

## Human rights preservation and protection in the face of global risks and threats: The importance of democracy and ways to enhance it

### Serhiy Danylenko

Doctor of Political Science, Professor  
Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv  
01033, 60 Volodymyrska Str., Kyiv, Ukraine  
<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3435-2146>

### Mykhaylo Nagornyak\*

Doctor of Political Science, Professor  
Vasyl Stefanyk Precarpathian National University  
76018, 57 Shevchenko Str., Ivano-Frankivsk, Ukraine  
<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8947-3450>

### Nataliia Bielousova

PhD in Political Science, Associate Professor  
Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv  
01033, 60 Volodymyrska Str., Kyiv, Ukraine  
<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9656-2942>

### Anatoliy Yakovets

PhD in Philology, Associate Professor  
Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv  
01033, 60 Volodymyrska Str., Kyiv, Ukraine  
<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1493-7825>

### Oleksandra Fursai

Postgraduate Student  
Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv  
01033, 60 Volodymyrska Str., Kyiv, Ukraine  
<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1318-4550>

**Abstract.** The research relevance is determined by the Russian full-scale invasion of Ukraine, which poses an unprecedented threat to human rights not only in Ukraine but also throughout the world. The study aims to provide a comprehensive analysis of the effectiveness of human rights protection in the context of global threats, including military conflicts. The paper examines in detail the concept of democracy and its key role in ensuring fundamental rights and freedoms of citizens. It is shown that it is the democratic system that guarantees the exercise of such fundamental rights as freedom of speech, freedom of association, participation in government, equal access to justice. The study analyses the destructive impact of global threats, in particular the COVID-19 pandemic and the full-scale war in Ukraine, on the human rights situation in the world. Based on statistical data, it is concluded that the weakening of democratic institutions in the face of threats leads to massive human rights violations and creates favourable conditions for the spread of authoritarian tendencies. The author substantiates the need to strengthen international cooperation and mutual support of democratic countries to counter global challenges and protect human rights. Specific recommendations for improving international human rights mechanisms are proposed. The results of the study are of value for further research on the promotion of human rights in the context of global instability

**Keywords:** autocracy; freedom of speech; human rights; pandemic; Russian-Ukrainian war; rule of law

### Suggested Citation

**Article's History:** Received: 04.03.2024 Revised: 26.05.2024 Accepted: 26.06.2024

Danylenko, S., Nagornyak, M., Bielousova, N., Yakovets, A., & Fursai, O. (2024). Human rights preservation and protection in the face of global risks and threats: The importance of democracy and ways to enhance it. *Social & Legal Studios*, 7(2), 9-18. doi: 10.32518/sals2.2024.09.

### \*Corresponding author



## Introduction

The Russian-Ukrainian war is currently seen as the main threat to democratic regimes in the world. After all, it undermines the foundations of national security, restricts the rights and freedoms of citizens, and violates the principles of equality and the concept of human centrism, which is the basis of most democracies in the world. However, the current democratic deficit is not only caused by this factor but also by the impact of previous events, including the COVID-19 pandemic. Thus, the research relevance is determined by an array of threats that democracies around the world, including Ukraine, are currently facing against the backdrop of the Russian-Ukrainian war and the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The study by U.V. Movchan (2022), which offers an overview of the impact of the full-scale Russian invasion on the democratic development of different countries of the world, is particularly noteworthy. The author points out that most researchers characterise the Russian political regime as authoritarian, but with the beginning of a full-scale invasion of the Ukrainian state, it is worth noting its change towards totalitarianism. This, according to the researcher, is associated with the prohibition of alternative media, as well as the restriction of fundamental rights and freedoms of citizens regarding freedom of speech and expression. The impact of the Russian-Ukrainian war can also be felt not only in Europe but also in Africa and the Middle East (Borko & Vilks, 2023).

The struggle between autocratic and democratic authorities is highlighted by O.V. Buryachenko (2023). The author points out that the Russian full-scale invasion of Ukraine also means an attack by autocratic regimes on democratic ones, therefore it is important to determine whether modern world democracies can withstand this attack. The researcher also notes that the activities and responses of the United Nations (UN) do not comply with the fundamental principles of liberal democracy and therefore need to be reformed. The study also draws attention to the fact that the global security system has shown its vulnerability and inability to consolidate to uphold the principles of democracy, such as equality, inclusiveness, and solidarity. Y. Zhai (2023) investigates the way Chinese individuals perceive three distinct forms of governance, namely government of the people, by the people, and for the people, without explicitly referring to the term “democracy”. The concept of popular sovereignty is highly favoured by the Chinese populace. Citizens who possess a comprehensive comprehension of democracy, which is founded on a system of governance by the people, express discontentment with the nation’s current state of democracy and voice their disapproval of authoritarian political practices. The general comprehension of democracy, which centres around the concept of a government that represents the interests of the people, can paradoxically align with a proclivity towards authoritarian governance.

The role of the Russian hybrid warfare in the construction and functioning of democratic states is discussed by T. Andriyevskyy (2019), pointing out that it is a series of disinformation campaigns and manipulation of democratic values and principles that create the basis for undermining equality and freedom of expression in different societies, and thus contribute to their polarization. D.A. Chyzhov (2022) is based on the consideration of human rights protection in the field of national security. The need to safeguard human rights and freedoms has become

more crucial due to contemporary threats and the growing prevalence of armament and terrorism. International human rights instruments establish the fundamental criteria for safeguarding national security and provide the conceptual framework for the subsequent advancement of specific international standards in different domains.

