

Human Rights Protection and Democratic Governance: An International Legal Perspective

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ABSTRACT

Human rights protection is a fundamental element of democratic governance because it supports political participation, accountability, equality, legal protection, and institutional legitimacy. This study examines the role of international human rights law in strengthening democratic governance and analyzes the contribution of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) as international legal frameworks for protecting fundamental rights and democratic values. The study employs a normative juridical method using a statutory, conceptual, and analytical approach. The legal analysis focuses on relevant international human rights instruments and examines their normative relationship with political participation, accountability, equality before the law, and democratic governance. The findings demonstrate that the UDHR provides a fundamental normative foundation for human dignity, equality, freedom, and democratic participation, while the ICCPR establishes legally binding protections for civil and political rights that are essential to democratic governance. However, digital rights, artificial intelligence, surveillance, misinformation, and democratic backsliding present emerging challenges. The study concludes that effective implementation of international human rights norms remains essential for strengthening democratic legitimacy, protecting political rights, limiting arbitrary governmental power, and sustaining resilient democratic governance.

Keywords: *Democratic Governance, Human Rights, ICCPR, Political Rights, UDHR.*

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1. | INTRODUCTION

Human rights and democratic governance are closely interconnected concepts that serve as fundamental pillars of modern political and legal systems. Democratic governance relies upon the protection of individual freedoms, equality before the law, political participation, and institutional accountability, while human rights provide the normative framework that safeguards these principles. The relationship between democracy and human rights has become increasingly significant within international law because democratic governance is often evaluated according to its ability to protect and promote fundamental rights and freedoms. Consequently, the protection of human rights is widely regarded as an essential condition for democratic legitimacy and sustainable governance.

The contemporary international human rights system emerged from the recognition that human dignity, freedom, and equality should be protected universally regardless of political, social, or cultural differences. Following the Second World War, the international community sought to establish legal and normative standards capable of preventing human rights abuses and strengthening democratic values. These efforts resulted in the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) in 1948, which established a comprehensive framework of civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights. The UDHR subsequently became the foundation of modern international human rights law and influenced constitutional systems, democratic institutions, and governance frameworks worldwide.

The development of international human rights law has significantly influenced democratic governance by establishing standards concerning equality, participation, accountability, and legal protection. Vodiannikov (2020) argues that the UDHR and constitutional democracy share common historical foundations because both emphasize human dignity, individual rights, and limitations on governmental power. Similarly, Nowak (2021) explains that international human rights law functions as a normative framework that guides state behavior and promotes the protection of fundamental freedoms. These developments demonstrate that democratic governance and human rights protection have evolved as mutually reinforcing principles within contemporary international law.

Among international human rights instruments, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) occupies a particularly important position. Adopted in 1966 and entering into force in 1976, the ICCPR transformed many principles contained within the UDHR into legally binding obligations for state parties. The covenant protects a wide range of civil and political rights, including freedom of expression, freedom of assembly, freedom of association, political participation, equality before the law, and due process protections. These rights constitute essential elements of democratic governance because they enable citizens to participate in public affairs and hold public institutions accountable. Consequently, the ICCPR has become one of the most influential international legal frameworks supporting democratic governance.

The relationship between human rights and democratic governance has attracted increasing scholarly attention, particularly in response to contemporary challenges affecting democratic institutions. Around the world, democratic systems continue to face pressures associated with political polarization, authoritarian tendencies, restrictions on civil liberties, and declining public trust in institutions. Regilme Jr. (2021) argues that contemporary democracies increasingly operate within contested political environments characterized by tensions between democratic norms and illiberal political practices. Likewise, Kangdim et al. (2022) emphasize that weaknesses in human rights protection often contribute to governance challenges and democratic instability. These findings suggest that the protection of human rights remains essential for maintaining democratic resilience and institutional legitimacy.

Political rights constitute one of the most important areas connecting human rights and democratic governance. Democratic systems depend upon meaningful citizen participation in public affairs, including the ability to vote, engage in civic activities, express political opinions, and influence governmental decision-making. The ICCPR explicitly recognizes these rights and requires states to ensure opportunities for political participation without discrimination. Halder and Campbell-Phillips (2020) argue that political participation represents a fundamental component of democratic governance because it enables citizens to influence public policies and governance outcomes. Similarly, Boulianne (2020) demonstrates that evolving forms of civic engagement continue to shape democratic participation in contemporary societies. These findings indicate that political rights are central to both democratic governance and human rights protection.

