

December 1, 2021

Mr. Joseph R. Biden
President of the United States of America
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
NW Washington, DC 20500

Mr. President:

The Inter American Press Association (IAPA), a leading organization in the fight for press freedom and freedom of expression in the Americas, and the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA), an international intergovernmental body that promotes democracy and free and fair elections worldwide, enthusiastically applaud The Summit for Democracy, convened by your Administration for next week, with the participation of government leaders along with representatives of civil society and the private sector.

We value this initiative of your presidency as a historic opportunity to include in the discussions the fundamental importance of these freedoms for the democratic development of peoples, many of whom are under siege by anti-democratic regimes and the totalitarian forces that support them. As you have rightly said, the renewal of the values of democracy will be decisive in facing the unprecedented challenges that threaten our hemisphere.

The freedoms of speech and the press, well reflected in the First Amendment and almost all the constitutions of the American countries, also constitute the spirit of two relevant IAPA documents: the Declaration of Salta of Principles on Freedom of Expression in the Digital Era, signed in 2018, and the 1994

Declaration of Chapultepec, endorsed by more than 60 presidents and heads of state, among them President Bill Clinton, as well as many political leaders, human rights defenders and representatives of civil society.


In its preamble, the Declaration of Chapultepec proclaims the conviction "that our principles and goals must be freedom and democracy" and that we support its "most forthright and robust manifestation: freedom of expression and the press."

During the 2015 VII Summit of the Americas in Panama and the 2018 VIII Summit in Peru, the IAPA warned the leaders about the deterioration of freedom of expression and press freedom to the detriment of the Inter-American Democratic Charter. The IAPA also warned about the danger of keeping silent in the face of attacks and abuses.

With great regret, we see that the subjugation of these freedoms persists in several nations of the continent and is often the first step to advance against democratic institutions and other essential human rights.

We at the Inter American Press Association and International IDEA interpret The Summit for Democracy, Mr. President, as a manifestation of your leadership and as a clear sign of hope that allows us to trust in a more promising future for the democratic life of the peoples.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jorge Canahuati', with a long horizontal flourish underneath.

Jorge Canahuati
President
Inter American Press Association

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kevin Casas Zamora', with a large, sweeping loop at the top and a long tail.

Kevin Casas Zamora
Secretary General
International IDEA