



The Asia Democracy Assembly 2025

Defending Democracy, Mobilizing Movements, and New Frontiers for Citizen Action

AGENDA

Bangkok, Thailand | November 1-3, 2025

| Time | Sessions |
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| DAY 1: NOVEMBER 1, 2025 – Welcome Ceremonies and the Thematic Discussions | |
| 7:30 am | Shuttle Buses depart from Royal River, Royal City, and SD Hotels for Thammasat University Location: Lobby of Hotels |
| 9:00 am - 12:00 pm | <u>Welcome Ceremonies and the International Civil Society Week 2025 Opening Ceremonies</u> <i>Venue: Thammasat University, Tha Prachan Campus</i> The Thammasat University, CIVICUS, the Asia Pacific Social Forum and the Asia Democracy Network will jointly welcome all attendees in the Thammasat University Tha Prachan Campus in Bangkok, Thailand. |

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| <p>12:00pm</p> | <p>Shuttle Bus Departs Thammasat University for Royal River Hotel for Asia Democracy Assembly Thematic Sessions</p> <p>Location: Outside of Sriburapha (Small) and Main Auditorium on the side of Na Prathat Road</p> |
| <p><u>Thematic Discussions</u></p> <p><i>Venue: Royal River Hotel, Bangkok, Thailand</i></p> <p>These sessions will unpack cross-cutting issues impacting democracy across Asia such as technology, disinformation, and securitization, among others. By drawing links across movements and countries, participants will explore shared challenges and identify opportunities for solidarity, innovation, and joint action.</p> | |
| <p>1:00 pm - 3:00 pm</p> | <p>Technology, Artificial Intelligence, and Democracy</p> <p>This session will explore how emerging technologies from AI-driven surveillance to algorithmic manipulation are shaping civic space, political participation, and public discourse in Asia, and identify safeguards to protect digital rights and democratic governance.</p> <p>Lead: SAFENet</p> <p>Phanurangsi Room A, Floor 1</p> <p>Speakers:</p> <p>Rachel Arinii Judhistari, Lead Public Policy Specialist, Wikimedia</p> <p>Nenden Arum, Executive Director, Southeast Asia Network for Freedom of Expression (SAFENet)</p> |

Disinformation, Propaganda, and Populist Rhetoric: Media under Siege

Focusing on the crisis of information integrity, this session will examine how disinformation campaigns, hate speech, and captured media ecosystems are being weaponized to delegitimize democratic actors, with an emphasis on strengthening independent journalism and regional media alliances.

Lead: Asia Democracy Chronicles

Bongkotrat Room A, 2F

Moderator:

Tess Bacalla, Editor-in-Chief, Asia Democracy Chronicles

Panelists:

Krixia Subingsubing -- Philippine Daily Inquirer Senior Reporter, and ADC assistant editor and contributor

Saba Chaudhry -- Independent journalist, Pakistan and ADC contributor

Trinh Huu Long -- Journalist and Activist, Legal Initiatives Vietnam

Brian Hioe - Founding Editor, New Bloom

Next Generation Democracy Leadership

Highlighting the experiences of youth-led movements across Asia, this session will examine how young activists are sustaining momentum, building transnational alliances, and shaping new political imaginaries in hostile environments.

Lead: ASEAN Youth Forum (AYF), South Asia Youth Network (SAYN), Milk Tea Alliance

Phanurangsi Room C, Floor 1

Moderator: Nitchakarn Rakwongrit (Meme), Facilitator, Milk Tea Alliance

Speakers:

Mark Diaz, Facilitator, Milk Tea Alliance

Aparna Prabu, Research Associate, National Campaign on Dalit Human Rights

Deepesh Chithra, Research Coordinator, National Campaign on Dalit Human Rights

Alvina N. A., Campaigner at Resister Berdaya Pulih, Photojournalist.

Fatimah Zahrah, Regional Coordinator, ASEAN Youth Forum

From the Margins to the Center: Making our Democracy Movements more Inclusive

This session aims to reframe democracy through the lens of historically marginalized communities, addressing structural exclusion and co-creating strategies to ensure that democratic movements are intersectional, inclusive, and transformative.

