.cnbc.com/2020/03/18/coronavirus-criticism-trump-defends-saying-chinese-virus.html).

<sup>8</sup> "Infographic: The Spread of the Coronavirus Outside China." *Statista Infographics*, 25 Feb. 2020, [www.statista.com/chart/20935/covid-19-coronavirus-cases-outside-china/](http://www.statista.com/chart/20935/covid-19-coronavirus-cases-outside-china/).

### **Emergency Laws**

An emergency law, or Emergency Power, can be used by a government to pass policies in the State of Emergency, without any prior discussion, for the safety of the citizens. One of the most well-known examples of emergency laws are the various coronavirus lockdowns that have taken place in the last one and a half years.

On the 30th of January 2020, the coronavirus pandemic was declared a national emergency by the World Health organisations and soon after many Countries decided to go into local and national lockdown. By doing so, governments took the liberty to impose a serious lockdown procedure for the safety of civilians. However, Governments can take advantage of this situation and use it for their own benefit.

### **The Democratic deficit**

The term democratic deficit can be used to characterize the lack of or underdevelopment of essential democratic institutions, as well as the numerous ways in which these institutions can fail to function correctly. The lack of transparency and accountability and the inadequate participation of citizens in policy making are some examples and thus is also closely related with the issue to democratic legitimacy.

Even though any democratic system could suffer from a democratic deficit, the term is closest associated with the European Union (EU). People who contend that the EU institutions and decision-making procedures lack democracy and are inaccessible to ordinary citizens due to their complexity use the term "democratic deficit." The true democratic weakness in the EU appears to be the lack of European politics. EU voters do not believe they have an effective method to reject a 'government' opposed to their beliefs, or to modify the path of politics and policy in some respects. The European Union law is a system of different operating rules and regulations within the member states of the European Union. Its aim is to "promote peace, its values and the well being of its peoples". However many claim that the EU's laws and democracy are hard to understand and that citizens do not really have a say in the decision making procedure. One of the most outspoken Organization is the Young European Federalists, which explain in their manifesto that between the EU and its citizens there is a lack of communication that has to be fixed. All in all, the term "democratic deficit" in regards to the EU calls out the poor decision making procedure and in general suffer from a lack of democracy.

### **Somalian coup**

Another example of a democratic deficit would be the Somalian Coup. On the 15th of October 1969 the then Somalian President Abdirashid Ali Shermarke was shot dead by a policeman during his visit to the northern town of Las Anod. Following this incident, a military coup took place on the 21st of October 1969. The Somali Police force

and military overthrew the government without any consequences. The Army then Major General Mohamed Siad Barre was in command of this coup and whoever went against his beliefs, mainly politicians, were being imprisoned. In 1978 Abdullahi Yusuf Ahmed, a former member of the Somali military who was also imprisoned, alongside a group of officials named Majeerteen tried to overthrow Barre's Dictatorship. After this attempt most of the people involved in this coup were executed, however, Ahmed survived by fleeing from the country and traveling to Ethiopia. In 1979 he formed a political organisation named the Somali Salvation Democratic Front (SSDF). Its main goal was to get rid of Barre's regime. In 1982 the Ethiopian-Somali Border war took place, which was directed against Barre's dictatorship, however it ended abruptly due to the United States supporting and providing military aid to Somalia. By 1985 most of Barre's regime was terminated by the SSDF.

### **The democratic deficit during the coronavirus pandemic**

The COVID-19 situation has highlighted the importance of strong health governance. The majority of COVID-19 strategy advice to political leaders came from specialists or those with a history of working with government agencies, reflecting a default governance style that is still not inclusive. Despite the fact that inclusive discussion programs are critical for fostering trust and policy adherence, populations, communities, and civil society were mostly ignored.

Unfortunately, the democratic procedures that have emerged since the outbreak have helped to exacerbate rather than alleviate the democratic gap. During the coronavirus pandemic many basic civil and human rights were violated. In the following some of these rights will be further analyzed.

#### **Freedom of movement<sup>9</sup>**

The freedom of movement states that one can move freely within the country and has the right to leave the country. It is established in different constitutions of numerous Countries. One example is the Treaty of Maastricht, which was signed in 1992 and created the cornerstone of Union citizenship: freedom of movement and residence for EU citizens.