Another important dimension of democratic governance concerns accountability and the rule of law. Human rights frameworks establish standards requiring governments to exercise authority within legal constraints and respect individual freedoms. Accountability mechanisms ensure that public institutions remain answerable for their actions and operate according to established legal principles. Democratic governance therefore depends upon institutions capable of protecting rights, enforcing legal standards, and responding to public concerns. Human rights protections contribute to these objectives by creating legal obligations that limit arbitrary exercises of power and strengthen governance legitimacy.

The role of civil society further illustrates the relationship between human rights and democratic governance. Civil society organizations, advocacy groups, professional associations, and community organizations contribute significantly to democratic accountability by monitoring governmental actions and promoting citizen engagement. Bernhard et al. (2020) argue that civil society can strengthen democratic resilience by discouraging democratic backsliding and supporting accountability mechanisms. These findings indicate that human rights protections contribute to democratic governance by enabling active and independent civil societies.

Recent developments in technology have introduced new challenges affecting human rights and democratic governance. Digital technologies have expanded opportunities for communication, participation, and information access, but they have also generated concerns regarding privacy, surveillance, misinformation, and digital rights. Human rights frameworks increasingly confront questions concerning how traditional rights protections should be applied within digital environments. The growing influence of artificial intelligence, algorithmic decision-making, and digital governance systems has further complicated these issues. Consequently, scholars and policymakers have emphasized the importance of adapting human rights protections to emerging technological contexts.

Digital rights have therefore become an increasingly important area of human rights scholarship. Meireles (2024) argues that digital rights have evolved into a significant component of contemporary governance debates because access to information and digital participation increasingly influence democratic engagement. Similarly, Stubbs (2023) emphasizes that digital participation should be understood within broader discussions concerning democratic governance and the governance of digital commons. These developments suggest that democratic governance increasingly depends upon effective protection of rights within digital environments.

Artificial intelligence presents another emerging challenge affecting human rights protection. Governments and institutions increasingly utilize AI systems in decision-making processes that may affect access to services, public benefits, security measures, and administrative outcomes. While these technologies may improve efficiency, concerns regarding transparency, fairness, discrimination, and accountability have become increasingly prominent. Bakiner (2023) argues that human rights frameworks provide important principles for evaluating AI governance and addressing technological risks. Likewise, Fjeld et al. (2020) identify accountability, fairness, and transparency as core principles within rights-based approaches to artificial intelligence. These findings indicate that human rights protections remain highly relevant within emerging technological governance environments.

Although substantial research has examined democracy, human rights, political participation, and governance accountability, many studies address these themes independently rather than through an integrated international legal perspective. Furthermore, contemporary challenges involving digital rights, artificial intelligence, democratic resilience, and governance legitimacy continue to reshape the relationship between human rights and democratic governance. Consequently, there remains a need for research that systematically examines how international human rights law contributes to democratic governance in contemporary societies.

In response to this gap, this study employs a normative juridical research approach to examine the relationship between human rights protection and democratic governance from an international legal perspective. The analysis focuses on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and the International Covenant on

Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) as the primary international legal frameworks supporting democratic values, political participation, accountability, and governance legitimacy. The study analyzes international legal instruments, legal doctrines, and relevant scholarly literature to provide a comprehensive understanding of the role of international human rights law in strengthening democratic governance. Accordingly, this study addresses two research questions: (1) How do the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) provide international legal foundations for protecting human rights and strengthening democratic governance? and (2) How does international human rights law contribute to political participation, accountability, equality, and democratic legitimacy while addressing contemporary challenges to democratic governance?

2. | RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a normative juridical method to examine the relationship between international human rights law and democratic governance, particularly concerning the protection of political participation, accountability, equality, and democratic legitimacy. The normative juridical method is appropriate because the study focuses on the analysis of legal norms, principles, and concepts contained in international human rights instruments and their relevance to the development and protection of democratic governance. The study primarily examines the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) as the main international legal instruments relevant to the protection of fundamental rights and democratic values.