O.A. Yurchenko and K.V. Filipchuk (2023) accurately described the COVID-19 coronavirus pandemic and its impact on democracy and human rights. In particular, it is noted that the spread of coronavirus disease, and several migration processes along with it, has led to a significant restriction of human rights and freedoms at all levels, including freedom of movement. Thus, the democratic values that have been developing and functioning for many years are at risk of being levelled. The spread of the pandemic has shown the unpreparedness of public authorities to combat this threat, which has naturally weakened democratic regimes and their role on the global stage (Yara *et al.*, 2023). The impact of COVID-19 was also discussed by P. Guasti (2020). It identifies two patterns of response among CEE populist leaders: the rise of autocracy and democratic resilience. In Hungary and Poland, the populist leaders used the state of emergency to increase executive power, contributing to the rise of autocracy. On the other hand, the Czech Republic and Slovakia demonstrated democratic resilience in the face of the crisis.

The issue of the threat of the spread of autocracy was studied by O.A. Lavrynovych (2022). The author points out that after the weakening of democratic regimes due to the impact of the coronavirus pandemic, the growth of autocracies are now characterised by greater flexibility and consistency. The democratic regression has become the basis for the further spread of narratives about the greater effectiveness of autocratic regimes in countering global threats (Spytska, 2023). Instead, the issue of the impact of global threats on the transformation of the democratic worldview was considered by V. Haponenko and V. Rykhluk (2022). The researchers observed positive changes in the development of democratic awareness within civil society, such as the heightened engagement in social initiatives, the unification of perspectives, the enhanced cohesion of society, and the reinforcement of social capital. Despite the threats to democracy in Ukraine and the world, such as Russian aggression, scholars emphasise the need to support democratic values and use their potential for further democratic development through regulatory frameworks, information policy, patriotic education, and tolerance.

The analysis of these works leads to the conclusion that the issue of modern threats to democracy is relevant and necessary to be covered, but the challenges of today require a comprehensive analysis of such factors as the pandemic, the Russian-Ukrainian war and to identify certain correlations between these facts; to propose ways to strengthen democracy and to affirm the values and principles of the said legal regime. Thus, the study aims to assess the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic as a precondition for further globalisation threats and challenges on the state of democratic regimes and their effectiveness in the context of military confrontation.

## Materials and methods

The research was conducted utilising various methodologies of scientific knowledge. The historical method, which examines the emergence, formation, and development of objects

in chronological order, has been instrumental in elucidating the evolution of democracy as a legal phenomenon. It has shed light on the distinctive characteristics of democracy in different periods and its relevance for contemporary society.

The analysis method was useful in the study of the concept of democracy and the elucidation of its characteristics, fundamental principles. This method was also used to identify the concepts and forms of democratic regimes inherent in most rule-of-law countries and to identify the defining features of these forms. The use of the synthesis method together with the analysis method allowed the author to identify several global challenges and threats to democratic regimes and the impact of these challenges on the legal situation. The author examined the relationship between the COVID-19 coronavirus pandemic and Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine; the synthesis method also made it possible to identify both the real and potential consequences of these threats for global democracies; it was used to distinguish between approaches and concepts to improve the effectiveness of democratic regimes in the current environment and reduce the impact of authoritarian regimes on the world order and transitional legal regimes.

The formal-logical method was used to study theoretical developments and initiatives for comprehensive reform of democracy as a legal phenomenon, ways and means of improving institutions and organisations whose activities are aimed at spreading democratic ideas, as well as the possibility of creating new models of democracy that differ from the classical options. It is also worth mentioning the comparative legal method, which helped to study the authoritarian regime, which is different from the democratic one, in particular the aspects in which they differ, their prevalence and leverage over other legal regimes. This method was also used in conjunction with the statistical method to highlight the impact of global threats on democratic and authoritarian regimes in the world; thus, the study was conducted on the examples of Ukraine, Russia, Sweden, Canada, Poland, Italy, as well as Turkey and China by comparing democracy indicators from 0 to 10 during 2018-2022. The source used to research and present relevant statistics was the Economist Intelligence Unit (2023). It should be added that the statistical and abstraction methods were also used to determine the likely indicators of democracy deficit in two main scenarios, one in which the factor of the COVID-19 coronavirus pandemic was present and the other in which this factor was absent.

It is also worth mentioning the forecasting method, which allowed us to study the future development of democratic regimes, considering current threats and challenges, in the example of Ukraine and Russia; these indicators were obtained using the International Futures (IFs) model (2023). Induction, a method of scientific cognition that involves the study of the movement of knowledge from the particular to the general, was used to examine the reasoning and results of scholars, considering controversial aspects and new data within the research topic, and formulating a general conclusion.

The main document regulating human rights and freedoms is the Constitution of Ukraine (1996), Article 21 which states that all people are free and equal in dignity and rights. In addition, the Constitution of Ukraine (1996) stipulates that the state is responsible to its citizens for ensuring human rights and freedoms and defines the direction of the state's activities aimed at establishing and guaranteeing these rights and freedoms. Thus, the main task of the state is to ensure

legal protection and realisation of the rights and freedoms of citizens. In turn, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) is an international act that ensures the regulation and observance of civil rights and freedoms. It serves as a global model for the protection of fundamental rights and freedoms, influences international law, inspires activism, guides legislation, and promotes international cooperation. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) plays a vital role in holding governments and organisations accountable for human rights violations, raising awareness and advocacy, combating discrimination, and ultimately serving as a beacon of hope and a shared commitment to uphold the dignity and rights of all people around the world.

## Results

Global threats and challenges of our time call into question the ability of democratic systems to effectively protect human rights. In the context of growing geopolitical instability and the spread of authoritarian tendencies, preserving the principles of democracy and the rule of law is of particular importance. Democracy and human rights are interconnected and interdependent concepts, as democratic institutions can guarantee the inalienable rights and freedoms of individuals. Therefore, strengthening the democratic foundations of public life should be seen as the most important factor in protecting human rights against global threats.