The freedom of movement is important because it encourages people to find jobs outside of their country of origin and it even promotes sustainable living in other countries. However, due to coronavirus regulations this freedom has been taken from the citizens. In many countries flying, travelling by boat and even changing countries by

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<sup>9</sup> "Right to Freedom of Movement." *Attorney-General's Department*, 31 Aug. 2020, [www.ag.gov.au/rights-and-protections/human-rights-and-anti-discrimination/human-rights-scrutiny/public-sector-guidance-sheets/right-freedom-movement](http://www.ag.gov.au/rights-and-protections/human-rights-and-anti-discrimination/human-rights-scrutiny/public-sector-guidance-sheets/right-freedom-movement).

car is prohibited. Moreover, there have been strict curfews imposed, which again violates the freedom of movement.

### Right to protest<sup>10</sup>

The right to protest is one of the fundamentals for a democracy and is at the core of the first amendment. This allows citizens to create and join protests peacefully. Law enforcement violates this law through preventing free public expression. In 1969 this right was passed in the Constitution as a civil rights movement, which states that peaceful protests are protected.

The right to protest is important for many reasons. By protesting like minded people can find each other, realise they are not alone and fight for important causes and start a debate, which can change society for the better.

During the covid pandemic many protests were shut down or even were not allowed to take place at all due to them either allegedly not being peaceful or because people would catch covid even though they were socially distancing. Additionally, police may stop protests in unlawful manners, such as mass arrests, illegal use of force and curfews.

### Freedom of speech<sup>11</sup>

The freedom of speech protects one's right to express themselves freely without the interference of the government. In 1971 the freedom of speech was included in the first amendment.

Freedom of Speech is important because it is a fundamental human right that guarantees an individual's or a group's ability to express their thoughts and beliefs without fear of retaliation, censorship, or legal repercussions.

Nonetheless, surveillance is becoming more frequent, as are restrictions on free expression and information, as well as curbs on public engagement. Throughout the covid pandemic people's opinions have been shut down over and over again, whether it was during protests, which were not permitted to happen, or on social media platforms. Not only were people disregarding other people, but whole governments were also trying to stop them from talking.

### Right to education<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> "Rights of Protesters." *American Civil Liberties Union*, [www.aclu.org/issues/free-speech/rights-protesters](http://www.aclu.org/issues/free-speech/rights-protesters).

<sup>11</sup> "Article 10: Freedom of Expression." *Article 10: Freedom of Expression | Equality and Human Rights Commission*, [www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/human-rights-act/article-10-freedom-expression](http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/human-rights-act/article-10-freedom-expression).

The right to education lets one have a standardized education which relates to the education system that already exists. In 2010, under Article 21-A and the Right To Education Act (RTE Act), the Right to Education was passed.

One of the most fundamental aspects in becoming a Rights Respecting School is the right to an education. Education is a crucial social and cultural right that helps to alleviate poverty and child labor. Education also encourages democracy, peace, tolerance, development, and economic prosperity.

Nevertheless, most students during the coronavirus lockdown did not receive adequate education. Most schools did not start online lessons until it was mandatory by the governments, which means students missed half a school year, regardless in which grade they are in.

### How governments can exploit a state of emergency

Authoritarian countries are stepping up their efforts in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, tightening their hold at home while taking the opportunity to further their agenda overseas. Autocratic governments have gotten more forceful in nature over the last few years.

There are three distinct patterns in how authoritarian regimes have responded to COVID-19, all of which could have long-term consequences: solidifying control at home, seeking geopolitical advantage in the midst of the crisis, and attempting to weaken democracies from inside. The covid-19 pandemic gave the opportunity to autocratic regimes to consolidate power and strengthen their grip on the country.

With people being petrified of the current situation, they are seeking for a leader to reassure them and bring calm and order. Seeing that autocratic leaders worry about their stability as a regime, this seems like the perfect situation to take advantage of the citizens. Moreover, these regimes claim to be better suited to tackle large scale challenges such as covid-19 and will do anything to advance this narrative. Lastly, authoritarian governments are increasingly exploiting official media and social media platforms to spread disinformation across borders, as has been the case for some years. The purpose of such disinformation campaigns is typically to take advantage of the open information environment in democracies in order to weaken perceived rivals from within by inciting discontent and strife among the populace.

## MAJOR COUNTRIES AND ORGANISATIONS INVOLVED

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<sup>12</sup> "Article 2 of the First Protocol: Right to Education." *Article 2 of the First Protocol: Right to Education | Equality and Human Rights Commission*, [www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/human-rights-act/article-2-first-protocol-right-education](http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/human-rights-act/article-2-first-protocol-right-education).



