



THE CENTRE FOR THE STUDY OF  
INTERNATIONAL PEACE AND SECURITY

**CALL FOR PAPERS**

**Democracy and the Rule of Law: Relationships, Challenges, and Conflicts**

Sat 18<sup>th</sup> November, 2017

Venue: The University of Westminster, London

*Which came first, the chicken or the egg?*

This eternal question is one which aptly sums up questions over the relationship between democracy and the rule of law.

On the one hand, democracy is an essential prerequisite to the rule of law; the power to determine as a people the leadership and governance of a nation is fundamental to the effective existence of a system of laws applicable to every citizen – the proverbial ‘claw setting’ that holds in place the rule of law ‘jewel’.

On the other, the rule of law is necessary for democracy; a robust system of checks and balances that curbs the excesses of government and potential encroachments into the lives of citizens, that guarantees equality and supremacy of the law from a fair trial to the enjoyment of core freedoms, is the foundation upon which one constructs a system of good governance.

In Asia, the Americas, Europe, Africa, and the Arab world there are examples to support the assertion that the rule of law, civil and political rights, and democracy are being undermined and that the decline of one facilitates erosion of the other. In Poland, for example, the separation of powers is jeopardised by new powers of the executive branch over judicial appointments; in Egypt, corruption within the judiciary and legislature allows for executive branch restrictions of political freedoms, stifling opposition voices and non-governmental groups; under the Trump administration in the United States, executive orders are only held in check by robust constitutional protections that are upheld without – and despite attempts towards – undue political prejudice; and in Turkey, consolidation of power by the presidency has resulted in severe curtailment of legal equality through crackdowns on media, academia, the judiciary, and so-called political opponents, paving the way for unchallenged leadership in the absence of accountability.

In these and other states, history appears to be repeating itself.

The difficulty of fully understanding the nexus between democracy and the rule of law is compounded by the fact that the content and scope of what the rule of law means remains tightly linked to each country’s domestic traditions and systems. While safeguarding common principles is essential and restrictions must be placed on all individuals and administrations that exercise discretion, domestic particularities occur when we annex the rule of law to democratic rights. So, what are the universally common characteristics of these two principles, and what type of institution should ascertain whether or not a state satisfies them?



## THE CENTRE FOR THE STUDY OF INTERNATIONAL PEACE AND SECURITY

This conference will explore the complex relationship between democracy and the rule of law. Furthermore, it will examine when it is justifiable to claim that the rule of law and democracies are threatened in countries.

*Indicative themes that fall within the scope of this conference include:*

- What is the relationship between democracy and the rule of law? Can the one exist without the other? Is their relationship marked by antagonism? Or collaboration?
- What is the role of international institutions in promoting and safeguarding the rule of law and/or democracy? How successful, for example, have UN declarations and resolutions been in practice?
- Against the backdrop of a renewed populist rise in some states, what role can the rule of law play in protecting against slips towards authoritarianism?
- Are constitutional limits on power a main characteristic of democracy? Do they necessitate obedience to the rule of law?
- The History and Future of Europe: is history repeating itself? Are nations drawing circles?
- When is the rule of law and democracy threatened?
- Is the EU protecting the rule of law and democracy in Europe and how can it do more?
- Has the collapse of communism signalled the ultimate victory of democracy and the rule of law over dictatorship?
- To what extent has democratisation impacted on nationalist movements?
- The democratic peace narrative remains contested; is there a connection between nationalism and democracy?
- Do democratising states habitually conduct aggressive foreign policies?
- The principle of sovereignty and the challenges that come with it in relation to the rule of law and democracy.
- Democracy and its innate problems.

Proposals should be sent to [admin@csips.org](mailto:admin@csips.org) by **7<sup>th</sup> August** and should include:

- The title of the proposed paper
- Abstract (maximum 500 words)
- Author(s) biographical information (short CV)
- Lead author's contact information.