A democracy is a political regime in which the source of power is the people; the state is governed not directly, but through elected representatives (Boese *et al.*, 2021). The following are considered to be the key features of a democratic regime:

- ▶ free and fair elections that are held by the legal requirements and rules;
- ▶ active participation of citizens in political and public life;
- ▶ focus on protecting and guaranteeing fundamental human rights and freedoms;
- ▶ rule of law and independence of the judiciary;
- ▶ transparency of government decision-making.

The concept of democracy as the power of the people originated in ancient Greece, where all male citizens over the age of 18 could vote in assemblies where laws were passed. The emergence and development of the Roman Republic contributed to the spread of Greek ideas about democracy. In the Middle Ages and the following centuries, various forms of ideas about the forms of democratic regime emerged, in particular, through the emergence of self-government. The American War of Independence, which began in 1776, and the subsequent founding of the USA were a landmark moment for the development of democracy in its modern form, notably through a decentralised system based on checks and balances, the separation of powers into three branches, and the enshrinement of fundamental rights and freedoms at the constitutional level (Welzel, 2021). With the extension of suffrage during the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries to ordinary men, women and minorities, democracy gradually spread across regions of Europe, Latin America, and beyond (Dingwerth *et al.*, 2020).

Concerning the practical implementation of democracy and its main forms, it is worth highlighting the classical model – liberal democracy, which is based on civil liberties and rights, individual freedom, and the ability to influence the state to meet both personal and public interests.

There is also the concept of pluralistic democracy, which is based on freedom of thought and expression, consideration of the interests of all members of society. Other concepts include corporate democracy, cosmopolitan democracy elitist democracy.

The legal regime of authoritarianism, characterised by centralised power and limited political freedoms, is different from the democratic one (Sharp, 2022). In addition to these features, it is worth highlighting that political power under the respective regime is concentrated in the hands of a small group of people under the leadership of a single ruler, there is no system of checks and balances, political pluralism is limited, there is no opposition, and civil rights, such as freedom of the press, assembly, speech, are not sufficiently guaranteed and protected. Thus, drawing a comparison between these two political regimes, it is possible to conclude that a democratic regime includes the separation of powers and protection of civil rights and freedoms, in contrast to an authoritarian regime where power is vested in a small ruling group and freedom of speech and expression, is limited.

Although democracy is recognised as a universal form of political regime and consolidates most of the fundamental principles of the rule of law, it is worth noting that this regime is currently facing several global threats and challenges. These threats include the rise of populism and the spread of authoritarianism, which lead to the erosion of civil liberties and equality in society. A decline in trust in such

important institutions of a democratic regime as the government, media, and judiciary; and the spread of disinformation (Guasti, 2020).

It is worth noting that the impact of these factors has increased significantly due to the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic. In many countries, governments have imposed restrictions on freedom of movement, freedom of assembly and other civil liberties to control the spread of the virus. These restrictions were necessary to protect public health, but they also raised concerns about the erosion of democratic freedoms. The pandemic has also exacerbated existing inequalities and vulnerabilities in many societies. This increased polarisation and social unrest. In addition, the pandemic has created opportunities for authoritarian governments to consolidate power (Starr, 2021). Some governments have used the pandemic as a pretext to suppress dissent and restrict the media.

To illustrate the relevant impact, it is useful to provide some statistical data (Fig. 1). Based on the proposed division of political regimes by The Economist, it is worth examining the democratic regimes of several countries of each form of regime during 2018-2022. Thus, Sweden and Canada should be considered as representatives of full democracy; Poland and Italy as imperfect democracies; Ukraine and Turkey as hybrid (transitional) regimes; and Russia and China as authoritarian regimes. Countries are assessed based on 60 indicators ranging from 0 to 10 points.

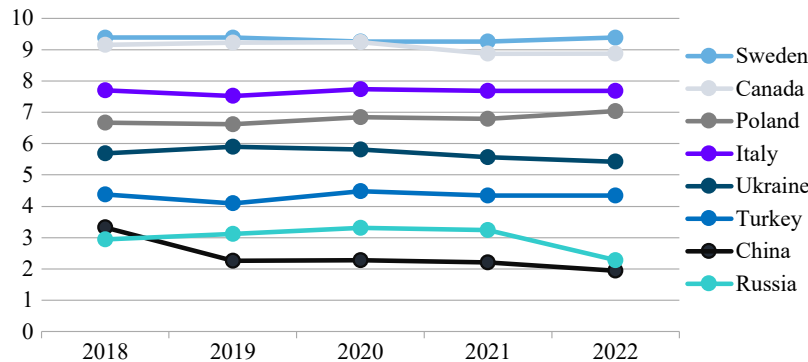


Figure 1. Global democracy index 2018-2022

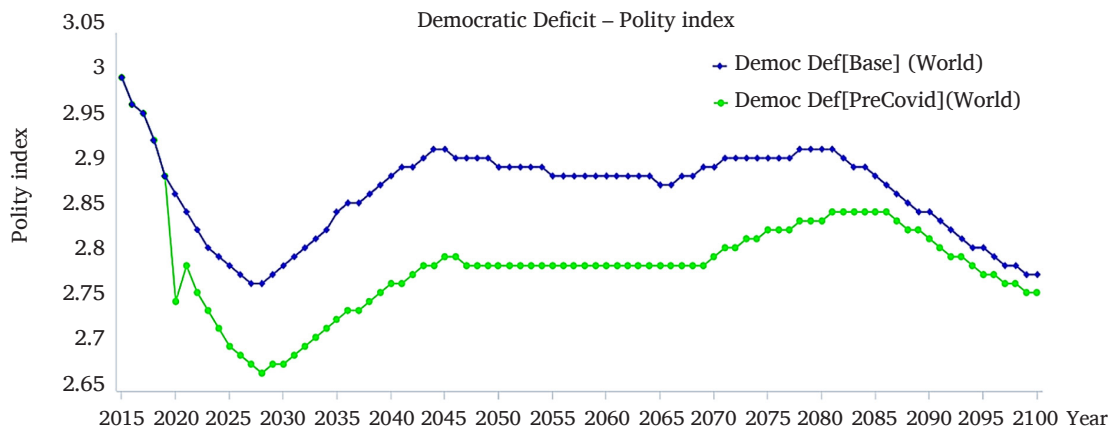
Source: compiled by the authors based on Economist Intelligence Unit (2023)