## The United States of America

On the 21st of January 2021 the first coronavirus case was reported in the US. Ten days later it was declared as a public health emergency by the government and after a month the first fatality regarding covid-19 was recorded. Soon after the US surpassed China's cases and became the hardest-hit country. In April of 2020 there had been several protests against the imposed lockdowns. On August 26th the US started planning the distribution of vaccines. Later in the same year the former President and First Lady of the US caught covid-19 and were sent to immediate treatment. As of right now there have been over 30 million confirmed cases, 580,000 deaths and 264,000,000 vaccine doses administered throughout the US.<sup>13</sup>

It is no secret, that Donald Trump has embraced his authoritarian tendencies throughout his administration. From the press media to members of his own government, elected leaders from both political parties, and foreign heads of state, he utilized his presidential megaphone to criticize a long list of perceived rivals.

## China

On the 31st of December of 2019 in the Chinese city Wuhan the first coronavirus case was recorded. On the 11th of January 2020 the first death was recorded in China and shortly after, on the 23rd of January, Wuhan went into lockdown. In Mid-July 2020 Hong Kong experienced a third wave of cases. Vaccinations in China started on the 15th of December 2020 and as of right now there have been 105 thousand confirmed Cases, 4,860 deaths and 388 million vaccine doses have been distributed.<sup>14</sup>

In a report of the Human Rights Watch, it is stated that Human rights are seen as an existential threat by China's leadership. Its response could represent an existential danger to people's rights all throughout the planet. To monitor and repress public criticism, the Chinese Communist Party, fearful that allowing political freedom might risk its hold on power, has built an Orwellian high-tech surveillance state and a sophisticated internet censorship apparatus.

## Brazil

The first covid-19 case was recorded on the 13th of March 2020 and the first death occurred on the 17th of March 2020. On the 7th of June 2020 Brazil's Government stopped releasing relevant case data on the situation at hand. A month later Brazil's President Jair Bolsonaro tested positive for covid-19. On the 23rd of February 2021 Brazil approved the Pfizer

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<sup>13</sup> "United States of America: WHO Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) Dashboard With Vaccination Data." *World Health Organization*, World Health Organization, covid19.who.int/region/amro/country/us.

<sup>14</sup> "China: WHO Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) Dashboard With Vaccination Data." *World Health Organization*, World Health Organization, covid19.who.int/region/wpro/country/cn.

vaccine for widespread use. As of right now there have been 15 million confirmed cases, 439 thousand deaths and 50 million vaccine doses administered.<sup>15</sup>

President Jair Bolsonaro has pursued measures that put disadvantaged groups at danger throughout his first year in office, embracing an anti-rights agenda. Some of these policies were thwarted by the courts and Congress. The Bolsonaro administration has proposed a bill that would exclude police personnel guilty of criminal killings from serving time in prison.

### The World Health Organisation

The World Health Organisation took immediate action when the existence of Covid-19 was brought to their attention. Within the first months the WHO declared the coronavirus a global health emergency and afterwards a global pandemic. Up to this day the WHO is trying to do everything in their power to discredit propaganda regarding Covid-19 and make everyone feel safer.

A subsection on their website was created where one can input their questions regarding Covid-19 and they will be answered.<sup>16</sup> Moreover, they have conducted several Country Case studies throughout the months such as “How a strong health system fights a pandemic in Thailand” and “Prioritizing health for a swift and effective Covid-19 response despite economic fragility and substantial inequalities”.<sup>17</sup>

### Amnesty International

Amnesty International is a Non-Governmental Organization founded in 1961. Their goal is to investigate and present the real information, when injustice is served. By lobbying powerful groups such as governments, Amnesty International ensures that the law is respected and promises are fulfilled.

By mobilizing the public to apply pressure on governments, armed political organizations, corporations, and intergovernmental organizations, Amnesty International helps to prevent human rights violations. Public demonstrations, letter-writing campaigns, lobbying decision-makers, petitions and human rights education are some of the most prominent techniques they use to mobilize civilians.

A good example showing Amnesty International protecting human rights during the Covid pandemic is an article they issued in 2021 discussing all the discrimination and inequalities civilians have and had faced during the pandemic. Who worked as frontline workers

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<sup>15</sup> “Brazil: WHO Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) Dashboard With Vaccination Data.” *World Health Organization*, World Health Organization, covid19.who.int/region/amro/country/br.

