

## About This Report

Each year the CIVICUS State of Civil Society Report examines the major events that involve and affect civil society around the world. Our report is of, from and for civil society, drawing from a wide range of interviews with people close to the major stories of the day, CIVICUS' ongoing programme of research and analysis, and findings from the CIVICUS Monitor online platform tracking the space for civil society around the world. This report kicked off a series of dialogues around 'Reimagining Democracy'; a synthesis of these dialogues is published in the report **Democracy for All: Beyond a Crisis of Imagination.**

**[Español](#) | [Français](#) | [Türkçe \[PDF\]](#)**

DECEMBER 2017  
NOVEMBER 2017  
OCTOBER 2017  
SEPTEMBER 2017  
AUGUST 2017  
JULY 2017  
JUNE 2017  
MAY 2017  
APRIL 2017  
MARCH 2017  
FEBRUARY 2017  
JANUARY 2017

# CIVIL SOCIETY MEETING CALLS FOR SOLIDARITY AND RADICAL ACTION TO TACKLE THE CURRENT CRISIS OF DEMOCRACY



As 2017 draws to a close, many in civil society found renewed hope in striving to make democracy real and to demand political and economic reform. In a world where authoritarianism is on the rise, the current crisis of democracy is one of the most significant challenges of our time. This timeline looks back at some of the major events of 2017 for civil society, including the Women's March, the #MeToo movement, and the #BlackLivesMatter protests. It also highlights the work of civil society organizations that have been instrumental in addressing these issues. The current crisis of democracy in many countries is a result of a combination of factors, including the erosion of fundamental freedoms, the breakdown of democratic institutions, and the rise of authoritarianism. Civil society organizations are working to address these challenges by promoting transparency, accountability, and the rule of law. They are also working to build global solidarity and to use economic inequality as a tool for social change.

## Year In Review: By The Month

Our monthly Year in Review looks back at the key stories for civil society in 2017; the major events that civil society was involved in, responded to and was impacted by.

**JANUARY**  
YEAR IN REVIEW

- USA:** As many as two million people marched in protest in cities across the USA and around the world on 20 January, the day of President Trump's inauguration.
- THE GAMBIA:** President Jammeh tried to hold onto power despite losing the election, but was forced to stand down after popular and international pressure.
- INDONESIA:** Five social media and blogging activists, campaign campaigners against the military and the military's human rights abuses were detained and tortured.
- DOMINICAN REPUBLIC:** Organized to challenge systemic, large-scale corruption, the Green March Movement (Marcha Verde) saw an estimated 200,000 people march on 22 January, the largest peaceful demonstration in the country's history.

- GUINEA-BISSAU:** Thousands protested against political deadlock that led to crumbling public services.
- BRAZIL:** Millions of workers joined protests or stayed at home in a one-day strike against corruption and economic inequality.

# APRIL

YEAR IN REVIEW

**CAMEROON:** After 33 days, internet access was finally restored to Cameroon's Anglophone regions, but the marginalization of Anglophone voices continued.

**TURKEY:** In a repressive political climate with many dissenting voices jailed, President Erdoğan gained even more power in a narrow referendum win.

**ARMENIA:** Elections were marred by allegations of fraud, include vote-buying and misuse of state resources to support ruling party candidates.

# JULY

YEAR IN REVIEW

**VENEZUELA:** Widespread protests culminated in a one-day national strike in July, as an economic crisis fueled anger about the lack of essential goods.

**ZAMBIA:** A 90-day state of emergency, declared in July, impacted on civil society freedoms, and made it harder to express dissent.

# OCTOBER

YEAR IN REVIEW

**NOBEL PEACE PRIZE:** Civil society's vital work received high-level recognition when the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize.

**CHINA:** The 1 October semi-fatal independence referendum saw violence as the police tried to stop people voting. Political deadlock followed.

**BUSINESS AND HUMAN RIGHTS TREATY:** Over 40 CSOs took part in talks to establish a treaty on transnational businesses and human rights; a draft of the treaty is now being prepared.

**INDONESIA:** Thousands rallied against President Jokowi's corruption, ultimately successful, to overturn presidential term limits.

# MAY

**INDONESIA:** In one of many acts of repression, at least six people were killed by police at a peaceful demo in the town of Cilacap.

# JANUARY

## YEAR IN REVIEW



**EGYPT:** A new NGO Law introduced further restrictions for civil society in a context where civic space is severely restricted.

