

9/9/24, 2:36 PM

Prime Minister's remarks at the Summit for Democracy | Prime Minister of Canada

December 9, 2021
Ottawa, Ontario

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Thank you, Ursula. I also want to thank President Biden for bringing us together for this important Summit.

I know that everyone here agrees: democracy matters.

Democracy creates healthy, inclusive societies, and builds a stable, safer world. So when we see it coming under threat, we must step up.

Today, I want to bring Canada's approach to the table: strengthening an open, inclusive society at home, and defending democratic values abroad, including in the digital space.

To protect democracy at home, we must continue our work on vital issues like the fight against foreign interference.

That said, today, I want to focus on something else that also really matters: diversity.

One of the most powerful ideas Canada can share with the world is our belief in diversity.

That's not to say we have it all figured out. But on reconciliation with Indigenous peoples, on fighting systemic racism, on gender equality, on defending LGBTQ2 communities – we're making progress.

From implementing UNDRIP to investing in Black entrepreneurs, we're strengthening the open, inclusive society Canadians cherish. Because when we do, everyone benefits.

That brings me to the other piece of the approach: leadership on the world stage.

The data is clear – not only is the number of democracies declining, the quality often is, too.

Authoritarian states are increasingly trying to sell systems that lack key rights and freedoms as so-called democracies.

As like-minded countries, we must defend true democratic values like free and fair elections, human rights, and the rule of law. On that note, I want to again thank everyone here who spoke up in the case of Michael Spavor and Michael Kovrig.

And if you haven't yet endorsed the Declaration Against Arbitrary Detention in State-to-State Relations, I hope you will. I want to thank my friend Mark Rutte from the Netherlands for mentioning it today, and thank all of you friends who have signed onto it alongside us.

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The world stood by Canada when we needed it. We'll always do the same in return.

We'll be there for fragile and emerging democracies with expanded fast and flexible support. One way we'll lead on that front is through a new Canadian centre for global democracy.

We'll also provide safe haven to even more human rights defenders, democracy activists, and journalists.

When we talk about democracy globally, we must also talk about the digital space.

In the coming year, Canada will be chairing the Freedom Online Coalition, where we'll put the focus on protecting human rights and inclusion.

We're also focused on addressing disinformation, which spreads faster than ever online. Canada will continue to stand by journalists, including as Co-Chair of the Media Freedom Coalition.

We must defend our democratic systems, on- and off-line.

The countries we lead are very different. But what brings us together is a belief in democracy.

So let us stand together to build free, open societies to create a more peaceful and prosperous world.

Thank you very much.