Data demonstrate that the pandemic has been the largest source of the decline in the development of democratic freedoms since 2020, and it is worth noting that this decline has been most pronounced in fully or imperfectly democratic countries. The reason for this was significant restrictive measures aimed at reducing the spread of the pandemic, but at the same time, it also meant expanding the powers of public authorities, which citizens did not agree with.

Figure 1 also shows that in 2022, the democracy index of some countries returned to its initial level from 2018, which can be attributed to the lifting of restrictions on the rights and freedoms of individuals, including freedom of movement. However, it is worth noting that countries such as Ukraine, Russia, China, and Turkey have not returned to higher democratic freedom scores. For example, China's policy on anti-epidemic measures resulted in an index score that is the lowest since 2006. The Russian Federation also

recorded the largest democratic decline, which was not due to the policy of stopping the spread of the pandemic, but to the invasion of Ukraine, which led to tighter control over the media and widespread suppression of uprisings, rallies. It is worth exploring the possible democratic deficit in a scenario where there is no such global threat as the coronavirus pandemic and, on the contrary, it is present as an influence factor (Fig. 2).

The democratic deficit is the lack of influence and importance of democratic principles, norms, and practices in a society (Zhai, 2023). It can be manifested, for example, in the impossibility of opposition parties or candidates, violation of voting rights, lack of impartial justice, restrictions on freedom of speech, censorship. Figure 2, according to the International Futures (IFs) model (2023), shows that the risks of such a deficit and a diminished role for democracy in the world could be lower in a scenario without the COVID-19 pandemic.



**Figure 2.** Democracy deficit in two scenarios: real (green line) and non-Covid-19 scenario (blue line)

**Source:** compiled by the authors based on International Futures (IFs) model (2023)

In general, it is worth noting that the two main events associated with the democratic crisis – the coronavirus pandemic and the Russian-Ukrainian war – have clear interconnections. For example, the pandemic has weakened democracy, exacerbated the polarisation of society, forced democratic regimes to resort to measures of imperative and authoritarian coercion that have meant significant restrictions on fundamental rights and freedoms of citizens; it has exacerbated the sense of distrust in governments and their ability to address global threats, as it has shown an unwillingness to act decisively and with integrity (Afsahi *et al.*, 2020). The period in which democratic regimes could have been restored – 2022 – marked the beginning of the Russian-Ukrainian war as another global crisis, the response to which was identical to that of the pandemic. Russian military invasion led to an increase in energy and food prices and triggered a migration crisis, which in turn again led to the polarisation of society in both European and other countries, dissatisfaction with government actions. It is also worth noting that authoritarian regimes are taking advantage of this situation to strengthen their positions in domestic politics, using the rhetoric of the need to protect their citizens (Wackenhut & Orjuela, 2023).

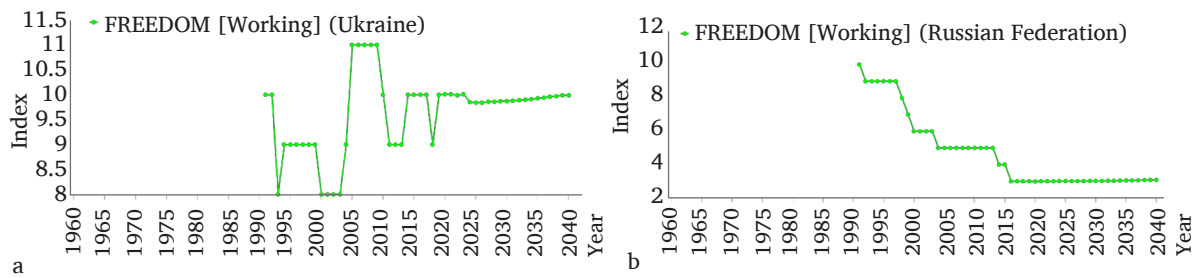
It is advisable to examine in more detail the impact of the Russian-Ukrainian war on democratic regimes, in particular in the United States and Europe. Thus, the respective countries have significantly increased military spending and budgets, and the corresponding change in priorities not only causes resistance from society but also significantly reduces the resources that could be used to support democratic institutions. The war has disrupted Europe's energy supply, forcing countries to look for alternative energy sources and reconsider their dependence on Russian gas (Kuzemko *et al.*, 2022). The refugee crisis has put a strain on the social sector. Geopolitical forces are grouped into pro-Russian and pro-Western sides, which reduces the middle space for democracies that want to be non-aligned. Many emerging democracies are facing pressure to support Russia due to economic or food dependence. The Russia-Ukraine war has led to a decline in democracy in transition countries, including Turkey.

The impact of the war on democracy is particularly noticeable in Ukraine and Russia. Given the imposition of martial law due to the Russian invasion, it is worth noting

the restriction of certain rights and freedoms of citizens and the foundations of the democratic regime, including freedom of speech, expression, and pluralism. For example, by the Law of Ukraine No. 2849-IX “On Media” (2022), a ban was imposed on the broadcasting of news resources with Russian connections and origins, as well as a ban on access to resources of Russian origin. The right to assemble and demonstrate, as guaranteed by the Constitution of Ukraine (1996) and other legal acts, has also been restricted. Due to the full-scale invasion, the number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) and refugees outside the Ukrainian border has increased. Under these conditions, the country cannot guarantee the full safety and security of the former and latter, so there is a risk of economic dependence, labour slavery, as well as restrictions on labour rights, expansion of employers' rights regarding working conditions, changes to employment contracts.