<sup>16</sup> “Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19).” *World Health Organization*, World Health Organization, www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019.

<sup>17</sup> “Country Case Studies.” *World Health Organization*, World Health Organization, www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/country-case-studies.

was determined by systemic gaps in employment, economic security, and access to housing and health care.

Incarcerated people were particularly vulnerable due to unsanitary circumstances in jails and detention centers, where they were unable to maintain proper physical distance and had insufficient access to sanitary supplies as facilities became infection hotspots.<sup>18</sup>

### Human Rights Watch

Human Rights Watch (HRW) is an NGO which examines and reports on human rights violations around the world. They target governments, armed organizations, and companies with their advocacy, urging them to modify or enforce their laws, policies, and practices. To maintain their autonomy, they refuse government money and scrutinize all gifts to verify that they are in line with their policies, mission, and principles.

On March 4th, 2021, they released a 54-page report to mark the one year anniversary of the coronavirus. In this report they discussed the different pandemic approaches and how governments should be more respectful of human rights. Moreover, the organization aims at raising awareness on how many people have died during this pandemic.

### TIMELINE OF EVENTS

Date	Description of Event
1920	The first time the United Nations Parliamentary Assembly (UNPA) was mentioned at the founding of the League of Nations
1945	At the end of World War II the idea of the creation of the UNPA was raised again
1957	The European Economic Community (EEC) was created
1961	Greece is the first Country to join the EEC

<sup>18</sup> "Everything You Need to Know about Human Rights in United States of America." Everything You Need to Know about Human Rights in United States of America. | Amnesty International | Amnesty International, [www.amnesty.org/en/countries/americas/united-states-of-america/report-united-states-of-america/](http://www.amnesty.org/en/countries/americas/united-states-of-america/report-united-states-of-america/).

1967	Greece suspends its membership to the EEC after the Colonels' coup
21st of September 1969	Somalian military coup
20th of September 1976	The Council agreed to the necessary instruments for election
1977	The first ever recording of the word democratic deficit
1978	Attempted coup in Somalia to overthrow dictatorship
1982	The Ethiopian-Somali Border War took place
1993	The EEC was renamed to the European Community (EC)
2007	Security Council Resolutions regarding Democracy were debated upon
2007	The Campaign for the Establishment of a United Nations Parliamentary Assembly (CUNPA) was established to promote the create the UNPA
2009	The European Community, or formally known as the EEC, was absorbed by the European Union
June 2017	The creation of the UNPA has received support from over 100 countries worldwide and over 1,600 members of the Parliament
31st of December 2019	The first Covid-19 Case was identified
21st of January 2020	First Covid-19 case in the US
30th of January 2020	The WHO issues Covid-19 as a global health emergency
23rd of February 2020	First Covid-19 case in Europe
11th of March 2020	The World Health Organisation (WHO) declared Covid-19 a pandemic
27th of March 2020	Boris Johnson, the UK Prime Minister, tests positive for Covid-19

7th of June 2020	Brazilian Government stops releasing data on Covid-19
7th of July 2020	Jair Bolsonaro, Brazil's President, tests positive for Covid-19
September 2020	1,000,000 confirmed global Covid-19 Cases
October 2020	The World Health Organisation estimates that 10% of the World's population has been infected with Covid-19
2nd of October 2020	Donald and Melania Trump, the former President and first lady of the USA, test positive for Covid-19
16th-18th of November 2020	Moderna and Pfizer vaccines are reported to be 95% effective
8th of December 2020	Mass vaccination starts in the UK
January 2021	2,000,000 confirmed global Covid-19 Cases
12th of January 2021	An international scientific consultation on Covid-19 takes place

## RELEVANT UN RESOLUTIONS, TREATIES AND EVENTS

### General Assembly Resolution A/68/284<sup>19</sup>

On the 7th of August 2013 the General Assembly held the 68th session on the promotion and protection of human rights. It promotes the right of peace, international cooperation, an enhanced participation of States and civil society in global decision making and a Security Council reform, which correlates with the matter. The Report written for this session should be read with the report A/HRC/24/38 of the Human Rights Council.

This Resolution is pertinent to the topic at hand, since they address civil and social rights, as well as peace and increased participation of society in decision-making, which is a major aspect in addressing democratic deficits.