Lead: ASEAN SOGIE Caucus, Asia Dalit Rights Forum, Asia Indigenous People's Pact

Busabongkot Room A, Floor 2

Moderator:

Sachini Perera, Program Manager, Network Grants team of Open Society Foundations

Speakers:

Beena Pallical, Chairperson, Asia Dalit Rights Forum

Sawang Srisom, Thai Disability Rights Advocate, Policy Advisor, and Researcher

Riska Carolina, Advocacy Officer at the ASEAN SOGIE Caucus

Jacq Ruiz, Women in Power Programme Organising Committee, APWLD

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| <p>3:00 pm - 5:00 pm</p> | <p>Militarization and Securitization of Civic and Democratic Space Analyzing how governments use national security frameworks, emergency laws, and military force to restrict activism, this session will assess regional patterns and explore counter-strategies that protect democratic spaces under siege.</p> <p>Lead: Security Intersections and Alternatives (SIA), Initiatives for International Dialogue (IID) and Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict - South East Asia (GPPAC), The Asian Muslim Action Network (AMAN)</p> <p>Phanurangsi Room A, Floor 1</p> <p>Moderator:</p> <p>Marc Batac, Lecturer, University of the Philippines-Diliman, and SIA</p> <p>Pimsiri Pechtnamrob, Activist, Thailand and SIA</p> <p>Panelists:</p> <p>Tuan Nguyen-M, Regional Representative, GPPAC-Southeast Asia, and SIA</p> <p>Dwi Ruby Kholifah, Coordinator, Asian Muslim Action Network Indonesia</p> |
| | <p>Safeguarding the Integrity of our Democratic Institutions: Enabling Greater Representation and Accountability</p> |

With increasing manipulation of democratic institutions, this session will address threats to electoral integrity, judicial independence, and legislative oversight sharing lessons on institutional reform and regional monitoring mechanisms.

Lead: Asian Network for Free Elections (ANFREL), Council of Asian Liberals and Democrats (CALD)

Bongkotrat Room A, Floor 2

Mardi Seng, CALD Chairperson, Senator, Kingdom of Cambodia

Wenli Alysa Chiu, Deputy Director, Department of International Affairs, Democratic Progressive Party

Lulu Keng, Board Member, Open Culture Foundation

Lorenzo “Erin” Tanada, Acting President, Liberal Party of the Philippines, Former Deputy Speaker of the House of Representatives

Mardi Mapa-Suplido, Member, Board of Trustees, INCITEGov

Rohana Hettiarachchi, ANFREL Chairperson

Diaspora and Migrant Communities in Democracy Struggles

Focusing on the political agency of migrant and diaspora communities, this session will explore their role in promoting democratic values, transnational organizing, and influencing home-country politics through solidarity, remittances, and advocacy.

Lead: Migrant Forum in Asia

Phanurangsi Room C, Floor 1

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| <p>4:30pm - 6:30pm</p> | <p>Peace March - Dharmayatra for Justice & Humanity</p> <p>Joint March for Peace with ICSW, ADN Assembly, and APSF Participants</p> <p>Start at Thammasat University</p> |
| <p>DAY 2: NOVEMBER 2, 2025 – Asia Democracy Assembly 2025 Plenary Discussions</p> <p><i>Venue: Royal River Hotel, Bangkok, Thailand, Krungthon Ballroom, 3rd Floor</i></p> | |
| <p>8:00am</p> | <p>Shuttle Bus Leaves Royal City Hotel and SD Hotel for Royal River Hotel</p> <p>Location: Respective Hotel Lobbies</p> |
| <p>9:00 am - 10:00 am</p> | <p><u>Asia Democracy Assembly Opening Session</u> – Invited speakers will address the participants, to provide insights on the region’s state of democracy, and encourage pro-democracy stakeholders to continue the fight for democratic renewal. Pro-democracy artists will also be invited to inspire the participants with performances tackling themes of freedom and hope.</p> <p><i>Opening Messages:</i></p> <p>Ichal Supriadi, Secretary-General, Asia Democracy Network Parit Wacharasindhu, Member of the House of Representatives of Thailand Gina Romero, UN Special Rapporteur for Freedom of Assembly and Association</p> |
| <p>10:00 am - 11:00 am</p> | <p><u>Plenary 1: The State of Democracy in Asia – Where are we now?</u></p> <p>This session will present key insights from ADN’s 2024 Democracy Outlook Report, analyzing major democratic events, emerging resistance, and institutional shifts across Asia. Moving beyond assessment, this discussion will identify regional priorities that demand immediate intervention, setting the stage for the</p> |

