

Netherlands Institute for
Multiparty Democracy

#MyDemocracy Campaign

THE MANY SHADES OF DEMOCRACY



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INTRODUCTION

In Myanmar today, the word democracy can lead to retribution. The people featured in this campaign were brave enough to stand up and share what democracy actually means to them. Their answers, and those of people across the world, remind us that democracy looks different depending on where you stand. At the same time we see a number of universal values when it comes to democracy that were shared across all the countries where the campaign took place.

Democracy is not only a system of institutions. It is also a set of everyday actions, carried out by citizens and institutions alike. That's why it matters to understand what democracy means to the people living it, so we can stand up for democracy in all its diversity.

We are often presented with a one size fits all version of democracy, but the key is looking at what democracy means to different people and operating from there, from the ground up. From what people want, translated into a Democracy that works for them.

This campaign is part of NIMD's ongoing work on democracy narratives as part of our involvement in the Democracy Narratives Alliance, to understand what makes Democracy meaningful to people everywhere. Find out more about the Alliance's work [here](#).

That understanding starts with listening. That is why, for the 2026 International Day of Democracy, NIMD asked people around the world: what is democracy for you?

Find their answers below.

126 PARTICIPANTS

Sharing what Democracy is for them

9 countries

15 language
and
dialects

1 governance
system with
many voices

LIBERIA



My Democracy is peace and justice for all men.



Tolerance of difference.



The table where everyone gets a seat.
Translated from Bassa.



Giving young people a role in decision making.



Inclusive participation and shared decision making.



Adherence to the rule of law.

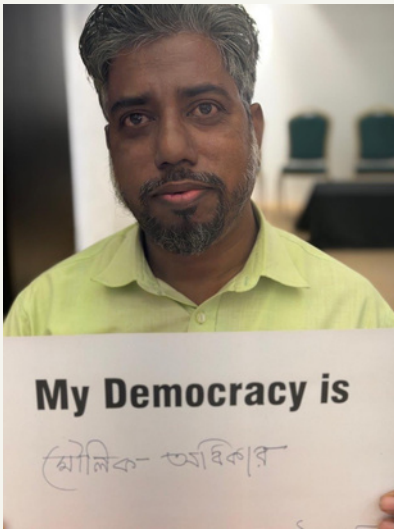


Freedom and participation.



Respecting my choice.

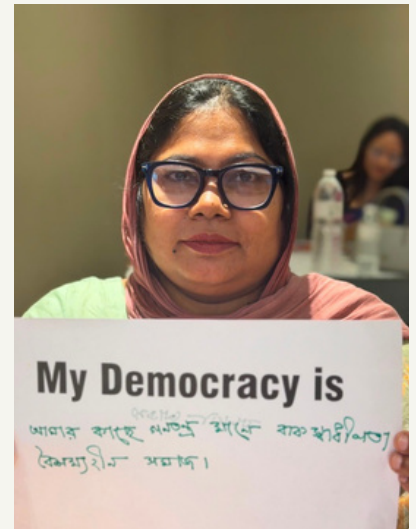
BANGLADESH



Fundamental Needs.



Voice of the people.



A society without discrimination.



Freedom of speech.



Equal Rights, freedom of speech and selecting own representative.



The right of everyone to live in peace.



Freedom, equal voting rights for citizens, and equal rights.



Rule of Law.



I want a discrimination free Bangladesh.

BANGLADESH



Not forced to compromise on my rights.



Ensuring the rights and justice of the common people.



Tolerance for others.



Establishing equal rights and justice.



Citizen's ability to express opinion, criticism and dissent.



Ensuring roadway to equal rights for all.



Asking questions without fear.



The people are the owners of the state.



People choose their own leaders.

BANGLADESH



Rule of people.



I will vote for the candidate of my choosing.



Humanitarian government.



Inclusion for all.



Right to express opinions without fear.



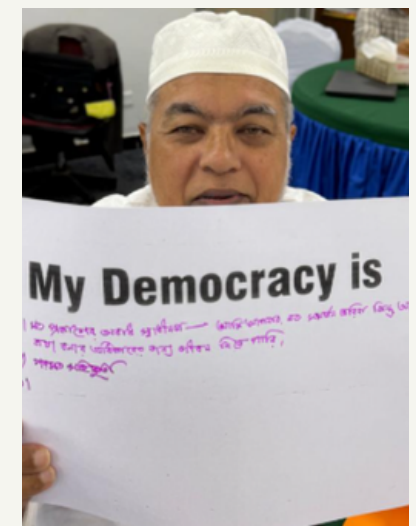
My vote is my right, your vote is yours.