In Russia, the impact of the invasion is noted in the area of freedom of speech and expression, in particular through restrictions on opposition, the elimination of human rights and freedoms (Rød *et al.*, 2020). Thus, the war is a pretext for strengthening the authoritarian regime of the ruling elites and spreading this influence on transitional democracies and other regimes. It is reasonable to state that Russia's invasion of Ukraine poses a significant threat to democratic regimes around the world, including in Europe (Sloss & Dickinson, 2022). The immediate and long-term consequences of the war will depend on the outcome of the conflict, with potential implications for military spending, energy security, refugee crises and the overall sustainability of democratic institutions. It is also worth noting that, when considering scenarios for the end of the war, it is the scenario in which Ukraine wins that could mark a new beginning for the development of democratic regimes and the principles that underpin them. The path to this scenario is possible only through the continued support of Ukraine by world leaders and countries through the supply of both funding and weapons. This path is not focused on quick results, but on long-term consequences, which are to establish the values of democracy, which include the priority of human rights and freedoms, their protection and guarantee.

Further development of democracy in Ukraine and Russia is also noteworthy (Fig. 3).



**Figure 3.** Estimated development of democracy in: a) Ukraine and b) Russia until 2040

**Source:** compiled by the authors based on International Futures (IFs) model (2023)

The data clearly illustrate the difference between the further development of democracy in Ukraine and Russia, but it should be noted that this cannot be an accurate indicator of the security of global democracy, given the influence of authoritarian regimes on countries in transition to democracy. Thus, the illustrated decline of democracy in Russia may become a determining factor for the development of other authoritarian regimes, and, accordingly, with more authoritarian regimes, pressure on world democracies through diplomatic, economic, and military factors increases; the role of democratic values is weakened, their importance, effectiveness, universality, and defensibility are levelled.

Protecting human rights and democracy amidst global risks and threats necessitates collaborative endeavours involving governments, civil society, international organisations, and other stakeholders. Possible strategies for enhancing democracy and safeguarding human rights encompass the cultivation of democratic norms, promotion of global equity, fostering collaboration and alliances, and preservation of the environment.

### Discussion

The COVID-19 pandemic has led to an increase in authoritarianism and democratic deficits around the world (Fredriksen, 2022). Authoritarian regimes such as China and Russia have used the crisis to strengthen their power. Using the crisis in the democratic development of countries, Russia launched a full-scale invasion of Ukraine. Thus, both the Russian-Ukrainian war and the pandemic have raised questions about the capacity of democracy to respond effectively to global risks and threats.

The issue of the overall impact of the pandemic on the world order is highlighted by S.C. Greitens (2020). It is pointed out that the pandemic has acted as a catalyst, accelerating existing trends in governance and legal regimes. The increased use of digital technologies to track contacts, communicate and disseminate information has shifted the boundaries between the public and private spheres. The pandemic has also further widened the gap between democracies and authoritarian regimes. Democracies have generally implemented surveillance measures with greater transparency and accountability, while authoritarian regimes have used the crisis to justify further expansion of their mechanisms and means of control (Popovych, 2023). The study argues that international cooperation is needed to address the challenges of surveillance in a way that is consistent with democratic values, including the establishment of principles of transparency, accountability, and human rights protection in the context of surveillance practices. The author's findings partially confirm the results of this

paper, in particular in terms of analysing the impact of the pandemic on the development of democratic regimes. It is reasonable to agree that the spread of COVID-19 has only increased the polarisation of society, and tension between representatives of different legal regimes, and has also become a prerequisite for the spread of authoritarian influence in countries in transition.

C. Norrlöf (2020) explored the potential impact of COVID-19 on liberal democracies and the international order. The author argues that the pandemic has been and remains a unique challenge for this type of democratic regime, in particular, because it is characterised by openness and the guarantee of individual freedom, so restricting the relevant features, although consistent with the needs of quarantine restrictions, is contrary to democratic values. Among the negative consequences of these restrictions, the researcher notes the strengthening of state control and interference, the development of populism, a decrease in public confidence in public authorities, as well as a weakening of the overall state of democracy in the world, deterioration of international cooperation and an escalation of confrontation between authoritarian and democratic regimes. It is worth noting that the results of the researcher's findings are consistent with those of this paper, but it is necessary to complement them with ways to reduce the impact of the pandemic on democratic regimes, such as increasing transparency and accountability of decision-making at the state level, thus restoring public trust, and establishing cooperation at all levels between fully formed democracies and democracies in transition.

Similar issues were explored by M. Kneuer and S. Wurster (2022). They point out that the pandemic has forced governments to take strict measures to contain the spread of the virus, which in some cases has led to restrictions on democratic rights. These measures included quarantines, curfews, bans on public gatherings and restrictions on freedom of movement. While these measures have been necessary to protect public health, they have also raised concerns about the erosion of democratic boundaries. The article also argues that the pandemic has not necessarily led to the erosion of democracy, but rather exacerbated existing problems. For example, countries that already had weak democratic institutions were more likely to see a decline in democratic rights during the pandemic. The pandemic also had a significant impact on democratic institutions. Overall, it is worth noting that the authors' findings are partially consistent with the results of this paper and provide a valuable analysis of the link between the pandemic and the weakening of democracy. It is also reasonable to agree with the authors' conclusions that the pandemic was not a direct consequence of the democratic deficit, but only accelerated the relevant processes.

