



Eight years ago, the General Assembly of the United Nations appointed September 15 as the International Day of Democracy, as put forth in [resolution A/62/7](#) (2007). The word democracy has its origin in the old city of Athens where its literal meaning is rule of the people. For that symbolic reason, our digital ambassador Elyx travelled to Greece today, the birthplace of democracy.

[Here Elyx discovers how the Greek people celebrate this day](#)

In a [report for this international day](#) , the UN declares that democracy is a universal value, based on the freely expressed will of people's political, economic, social and cultural believes.

[Secretary General](#)

of the United Nations, Ban Ki-moon, therefore states today that it is our collective responsibility to give voice to all people, only “when the people have spoken and when they have been heard, democracy lives.” Freedom of speech is a human right and hence is one of the most important pillars of stable democracy, as captured in the

[International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights](#)

(1966).



Strengthening of democratic ideals is as important today as ever. According to Ban Ki-moon,

direct participation of the citizens is essential here, because they “play a critical role in keeping Government accountable, and it helps represent the diverse interests of the population”. On this International Day of Democracy, the United Nations calls upon all governments to make space for civil society, which is also this year's theme for this international day.

A successful and stable democracy requires an active civic participation. For that reason, the UN founded the United Nations Democracy Fund ([UNDEF](#)). This supports initiatives all over the world that see the acquisition of knowledge about democracy as an integral part of any type of education. Development is more likely to consolidate sustainably when the people get a say in the decisions that affect them. “As the United Nations continues to work towards a democratic, pluralistic future for all, the State and civil society can and should be partners in building the future people want” (Ban Ki-moon).

Related Links:

- UN Observances: [International Democracy Day](#)
- UN Democracy Fund: [UNDEF Events – Democracy Day](#)
- UNRIC News: [#Democracy Day – Involving Youth](#) (2014)
- OHCHR: [International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights](#) (1966)
- Elyx70Days: [Greece: Elyx visits Athens to celebrate the International Day of Democracy](#)

Photo Credits:

- Sudan Elections: UN Photo