Humanity, freedom of speech, and the right to religious freedom.



Ballot is stronger than bullet.



Protecting and ensuring individual liberty by upholding the public's right to freedom of expression.

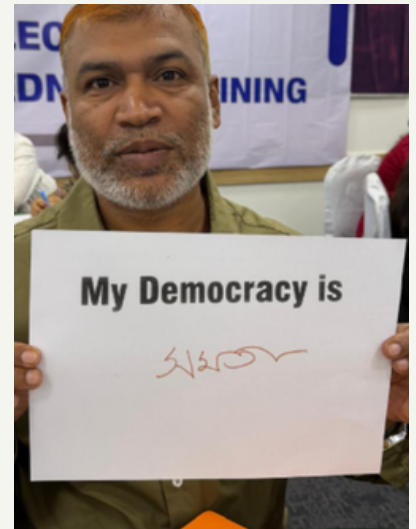
BANGLADESH



Fundamental needs.



Participation of people.



The balance.



Self discipline .



Making every sector safe in the country.



Express my opinion freely.



Get Freedom and rights.



Where all people will have the right to speak and state power will belong to the people.



Democracy is a system of governance where the people are the source of the supreme power of the state.

UGANDA



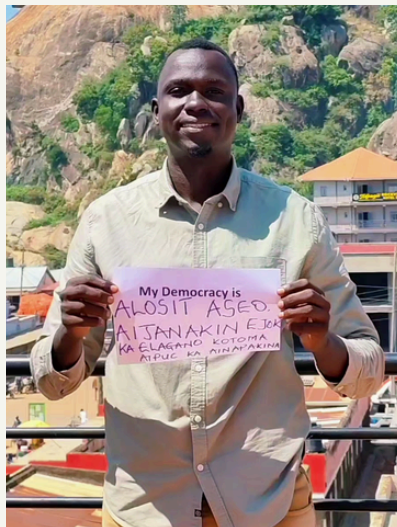
Freedom, Equality, and a Voice for Every Citizen.



Leadership with Empowerment of the People.



A healthy exchange of ideas.



Participating in elections, serving well when elected and peaceful competition during campaigns.



My Democracy is the Freedom to Speak the Truth and Listening to the Voice of Every Person.

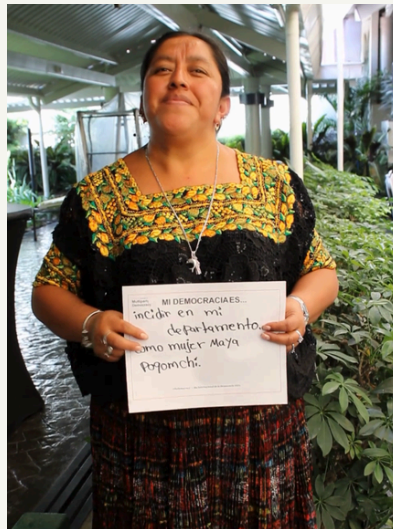


Governance that Abides by the Rule of Law.

GUATEMALA



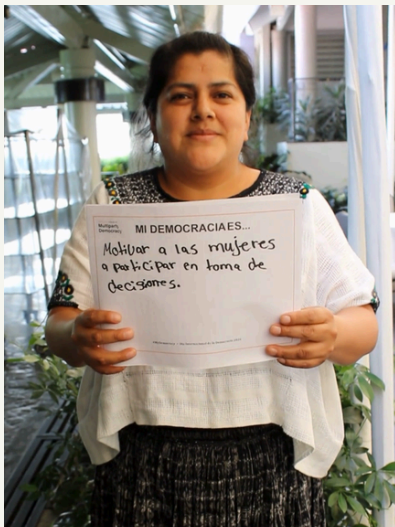
Youth participation in decision-making.