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<sup>19</sup> "Promotion of a Democratic and Equitable International Order ." *United Nations General Assembly*, [www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/IntOrder/A-68-284\\_en.pdf](http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/IntOrder/A-68-284_en.pdf).

### Human Rights Council Resolution A/HRC/24/38<sup>20</sup>

On the 1st of July 2013 the Human Rights Council held its 24th session on the promotion and protection of human rights. This Report is relevant to the issue at hand as it aims to achieve a more democratic and equitable international order. Moreover, it focuses on civil, cultural, economic, political and social rights.

Seeing that this Resolution should be read in conjunction with the Resolution above, it discusses the same topics, mainly civil and social rights, as well as peace and enhanced societal engagement in decision-making, are all important factors in solving democratic deficits.

### 2007 Security Council Resolutions regarding Democracy<sup>21</sup>

Throughout the whole of 2007 the Security Council called on governments to take steps and support democratic processes in their respective countries. These Resolutions discussed the pursuit of democratic governance reforms, the strengthening of democratic governance, the planning and establishment of permanent and effective electoral votes and providing the necessary support for elections.

Bearing in mind that one of the main issues is democratic legitimacy, these Security Council Resolutions ensure a more democratic approach to everything. Furthermore, by the Security Council acknowledging that the democratic governance needs to be strengthened, this makes the phrase “democratic deficit” more well known and shows that it is a very important topic that should be discussed.

### Resolution 2209 (2018)<sup>22</sup>

On the 24th of April 2018 the 12th sitting of the Parliamentary Assembly was held, in which the issues concerning derogations under Article 15 of the European Convention on Human Rights were discussed, which directly correlates with the topic.

Moreover, recognizing that democratic deficits are usually connected with the EU, the Resolution of the Parliamentary Assembly has made a great effort to discuss human rights, some of which were also violated during the covid pandemic.

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<sup>20</sup> A/HRC/24/38 - E - A/HRC/24/38 -Desktop, undocs.org/A/HRC/24/38.

<sup>21</sup> Farrall, Jeremy. *Does the UN Security Council Compound the Global Democratic Deficit.* [www.albertalawreview.com/index.php/ALR](http://www.albertalawreview.com/index.php/ALR).

<sup>22</sup> “Parliamentary Assembly.” *PACE - Resolution 2209 (2018) - State of Emergency: Proportionality Issues Concerning Derogations under Article 15 of the European Convention on Human Rights*, assembly.coe.int/nw/xml/XRef/Xref-XML2HTML-en.asp?fileid=24680&lang=en.

## SG/SM/12489

In a legal Document called “Tackling Socio-Economic Deficits Only Way to Ensure Stability, Democratic Consolidation in Pakistan”<sup>23</sup>, which was published on the 24th of September 2009, the former Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon stated his closing remarks towards the Situation in Pakistan. He recognized Pakistan’s challenges in its quest for stability and prosperity and how civilians struggle against violent extremism. Ban Ki-Moon appointed an ambassador as Special Envoy for assistance, who will assist in mobilizing international assistance and coordinating efforts so that displacement can be ended, people may return home, and stability can be achieved.

Recognizing the fact that Pakistan was in a state of Emergency, the former Secretary General took immediate action towards the issue. His actions are a great example of how a state of emergency should be treated.

## PREVIOUS ATTEMPTS TO SOLVE THE ISSUE

In the past, there have been some attempts made to address the issue of Democratic deficits in regard to Emergencies. The most important ones will be analyzed below.

### Un parliamentary assembly<sup>24</sup>

In 2018 the Members of the European Parliament Jo Leinen and Andreas Bummel wrote and published a book on the history, the ongoing relevance and the future for the implementation of the idea of civilians partaking in the decision making of politics and priorities. In this book, called “A World Parliament: Governance and Democracy in the 21st Century” they propose the UNPA as an independent watchdog in the UN system which would allow citizens to have a formal role in global affairs. Moreover, they explain that this would also promote democratic legitimacy.

This proposal is based on a 2007 international plea for the creation of a parliamentary assembly at the United Nations, which stated that to address fundamental concerns such as social inequality, the development of weapons of mass destruction, the threat of terrorism, or

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<sup>23</sup> “Tackling Socio-Economic Deficits Only Way to Ensure Stability, Democratic Consolidation in Pakistan, Secretary-General Tells Group of Friends | Meetings Coverage and Press Releases.” *United Nations*, United Nations, [www.un.org/press/en/2009/sgsm12489.doc.htm](http://www.un.org/press/en/2009/sgsm12489.doc.htm).