A study of the impact of not only the pandemic but also the Russian-Ukrainian war on democratic institutions and the European Union as a whole was presented by V. Anghel and E. Jones (2023). The authors point out that both crises have intensified various aspects of decision-making and decision-making in the EU, in particular by circumventing traditional decision-making procedures and introducing exceptions that demonstrate the unity of democratic regimes, flexibility and solidarity. The researchers note that despite the overall demonstration of solidarity, there have been some internal divisions within the EU. For example, some member states were more hesitant than others to impose harsh sanctions or actions against Russia or to provide military assistance to Ukraine. These differences raised questions about the EU's ability to make collective decisions and act effectively in the face of external threats. They also raised the question of the EU's ability to defend the democratic values that underpin the union. Although the authors' findings only partially confirm the results of this paper, they are important to consider. In particular, by highlighting both positive and negative effects of the Russian-Ukrainian war on democratic values within the EU. Indeed, although the EU has shown solidarity in many aspects of economic, military, and other assistance, some contradictions do not correspond to the values that are fundamental to the development of democracy (Kotsur, 2023).

The study by H. Landemore (2020) is particularly noteworthy, as the author argues that democracy is currently in crisis and needs a new approach and new principles. The researcher proposes a new model of democracy, which he calls "open democracy". Open democracy is based on the idea that everyone should have the opportunity to participate in the political process. This model, according to the author, would solve several problems associated with the lack of citizen participation in and influence on decision-making. Thus, it is proposed to create new advisory bodies, namely groups of citizens who come together to discuss important issues at the state level and form a general public opinion. The author's findings do not confirm the results of this paper, although the author's reasoning is logical and driven by the current democratic deficit and threats to the regime. However, it should also be added that the creation of a new model of democracy may be an unjustified measure; it is more appropriate to formulate and implement a comprehensive approach to reforming democracy and establishing this regime as a guarantor of human rights and freedoms, which will include the development of transparency in decision-making, international cooperation and support for transitional democracies, both financially and diplomatically, to offset their dependence on authoritarian regimes (Chochia *et al.*, 2018).

A study of democracy, its essence, and the causes of the crisis, was conducted by A. Przeworski (2019). Democracy is defined as "a political mechanism in which people, through elections, choose a government and influence this process". Democracy, according to the researcher, is not stable and faces periodic crises. The factors that negatively affect the democratic regime are economic inequality, social polarisation, technological changes, globalisation challenges (Sannikov, 2017). The results presented in the author's paper partially coincide with the results of this paper. It is reasonable to agree that democratic regimes are characterised by a certain instability; for example, most democracies

were not prepared for the global threat of the pandemic and the Russian-Ukrainian war, so these factors led to a certain decline and halted the development of democracy. To reduce the impact of these threats, it is worth focus on protecting democracy in Ukraine through economic, military, and diplomatic cooperation. Such protection may include guaranteeing the rights and freedoms of individuals, immediate response to violations of the terms and customs of war. An important role is also played by the UN, whose activities should also be aimed at supporting and developing democratic values, countering disinformation and influences from authoritarian regimes.

## Conclusions

The study underlines the importance of human rights protection in the context of global risks and threats. The analysis shows that democracy faces significant threats and challenges in the modern world. The COVID-19 pandemic led to restrictions on rights and freedoms in many countries, exacerbated inequalities, increased polarization in society, and created opportunities for authoritarian consolidation of power. The war in Ukraine also poses risks for democracy, including through impacts on military spending, energy security, refugee crises, and erosion of civil liberties.

The data indicates a decline in democracy globally during the pandemic, with a partial recovery in 2022 as restrictions were lifted. However, countries like Russia and China have continued on an authoritarian trajectory. Scenario analysis suggests the risks of a democratic deficit could have been lower without the pandemic. Ukraine and Russia demonstrate divergent potential democracy pathways, with Ukraine projected to make gains if it emerges victorious in the war, while Russia is expected to decline further into authoritarianism. However, the spread of authoritarianism worldwide remains a threat to global democracy.

This study highlights the importance of considering human rights as an integral part of the global security context. Building strong international relations and cooperation with democratic countries, as well as reforming intergovernmental organisations, are becoming urgent tasks to ensure human rights amid global instability. The proposed recommendations relate to improving international human rights mechanisms, including supporting transitional democracies, actively combating authoritarianism, and backing Ukraine as a symbol of the struggle for democracy and human rights. To achieve these goals, protecting human rights and democracy necessitates unified efforts across governments, civil society, international groups and other stakeholders. Feasible approaches involve strengthening democratic institutions, furthering global justice and cooperation, guaranteeing environmental sustainability, and creating new forms of democratic practice.

Further research in the area of global risks and threats could focus on analysing the impact of environmental issues, cyber threats, geopolitical conflicts, the resilience of democratic institutions, and the role of international organisations in ensuring stability and human rights.

## Acknowledgements

None.

## Conflict of interest

None.

