



TACKLING VOTER SUPPRESSION, ELECTORAL  
FRAUD AND MANIPULATION

UNHRC – BATHMUN 2024

# Message from the Chairs

Dear delegate of UNHRC, welcome to the committee, and as your chairs, we are just as excited as you are! This year's theme for BathMUN "moving forward, looking back", allows us to reflect on what we have learned from the past, and think about what lessons we can apply to create a better future. Our topic "tackling voter suppression, electoral fraud and manipulation will tap directly into this theme. As you might have heard and read from many news sources, **2024 is indeed the year of elections**. As democracies around the world face significant challenges, it is essential to reflect on the history of such issues, while innovating solutions for the future. These issues are persistent threats to the legitimacy of democratic systems, and our discussions will explore how we can learn from past instances of electoral fraud to build stronger and more resilient democracies.

By choosing this topic, we hope that you can understand the importance of integrity in elections, which is the cornerstone of democracy. Today's global political landscape is increasingly influenced by technology, media, and transnational networks, making it more challenging to uphold electoral integrity. Whether it's the rise of artificial intelligence in shaping voter behaviour, or foreign interference in democratic processes, our task is to think creatively about how to safeguard future elections from manipulation. Hence, BathMUN provides us with the platform to tackle these urgent issues collaboratively, considering both policy-level interventions and grassroots approaches.

As you engage yourselves in the debate throughout the conference, remember that your role is to propose ideas that not only address the symptoms of electoral fraud but also tackle the systemic causes of suppression and manipulation. We look forward to seeing the ideas and initiatives you will bring to the table. Once again, good luck and happy researching!

With love,  
Chairs of UNHRC,  
Aether, Matthew and Megan



# Chair Introduction

**Nongrat Aether Li**



Hi everyone! I'm Aether Li (they/them), a 3rd year student of Politics and International Relations from SOAS, University of London. I thoroughly enjoyed being at BathMUN last year, so I figured I should come back again, chairing the exact same committee!

As someone from a country with many coups (guess which one 😊), the topic of elections and democracy are near and dear to my heart and hold great significance in terms of my academic interests. I think there is no better time to do this topic than right now, considering [so many important elections have taken place or will take place this year](#). I hope that this topic will be fun and engaging to you, and I am looking forward to seeing you in November!

**Megan Kong**



# Chair Introduction

Hi there, it's Megan (she/her)! I'm a final year Politics and IR student at UCL. I'm more than excited to be one of your chairs for UNHRC here in BathMUN, and I can't wait to see what you can come up with during the conference. My MUN journey began way back in 2017, when I was 14, and I never fell out of love with it. I currently serve as the Acads Vice President for UCLUNA, and you will definitely see me around UK's MUN conferences, or maybe some in continental Europe as well.

Over the past decade, we have seen increasing allegations of electoral fraud and voter suppression across both established and emerging democracies. Electoral integrity is closely linked to fundamental human rights, such as voting and participating in governance. Voter suppression, fraud, and manipulation are not just political issues, since they directly impact human rights. I truly hope that with 2024 being a year full of elections, this topic will provide you with a lot of opportunities to assess and strengthen the mechanisms of protecting voters' rights. Can't wait to see you all!

## Matthew Davies



Hey everyone! I'm Matthew (he/him), one of your chairs for the UNHRC committee at BathMUN 2024. I'm so excited to be working with Aether and Megan to bring you the best committee at the conference. I've been doing MUN since January 2023, where I've had the chance to delegate and chair conferences across the UK and Germany. I've also taken up the role of vice-president at my MUN society in Exeter, arranging gala's and managing society welfare.

With this year being one of the busiest for elections across the world, the idea of voter suppression and electoral manipulation becoming a threat to democracy has never been so evident. I can't wait to see all the amazing ideas, speeches, and resolutions you guys bring forward to this committee and hope this becomes a conference to remember!



# Introduction to the Committee

## The History and Mandate of UNHRC

The United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) – not to be confused with the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) – is a subsidiary body of the UN General Assembly and closely works with the High Commissioner for Human Rights. In other words, it is one of the three organs dedicated to human rights according to the UN Charter.