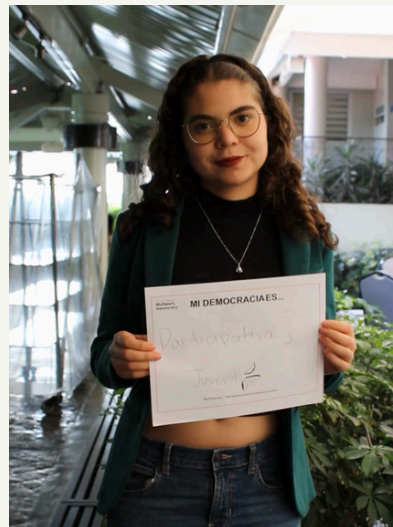
To make a difference in my department as a Po'omchi Maya Woman.



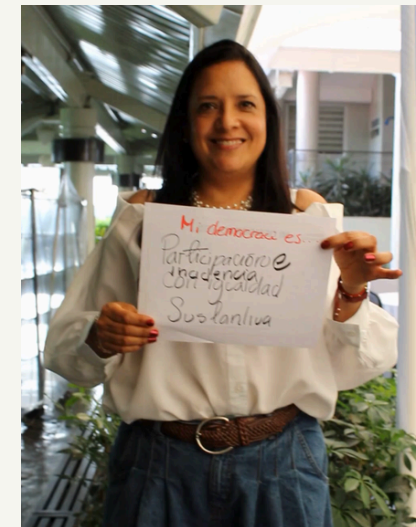
That we may all have a say.



Encouraging women to take part in decision-making.



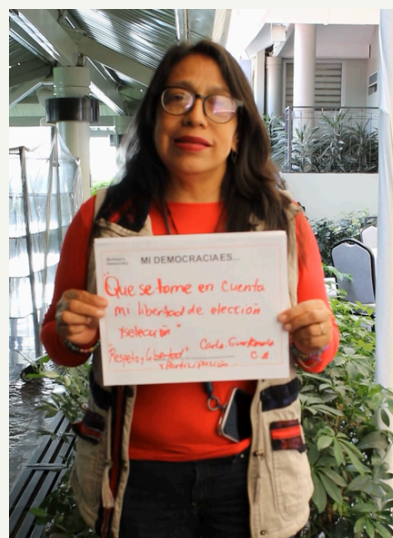
Participatory and youth-led.



Participation and advocacy with substantive equality.



Freedom of expression. Equality of rights before the law.

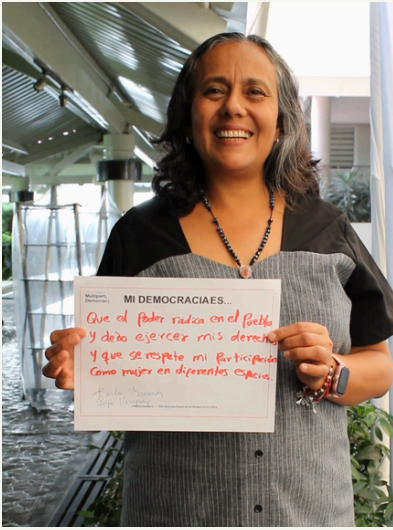


That my freedom of choice and selection is taken into account. Respect, freedom and participation.

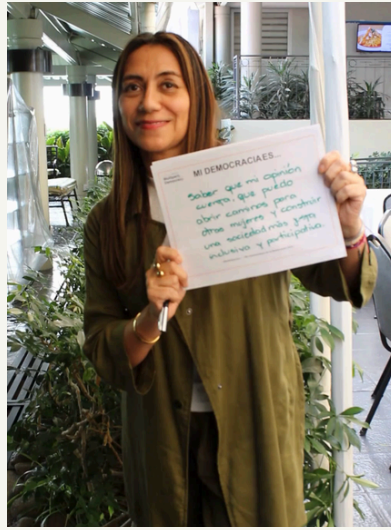


The right to live free from stereotypes.

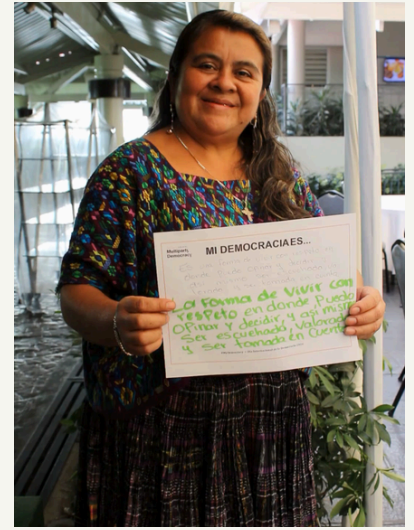
GUATEMALA



That power lies with the people, and I am able to exercise my rights and have my participation as a woman recognised in various spheres.

