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Canada announces over \$30 million in initiatives during third Summit for Democracy | Prime Minister of Canada

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Ottawa, Ontario

At the third Summit for Democracy, on March 20, 2024, Prime Minister Trudeau reaffirmed Canada's unwavering commitment to protect and build the resilience of democracy.

At the Summit, the Prime Minister announced over \$30 million for new projects to strengthen democracies in Canada and around the world.

A number of these projects are supported through an investment of \$10 million announced (<https://www.pm.gc.ca/en/news/backgrounders/2022/11/20/prime-minister-announces-significant-supports-francophonie-summit>) by the Prime Minister in November 2022 to provide fast and flexible supports to La Francophonie countries, the Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie, civil society organizations, human rights advocates and political activists so they can address new and emerging challenges that are threatening democracy and human rights.

Defending Human Rights and Promoting Inclusion

- **Reclaiming Civic Space to Confront the Climate Emergency:** Through the International Development Research Centre (IDRC), Canada is investing \$8.4 million to support human rights defenders working on climate and environmental issues across the Global South. The new investment will identify strategies to safeguard rights and counter shrinking civic spaces – the political, legislative, social, and economic environment where people come together – as part of Canada's effort to promote inclusive, participatory, and accountable governance in the face of climate change.
- **Promoting a Feminist and Inclusive Digital Sphere:** Canada stands at the forefront of global efforts to promote and bolster the rights of people to access information and engage with others online. Through the IDRC, Canada is investing \$4.6 million in research to create an equitable, feminist, and inclusive digital sphere. The investment into research led by local organizations in developing countries will leverage the potential of digital technologies in promoting inclusive governance and democracy, by identifying the drivers and responses to the online information disorder and gender-based violence facilitated by technology.
- **Advancing Digital Security Protection for Civil Society Actors and Human Rights:** Canada is providing an additional \$2.98 million to Access Now to promote digital security, rapid response support for human rights defenders, women human rights defenders, civil society organizations, journalists and independent media, and other marginalized and vulnerable people wherever urgent crises emerge.

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Canada previously announced (<https://twitter.com/CanadaFP/status/1287809332466397192>) \$2 million to Access Now to support this initiative, at RightsCon in July 2020.

- **Scaling and Sustaining the World Benchmarking Alliance's Digital Inclusion Benchmark:** Canada is providing \$2 million to the World Benchmarking Alliance to foster transparency and accountability around the largest companies' commitments to promote human rights and digital inclusion in their business practices. This will be achieved through a comparative annual snapshot of their policies, processes, and practices.
- **Resilience of francophone LGBTQI+ movements in North Africa:** Canada is providing \$1.44 million to Égides, the International Francophone Alliance for Equality and Diversities, to strengthen the resilience of francophone LGBTQI+ rights movements in North Africa, with a focus on Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia. This project will support local organizations in establishing 10 initiatives to promote the rights and well-being of LGBTQI+ people and will document and strengthen the safety, mental health and well-being of LGBTQI+ activists. The project will also promote regional coordination and activists' participation in international conferences and fora.
- **Women's Political Leadership in ASEAN Countries:** Canada is providing an additional \$1.37 million to the Westminster Foundation for Democracy (WFD) to support their project to advance equality in politics and wider society by enabling politically active women across Association of Southeast Asian (ASEAN) countries to exercise and sustain political careers safely, and with influence, at regional and national levels of government. This will be achieved by promoting a more inclusive environment in which women in politics are better supported and protected from violence, and gender equality is better addressed in law and policy. Prime Minister Trudeau previously announced (<https://www.pm.gc.ca/en/news/news-releases/2021/12/09/prime-minister-focuses-protecting-democracy-summit-democracy>) \$1 million to the WFD for this initiative during the first Summit for Democracy in December 2021.
- **OHCHR Institutional Support 2024:** Canada is providing \$1 million to support the United Nations' Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) in Geneva for 2024. The OHCHR works to strengthen international human rights mechanisms to: enhance equality and counter discrimination; combat impunity and strengthen accountability for the rule of law; integrate human rights in development and in the economic spheres; widen democratic space; and provide analysis on early warning and protection of human rights in situations of conflict, violence, and insecurity.
- **Reducing Gendered State and Societal Violence Experienced by Young People in Tunisia:** Canada is providing \$475,000 to International Alert for their project to

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equip young women and men in the marginalized regions of Kasserine and Tataouine, Tunisia to effectively tackle gender-based violence and repression and to engage more constructively with authorities and decision-making bodies of government on issues of relevance to them. This project will provide training and assistance to increase collaboration with media organizations to generate content that sheds light on the challenges and violence faced by young people throughout the region.

