



EN  
5.3

## **RESOLUTION**

**ON**

**PANAMA**

The Centrist Democrat International (CDI) considers it a moral duty to promote democracy wherever it is lacking; to improve democratic institutions where democracy has been established; and to defend democracy where and whenever it is threatened. Following several decades of authoritarian governments, a wave of democracy, benefitting all but a few countries, swept through the Latin American continent. In recent years, however, CDI has been observing a number of countries going through institutional reversals jeopardising the continuation of an authentic democratic system. The use of the popular vote to legitimise governments that disrespect freedom and human rights and operate outside the rule of law may confound some people about the true nature of these regimes. Based on past experience, however, we are able to see an autocracy for what it is, even when disguised in democratic attire. For one thing, any government that removes the barriers separating public powers; that persecutes critical voices and seeks the closure of the mass media; that does not respect human rights and the right to private property; that subjugates justice and seeks to politicise the armed forces and the police in order to persecute its political opponents, is an autocratic government even if it attained power by electoral means. If, in addition, it uses this accumulated power to change constitutional norms and to perpetuate itself in power, it demonstrates its true antidemocratic nature. In other words, it is not enough to be voted into office by democratic means. It is also necessary to govern in a democratic way.

CDI notes with concern the deterioration of democratic institutionalism in Panama, including constant pressures against journalists and the mass media on the part of high officials and their contractors, and the transparency and reliability of the elections to be held on 4<sup>th</sup> May 2014. For the above reasons, CDI will seek the establishment of a corps of international observers to monitor the electoral process, and other actions of solidarity with the Panamanian people which will ensure respect for its sovereign will.