The Council was established on the 15th of March 2006 with the resolution 60/251 of the General Assembly, to replace the UN Commission on Human Rights with the approval of 170 votes, only 4 were against (United States, Marshall Islands, Palau and Israel) and 3 abstained.

One of the Council's main objectives is the investigation of allegations of breaches of human rights in Member States on issues such as freedom of association, expression, belief and religion, and also minorities' protection.

The UNHRC is made up of 47 Member States that are elected with a secret ballot of the General Assembly. As in other UN bodies, the principle of equal geographical representation is applied: in this case, 13 states are African, 13 Asiatic, 8 South American, 6 East European, 7 West European and others. Members serve in the UNHRC for 3 years and can only serve two terms in a row. Elections for UNHRC membership take place every year, with one-third of the committee being renewed each year [1]. The criteria for eligibility to be a member of the UNHRC in the establishing resolution is that "...members elected to the Council shall uphold the highest standards in the promotion and protection of human rights". In the case where a member of the UNHRC has committed "gross and systematic violations of human rights" [2], the General Assembly is able to vote to suspend their membership.

The mandate of the Council is to oversee that all member states respect human rights and to report on the state of these. In case of allegations of violation, the Council can call for a "special procedure" that can be requested by a Member State or an organisation. If a "special procedure" is approved (by majority) a group of experts led by a representative of the Council will visit the area of the violation and will verify that human rights are respected. After the production of this report, the Council will then vote on this allegation and decide if it is a violation or not. In case of a true allegation, the Council can produce a resolution that imposes the reinstatement of human rights that were violated. It is vital to note that resolutions are non-binding and the Council cannot impose an embargo for the violation of these rights.

# Topic Introduction

## What is Electoral Manipulation?

Electoral manipulation is the attempt by either a group or individual to change or influence the outcome of an election. Often this can be achieved either through electoral fraud, illegally changing, omitting, adding votes to an election, or through voter suppression. Voter suppression can be defined as manipulating an election's results by directly or indirectly restricting voters and their right to vote. There are several methods used across the world to suppress voters, with some more overt and legal than others.

## Disenfranchisement

One of the greatest examples of voter suppression is the disenfranchisement of voting rights. This is where potential groups of voters are restricted from their right to vote by law. This is typically directed towards younger citizens, those with criminal records, and resident foreign nationals; however historically and in more extreme countries it has been targeted to groups based on sex, race, or religious beliefs.

## Ballot Design

With the growing rise of technology used in ballot designs, whether intentionally or unintentionally, the design often restricts voters from voting for their chosen candidate or attending the election. Often more simple areas of the ballot design can restrict voters, such as having too many candidates.

## Gerrymandering

Gerrymandering is the process of redrawing electoral boundary lines to ensure an area of a country's political vote favours a particular group over another. Redrawing boundary lines is essential in protecting democracy in many nations, ensuring fairness as population numbers and communities move and change over time. However, it can become problematic when political parties do this for their benefit to manufacture their favoured election outcomes [3]. As a result, it can be difficult to prohibit this behaviour.

## Impact of Electoral Manipulation



# Topic Introduction

## Impact of Electoral Manipulation

Electoral manipulation is a direct violation of human rights, affecting 'genuine elections which shall be by universal and equal suffrage' as established in Article 21 of the UNDR [4]. Disrupting the electoral process of any nation restricts the democratic rights of the people, resulting in unjust, discriminatory candidates entering governments and further impeding on the human rights of its population.

Restricting these human rights can lead to public outrage and resistance. Nations across the world have suffered from public rioting and turmoil as a direct result of believed electoral manipulation attempts. Notable examples include the riots in Bangladesh through July 2024, resulting in their then Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina resigning and fleeing the country [5] or the violent January 6th riots against the Capitol of the United States, caused by supporters of Former President Trump who fought in an attempt to prevent a legitimate president-elect from assuming office, fighting on the belief of electoral manipulation taking place. Whilst this attempt has been widely considered to be an insurrection or a coup [6], it nevertheless emphasises the lengths a population will take when their right to genuine and fair elections is neglected.