The research applies a statutory approach, a conceptual approach, and an analytical approach. The statutory approach is used to examine relevant provisions and principles contained in international human rights instruments, particularly those concerning human dignity, equality, freedom of expression, freedom of association and assembly, political participation, and participation in public affairs. The conceptual approach is applied to analyze the legal concepts of human rights protection, democratic governance, political participation, accountability, equality, and democratic legitimacy. Meanwhile, the analytical approach is used to assess the relationship between international human rights norms and the implementation of democratic governance in contemporary societies.

The legal materials consist of primary, secondary, and tertiary legal materials. Primary legal materials include the UDHR and the ICCPR as the principal sources of international human rights norms. Secondary legal materials include scholarly books, academic journal articles, legal commentaries, and relevant research discussing international human rights law and democratic governance. Tertiary legal materials consist of legal dictionaries, encyclopedias, and other supporting references.

The collected legal materials are analyzed qualitatively through legal interpretation and systematic examination of relevant legal norms and concepts. The analysis is directed toward identifying the normative foundations provided by the UDHR and

ICCPR and examining how international human rights law contributes to political participation, accountability, equality, and democratic legitimacy. The analysis also considers contemporary challenges, including digital rights, artificial intelligence, surveillance, misinformation, and democratic backsliding, to assess the continuing relevance of international human rights law in strengthening resilient democratic governance.

3. | RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

International Legal Foundations of the UDHR and ICCPR for Human Rights Protection and Democratic Governance

The normative juridical analysis demonstrates that the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) constitute two fundamental pillars of the international human rights framework that contribute to the protection of human rights and the strengthening of democratic governance. Although the two instruments have different legal characteristics, they establish complementary foundations for protecting human dignity, individual freedoms, equality, political participation, and limitations on governmental authority. Their normative significance demonstrates that democratic governance cannot be separated from the protection of human rights because the legitimacy of public power depends upon its compliance with fundamental rights and legal standards.

The UDHR occupies a foundational position in the development of modern international human rights law. Adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1948, the declaration emerged from the international community's effort to establish universal standards for the protection of human dignity and fundamental freedoms. Although the UDHR does not constitute a legally binding treaty in itself, its principles have exercised substantial influence on constitutional systems, international agreements, and national legal frameworks. Its normative significance lies in its articulation of universal principles that establish the basic standards by which the treatment of individuals and the exercise of governmental authority can be evaluated. Vodiannikov (2020) argues that the UDHR and post-war constitutional democracy share common historical foundations because both emphasize human dignity, individual liberty, and limitations on governmental authority. This relationship demonstrates that the protection of human rights and democratic governance developed through closely connected normative principles.

The importance of the UDHR for democratic governance can first be identified through its recognition of human dignity and equality. Human dignity establishes the premise that individuals possess inherent value and therefore cannot be treated merely as instruments of state power. From a normative juridical perspective, this principle places limits on the exercise of governmental authority and requires public institutions to recognize individuals as rights-bearing subjects. Rahman (2020) explains that the UDHR functions as a normative foundation for contemporary international human

rights frameworks. Accordingly, the declaration provides a fundamental conceptual basis for understanding democratic governance as a system in which governmental authority must operate within a framework that respects individual rights and freedoms.

The principle of equality further strengthens the connection between the UDHR and democratic governance. Democratic governance requires political institutions to provide equal opportunities for citizens to participate in public affairs and to receive equal protection under the law. The UDHR establishes the principle that all individuals possess equal rights and dignity and should be protected against discrimination. This principle is essential because political participation cannot be considered genuinely democratic when particular groups are systematically excluded or treated unequally. Equality therefore functions simultaneously as a human rights principle and a foundational democratic requirement. Through this normative foundation, the UDHR supports an inclusive conception of democracy in which political institutions are expected to recognize the equal status of individuals.

The UDHR also provides an important normative foundation for participatory governance through the recognition of freedoms of expression, assembly, association, and participation in public affairs. These rights create the conditions necessary for citizens to express political preferences, organize collectively, exchange information, and participate in public decision-making. From a legal perspective, these freedoms limit the possibility of arbitrary restrictions on civic and political activity. Democratic governance requires citizens to have sufficient space to communicate their views and organize their interests. Consequently, the protection of these freedoms under the UDHR establishes an essential normative relationship between individual rights and collective democratic participation.