<sup>24</sup> “UN Parliamentary Assembly.” *One World Trust*, [www.oneworldtrust.org/un-parliamentary-assembly.html#:~:text=They%20propose%20a%20United%20Nations,as%20its%20democratic%20legitimacy%20in%20creases](http://www.oneworldtrust.org/un-parliamentary-assembly.html#:~:text=They%20propose%20a%20United%20Nations,as%20its%20democratic%20legitimacy%20in%20creases).

the deterioration of global ecosystems, all humans must work together. People must be more effectively and actively involved in the activities of the United Nations and its international organizations to assure international collaboration, gain acceptance, and boost the UN's legitimacy and capability to act. They must be given more opportunities to engage in UN activities.

### **Emergency special sessions<sup>25</sup>**

Under the resolution 377A(V) "Uniting for peace", which was adopted by the General Assembly on the 3rd of November 1950, it was decided that if the Security Council has a lack of unanimity of the permanent member states or fails its primary responsibility, mainly to promote and maintain world peace, the General Assembly can hold emergency special sessions in which they can take matters into their own hands.

### **The United Nations Democracy Fund<sup>26</sup>**

The United Nations Democracy Fund (UNDEF) conducted many studies named regarding many topics discussing societal, governmental and democratic issues around the world. A section of this study discussed the Topic of marginalized groups in Nepal. The UNDEF supports the Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO) the National Coalition Against Racial Discrimination, which strives towards the influence of marginalized groups in the Federal Democratic Republic's constitution and another section discussed the topic of the difficulty to enforce international laws with barriers such as language barriers. In 2008 they supported the NGO Mandat International in the creation of a search engine dedicated to humanitarian law and international human rights.

## **POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS**

### **Raising awareness and educating**

One of the most important things one can do to understand the topic more clearly, is to educate themselves and others on the matter at hand. Raising awareness is a key action to solve any problem. By doing so, it would eliminate the Stigma around "not knowing what to do" in a State of emergency, where people might be taken advantage of.

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<sup>25</sup> "United Nations, Main Body, Main Organs, General Assembly." *United Nations*, United Nations, [www.un.org/en/ga/sessions/emergency.shtml](http://www.un.org/en/ga/sessions/emergency.shtml).

<sup>26</sup> "Democracy: As If People Matter." *The United Nations Democracy Fund*, [www.un.org/democracyfund/sites/www.un.org.democracyfund/files/democracy\\_as\\_if\\_people\\_matter.pdf](http://www.un.org/democracyfund/sites/www.un.org.democracyfund/files/democracy_as_if_people_matter.pdf).



Civilians and experts on the issue at hand could raise awareness in ways such as but not limited to, public speeches, radio and television segments, informative days at school and posters throughout the city. Moreover, educating civilians by having a database, where civilian and human rights are accessible to everyone, including people with disabilities, is an effective Solution.

### **The creation of a website where citizens can express themselves freely**

Keeping in mind that one of the basic human rights is the freedom of speech, having a website where citizens can express themselves freely on the issue would be a plausible solution. This would also let citizens organize marches and protest. Not only would that spark the attention of the media, but it would also hold others accountable, such as Governments and Politicians. Such protests should be held in a peaceful manner and should also follow the coronavirus regulations set by the governments and the world health organisation. Great examples for peaceful protests are the protests held in support of the Fridays for Future movement.

### **The creation of a new non-governmental organisation**

The creation of a new Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO), that protects civil and human rights is a vital solution on the matter at hand. This NGO would cooperate with the UN and keep data on the actions taken by the government, regardless if these are in favour or against the citizens rights. These would be reported to the UN. Furthermore, this NGO would hold governments accountable if they were to exploit the situation and disregard civil and human rights.

### **A comprehensive website explaining Emergency Laws**

Seeing that there is no official website, either locally or globally, discussing and explaining what Emergency Laws are and how they can take place, a further possible solution could be the creation of such a website. This website should be accessible to everyone, meaning to people from all backgrounds, people with disabilities and in multiple languages for it to be understandable. In addition to that, this website should clearly state what governments are prohibited from doing to ensure that a democratic deficit does not take place.

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