# Case studies and past attempts to solve the issue

## 2024 Venezuelan presidential election: Maduro's disputed victory

### CONTEXT

Leading up to the controversial election of Maduro on 28th July 2024, Venezuela was already in somewhat of a political turmoil. In 2017, Nicolás Maduro, who was elected as President of Venezuela in 2013 in a contentious election, announced the establishment of a constituent assembly [7]. This was a controversial move – opposition activists criticised how Maduro failed to hold a referendum to consult Venezuelan citizens prior to establishing the constituent assembly, and how they see that it is “a way for President Maduro to maximise his power and cling onto it longer” [7], since the National Assembly – the Venezuelan government's legislative body – was led by his opposition [7]. Furthermore, when elections of Constituent Assembly members were held, it was reported by local human rights groups that some Venezuelans were told “they would lose their jobs or access to food bags with items subject to government-controlled prices if they didn't vote” [8]. While not as major as a presidential election, this election is still of great importance and should be held up to the same democratic standard. Unfortunately, if these claims are true, it can be considered a serious case of electoral manipulation. Moreover, it is reported that the constituent assembly, as well as the people elected to serve in it, are “staunch government supporters” – the assembly supported Maduro's actions following US sanctions, established a truth commission to investigate violence in anti-government protests, and voted to put opposition leaders on trial for treason [7]. **One could consider this an instance of voter suppression, since opposition voices speaking out against Maduro are being restricted and persecuted.** In practice, the existence of the Constituent Assembly meant Maduro could bypass the National Assembly, and there are now essentially two legislative bodies.



# Case studies and past attempts to solve the issue

The following year in 2018 saw Venezuela – and the world at large – divided on who was recognised as the legitimate winner of the presidential election. Although Maduro was once again declared the winner, his victory was heavily disputed. Opposition parties claim that the election was not free and fair and illegitimate. Firstly, the turnout for this election was the lowest in Venezuelan history at 46%. Furthermore, opposition critics argued that the Constituency Assembly, which was already unconstitutional in their perspective, decided to call this election early with less than six months' notice, which directly violates the constitution once again [9]. They say the poll "had been brought forward from December 2018 to take advantage of disarray within opposition ranks" [10] that many prominent candidates from the opposition had been banned from running in the election, jailed, or fled the country. Upon this basis, the opposition coalition called for a boycott. There was also distrust in the Venezuelan National Electoral Council (CNE), with critics claiming that rather than being an independent body, the majority of members in the CNE were biased towards the incumbent government [10]. This shows the link between electoral manipulation/ electoral fraud and the backsliding of democracy in terms of a smooth transition of power – beyond one-time actions of fraud such as bribing voters, electoral manipulation can come in more structural forms which can have long-lasting effects on the state of democracy in that country as a whole.

Fast forwarding to 2021, the Unitary Democratic Platform ('PUD'), an opposition political alliance against Maduro's government, was formed. In 2023, the government and the PUD signed the Partial Agreement on the Promotion of Political Rights and Electoral Guarantees for All in Barbados (the 'Barbados Agreement'), which aimed to ensure competitive elections in Venezuela [11]. In October 2023, the PUD held primary elections to choose a single candidate for the presidential election. María Corina Machado won the election with 92% of the votes, but the Supreme Court suspended the results of the election since Machado had been previously disqualified from holding public office for 15 years [12].

## FACTS OF THE MATTER

The following year in March, the National Electoral Council published the finalised list of all presidential candidates for the July 2024 presidential election. The PUD faced difficulties registering its presidential candidate. This prompted countries like Brazil and the United States to express their concern about the election [13]. Prior to the election, the United Nations' Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela "investigated 42 cases of arbitrary detention and recorded numerous acts of harassment, reprisals, and attacks targeting opposition campaign events" [13]. In particular, the authorities "detained and sanctioned" [13] individuals who provided support for or attended events by the PUD alliance.