The ICCPR subsequently strengthened this international legal framework by transforming many principles reflected in the UDHR into legally binding obligations for states that become parties to the covenant. This distinction is particularly important from a normative juridical perspective. While the UDHR provides a universal normative foundation, the ICCPR establishes treaty-based legal obligations concerning civil and political rights. The covenant therefore strengthens the legal dimension of human rights protection by requiring states parties to respect and protect rights that are directly connected to democratic governance.

The ICCPR provides comprehensive protection for civil and political rights, including freedom of opinion, freedom of expression, freedom of assembly, freedom of association, voting rights, and participation in public affairs. Butt (2024) argues that the ICCPR represents one of the strongest international legal frameworks for protecting political rights, civic participation, and democratic freedoms. These provisions demonstrate that democratic participation is not merely a political aspiration but is closely connected to internationally recognized human rights obligations. The legal protection of political rights creates a framework within which citizens can participate

in elections, express political opinions, organize collectively, and contribute to public affairs.

The ICCPR's contribution to democratic governance is also evident in its relationship with governmental accountability. Democratic governance requires public authorities to exercise power within legal boundaries and remain answerable for their decisions. By establishing obligations concerning civil and political rights, the ICCPR provides standards against which governmental conduct can be assessed. Restrictions on fundamental freedoms cannot simply be justified by governmental preference; they must be evaluated within the framework of applicable legal standards and human rights obligations. In this sense, international human rights law contributes to the limitation of arbitrary governmental power and strengthens the rule of law.

The relationship between the UDHR and ICCPR can therefore be understood as complementary. The UDHR establishes the universal normative vision of human dignity, equality, liberty, and participation, while the ICCPR provides a more concrete treaty-based legal framework for protecting civil and political rights. Together, they establish a normative and legal structure that supports democratic governance. The UDHR provides the foundational principles, whereas the ICCPR reinforces those principles through legally binding commitments for states parties. This complementary relationship strengthens the capacity of international human rights law to influence domestic legal systems and governance practices.

The normative significance of these instruments becomes particularly important in situations where democratic institutions face pressures from authoritarian tendencies, restrictions on civil liberties, or declining institutional accountability. Regilme Jr. (2021) argues that contemporary democracies increasingly face pressures from illiberal political movements and authoritarian tendencies. In such circumstances, human rights frameworks provide standards that can be used to evaluate whether governmental actions remain consistent with democratic and legal principles. The protection of freedom of expression, association, assembly, and political participation becomes essential for preventing the concentration of power and maintaining meaningful citizen involvement in governance.

The analysis further demonstrates that international human rights law contributes to democratic legitimacy. Legitimacy is not derived solely from the existence of elections but also from the manner in which public authority is exercised. A democratic government must respect fundamental freedoms, ensure equality before the law, and provide opportunities for citizens to participate meaningfully in public affairs. Nowak (2021) argues that international human rights law provides a normative framework supporting democratic institutions and governance legitimacy. These perspectives reinforce the conclusion that human rights protection is an essential condition of legitimate democratic governance.

Therefore, the answer to the first research question is that the UDHR and ICCPR provide complementary international legal foundations for human rights protection and

democratic governance. The UDHR establishes universal normative principles based on dignity, equality, liberty, and participation, while the ICCPR strengthens these principles through binding treaty obligations concerning civil and political rights. Their combined normative significance limits arbitrary governmental authority, protects individual freedoms, promotes equality, facilitates political participation, and establishes standards of accountability. Consequently, democratic governance is strengthened when states implement these international human rights standards through effective legal and institutional mechanisms. The continuing relevance of the UDHR and ICCPR demonstrates that the protection of human rights is not separate from democratic governance but constitutes one of its fundamental legal and normative foundations.

The Contribution of International Human Rights Law to Political Participation, Accountability, Equality, and Democratic Legitimacy

The normative juridical analysis demonstrates that international human rights law contributes significantly to democratic governance by establishing legal standards that protect political participation, strengthen accountability, promote equality, and reinforce democratic legitimacy. These elements are closely interconnected because democratic governance requires not only the existence of political institutions but also the effective protection of individual rights within those institutions. The protection of human rights ensures that citizens can participate in public affairs, express political opinions, organize collectively, and hold public authorities accountable. At the same time, equality and the rule of law ensure that such participation occurs within an inclusive and legally regulated framework.

