

Dictatorships advancing globally

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Seventy percent of the world's population now live in dictatorships, according to this year's report on democracy from the Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem) Institute at the University of Gothenburg.

"On the same day that we concluded this year's [democracy](#) report, President Putin of Russia ordered a full-scale invasion of Ukraine. This war is being waged by the same man who, 20 years ago, triggered the third wave of autocratization in the world," says Staffan I. Lindberg, Director of the V-Dem Institute.

The invasion of Ukraine confirms what the V-Dem Institute has been warning of for years—that democratic decline, termed autocratization, leads, among other things, to more wars. Trends are showing that autocratic leaders have become increasingly emboldened and do not care what others think.

The report that has just been released shows gloomy figures for the state of democracy in the world. For the average world citizen in 2021, the level of democracy is back at 1989 levels, which means that the last 30 years of democratic progress are now a thing of the past.

"The figures were the highest in 2012, when there were 42 [liberal democracies](#) in the world. In other words, democracies that include things that go beyond government by the people itself: a state governed by the rule of law and fundamental human rights. In 2021, that figure is down to 34 liberal democracies. This means that only 13% of the world's population live in a democracy as we define it in Sweden, for example.

Autocratization means that democracies are dismantled, and this is largely done by elected leaders who tear down [democratic institutions](#): the media, [civil society](#), independent organizations and the judiciary. The report also describes how autocratization appears to be changing its shape via increased levels of polarization, disinformation and coup d'état.

The greatest democratic decline over the past year has occurred in the Pacific region, Eastern Europe, Central Asia, Latin America and the

Caribbean.

"Our measurements show that closed autocracies have increased from 25 to 30 countries globally. Dictatorships are on the rise around the world. Today, 5.4 billion people, 70%, live in dictatorships.

When V-Dem classed Hungary as a non-democracy in its 2020 democracy report, the EU got its first dictatorship. The latest [report](#) shows that the trend is continuing in the EU, where 20 percent of Member States have been autocratized over the last decade.

More information: Autocratization Changing Nature? v-dem.net/media/publications/dr_2022.pdf

Provided by University of Gothenburg

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