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| | <p>day’s strategy-focused sessions. This session will follow a candid talk show format, after which questions from the audience will be entertained.</p> <p>Discussion themes include Asia’s geopolitical situation and the role of civil society amid autocratic expansion, ADN’s findings from the 2024 Democracy Overview, Regional Consultations, and Thematic Discussions, and innovations and priorities for pro-democracy mobilization.</p> <p><i>Moderator:</i> Beena Pallical, Chairperson, Asia Dalit Rights Forum</p> <p><i>Panelists:</i> Dr. Maiko Ichihara, Professor, Global Governance Research of Hitotsubashi University</p> <p>Karel Jiaan Antonio Galang, Senior Program Officer, Asia Democracy Network</p> <p>William Gois, Regional Coordinator, Migrant Forum in Asia</p> |
| <p>11:00 am – 11:10 am</p> | <p><u>“Kanom” Talk: Sustenance for Democratic Renewal</u></p> <p>Stories keep democracy alive. Much like Thai <i>kanom</i> or snacks, they give us energy to power through. Kanom Talks are short and creative messages from activists meant to inform, inspire and enable solidarity among pro-democracy stakeholders in the region.</p> <p>By “Nick” of A New Burma</p> |
| <p>11:10 am – 12:30 pm</p> | <p><u>Plenary 2: Resistance Without Borders – Sustaining Struggles Under Military Rule, Occupation and Forced Exile</u></p> <p>From Myanmar to Afghanistan, Palestine to Hong Kong, authoritarian regimes and occupying forces have forced movements into exile, underground resistance, or total suppression. This session examines how these struggles can remain effective, connected, and supported. This session will follow a storytelling format. Activists will tell the story of their struggles and hopes as they fight for freedom and democracy outside the borders of their country. Question and answer will be facilitated after the storytelling session.</p> |

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| | <p>Democracy activists will tell the story of how they sustain and nurture the spirit of democracy amid difficult autocratic control, the role the diaspora movement plays in international pro-democracy promotion and protection, and the importance of cross-border collaboration in combating transnational repression.</p> <p><i>Moderator:</i> Augusto Miclat, Executive Director, Initiatives for International Dialogue and GPPAC - SEA</p> <p><i>Storytellers:</i> Noor Azizah, Co-Executive Director, Rohingya Maiyafu'inor Collaborative Network Atifa Amiry, Co-Founder, The Amiri Foundation & Village Girls' Voice Network (Video) Phurbu Dolma, Legal Officer, Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy Nadine Khuweis, Law Student, and Activist from Jerusalem, Palestine. Tashken Davlet, Uyghur Human Rights Advocate Alric Lee, Executive Director, Lady Liberty Hong Kong</p> |
| <p>12:30 pm - 1:30 pm</p> | <p>Lunch</p> |
| <p>1:30 pm - 1:40 pm</p> | <p><u>“Kanom” Talk: Sustenance for Democratic Renewal</u> Stories keep democracy alive. Much like Thai <i>kanom</i> or snacks, they give us energy to power through. Kanom Talks are short and creative messages from activists meant to inform, inspire and enable solidarity among pro-democracy stakeholders in the region.</p> <p>By Tae-hwan Kim of Feminism with Him</p> |
| <p>1:40 pm - 3:00 pm</p> | <p><u>Plenary 3: Breaking the Wheel: Dismantling the Cycle of Autocratic Control</u> Autocratic tools for control are varied. Autocrats weaponize public sentiments, utilizing divisive populist and nationalist rhetoric to prop-up support and control, while dominating democratic institutions to subvert checks and balances. Regimes have become so powerful, monopolizing control over public resources through corrupt practices and untransparent dealings with complicit private entities which stunt genuine</p> |