Political participation represents one of the strongest connections between human rights protection and democratic governance. Democracy requires citizens to participate meaningfully in public affairs and to influence governmental decision-making. Participation may take the form of voting, political campaigning, civic engagement, public advocacy, public consultation, community activities, and involvement in civil society organizations. These forms of participation enable citizens to function not merely as recipients of government policies but as active participants in governance processes. Consequently, political participation strengthens both democratic legitimacy and institutional accountability.

The ICCPR provides an important legal framework for protecting political participation through the recognition of civil and political rights. The protection of freedom of opinion, freedom of expression, freedom of peaceful assembly, freedom of association, voting rights, and participation in public affairs creates the legal conditions necessary for citizens to engage in democratic processes. Butt (2024) emphasizes the importance of the ICCPR in safeguarding political rights, civic participation, and democratic freedoms. These protections demonstrate that participation is not simply a political privilege but an important component of the international human rights framework.

The right to participate in public affairs is particularly important because it creates a direct relationship between citizens and governmental authority. Citizens must have opportunities to influence public decisions and express their political preferences. Elections provide one mechanism through which this relationship is established, but democratic participation extends beyond electoral processes. Halder and Campbell-Phillips (2020) argue that political participation enables citizens to influence governance processes and contribute to democratic development, while Boulianne (2020) emphasizes the continuing importance of civic engagement for democratic responsiveness. From a normative juridical perspective, these forms of participation demonstrate that the protection of political rights is essential to ensuring that governmental authority remains responsive to the public.

Accountability constitutes another important contribution of international human rights law to democratic governance. Democratic institutions must remain answerable for their decisions and actions. Accountability mechanisms include elections, legislative oversight, judicial review, transparency requirements, and public participation. These mechanisms ensure that governmental authority is not exercised arbitrarily and that public institutions remain subject to legal and institutional scrutiny.

International human rights law strengthens accountability by establishing obligations concerning the protection of fundamental rights. Governmental conduct can therefore be assessed against internationally recognized human rights standards. States are expected to respect and protect fundamental freedoms, prevent discrimination, and provide effective legal protection when rights are violated. This creates an additional dimension of accountability in which governments are not only politically responsible to citizens but are also expected to comply with their international human rights obligations.

Scobie et al. (2020) argue that democratic accountability contributes to governance legitimacy by enabling citizens to evaluate governmental actions and challenge decisions when necessary. This demonstrates that accountability serves both a democratic and human rights function. From the perspective of democratic governance, accountability prevents abuses of public authority and strengthens public trust. From the perspective of human rights law, accountability provides mechanisms through which violations of fundamental rights can be identified and addressed. The two dimensions therefore reinforce one another.

Equality is also essential to the relationship between human rights and democratic governance. A democratic system cannot function effectively when individuals or groups are systematically excluded from political participation or denied equal protection under the law. The principles of equality and non-discrimination establish that individuals must be treated fairly and must have equal opportunities to participate in public life. The UDHR and ICCPR provide important normative and legal foundations for these principles.

Equality before the law strengthens democratic legitimacy because it establishes the expectation that governmental institutions must apply legal standards impartially. When citizens perceive that laws are applied selectively or that particular groups are excluded from political processes, public confidence in democratic institutions may decline. Conversely, equal treatment strengthens the perception that public institutions operate according to principles of justice and fairness. Therefore, equality is not merely an individual human rights principle but also a structural requirement for inclusive democratic governance.

The rule of law further connects equality, accountability, and human rights protection. Democratic governance requires that public power be exercised according to established legal standards rather than arbitrary governmental discretion. Human rights frameworks reinforce this principle by establishing protections against abuses of power and discriminatory treatment. Legal certainty, judicial protection, and equal application of laws contribute to the creation of institutional environments in which democratic rights can be effectively exercised.

Civil society also plays a significant role in strengthening this relationship. Civil society organizations can monitor governmental conduct, advocate for human rights, encourage public participation, and contribute to accountability. Bernhard et al. (2020) emphasize the contribution of civil society to democratic stability through stronger accountability mechanisms and resistance to democratic backsliding. From a normative juridical perspective, the protection of freedom of association and expression is therefore essential to maintaining an active civil society capable of monitoring public authority.