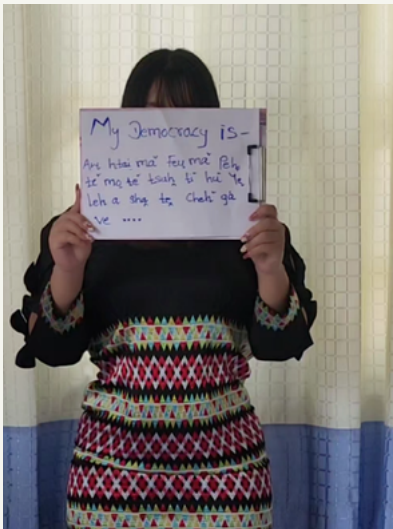


Knowing that my opinion matters, that I can pave the way for other women and help build a fairer, more inclusive and participatory society.

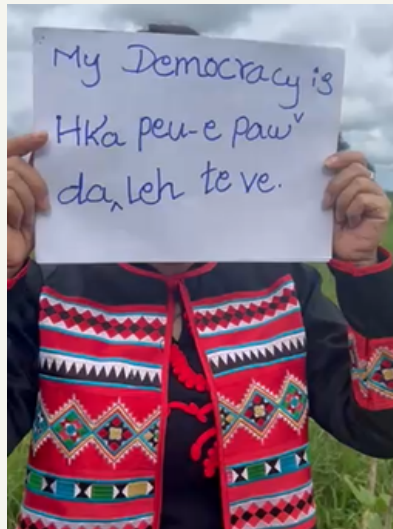


A way of life based on respect, where I can express my views and make decisions, whilst also being listened to, valued and taken into account.

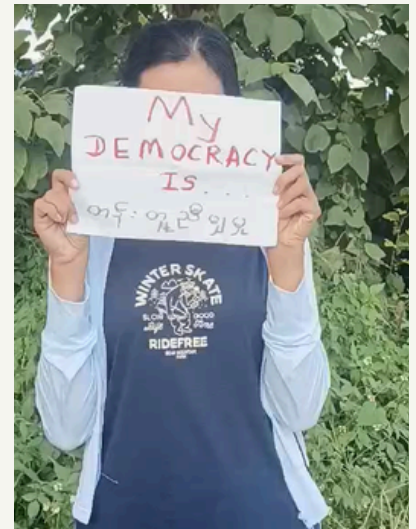
MYANMAR



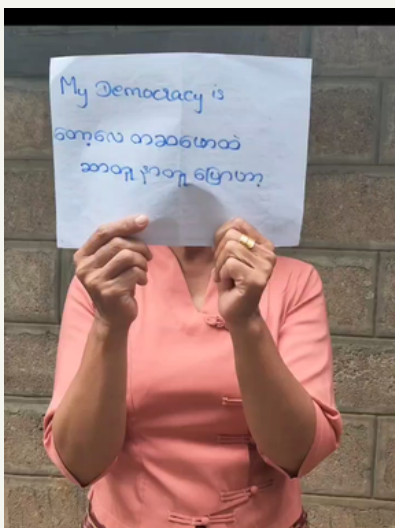
Fundamentally we are equal, we can live together harmoniously.



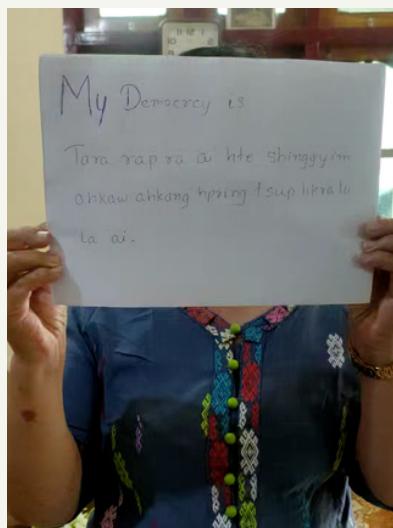
Inclusive Participation.



Equality.



