

STOP THE COUNT!

**DEFENDING DEMOCRACY
IN THE DIGITAL AGE**

**International Institute for Democracy and
Electoral Assistance (IDEA)**

CINCYMUNC III

CHAIR

Katelyn Gramza

Co-Chair

Youssef Elkady



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CODE OF CONDUCT

Our goal at CINCYMUNC III is to cultivate an educational environment that aligns with our mission. It is essential for all participants, including delegates, head delegates, faculty, delegation leaders, guests, secretariat, staff, and board members, to maintain professionalism in their speech, actions, and appearance throughout the conference. The following guidelines are provided to establish clear expectations.

If any disrespectful behaviors arise during committee sessions, attendees are encouraged to address the issue directly with each other or involve their faculty advisor or head delegate. Instances of repeated undiplomatic behavior can be brought to the attention of organizers by faculty advisors or head delegates through Information Services. Larger concerns, such as issues related to sexual harassment or discrimination, should be referred to conference organizers. Cases involving sexual violence must be reported to conference organizers at a minimum. Organizers can be contacted either through volunteer staff in committee or directly through Information Services.

CINCYMUNC III retains the right to exclude violators from further participation and/or impose restrictions on future registration for any participant or school that fails to uphold their responsibility to the conference's expectations.

GENERAL CONDUCT POLICIES

Delegates are required to adhere to all rules, regulations, and policies applicable to the venue hosting CINCYMUNC III throughout the entirety of the conference.

Delegates are expected to maintain a noise level that is not disruptive while inside the conference venue.

Harassment or disruption of other participants is strictly prohibited.

Conference identification (delegate name tags) must be visibly worn at all times during the conference.

The use of tobacco products, including e-cigarettes and vapes, is prohibited within the conference venue.

The use or possession of illegal substances, including marijuana products or paraphernalia, is strictly forbidden for all delegates.

Consumption or possession of alcohol in public spaces, including those within the conference venue, is strictly prohibited, regardless of the delegate's age. Alcohol consumption or possession among underage delegates is strictly prohibited in all situations.

Delegates are expected to be punctual and present at all committee sessions. In the event of anticipated lateness or absence, delegates are required to inform their chair and/or crisis manager in advance.

Delegates are expected to demonstrate respect for all ethnic and national cultures, as well as religious affiliations. Additionally, they must adhere to any committee-specific content expectations outlined in their Background Guide.

Delegates will act in accordance with federal laws and regulations at all times and comply with the local laws and regulations of the city where CINCYMUNC III is hosted.

Delegates are obligated to follow the instructions of CINCYMUNC III staff members, venue staff and security, as well as law enforcement personnel, and respect their roles in enforcing the policies outlined in this Code of Conduct.

ZERO-TOLERANCE DISCRIMINATION POLICY

CINCYMUNC III maintains a strict zero tolerance policy towards any form of sexual misconduct, encompassing sexual harassment and assault. Additionally, the conference enforces a zero tolerance policy against harassment or discrimination based on race, color, sex, gender, gender identity, sexual identity, national origin, religion, age, or disability. This policy extends to inappropriate :

Content in notes exchanged or documents produced during committee sessions,
Conversations occurring throughout the CINCYMUNC III event, and
Behavior at the designated venue or during any conference-sponsored activities.

Delegates who encounter any discrimination or experience sexual misconduct are encouraged to promptly report the incident to a member of the CINCYMUNC II Secretariat or through an anonymous reporting form, which will be provided during the conference. All reported cases will be immediately investigated by the Executives and may result in disqualification from awards and/or removal from the conference.

Social Media Policy

Delegates should not use Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, Tiktok, or any other kind of social media during committee sessions. Outside of committee sessions, delegates should practice appropriate behavior on these sites and apps. Inappropriate posts or bullying via social media related to CINCYMUNC III will not be tolerated.

DRESS CODE POLICY

CINCYMUNC III requests that delegates wear standard Western Business Attire while the committee is in session. Western Business Attire includes appropriate dress shirts and pants worn with jackets and ties, appropriate dress blouses worn with skirts or slacks, and business formal dresses.

Code of Conduct Violations Policy

Participants should be aware that if they are found in violation of any of the above policies, the Executives may impose these or any other sanctions at their sole and final discretion:

- Notification of the participant's head delegate and/or faculty advisor
- Suspension from the remainder of committee sessions
- Disqualification of the delegate or delegation from individual and/or delegation awards

Other actions deemed fit by the Executives, including notification of and/or security, law enforcement or other relevant authorities.

LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

Welcome to CINCYMUNC 3!

My name is Katelyn Gramza, and it is my distinct pleasure and honor to be your chair for the specialized committee of the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance. The subject of electoral integrity and upholding democracy is incredibly important and especially relevant given our country's recent elections. I am so excited to hear your thoughtful, passionate debates and read the resolutions you will devise.

A bit about myself: I am a fourth-year international affairs major. In addition, I study French and as my senior capstone project, I am currently writing a thesis on the global transition to a circular economy. I will graduate from UC this May. I joined UC Model UN last year and have since been elected to Internal Vice President of the team. Model UN has become a passion of mine and although it was short-lived, I will never forget the experiences I have had and the skills I have gained with my amazing team members.

In addition to school, I currently work as a field manager for the nonprofit organization, Ohio Citizen Action. Like IDEA, this organization also has a mission of upholding democracy. My work there has emboldened my passion for this subject. This fall, I was a manager for the OCA Cincinnati office's electoral campaign. I worked and spoke to people on all ends of the political spectrum daily, and it was an extremely educating and impactful experience. Our priority, above all, was to get people to the polls. I am an avid believer in the merits and potential of democracy; By studying and debating the subject of electoral integrity, my hope is that we all will gain a better understanding of the successes and obstacles for democracy in our modern, digitalized world. If you have any questions at all about committee or your position, please do not hesitate to reach out.

Thank you!

Katelyn Gramza, gramzakm@mail.uc.edu

Chair | Internal Vice President, UC Model United Nations

INTRODUCTION TO THE COMMITTEE

This committee is a specialized agency, as we will be simulating a conference meeting of member states and entities of the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance or IDEA. In all other purposes, this committee will be run like a typical Model UN General Assembly. We will begin by taking roles, opening debate, selecting a topic, and opening the speakers list. The timelines and requirements for working papers and draft resolutions will be contingent on the flow of debate and the formation of blocs.

Position papers are not required; however, we expect and strongly encourage delegates to come adequately prepared to debate the principles and priorities of their position accurately and effectively. Diplomacy is of utmost importance, especially during a lively debate. We expect

BACKGROUND OF THE IDEA

The International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA) is an intergovernmental organization that supports democracy worldwide. Founded in 1995, they are one of the only IGOs whose only mission is to foster sustainable democracy (2024d). They began with 14 founding member states and have since grown to 35. These countries span several continents and work collectively to promote and support democracy around the world through IDEA's research, capacity-building, and advisory services. In addition, IDEA has made partnerships with other organizations such as the United Nations Development Programme, Human Rights Watch, the African Union, European Commission, Council of Europe and many others (2024b).

IDEA's governance works as follows: "Council of Member States, a Steering Committee, a Finance and Audit Committee, a Board of Advisers and a Secretariat, led by the Secretary-General Dr Kevin Casas-Zamora" (2024b). The work of IDEA is in the form of policy knowledge-sharing, assistance in democratic reforms, research, et cetera. Their work is focused on six main objectives: Electoral Processes, Constitution-Building, Democracy Assessment, Political Participation and Representation, Climate Change and Democracy, Digitalization and Democracy (2024a).

TOPIC 1: DIGITALIZATION AND PREVENTING ELECTORAL INTERFERENCE

There are a plethora of opportunities and challenges at the intersection between democracy and digitalization. This problem cannot be ignored as more and more facets of politics and daily life are conducted online. Digital technologies have bridged divides and made people more connected, which in turn promotes democratic processes characterized by higher levels of responsibility from governmental entities, better transparency, and increased citizen engagement and inclusivity. These technological advancements also pave the way for the fulfillment of basic human rights and offer doors to unbounded human progress. But these same technologies also carry the risk of strengthening authoritarian regimes' capacity for repression, endangering fundamental rights, controlling access to unbiased and trustworthy electoral information, and solidifying existing power structures.

To fully take advantage of the benefits of digitization, democratic institutions and stakeholders are supported by International IDEA's Digitization and Democracy program in prioritizing democratic values and principles. Additionally, it works to defend democratic institutions from new-found technological dangers. The program's activities include providing technical support, creating knowledge, advocating, and facilitating communication.