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| | <p>development. The influence of autocratic actors has spread unchecked as autocratic regimes shield each other from international justice mechanisms.</p> <p>For this session, pro-democracy actors will be presenting case studies of how autocratic actors utilize various instruments that inhibit democratic progress and renewal, and how activists go against the cycle of repression. These instruments include the use of populist and nationalist sentiments, capture of democratic institutions, unabated corruption and unjust economic development, and expansion of autocrat-to-autocrat support systems. After the presentations, the speakers will answer questions from the audience.</p> <p><i>Moderator:</i> Kaustuv Bandyopadhyay, Director, Participatory Research in Asia</p> <p><i>Panelists:</i> Bivitri Susanti Lecturer, Indonesia Jentera Law School Yingcheep Atchanont, Director, iLaw Thailand Akiko Sato, Interim Asia Regional Manager, Business and Human Rights Resource Centre Penghsuan Lee, Cross Movement Activist</p> |
| <p>3:00 pm - 3:15 pm</p> | <p>Coffee Break</p> |
| <p>3:15 pm - 3:25 pm</p> | <p><u>“Kanom” Talk: Sustenance for Democratic Renewal</u> Stories keep democracy alive. Much like Thai <i>kanom</i> or snacks, they give us energy to power through. Kanom Talks are short and creative messages from activists meant to inform, inspire and enable solidarity among pro-democracy stakeholders in the region.</p> <p>By Ulamsaikhan Otgon of Noorog</p> |
| <p>3:25 pm - 4:55 pm</p> | <p><u>Plenary 4: Unraveling the Authoritarian Playbook and New Tactics for Resistance</u></p> |

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| | <p>Authoritarian regimes may be refining their tactics, but resistance movements, activists, and civil society groups are evolving just as fast. This session shifts the focus from repression to resilience—highlighting new, unexpected ways movements are successfully countering state control, reclaiming civic space, and outmaneuvering autocratic strategies. From underground networks and decentralized organizing to legal loopholes and digital resistance, this session will explore how democracy movements are breaking authoritarian playbooks rather than just responding to them. This session will follow a TED Talk-style presentation format. After all presentations are done, an open forum will be opened for 30 minutes.</p> <p>Discussions will center on topics such as outsmarting surveillance and how tech can assist in evading crackdowns, case studies of state overreach backfired and led to stronger movements, successes and challenges of decentralized and leaderless resistance, and reclaiming democratic narratives.</p> <p><i>Moderator:</i> Muda Tariq, South Asia Programme, Programme Officer, Forum Asia</p> <p><i>Panelists:</i> Chia-Shou Tang, Research Manager, Open Culture Foundation Razi Thalib, Fellow, Democracy Hub, Founder, Weapons of Mass Discussion Bridhika Senchury, Co-Founder, Dalit Lives Matter Global Alliance Leni Velasco, Secretary-General, DAKILA Artist-Activist Collective</p> |
| <p>4:55 pm - 5:25 pm</p> | <p><u>Closing Ceremony</u></p> <p><i>Reflections:</i> Democracy activists will reflect on the discussions that happened throughout the day, and offer messages of inspiration for democracy stakeholders present to sustain the spirit of democratic struggle.</p> <p>Dr. Chelsea Chia-chen Chou, Director for International Cooperation, Taiwan Foundation for Democracy</p> <p>Debbie Stothard, Executive Director, ALTSEAN-Burma</p> |