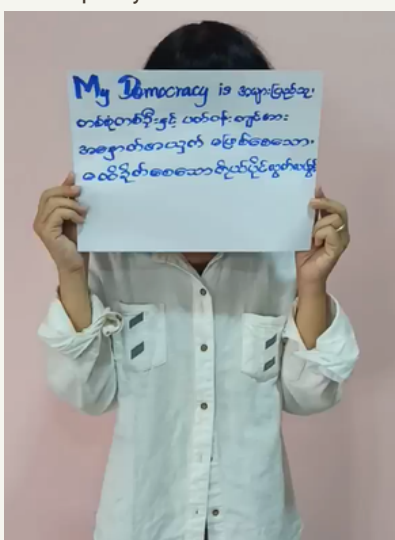
We share the same stance, and we value equality.



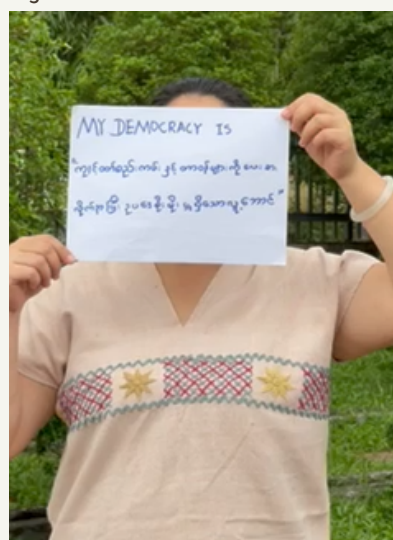
Full access to Justice and Human Rights.



Freedom to Choose.



Individual freedom, which must not harm and disturb the public, individual and environment.

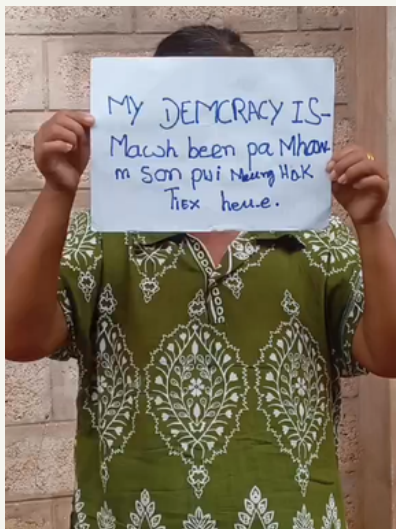


A society that respects and upholds ethics, rules, and responsibilities, and where the rule of law prevails.

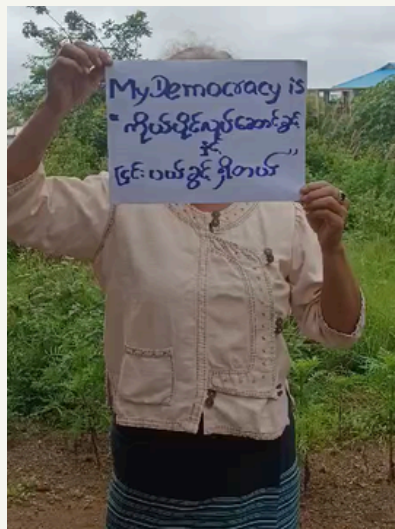


One's liberty must not harm or affect others.

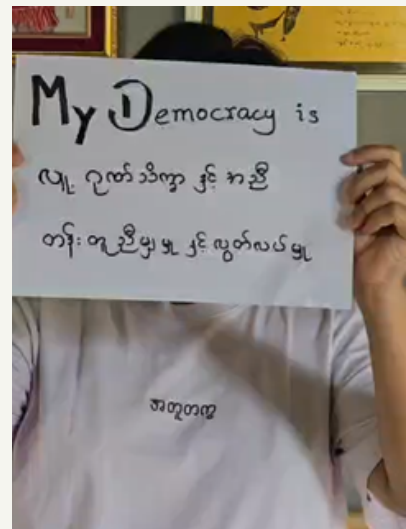
MYANMAR



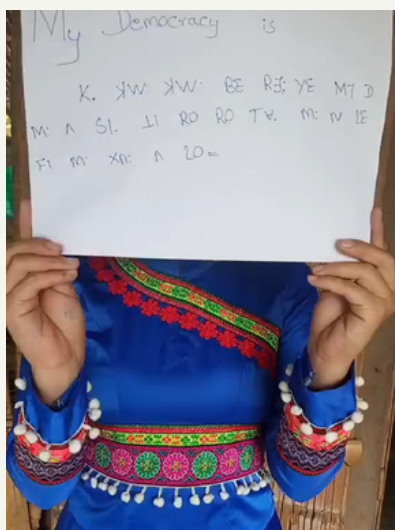
A system that benefits every citizen.