AUTOMATION AND AI

New technologies, especially the highly controversial rise of artificial intelligence, have been introduced into governmental processes, and electoral procedures have all felt the touch of these new advancements. AI systems are rapidly growing in size and capacity. According to a 2023 report published by the National Endowment for Democracy, one such technology enhancing governmental processes is automated decision-making (ADMs) tools. As Krzysztof Izdebski writes:

"Whether through opaque decision-making processes that blur lines of official responsibility, discriminatory impacts of algorithmic tools (as we have seen across a range of established democracies), or abuses of new surveillance powers (as with NSO Group's Pegasus spyware), poorly overseen digitalization may further erode political accountability where it is already under threat" (5).

Automation and AI have made entrances to government and electoral processes in a variety of ways. In some instances, AI has been beneficial in increasing the capacity and effectiveness of governments responding to the needs of their citizens. In others, the lack of regulation or oversight has created grave concerns about the rights of voters.

ELECTORAL INTERFERENCE

The advent of digital technologies has introduced a wide range of threats to the democratic process. Trust in government is low, as well as trust in fair elections. Elections have been interfered with in many ways, such as hacking, disinformation campaigns, and online political propaganda. One such highly controversial event was the 2016 United States Presidential election, in which there was speculation that Russian intelligence forces used digital platforms to interfere. Investigations revealed that foreign actors had leveraged digital tools to create false narratives, amplify polarizing content, and manipulate public opinion, raising concerns about the security of elections worldwide. This event underscored the urgent need for stronger cybersecurity measures, international cooperation, and regulations to prevent future interference. As a result, organizations like International IDEA have intensified their efforts to bolster electoral resilience and safeguard democratic processes from digital threats, working with governments and stakeholders globally to build more robust defenses against these evolving challenges.

HISTORY AND PAST ACTIONS

The IDEA completes a remarkable amount of research every year that furthers their goals of protecting democracy. One such ongoing research publication is their State of Democracy reports. They publish reports that evaluate specific countries and regions, and this year they published the Global State of Democracy Report 2024 which analyzes these trends on a worldwide scale. They also produce Annual Outcome Reports and other handbooks such as "Cybersecurity in Elections: Models of Interagency Collaboration," and "Digital Solutions for Political Finance Reporting and Disclosure." These handbooks offer essential guidance for electoral management bodies, policymakers, and cybersecurity experts, providing actionable steps to safeguard electoral systems from cyberattacks and to ensure transparency in the digital age. IDEA has also created a number of digital democracy trackers, which, through their website track several facets of democratic process, such as The Global Monitor of COVID-19's Impact on Democracy and Human Rights (2020). These digital trackers serve as a key reference for governments, international organizations, and civil society groups seeking to assess the state of democracy across different regions and contexts.

Furthermore, International IDEA collaborates closely with other prominent global institutions to advance democratic resilience in the face of digital threats. Partnerships with organizations such as the United Nations, the National Endowment for Democracy (NED), and the European Union have amplified IDEA's reach and impact. Through joint initiatives, these institutions have promoted cybersecurity frameworks for elections, facilitated capacity-building workshops, and advocated for global norms to prevent digital interference in democratic processes.

CURRENT STATUS

While IDEA has made incredible strides in the grand mission for democracy, and they are one of the biggest contributors on the international scale, there is still much progress to be made. Constant technological innovations and increased access to the internet demands new frameworks and pathways to oversee and safeguard democratic elections. The spread of disinformation cyber-attacks on election infrastructure, and the exploitation of personal data for political gain continue to undermine trust in democratic institutions and processes. Many electoral management bodies (EMBs) lack the capacity or resources to defend against constantly evolving cyberthreats.

Furthermore, IDEA's push for greater media literacy and digital accountability has been met with uneven success. While some countries have embraced these initiatives, implementing regulations on political advertising and working with social media platforms to flag misinformation, other regions struggle with fragmented efforts, insufficient legal frameworks, or political resistance to regulation. The delicate balance between freedom of speech and combating harmful digital content remains a contentious issue, with no one-size-fits-all solution.

While IDEA has a strong presence in many regions, there are underserved areas where their programs could be expanded. Post-conflict regions, small island nations, and countries with limited democratic experience often lack the institutional capacity to effectively combat digital threats or foster meaningful citizen engagement in elections. IDEA's ongoing efforts to address these gaps, through capacity-building initiatives and targeted technical assistance, remain critical for ensuring that democracy flourishes in all corners of the world.