# Case studies and past attempts to solve the issue

The presidential election itself took place on 28 July 2024, with the National Electoral Council declaring Maduro the winner with 51% of the votes [12], [14]. There was a delay in announcing the results of the election due to “an attack on the data transmission system” according to the President of the CNE [12]. Once again, the results were disputed. It is worth noting that in announcing the results of the election, the CNE did not allow opposition-accredited observers of the election to gather and digitise the voting tallies, revealing that Maduro actually had won only 30% of the votes, while his rival Edmundo González won 67% [15]. For anyone who is interested, they can see the results that these volunteers have uploaded onto this [website here](#).

This sparked protests in Venezuela, which Maduro’s government cracked down heavily upon. In September 2024, it was reported that at least 24 people have been killed and about 2,400 people have been arrested in relation to the protests [14]. In September, the United Nations’ Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, which was established in 2019 but extended its mandate until September 2024, revealed that suppression of Maduro’s opposition has reached “unprecedented levels” [16], [17]. An arrest warrant for Edmundo Gonzalez was also issued [18]. Gonzalez has since fled the country to seek asylum in Spain [14].

## WHAT ACTIONS DID THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY TAKE?

Considering the instances of electoral manipulation and voter suppression were mainly committed by the incumbent government itself, this case study will focus on the ways that the international community tried to address the issue, starting from unilateral actions and progressing to responses by intergovernmental organisations. Beyond that, we will also talk briefly about non-state actors, primarily international non-governmental organisations (NGOs).



# Case studies and past attempts to solve the issue

Having recently lifted sanctions back in 2023 with faith in the promises of the Barbados Agreement, the United States reimposed its sanctions on the Venezuelan oil and gas sector in April 2024 after determining that despite calling for an election, the Maduro government “has fallen short” in honouring several aspects of the Barbados Agreement [19]. After the election results came out, the US government then introduced sanctions against 16 Venezuelan officials who “obstructed a competitive and inclusive presidential election process in Venezuela and violated the civil and human rights of the people” [18]. Some of these officials included those from the CNE and the Supreme Tribunal of Justice (‘TSJ’). Other countries, such as members of the European Union, also viewed that the July 2024 presidential elections did not “meet international standards of electoral integrity” [19] and extended its preexisting sanctions, specifically its embargo on arms, travel bans and asset freezes on “individuals and entities responsible for human rights violations and for undermining democracy and the rule of law in Venezuela” since 2017 [19]. Beyond the Western bloc, Panama halted its diplomatic relations with Venezuela and withdrew its diplomatic personnel when the election results were being disputed [20]. As a member of the Organisation of American States (‘OAS’), Panama joined eight other countries (Argentina, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Guatemala, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, and Uruguay) in requesting for an emergency meeting of the OAS permanent council over concerns regarding Venezuela’s election [21].

The United Nations responded to the situation in Venezuela in various ways. Firstly, the UN had already established an Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela since 2019 to “investigate gross violations of human rights”, “to help combat impunity and ensure full accountability for perpetrators and justice for victims”, “to present oral updates on its work” to the UNHRC, and “to prepare written reports on its findings” to the UNHRC [17]. The Fact-Finding Mission’s mandate was extended by the UNHRC until September 2024 [17]. During its time, the Fact-Finding Mission released three public statements following the election on 28 July, all expressing concern over the human rights violations and repression after the election results were declared. Beyond that, prior to the election, the UN Panel of Electoral Experts was also deployed to Venezuela. This Panel’s mandate was to produce internal reports on the overall conduct of the elections, which differs from that of UN electoral observation missions, which are more serious and require a mandate to be established by the Security Council or the General Assembly [22].

# Case studies and past attempts to solve the issue

## Gerrymandering and the 2024 US Presidential Elections

Oh man. What a time to write this.

### WHAT IS GERRYMANDERING?

Gerrymandering refers to the process of redrawing political maps (i.e. rather than these maps being used for physical geographic reasons, these maps are used to determine constituency boundaries for elections) for political gain, prominently in the context of US politics. In theory, redrawing constituency boundaries should make the electoral process more democratic – the process usually commences after the census is released to make sure that “ districts are equally populated, [...] and are otherwise representative of a state’s population” [3]. In John Adams’ Thoughts on Government (1776), he argues in defence of the US representative democracy system, and posits that the establishment of the “Representative Assembly” [23] should resemble “an exact portrait of people at large” . Gerrymandering is intended to do just that – if done accurately and without bias, gerrymandering allows policymakers to reflect the changes in communities over time to better represent the people. However, this is hardly the reality.