## References

- [1] Afsahi, A., Beausoleil, E., Dean, R., Ercan, S.A., & Gagnon, J.P. (2020). Democracy in a global emergency: Five lessons from the COVID-19 pandemic. *Democratic Theory*, 7(2), 5-19. doi: [10.3167/dt.2020.070201](https://doi.org/10.3167/dt.2020.070201).
- [2] Andriyevskyy, T. (2019). Crisis of the institute of direct democracy in the conditions of hybrid war: Electoral aspect. *Modern Society: Political Science, Sociology Science, Culturology Science*, 1(17), 4-15. doi: [10.34142/24130060.2019.17.1.01](https://doi.org/10.34142/24130060.2019.17.1.01).
- [3] Anghel, V., & Jones, E. (2023). Is Europe really forged through crisis? Pandemic EU and the Russia-Ukraine war. *Journal of European Public Policy*, 30(4), 766-786. doi: [10.1080/13501763.2022.2140820](https://doi.org/10.1080/13501763.2022.2140820).
- [4] Boese, V.A., Edgell, A.B., Hellmeier, S., Maerz, S.F., & Lindberg, S.I. (2021). How democracies prevail: Democratic resilience as a two-stage process. *Democratization*, 28(5), 885-907. doi: [10.1080/13510347.2021.1891413](https://doi.org/10.1080/13510347.2021.1891413).
- [5] Borko, T., & Vilks, A. (2023). Consequences and threats of international terrorism for Ukraine. *Foreign Affairs*, 33(3), 43-50. doi: [10.46493/2663-2675.33\(3\).2023.43-50](https://doi.org/10.46493/2663-2675.33(3).2023.43-50).
- [6] Buryachenko, O.V. (2023). Democracy vs. autocracy in the context of the Russian-Ukrainian war. *Bulletin of NTUU "KPI" Political Science. Sociology. Law*, 2(58), 48-58. doi: [10.20535/2308-5053.2023.2\(58\).285599](https://doi.org/10.20535/2308-5053.2023.2(58).285599).
- [7] Chochia, A., Troitiño, D.R., Kerikmäe, T., & Shumilo, O. (2018). [Enlargement to the UK, the referendum of 1975 and position of Margaret Thatcher](#). In *Brexit: History, reasoning and perspectives* (pp. 115-139). Verlag: Springer International Publishing.
- [8] Chyzhov, D.A. (2022). International standards for ensuring human rights in the field of national security. *Current Policy Issues*, 69, 124-131. doi: [10.32837/app.v0i69.1312](https://doi.org/10.32837/app.v0i69.1312).
- [9] Constitution of Ukraine. (1996, June). Retrieved from <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/en/254%D0%BA/96-%D0%B2%D1%80#Text>.
- [10] Dingwerth, K., Schmidtke, H., & Weise, T. (2020). The rise of democratic legitimation: Why international organizations speak the language of democracy. *European Journal of International Relations*, 26(3), 714-741. doi: [10.1177/1354066119882488](https://doi.org/10.1177/1354066119882488).
- [11] Economist Intelligence Unit. (2023). *Democracy Index 2022: Frontline democracy and the battle for Ukraine*. Retrieved from <https://pages.eiu.com/rs/753-RIQ-438/images/DI-final-version-report.pdf>.
- [12] Frederiksen, K.V.S. (2022). When democratic experience distorts democracy: Citizen reactions to undemocratic incumbent behaviour. *European Journal of Political Research*, 61(1), 281-292. doi: [10.1111/1475-6765.12465](https://doi.org/10.1111/1475-6765.12465).
- [13] Greitens, S.C. (2020). Surveillance, security, and liberal democracy in the post-COVID world. *International Organization*, 74(S1), 169-190. doi: [10.1017/S0020818320000417](https://doi.org/10.1017/S0020818320000417).
- [14] Guasti, P. (2020). The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic in Central and Eastern Europe: The rise of autocracy and democratic resilience. *Democratic Theory*, 7(2), 47-60. doi: [10.3167/dt.2020.070207](https://doi.org/10.3167/dt.2020.070207).
- [15] Haponenko, V., & Rykhlik, V. (2022). Transformation of the democratic worldview in the conditions of global threats. *Visnyk of the Lviv University. Philosophical Political Studies*, 42, 198-204. doi: [10.30970/PPS.2022.42.25](https://doi.org/10.30970/PPS.2022.42.25).
- [16] International Futures (IFs) model. (2023). Retrieved from [https://www.ifs.du.edu/ifs/frm/MainMenu.aspx](https://www.ifs.du.edu/ifs/frm>MainMenu.aspx).
- [17] Kneuer, M., & Wurster, S. (2022). Democratic health in the corona pandemic. The corona pandemic as a trigger or amplifier of democratic erosion or autocratization? *Journal of Comparative Politics*, 16(4), 615-634. doi: [10.1007/s12286-023-00558-8](https://doi.org/10.1007/s12286-023-00558-8).
- [18] Kotsur, V. (2023). Challenges and threats to the collective security of Europe in the context of the russian-ukrainian war. *Society. Document. Communication*, 8(1), 151-181. doi: [10.31470/2518-7600-2023-18-151-181](https://doi.org/10.31470/2518-7600-2023-18-151-181).
- [19] Kuzemko, C., Blondeel, M., Dupont, C., & Brisbois, M.C. (2022). Russia's war on Ukraine, European energy policy responses & implications for sustainable transformations. *Energy Research & Social Science*, 93, article number 102842. doi: [10.1016/j.erss.2022.102842](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.erss.2022.102842).
- [20] Landemore, H. (2020). *Open democracy: Reinventing popular rule for the twenty-first century*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. doi: [10.2307/j.ctv10crczs](https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv10crczs).
- [21] Lavrynovych, O.A. (2022). Autocracy vs democracy in the midst of the coronavirus crisis. *Regional Studies*, 28, 72-78. doi: [10.32782/2663-6170/2022.28.13](https://doi.org/10.32782/2663-6170/2022.28.13).
- [22] Law of Ukraine No. 2849-IX "On Media". (2022, December). Retrieved from <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/2849-20/ed20221213#Text>.
- [23] Movchan, U.V. (2022). [The impact of the war Russia against Ukraine on the democratic political and legal development of the Ukrainian state and the world](#). *State and Law*, 91, 195-200.
- [24] Norrlöf, C. (2020). Is Covid-19 a liberal democratic curse? Risks for liberal international order. *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*, 33(5), 799-813. doi: [10.1080/09557571.2020.1812529](https://doi.org/10.1080/09557571.2020.1812529).
- [25] Popovych, K. (2023). Citizens' access to justice during the introduction and implementation of the legal regime of martial law in Ukraine. *Law Journal of the National Academy of Internal Affairs*, 13(3), 55-64. doi: [10.56215/naia-chasopis/3.2023.55](https://doi.org/10.56215/naia-chasopis/3.2023.55).
- [26] Przeworski, A. (2019). *Crises of democracy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. doi: [10.1017/9781108671019](https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108671019).
- [27] Rød, E.G., Knutsen, C.H., & Hegre, H. (2020). The determinants of democracy: A sensitivity analysis. *Public Choice*, 185(1), 87-111. doi: [10.1007/s11127-019-00742-z](https://doi.org/10.1007/s11127-019-00742-z).
- [28] Sannikov, D.V. (2017). [Problems of land legislation of Ukraine and European Union integration](#). *Journal of Legal, Ethical and Regulatory Issues*, 20(1).
- [29] Sharp, D. (2022). Democratic citizenship and polarization: Robert Talisse's theory of democracy. *Ethical Theory and Moral Practice*, 25(4), 701-708. doi: [10.1007/s10677-022-10314-8](https://doi.org/10.1007/s10677-022-10314-8).
- [30] Sloss, D.L., & Dickinson, L.A. (2022). The Russia-Ukraine war and the seeds of a new liberal plurilateral order. *American Journal of International Law*, 116(4), 798-809. doi: [10.1017/ajil.2022.55](https://doi.org/10.1017/ajil.2022.55).

