

DEFENDING DEMOCRACY – ADDRESSING FOREIGN THREATS

Context

The G7 share common democratic values of respect for fundamental freedoms, human rights, and the rule of law. We are committed to a rules-based international order, which is central to the maintenance and development of free, open, well-governed, pluralistic, peaceful, and prosperous societies, together with cooperation and security among states. Foreign actors seeking to undermine democratic institutions and processes through coercive, corrupt, covert or malicious means constitute a strategic threat, which we commit to confront together, and with other countries that share democratic values.

Effectively responding to this threat will require a coordinated, multi-dimensional approach that respects human rights and fundamental freedoms and is developed in consultation with government and non-government stakeholders, including civil society and the private sector. We welcome G7 engagement with the private sector to improve transparency regarding the inappropriate or illegal use of personal data, including for political purposes. We recognize its impact on democratic processes and institutions.

We commit to exchange information, coordinate action and develop strategies to reinforce our democracies and strengthen our societies' resilience. These strategies will fully reflect gender equality, human rights and our respective legal systems. We will identify focal points in G7 countries to facilitate cooperation. We commit to providing advice to leaders in time for the Charlevoix Summit outlining our coordinated approach to reinforce our democracies and respond to interference in countries democratic systems, including, but not restricted to, the following illustrative examples:

Democratic institutions and processes: Acts or measures by foreign actors with the malicious intent to undermine the confidence in, and the legitimacy of, democratic institutions and processes. Specific attention is directed at undermining the integrity or confidentiality of free and fair electoral processes and infrastructure. This could include:

- preventing or impeding citizens from registering to vote, or from voting;
- tampering with election results;
- stealing or manipulating voter or party databases;
- hacking electoral systems;
- blackmailing or threatening political actors, particularly women and vulnerable groups.

Disinformation and media: Acts or measures by foreign actors with the malicious intent of undermining trust in the independent media, and manipulating public discourse and violating privacy, often through cyber-enabled activities. This could include:

- attempts to sow hatred, the malicious spread of disinformation that seeks to limit, control or manipulate open discourse, often through cyber activities;
- hijacking social media accounts or websites to disseminate purposefully inaccurate information;
- blackmailing or threatening members of the media.

Fundamental freedoms and human rights: Acts or measures by foreign actors to influence, pressure or threaten individuals living in our respective countries with the malicious intent of preventing them from exercising their legitimate human rights and fundamental freedoms, including freedom of expression.

We are united in our commitment to defending and reinforcing democracy. We support and encourage ongoing efforts by the G7 and others to strengthen democratic institutions and processes, both at home and abroad. In addition we are seeking for the G7 to:

1. Support vulnerable democracies against potential foreign efforts to undermine democracy;
2. Coordinate deterrent actions;
3. Improve threat information sharing;
4. Jointly develop a process for cyber attribution and response mechanisms, where appropriate.

Our efforts are guided by a shared commitment to transparency and accountability as essential building blocks of sustainable, inclusive democracies.

Source: <https://g7.gc.ca/en/g7-presidency/themes/building-peaceful-secure-world/g7-ministerial-meeting/defending-democracy-addressing-foreign-threats/>