In practice, gerrymandering is often used by legislators to manipulate election results. This study guide will demonstrate this through the case study of North Carolina. Before moving on to that, we shall first take a look at how gerrymandering is done.

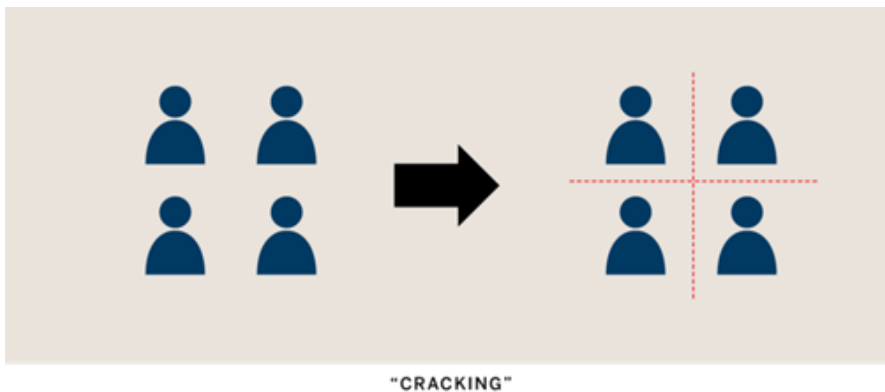
### HOW IS GERRYMANDERING DONE?

For simplicity, imagine that you are redrawing districts in a city, with a total population of 100. Half of these people are affiliated with the Red party, while the other half is affiliated with the Blue party. If you were a politician tasked to redraw the districts so that the Red party could win, how would you do so?

# Case studies and past attempts to solve the issue

## 1. Cracking

Cracking refers to the method of spreading groups of people with similar characteristics (whether that's race, party affiliation, class, etc.) out to various districts, so that their voting strength is less concentrated and could not easily elect their preferred representative, considering their votes would likely only constitute a minority [3].



## 2. Packing

Packing refers to the method of cramming and packing voters with similar characteristics into as few districts as possible. Even if their votes succeed in electing their preferred representative in their district, they would still be overwhelmed by the other districts in the city who voted for another candidate [3].



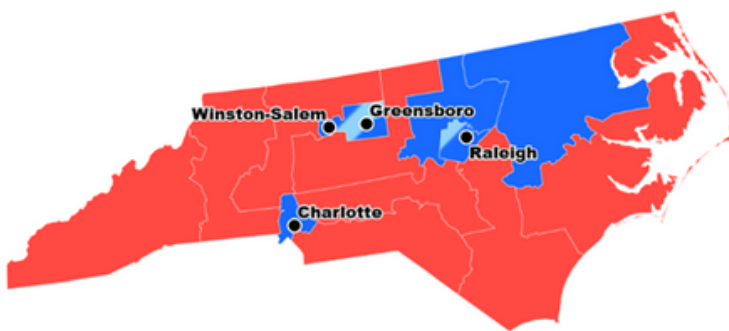
It is important to recognise that Gerrymandering is not a standalone problem that can be examined on its own; it is a practice of electoral manipulation that emerged often out of racial or class divide, which is inseparable from electoral politics where minority rights are a crucial issue of debate [24] ([Miller and Walling, 2013](#)).