One has the right to act independently and the right to refuse.



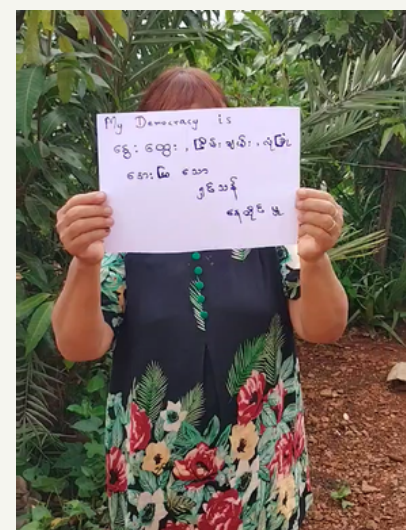
Equality and freedom in accordance with human dignity.



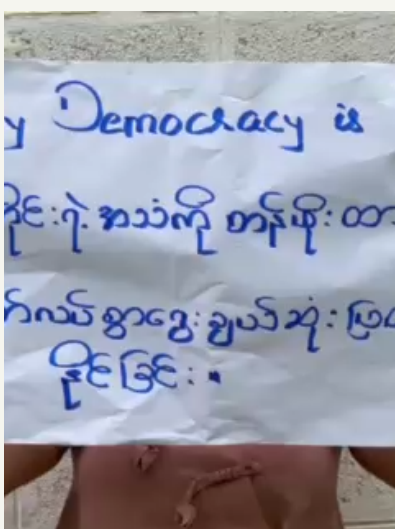
My Democracy is Freedom without harming others.



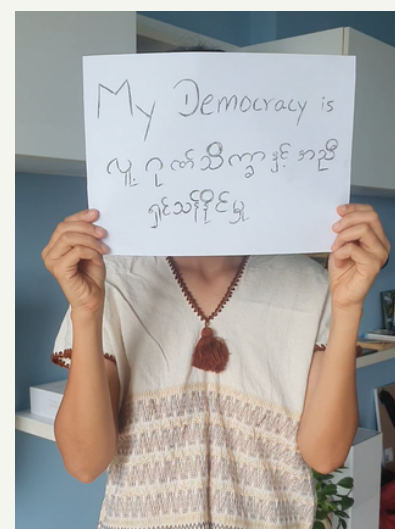
Equality and Freedom of expression.



A warm, peaceful, secure, and tranquil life.



Valuing everyone's voice and the freedom to choose and decide.

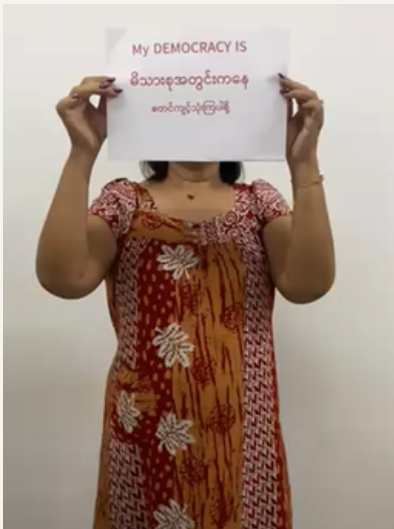


To be able to live with human dignity.

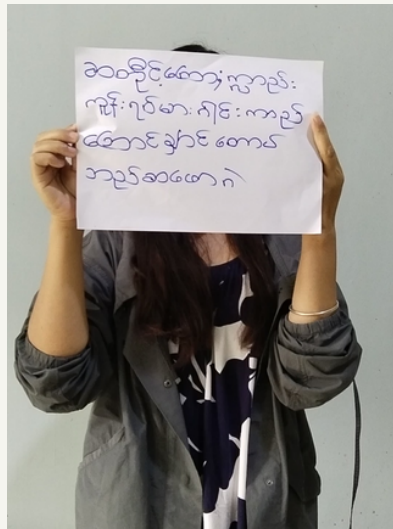


The right to thrive and lead freely, with justice and human dignity.