In summary, while International IDEA has emerged as a global leader in advancing democracy and guarding elections from digital threats, the rapid pace of technological change, growing authoritarianism, and challenges in coordinating international efforts mean that the mission is far from complete. The organization must continue to evolve and adapt its strategies to meet these emerging challenges and ensure that democracy remains resilient in the face of an increasingly digital world.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

How can the benefits of digitalization be harnessed to further democratic representation?

How can this committee leverage digital tools to create accountability pathways for electoral interference?

What types of regulations or oversight should be introduced for the emergence of digitized democracies?

What kinds of frameworks could this committee create to assist developing countries in adopting digital technologies and building democratic institutions?

TOPIC 2: FOSTERING CIVIC ENGAGEMENT AND INCLUSIVE DEMOCRATIC PARTICIPATION

Another critical subset of IDEA's organizational goals is increasing civic participation and inclusive democratic participation. IDEA's goal of furthering Political Participation and Representation follows three thematic pillars: 1) Money in Politics, 2) Parliamentary Strengthening, and 3) Citizen Engagement. These three pillars provide a look at the key approaches IDEA takes in their boundless efforts to pursue these goals. The ability of all citizens to participate in shaping their government is absolutely essential to building democracy in any region. Democracy thrives when the population is engaged and has trust in the institutions that represent them. Yet across the globe there are a plethora of challenges that prevent growing democracies from being fully representative. These obstacles range from legal and institutional barriers to economic inequality, lack of access to education, socio-cultural norms that limit political participation, and ongoing geopolitical conflicts.

Digitalization has had both positive and negative impacts on civic engagement. On the one hand, technology has made political participation more accessible by providing digital tools for voter registration, online petitions, and real-time discussions on social media. On the other hand, it has also amplified challenges such as the spread of misinformation, political polarization, and unequal access to the digital world, particularly for those in underserved communities. In this context, International IDEA plays a pivotal role in fostering inclusive participation by advocating for the removal of barriers to civic engagement, promoting voter education, and supporting policies that ensure democratic systems remain open and accessible to all citizens.

HISTORY AND PAST ACTIONS

IDEA's Electoral Processes Program is at the forefront of initiatives aimed at fostering inclusive political participation. The program focuses on providing technical assistance to countries to enhance voter registration systems, improve accessibility at polling stations, and develop legal frameworks that protect the rights of underrepresented groups. IDEA has championed efforts to expand political opportunities for women and youth, recognizing that their involvement is essential to a vibrant and representative democracy. IDEA's Gender and Democracy Program actively promotes gender parity in politics, offering capacity-building initiatives for female candidates, advocating for gender-sensitive electoral policies, and monitoring global progress on women's political participation through reports and databases.

The United Nations has long been involved in promoting inclusive participation through its various programs and initiatives aimed at supporting democratic governance. One of the most significant UN efforts is the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), which works directly with governments to strengthen electoral systems, promote civic education, and foster inclusive political processes. The UNDP's 2022-2025 Strategic Plan underlines how digitalization will play a pivotal role in "civic engagement, information integrity, elections, and parliamentary development" (2023).

CURRENT STATUS

While International IDEA has made substantial progress in promoting inclusive democratic participation, there is still much work to be done. Political apathy remains a significant issue in many regions, particularly among youth and marginalized communities who feel disenfranchised or disconnected from the political process. The rise of authoritarianism and populism in some countries has further complicated efforts to foster civic engagement, as governments may limit political freedoms or use digital technologies to suppress dissent. Moreover, the COVID-19 pandemic exposed and exacerbated inequalities in political participation, as many governments shifted to digital electoral processes, leaving behind those without reliable access to the internet or digital tools.

International IDEA continues to address these challenges through its advocacy for electoral reforms, the promotion of inclusive policy frameworks, and the development of tools that empower citizens to engage in the democratic process. As technology continues to reshape political engagement, IDEA must remain at the forefront of efforts to ensure that democracy is accessible to all, regardless of socioeconomic status, geographic location, or digital access. Through its ongoing initiatives and global partnerships, International IDEA remains a vital force in the fight to create more inclusive, participatory democracies.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

What frameworks could this committee create that would address voter turnout problems in historically politically disengaged areas?

How can international organizations, like IDEA, collaborate with governments to enhance trust in democratic institutions and elections, particularly in post-conflict or transitioning countries?

What role should international oversight and observation play in ensuring that civic engagement is equitable and inclusive during critical democratic processes like elections and referendums?

How can this committee address other factors that cause voter disengagement such as disinformation, political apathy, political extremism, economic downturn or safety hazards like armed conflict and extreme weather events?

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