# Case studies and past attempts to solve the issue

## HOW GERRYMANDERING AFFECTS ELECTIONS: THE CASE STUDY OF NORTH CAROLINA, 2020-2024

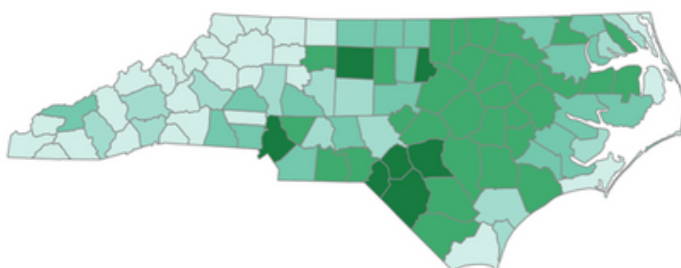
North Carolina's state legislative (house) and congressional districts are drawn by the state Legislature by ordinary statute. In 2020, North Carolina's house district maps looked like the map below. This was due to the new census. The election saw the democratic party winning in 5 districts, while the Republican party won in the other 8 districts.



[25]

In investigating why the results turned out in this manner, one could compare the results map to the census data for North Carolina from 2020. For instance, here's the Diversity Index by County in 2020 [26]. The Diversity Index is based on the works of Meyer and McIntosh (1992) and Blau (1977). The Equation takes into account the proportions of the population that each ethnicity takes up, and uses that to calculate how ethnically diverse a county or a state is. The higher the percentage, the more diverse a county or a state is. Of course, other factors, such as income or occupation, should also be considered. For now, the map is below:

Diversity Index by County: 2020  
North Carolina: 57.9%



[27]

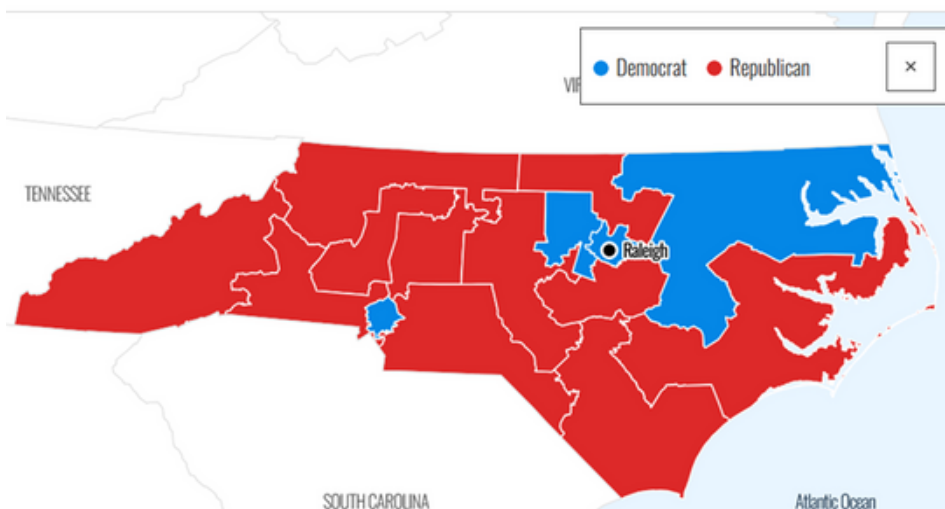
If one overlays these maps on top of each other, a correlation could be inferred, although not decisively.

# Case studies and past attempts to solve the issue

However, before the 2024 elections, the house districts were redrawn again. In October 2023, the North Carolina General Assembly passed redistricted maps for the state House, state Senate, and the US Congress. These three maps “passed the legislature along party lines, with all Republicans voting in favour and all Democrats voting against” [28]. If unchallenged, this map will be used from now until 2030 until the next decade’s census is complete [28].

The map illustrating the redistricting, as well as the results from the 2024 election, is below. Republicans won 10 house seats, while democrats won 4:

## House District Results



Of course, there are multiple factors that may have resulted in these election results. However, it is quite reasonable to believe that through cracking and packing the democratic voter base in North Carolina, Republicans were able to increase their odds.

## IS GERRYMANDERING A UNIQUE POLITICAL PHENOMENON THAT OCCURS ONLY IN THE US?

Gerrymandering is not a new occurrence, nor is it a unique phenomenon to the United States. Cases of gerrymandering can also be found in:

- Kenya ([this source](#))
- Canada – [Saskatchewan](#) and [Quebec](#)
- Hungary – [particularly Viktor Orban’s win in 2022](#)

# Points of Discussion

- **Impact on Vulnerable Populations**

Voter suppression tactics often disproportionately affect vulnerable populations such as minorities, the elderly, and low-income individuals. Certain forms of barriers can make it harder for them to register and vote, leading to lower turnout and diminished representation, especially among those with mobility issues or who live in remote areas.