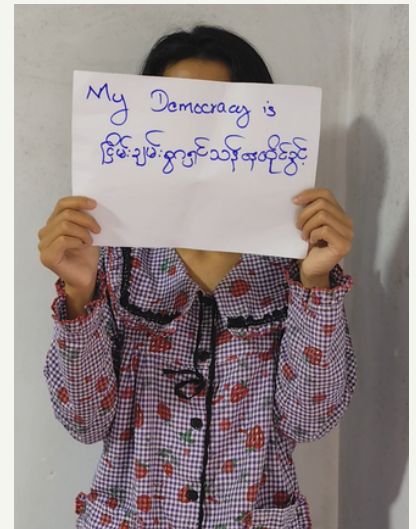
MYANMAR



Let us begin practicing from within the family



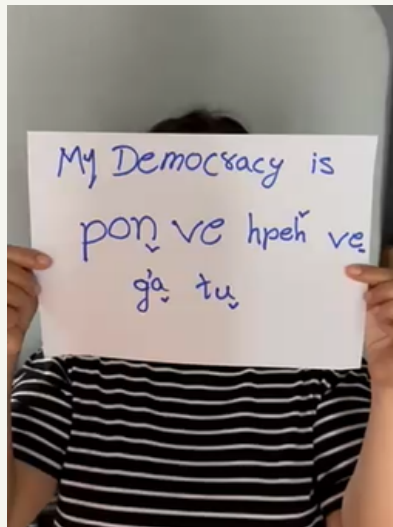
Listening the people's voices and rule according to peoples' wishes



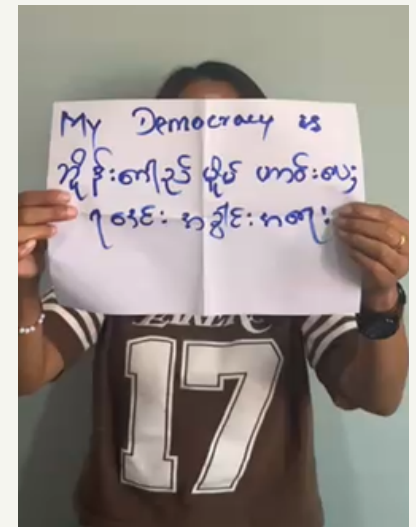
Right to live peacefully



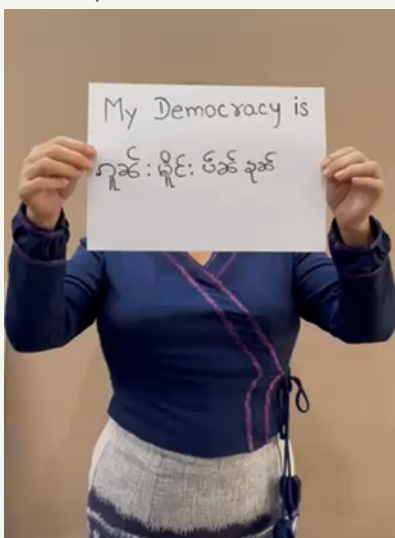
A society governed by proper order and discipline.



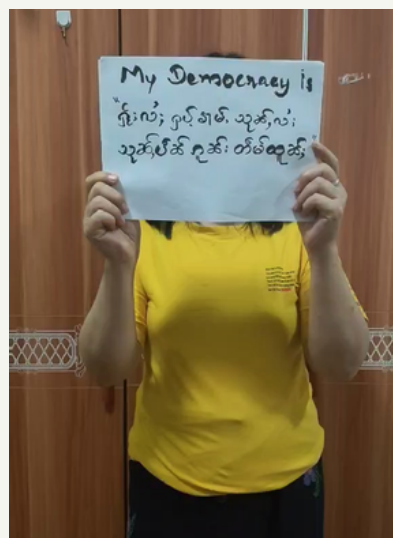
Freedom.



Free movement and the right to live wherever one chooses.



The people are the sovereign.

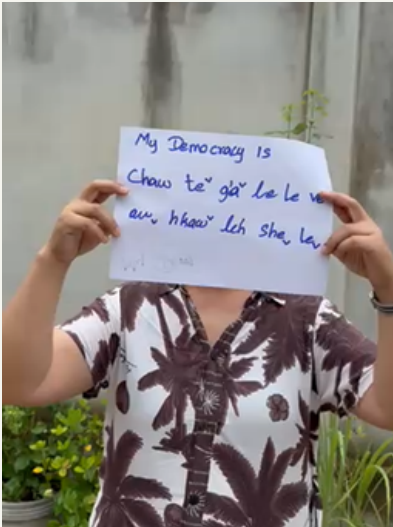


Everyone must be able to fully exercise their human rights.