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| | <p><i>Closing Message:</i> Ruby Kholifah, Chair, ADN Governing Council</p> |
| <p>DAY 3: NOVEMBER 3, 2025 – Strategy Building for the Asia Democracy Assembly 2025 Outcome Document</p> <p><i>Venue: Royal River Hotel, Bangkok, Thailand, Busabongkot Room B, 2nd Floor</i></p> | |
| <p>9:00 am - 12:00 pm</p> | <p><u>Plenary 5: The Final Strategy Session – Where Do We Go From Here?</u> <i>(Invitation Only)</i></p> <p>The final session will consolidate the assembly’s key takeaways, formalize collective strategies, and define concrete next steps for post-assembly action. This session led by the Innovations for Change – East Asia, will consolidate agreements defining regional priorities & mechanisms for regional democracy promotion and protections, as well as commitments from key stakeholders, ensuring partners, movements, and civil society leave with clear next steps and collaboration points.</p> |
| <p>DAY 4: NOVEMBER 4, 2025 – ADN Member and Partners Collaborative Sessions</p> <p><i>Venue: Royal River Hotel, Bangkok, Thailand, Busabongkot Room B, 2nd Floor</i></p> | |
| <p>9:30 am - 11:30 pm</p> | <p><u>Session 1: Launch of the ANNI Report 2025 On the Performance of National Human Rights Institutions in Asia</u></p> <p>Organized by: Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development (FORUM ASIA)</p> <p>Since 2006, the Asian NGO Network on National Human Rights Institutions (ANNI) has worked to strengthen NHRIs in Asia by promoting the Paris Principles, the global standard for independence and effectiveness. Its bi-annual ANNI Report shares civil society’s assessment of NHRIs, highlighting challenges, progress, and best practices. The 2025 edition (covering 2023–2024) will present key findings</p> |

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| | <p>and convene NHRIs, CSOs, and regional networks to amplify civil society voices, foster collaboration, and push for reforms to safeguard NHRI independence.</p> <p>Room: Busabongkot Room B, 2F</p> |
| <p>12:00pm - 1:00pm</p> | <p><u>LUNCH</u></p> |
| <p>1:00pm - 3:00pm</p> | <p><u>Session 2: Launch and Discussion</u></p> <p><u>UN & Multilateral Efforts and Civil Society Engagement on Counterterrorism and Preventing and/or Countering Violent Extremism in Southeast Asia: A Landscape Assessment</u></p> <p>Organized by: Initiatives for International Dialogue, GPPAC</p> <p>In Southeast Asia, the misuse and abuse of CT & P/CVE measures, including terrorist organization designations, counter-terrorism financing tools, and security sector apparatuses, has allowed state actors to censor and control information, judicially harass political dissidents, crack down on human rights defenders and civil society organizations, restrict civic space and endanger peace workers, indigenous and land rights activists, women and LGBTQ+ civil society organizations, and youths. Despite its potential harms, in the past decade, P/CVE has attracted enormous resources and attention of multilateral security systems, nation states, and civil society, while effectively draining political and financial capitals from community-based peacebuilding, conflict transformation and prevention efforts.</p> <p>In this panel, we hope to present findings from our landscape study of CT and P/CVE frameworks and programming in Southeast Asia, discuss the global discourse on CT and P/CVE and how it has shifted due to the ongoing genocide in Gaza, and explore modalities that civil society actors and activist movements can critically engage with (or disengage from) CT and P/CVE frameworks.</p> <p>Room: Busabongkot Room B, 2F</p> |

3:15pm -
5:15pm

Session 3: Reimagining Masculinities: A Citizen-Led Dialogue and Civic Mapping on Gender-Inclusive Democracy

Organized by Heinrich Boell Foundation - East Asia, Feminism with Him

This session explores *transformative masculinities* as a critical entry point for reimagining democracy, rights, and inclusion in Asia. It originates from “Feminism with Him,” a youth-led initiative in South Korea, and highlights the country’s recent democratic crisis, gender backlash, and the rise of anti-feminist politics among young men.

In the first part, speakers will share short interventions on how young men in different East Asian contexts are being radicalized or resisting patriarchal norms. A moderated discussion and open Q&A will follow.

The second part is an interactive civic hacking workshop where participants will collectively build a live digital map of transformative masculinity initiatives across Asia. This shared resource will support future collaboration, visibility, and learning among civil society actors.

While the session is rooted in East Asia, we actively welcome participants and contributions from across Asia to broaden dialogue and regional connection.

Room: Busabongkot Room B, 2F