Vulnerable populations can also face fraud schemes, such as being coerced into voting for specific candidates or having their ballots manipulated by others [29]. They could be targeted for fraudulent activities more frequently due to their economic vulnerability. Disinformation campaigns and media manipulation also target minority communities with false information about voting procedures, election dates, or candidates [30]. This can lead to confusion and discourage them from voting, affecting their participation in the electoral process. Therefore, Addressing these issues requires targeted interventions and policies that address the specific needs and vulnerabilities of these groups, ensuring that all eligible voters have equal access to the electoral process and are protected from fraud and manipulation.

- **International Standards and Cooperation**

When it comes to establishing legal frameworks, it is crucial to consider the collaboration between countries, and how countries can share best practices to improve existing measures. Solutions such as information sharing and joint electoral observation missions are essential for establishing international standards for electoral integrity, and such collaboration helps to create more resilient electoral systems that are better equipped to resist manipulation [31].

Moreover, voter suppression, electoral fraud, and manipulation often have cross-border dimensions, especially with the rise of digital interference and disinformation campaigns. Foreign entities may attempt to influence elections [32]. Therefore, collaborative efforts between countries can enhance cybersecurity, improve media literacy, and create international protocols to guard against external interference.

By working together, countries can push for the development of international legal frameworks that set out clear rules for preventing voter suppression, electoral fraud, and manipulation. These frameworks can help hold actors accountable, establish clear consequences for electoral interference, and set benchmarks for the protection of voting rights.



# Points of Discussion

- **Media and Political Influence**

Media bias and political influence can distort public opinion and election results in several significant ways. For example, media outlets that are biased may focus heavily on certain candidates or parties while downplaying or ignoring others [33]. This creates an imbalance in the information available to the public. The way the media frames political issues can also shape how the public perceives them. Biased outlets might frame economic, social, or foreign policy issues to favour a particular political agenda. Moreover, in certain countries, candidates may be portrayed in an overly negative or positive light by biased media outlets, resulting in distortion of perceptions of the voters [34].

In some cases, biased media may suppress or fail to report critical information that could negatively impact their preferred candidates or parties. By withholding information about scandals, controversies, or unpopular policies, they prevent voters from having a complete understanding of the candidates' positions or track records. Biased media outlets may further amplify disinformation or misleading content, which can misinform the public about key issues or candidates [35]. When repeated frequently, false information can become accepted as truth, shaping public opinion in ways that distort the electoral process. This undermines democratic processes, as voters may not have access to accurate, balanced, or comprehensive information when making their electoral choices.

# Points of Discussion

- **Balancing the Sovereignty of Governments and the UN's Involvement**

Balancing the sovereignty of governments with the United Nations' involvement is essential when addressing sensitive issues like voter suppression, electoral fraud, and manipulation. Governments have the primary responsibility for conducting fair and transparent elections, but when these processes are undermined, international bodies like the UN often step in to offer assistance, technical support, or even mediation.

Governments have the primary responsibility for conducting fair and transparent elections, but when these processes are undermined, international bodies like the UN often step in to offer assistance, technical support, or even mediation. One approach is for the UN to provide election-monitoring missions that respect the host country's sovereignty by working as advisors or observers rather than enforcers. For instance, the UN deployed electoral observers in Kenya's 2017 presidential elections following claims of irregularities, supporting a fair process without directly intervening in Kenya's electoral administration [36].

Additionally, by collaborating with national and regional election bodies, the UN can help build local capacity for fair elections and reinforce transparency, which allows governments to lead the reforms themselves. Effective coordination between the UN and national governments is key to achieving a balance between sovereignty and necessary intervention. It is important to prioritise cooperation with governments that request assistance, working with local institutions to strengthen their practices rather than directing them. By maintaining a respectful partnership, positive electoral practices can be encouraged and this can help combat suppression and fraud in a way that respects each state's autonomy while promoting the democratic values.