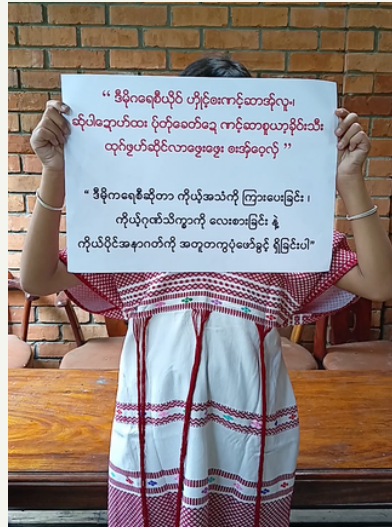


The voice of the people.

MYANMAR



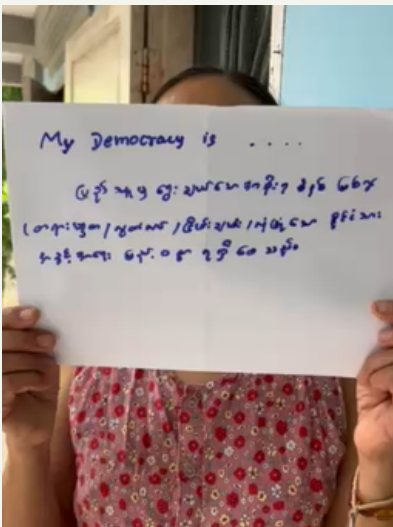
Everyone's Voice and Dignity.



Being heard, having your dignity respected, and having the right to shape your own future together.



My Democracy is defending freedom today so tomorrow inherits justice, not fear.



A system of government chosen by the people, guaranteeing justice, freedom, peace, and security, with full rights for all citizens.

KENYA



My opinion, voice, and my freedom to make a choice.



Equality.



Freedom of expression.



My voice.



Where young people are not only voters but active in decision making and nation building.



Championing for good governance and upholding the rule of law.

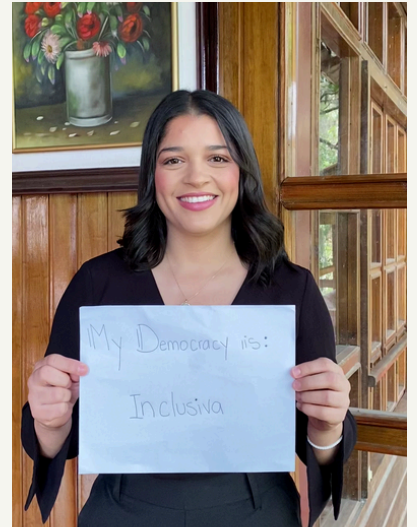
HONDURAS



Participating in and transforming communities.



Turning differences into dialogue.



Inclusive.



With equality for all.

THE HAGUE



Dialogue, accountability, equal distribution of power.



Equal opportunity to let your voice be heard.



Voice, inclusion and accountability.



Freedom of choice and freedom of difference (inclusion).

SOMALIA



Free and fair elections.



Consultation.



Access to Justice.



Government by the people.



Youth leadership.



Society should participate equally in political decisions.



Equity.



A system of government in which the people hold the power.



Freedom and diversity and the right to have a voice.

SOMALIA



Human Rights.



Human Rights.



Peaceful and inclusion.



Voice of the voiceless.



Diversity, responsibility of society.



Respect of diverse voices of the population.



Peace.

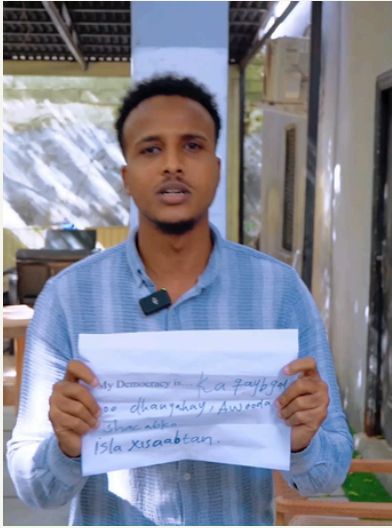


Transparency and accountable government.



Transparency and accountable government.

SOMALIA



inclusivity and power of the people
and accountability.