Strengthening Democratic Institutions

- **Parliaments Delivering Accountable, Inclusive and Effective Governance (ParlDeliver):** Canada is providing \$3 million to the United Nations Development Programme to improve parliaments' representation, lawmaking, and oversight functions to be effective actors of change. The project seeks to address critical challenges to democratic principles, focusing on: barriers to women's political leadership, governance of digitalization, information integrity and just green transitions. The project will focus on Francophone countries in Africa, the Maghreb, Latin America, and the Caribbean.
- **Enhance Diversification of Election Observation Missions and Follow-Up of ODIHR Electoral Assessments and Recommendations:** Canada is providing over \$947,000 to the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe's (OSCE) Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) to promote diversification and geographical balance in the composition of election observation missions and provide observers from participating states with experience they can apply in their own countries. This initiative will assist participating states in aligning their electoral laws and practices with OSCE commitments and international standards through targeted, on-demand legal expertise and in-depth assistance to institutions and civil society organizations.
- **Supporting OAS Electoral Observation Missions as a Tool for Strengthening Electoral Institutions and Processes in the Americas:** Canada is providing an additional \$750,000 to the Organization of American States' (OAS) Department of Electoral Cooperation and Observation for their project to conduct election observation missions in collaboration with electoral management bodies and other stakeholders to advance electoral processes that are inclusive, transparent, and seek to reduce electoral violence and manipulation. Prime Minister Trudeau previously [announced](https://www.pm.gc.ca/en/news/backgrounders/2022/06/10/canadas-new-investments-and-assistance-latin-america-and-caribbean) (<https://www.pm.gc.ca/en/news/backgrounders/2022/06/10/canadas-new-investments-and-assistance-latin-america-and-caribbean>) \$1.7 million to support this initiative during the 2022 Summit for the Americas.

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- **Support to the World Bank's Debt Management Facility:** Canada is providing \$700,000 to the World Bank Debt Management Facility (DMF) to strengthen public debt management capacity and institutions, reduce debt-related vulnerabilities, and improve debt transparency of low and middle-income countries. The DMF leverages the expertise and track record of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund to offer advisory services, training and peer-to-peer learning to more than 80 developing countries around the world to strengthen their debt management capacity and improve long-term debt sustainability.
- **Improving the Implementation of Access to Information Laws:** Canada is providing over \$270,000 to the Centre for Law and Democracy for their project to improve equality and accessibility of fundamental human rights for civil society, including the right to participate in democratic processes and political discourse. This initiative includes the development of a comprehensive methodology for local actors, such as oversight bodies and civil society organizations, to assess how well states are implementing their right-to-information laws. The project will also offer training and assistance to international partners to support the application of this assessment methodology in other countries.

Countering Foreign Interference

- **Countering Election-Related Foreign Information, Manipulation, and Interference in Moldova and Beyond:** Canada is providing \$2.5 million to the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA) to increase the capacity of civil society organizations in Francophone countries to more effectively counter election-related foreign information, manipulation and interference (FIMI), as well as address existing legal and policy vulnerabilities that enable it. This initiative will include conducting needs assessments and workshops, gathering data, and carrying out in-depth interviews in reference to FIMI, political and financial drivers, and their gender implications. These activities will be piloted in Moldova before being extended to three additional countries in Europe and Africa struggling with similar vulnerabilities.
- **Countering Foreign Interference in Canada's Democratic Institutions:** In April 2023, the Government of Canada provided an [update on outstanding recommendations to counter foreign interference](https://www.canada.ca/en/democratic-institutions/news/2023/04/government-of-canada-provides-update-on-recommendations-to-combat-foreign-interference.html) (<https://www.canada.ca/en/democratic-institutions/news/2023/04/government-of-canada-provides-update-on-recommendations-to-combat-foreign-interference.html>) in Canada's democratic institutions from the National Security and Intelligence Committee of Parliamentarians (NSICOP) and the independent

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assessments of the Critical Election Incident Public Protocol. This update highlighted work completed to date, as well as further actions to respond to those recommendations, including the enhancement of communications with Canadians about foreign interference and protecting democracy; supporting legislation to combat foreign interference, responding to newly emerging risks, vulnerabilities, and security issues; and deepening engagement with partners to enhance awareness and improve resiliency to foreign interference and other threats to democracy.

- **Protecting Democracy and Countering Disinformation in Canada:** In January 2024, the Government of Canada released [Protecting Democracy Toolkits](https://www.canada.ca/en/democratic-institutions/services/protecting-democratic-institutions.html#toc0) (<https://www.canada.ca/en/democratic-institutions/services/protecting-democratic-institutions.html#toc0>) and [Countering Disinformation: A Guidebook for Public Servants](https://www.canada.ca/en/democratic-institutions/services/protecting-democratic-institutions/countering-disinformation-guidebook-public-servants.html) (<https://www.canada.ca/en/democratic-institutions/services/protecting-democratic-institutions/countering-disinformation-guidebook-public-servants.html>) (the Guidebook). These tools will help community leaders, elected officials and public office holders, and public servants identify and combat disinformation and foreign interference. The Guidebook provides federal public servants with a baseline understanding of the threat of disinformation to Canada's democratic institutions and offers guidance on how to identify, build the public's resilience to, and counter disinformation. It is part of a broader toolkit for the Canadian federal public service, which will include training, workshops, and other related guidance on countering disinformation.
- **Canadian Digital Media Research Network:** In June 2023, the Government of Canada [announced](https://www.canada.ca/en/democratic-institutions/news/2023/06/government-of-canada-working-with-civil-society-to-strengthen-defences-against-online-disinformation.html) (<https://www.canada.ca/en/democratic-institutions/news/2023/06/government-of-canada-working-with-civil-society-to-strengthen-defences-against-online-disinformation.html>) a \$5.5 million investment to create the Canadian Digital Media Research Network, which will further strengthen Canadians' information resilience by researching how quality of information, including disinformation narratives, impact Canadians' attitudes and behaviors, and by supporting strategies to enhance Canadians' digital literacy.

Related Product

- [Working together to protect democracy and defend human rights](https://www.pm.gc.ca/en/news/news-releases/2024/03/20/working-together-protect-democracy-and-defend-human-rights) (<https://www.pm.gc.ca/en/news/news-releases/2024/03/20/working-together-protect-democracy-and-defend-human-rights>)