The contribution of international human rights law to democratic legitimacy becomes particularly visible when democratic systems face institutional pressures. Democratic legitimacy depends not only on electoral procedures but also on whether governmental institutions respect fundamental rights, ensure equality, and remain accountable. Nowak (2021) argues that international human rights law provides a normative framework supporting democratic institutions and governance legitimacy. Similarly, Oakley (2022) emphasizes that effective governance increasingly depends on institutions capable of protecting rights and promoting public trust. These perspectives demonstrate that human rights protection strengthens democratic legitimacy by ensuring that public authority is exercised within recognized legal and ethical boundaries.

However, the analysis also identifies contemporary challenges that complicate the implementation of human rights standards within democratic governance. Digital transformation has created new opportunities for communication, information access, civic engagement, and political participation, but it has simultaneously generated concerns regarding privacy, surveillance, misinformation, and digital exclusion. Meireles (2024) argues that digital rights have become increasingly important because access to information and digital participation influence democratic engagement.

Stubbs (2023) similarly emphasizes the significance of digital participation within discussions of democratic governance and the governance of digital commons.

Artificial intelligence presents another emerging challenge. Governments and public institutions increasingly use AI systems in administrative decision-making, resource allocation, public services, and other governance processes. While such technologies may improve efficiency, they can also create risks involving discrimination, lack of transparency, limited explainability, and insufficient accountability. Bakiner (2023) argues that human rights principles provide important guidance for evaluating AI governance, while Fjeld et al. (2020) identify accountability, fairness, transparency, and non-discrimination as central principles for rights-based AI governance. These developments demonstrate that international human rights law must continue to provide a framework for assessing emerging technologies that increasingly influence democratic decision-making.

Democratic backsliding represents another significant challenge. Restrictions on freedom of expression, limitations on political participation, weakening judicial protection, and declining accountability mechanisms can simultaneously undermine human rights and democratic governance. Regilme Jr. (2021) identifies illiberal political movements and authoritarian tendencies as continuing pressures on contemporary democracies. While, Rovny (2023) highlights the importance of inclusion, participation, and accountability for democratic resilience.

Therefore, the answer to the second research question is that international human rights law contributes to democratic governance by protecting the rights that enable meaningful political participation, establishing accountability standards, guaranteeing equality, and strengthening democratic legitimacy. The UDHR and ICCPR provide the normative and legal foundations for these functions, while human rights principles also offer mechanisms for responding to contemporary challenges involving digital rights, artificial intelligence, surveillance, misinformation, and democratic backsliding. The effectiveness of this contribution, however, depends upon the implementation of international human rights standards through domestic legal systems and accountable institutions. Consequently, the protection of human rights should be understood not only as an objective of democratic governance but also as a legal mechanism that enables democratic institutions to remain inclusive, accountable, legitimate, and resilient in the face of contemporary political and technological challenges.

4. | CONCLUSION

This study examined the relationship between human rights protection and democratic governance through a normative juridical research approach, focusing on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR). The analysis demonstrates that human rights protection constitutes a fundamental foundation of democratic governance by promoting political participation, accountability, equality, rule of law, and democratic legitimacy. The UDHR provides a universal normative foundation for human dignity,

equality, individual freedoms, and democratic values, while the ICCPR strengthens these principles through legally binding protections for civil and political rights, including freedom of expression, association, assembly, voting, and participation in public affairs. These international human rights frameworks contribute to limiting arbitrary governmental power and establishing standards for accountable and legitimate governance. The findings further demonstrate that meaningful political participation enables citizens to influence public affairs and hold institutions accountable, while equality before the law and active civil society strengthen inclusive and stable democratic governance. However, emerging challenges involving digital rights, artificial intelligence, surveillance, misinformation, and democratic backsliding require continuous adaptation of legal and institutional frameworks. The study concludes that effective human rights protection remains indispensable for maintaining democratic legitimacy, resilience, accountability, equality, freedom, and human dignity in contemporary governance.

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Ethical approval was obtained for this study. The manuscript represents original work and has not been previously published, nor is it under consideration by another journal.

Data Disclosure Statement

The data that support the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

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