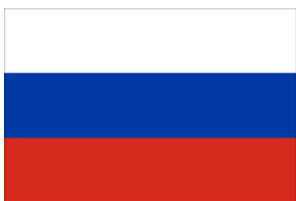
# Key Stakeholders



Having gone through one of the most notable election disputes in recent times, with Nicolás Maduro's continuous victory's being described as an "insult to democracy" [37]. Despite this, the Supreme Tribunal of Justice (TSJ) in Venezuela declared Maduro's victory genuine, concluding that the result material was assessed "unobjectionably" with the results "validated" [38]. Venezuela would be aiming to defend their own elections within this debate, promoting its own democratic system across the global community.



The US has, throughout history, promoted democracy. From its constitution to the two-term precedent set by Washington the US has valued freedom and fairness within its elections. However, whilst the US has promoted its electoral system as "honest, fair and... transparent" [39], misinformation grew to become a prevalent issue for the nation throughout its electoral processes [40], resulting in an indirect impact in electoral manipulation. The United States will be prioritised in upholding electoral integrity across the global community, aiming to lead by example.



Russian president Vladimir recently won his election in a landslide victory, receiving over 90% of the vote. However, this has been shrouded in controversy and suspicion of electoral manipulation, being declared that "the campaign took place in a situation where the fundamental articles of the Russian Constitution, guaranteeing political rights and freedoms, were essentially not in effect" [41]. Furthermore, along with other nations have been accused of interference with the electoral processes of other nations, creating misinformation and "undermining public confidence" [41]. Russia will aim to defend its global priority, promoting democracy within the federation and the fairness of its elections.



# Key Stakeholders



Sweden has become renowned for its global election integrity, being declared a nation which holds “contests which most empowers their citizens” within the global integrity report [42]. These elections are regulated by the Swedish Election Authority, a government appointed committee where members are appointed for a period of time and are not political appointments [43]. Sweden will likely aim to lead by example, prioritising free and fair elections across the world and promoting genuine multiparty systems.



China's position on tackling voter suppression, electoral fraud, and manipulation is complex, particularly in the context of Hong Kong's recent history. Following the mass pro-democracy protests, Beijing imposed the National Security Law in 2020, which significantly restricted electoral freedoms [44]. While Beijing justifies these measures as necessary for maintaining order and sovereignty, critics argue that they undermine democratic principles and disenfranchise pro-democracy voices in Hong Kong.

By reducing the proportion of directly elected representatives and tightening control over candidate eligibility, China has effectively limited electoral pluralism, demonstrating its reluctance to allow full democratic participation where it sees potential threats to its authority. Moreover, China has reportedly engaged in influencing the 2024 U.S. elections by using disinformation campaigns aimed at amplifying social divisions and undermining trust in democratic institutions [45].



Iran's approach to tackling voter suppression and electoral integrity is complex and largely shaped by internal politics. The recent elections highlighted significant voter dissatisfaction, evidenced by a record-low turnout of only 39.9%, which reflects widespread disillusionment even among regime loyalists [46]. Despite efforts to present elections as democratic, many Iranians perceive the system as manipulated to favour hardline candidates, limiting genuine political reform. Calls for greater transparency and inclusivity in the electoral process remain largely unaddressed, showcasing the tension between maintaining regime control and addressing public discontent.

# Guiding Questions

- How much can the international community work together to prevent electoral manipulation and voter suppression without breaching state sovereignty?
  - What form of international cooperation would suit this issue best?
- How do we ensure that democratic elections protect the rights of vulnerable groups?
- How do we ensure that the electoral process is accessible to as many people in the population as possible who are eligible to vote, especially those from marginalised groups?
- After these elections, how can each state and the international community work together to ensure there are peaceful transfers of power?

# Additional Resources

## More on Gerrymandering

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KpamjJtXqFI&t=124s>

<https://abcnews.go.com/538/redistricting-play-key-role-fight-control-house-2024/story?id=114640271>



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