# AUGUST

## YEAR IN REVIEW

**SPAIN:** Sustained military violence against the Basque people led to a major human rights crisis.

**ANGOLA:** Civil society saw grounds for cautious optimism when President José Eduardo dos Santos stepped down after 38 years in power.



**ETHIOPIA:** A bleak state of emergency came to an end, but civil society continued to face major restrictions.

**INDONESIA:** Tens of thousands protested against the jailing of these young parliamentary activists, leaders of 2013's 'Indonesian movement'.

**TURKEY:** Several people were killed in protests for political change and constitutional reform.



**MEXICO:** The assassination of journalist Claudia Rincón emphasized the deadly threat to Mexico's media workers.

**NICARAGUA:** By August, community groups had held more than 90 protests against the jailed labor leader's Court project.

**LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN:** Civil society had to threaten to walk out of negotiations on a regional treaty on environmental rights, in order to ensure that fundamental rights were protected.

# NOVEMBER

## YEAR IN REVIEW

**DENMARK:** Change at the top finally came when President Mogens was forced to stand down, but whether this would lead to improved civil society conditions remained unclear.



**HONDURAS:** Mass protests against general elections, condemned by many as being rigged, the government responded by declaring a state of emergency.

**UNITED NATIONS:** The UN General Assembly adopted a resolution, originating in the UN Human Rights Council, on the protection of human rights defenders.

# MARCH

## YEAR IN REVIEW

**SOUTH KOREA:** Overwhelming public pressure led to the impeachment of President Park Geun-hye following a widespread corruption scandal.



**PARAGUAY:** Protests against a proposal to change presidential term limits were met with violence but led to the changes being dropped.

**ROMANIA:** Anticorruption protests took place in at least 100 cities, bringing a heavy-handed state reaction.



**THE REPUBLICS OF CONGO:** A rise in xenophobic and racist politics demanded a progressive civil society response.

**IN ISRAEL:** Following extensive civil society advocacy, 18 soldiers became the first country in the world to impose a ban on mental training.

# JUNE

## YEAR IN REVIEW



**PROTESTS:** A fresh attack on freedom came in June with the passing of a new law limiting international funding for civil society.

# SEPTEMBER

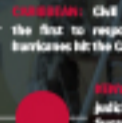
## YEAR IN REVIEW



**YEMEN:** After civil society advocacy, the UN set up an independent group to investigate human rights abuses in the Yemen conflict.



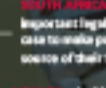
**INDONESIA:** Civil society was at the forefront of response after two deadly earthquakes struck the country.



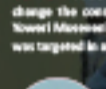
**COLOMBIA:** Civil society was also the first to respond as devastating hurricanes hit the Caribbean.



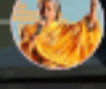
**INDIA:** In a rare show of judicial independence, India's Supreme Court insisted that the presidential election be re-run.



**SOUTH AFRICA:** Civil society scored an important legal victory, winning a court case to make political parties reveal the source of their funds.



**CHINA:** Amid controversial moves to change the constitution to let President Xi Jinping serve longer, civil society was targeted in a series of police raids.



**UNITED STATES:** The private sector's government rate at the UN General Assembly prompted concern among many in civil society.

# DECEMBER

## YEAR IN REVIEW



**RUSSIA:** Anti-government protests erupted, focused on issues of jobs, housing and high prices, as well as demands for democracy.



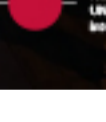
**INDIA:** Following extensive civil society advocacy, parliament approved a law on the promotion and protection of human rights defenders.



**INDONESIA:** CSOs mobilized against a proposed NGO bill that would vastly extend the state's powers over civil society.



**ARGENTINA:** 45 activists were prevented from attending a World Trade Organization meeting hosted by Argentina, leading worrying signals about the state's willingness to tolerate dissenting voices.



**UN:** Serious cuts to the UN's budget raised civil society concerns about the UN's ability to deliver, and about current international priorities.



## STATE OF CIVIL SOCIETY REPORT 2018

### YEAR IN REVIEW: TOP TEN TRENDS



## OVERVIEW: TOP TEN TRENDS

"What is perhaps unusual about this year's report is the focus on the resistance and the fact that the fightback is on, " is one of the key findings of the State of Civil Society Report 2018. The report identifies 10 key trends that impacted on civil society in 2017 and are continuing in 2018, including:

- Globalised neoliberalism is failing people all around the world;
- Polarising politics are dividing our societies;
- Personal rule by political leaders is undermining democratic institutions;
- Attacks are increasing on journalists reporting on corruption and public protests;
- Growing surveillance and manipulation of opinion is betraying the promise of social media;
- Uncivil society is claiming civil society space;
- Multilateralism is in the firing line;
- The private sector's growing role in governance demands more scrutiny;
- Patriarchy is now firmly under the spotlight;
- Civil society is fighting back and building resolute resistance.