- 
- [31] Spytka, L. (2023). [Criminal prosecution as a tool of political pressure on opposition forces by authoritarian regimes: From the origins to the present](#). *Pakistan Journal of Criminology*, 15(2), 259-274.
- [32] Starr, H. (2021). Democratic dominoes: Diffusion approaches to the spread of democracy in the international system. In *Harvey Starr: Pioneer in the study of conflict processes and international relations* (pp. 123-145). Cham: Springer. doi: [10.1007/978-3-030-78907-7\\_5](#).
- [33] Universal Declaration of Human Rights. (1948, December). Retrieved from <https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/2021/03/udhr.pdf>.
- [34] Wackenhut, A.F., & Orjuela, C. (2023). Engaging the next generation: Authoritarian regimes and their young diaspora. *European Political Science*, 22(1), 143-158. doi: [10.1057/s41304-022-00409-2](#).
- [35] Welzel, C. (2021). Why the future is democratic. *Journal of Democracy*, 32(2), 132-144. doi: [10.1353/jod.2021.0024](#).
- [36] Yara, O., Hlushchenko, S., Koval, M., Berlach, H., & Lytvyn, N. (2023). Administrative and legal regulation of local taxes and fees in Ukraine: The current state of affairs and the influence of EU member state legislation. *European Taxation*, 63(5), 214-219. doi: [10.59403/avckk8](#).
- [37] Yurchenko, O.A., & Filipchuk, K.V. (2023). Human rights and democracy: Threats of the global char actor. *Legal Bulletin*, 1(7), 26-39. doi: [10.31732/2708-33X-2023-07-26-31](#).
- [38] Zhai, Y. (2023). Embracing the concept of democracy in China: Citizens' democratic perceptions and support. *Contemporary Politics*, 29(2), 228-248. doi: [10.1080/13569775.2022.2118436](#).

## Збереження та захист прав людини в умовах глобальних ризиків та загроз: важливість демократії та шляхи її зміцнення

### Сергій Даниленко

Доктор політичних наук, професор  
Київський національний університет імені Тараса Шевченка  
01033, вул. Володимирська, 60, м. Київ, Україна  
<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3435-2146>

### Михайло Нагорняк

Доктор політичних наук, професор  
Прикарпатський національний університет імені Василя Стефаника  
76018, вул. Шевченка, 57, м. Івано-Франківськ, Україна  
<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8947-3450>

### Наталія Белоусова

Кандидат політичних наук, доцент  
Київський національний університет імені Тараса Шевченка  
01033, вул. Володимирська, 60, м. Київ, Україна  
<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9656-2942>

### Анатолій Яковець

Кандидат філологічних наук, доцент  
Київський національний університет імені Тараса Шевченка  
01033, вул. Володимирська, 60, м. Київ, Україна  
<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1493-7825>

### Олександра Фурсай

Аспірант  
Київський національний університет імені Тараса Шевченка  
01033, вул. Володимирська, 60, м. Київ, Україна  
<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1318-4550>

**Анотація.** Актуальність дослідження зумовлена повномасштабним вторгненням Російської Федерації в Україну, що становить безпрецедентну загрозу правам людини не лише в Україні, а й у всьому світі. Метою роботи є комплексний аналіз ефективності захисту прав людини в умовах глобальних загроз, зокрема військових конфліктів. У роботі детально досліджується поняття демократії та її ключова роль у забезпеченні основних прав і свобод громадян. Показано, що саме демократичний лад гарантує реалізацію таких фундаментальних прав як свобода слова, свобода об'єднань, участь в управлінні державою, рівний доступ до правосуддя. Проаналізовано деструктивний вплив глобальних загроз, зокрема пандемії COVID-19 та повномасштабної війни в Україні, на стан дотримання прав людини у світі. На основі статистичних даних зроблено висновок, що послаблення демократичних інститутів в умовах загроз призводить до масових порушень прав людини та створює сприятливі умови для поширення авторитарних тенденцій. Обґрунтовано необхідність посилення міжнародного співробітництва та взаємної підтримки демократичних країн для протидії глобальним викликам та захисту прав людини. Запропоновано конкретні рекомендації щодо вдосконалення міжнародних механізмів захисту прав людини. Результати дослідження становлять цінність для подальших наукових розвідок з питань утвердження прав людини в умовах глобальної нестабільності

**Ключові слова:** автократія; свобода слова; права людини; пандемія; Російсько-українська війна; верховенство права