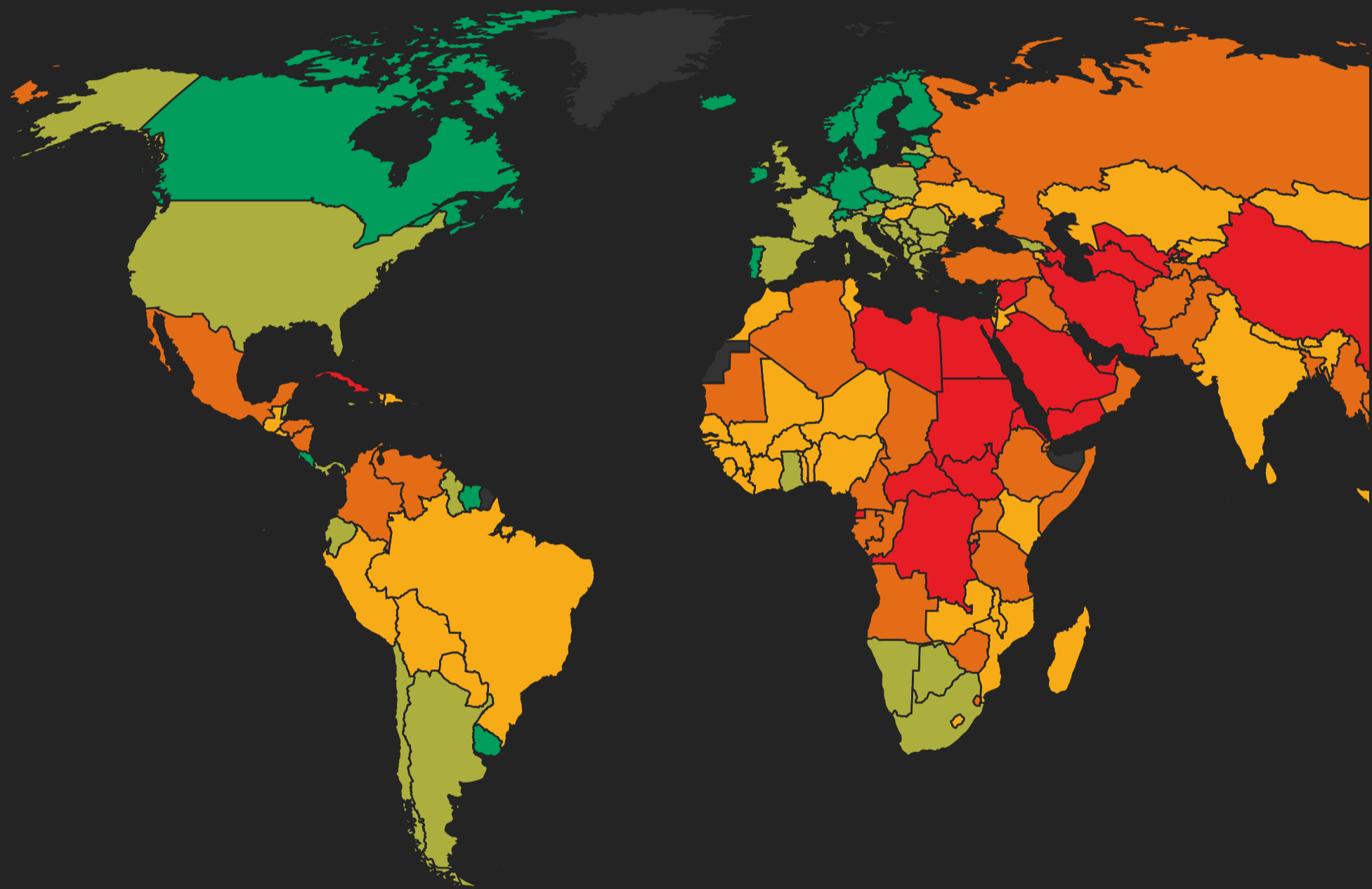
[DOWNLOAD OVERVIEW](#)

# CIVICUS Monitor

See the state of civil society in your country...



**MONITOR**  
TRACKING CIVIC SPACE



- Closed
- Repressed
- Obstructed
- Narrowed
- Open

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