

Coordination Wins, But Does Not Mean Unanimity

How democratic coalitions make decisions, manage difference, and choose leadership under authoritarian pressure

A practical guide for members of the World Liberty Congress and the World Liberty Academy. Ninth principle of the WLC Adaptations to Counter-Autocracy Strategic Framework (Berlin, November 2025).

The principle, in one sentence. Democratic movements do not need total agreement to act together. They need enough trust, shared purpose, and agreed procedures to make collective decisions, manage disagreement, choose leadership, and keep moving under pressure. Principle 8 said that restoring democracy is everyone's job. Principle 9 answers the next practical question: how do very different actors act together when they do not agree on everything?

INTRODUCTION

From moral unity to operational coordination

A coalition that waits for total agreement will usually be paralyzed. A coalition that ignores disagreement will eventually fracture. A mature democratic coalition does something harder than either. It builds decision rules, procedures, and leadership-selection mechanisms that allow diverse actors to cooperate without pretending they are identical. This is why Principle 9 is one of the most practical principles in the Playbook for Liberty. It is the principle that converts moral unity into operational coordination, and operational coordination into political leverage.

The Berlin Manifesto declares that the WLC unites dissidents, exile activists, and freedom fighters from more than sixty countries into one global network, breaking down silos between struggles and fostering a community of practice and solidarity that transcends borders. That breadth is the network's strength. It is also a permanent test of this principle. Members of the WLC do not agree about

everything. We are not supposed to. The network exists to help us coordinate well across the differences that authoritarian regimes work hard to convert into fractures.

This essay sets out the principle in nine sections. It explains why unanimity is the wrong standard, what coalitions usually break over, the three things every coalition must separate cleanly, the discipline and risks of opposition primaries as one democratic answer to leadership disputes, two cases that frame the strategic choice (Venezuela in 2023 and Nicaragua in 2021), the role of exile and diaspora in leadership selection, the criteria and design discipline for primaries under repression, the Primary Compact template, and the operational role the WLC plays in supporting members through these decisions.



SECTION I

Why unanimity is the wrong standard

Authoritarian regimes love unanimity. They perform it constantly: unanimous assemblies, unanimous party congresses, unanimous courts, unanimous media narratives, unanimous national will. Democracy is different. Democracy assumes disagreement. It is built precisely to prevent disagreement from becoming civil war, repression, or permanent paralysis. The legitimacy of a democratic order rests not on the absence of conflict but on the presence of procedures that convert conflict into decision.

For pro-democracy movements, the goal is therefore not to eliminate disagreement. The goal is to organize disagreement toward a shared democratic objective. A coalition may include conservatives, liberals, social democrats, religious citizens, secular activists, students, business leaders, labor unions, rural movements, indigenous communities, feminists, former regime insiders who broke with the system, exiles, former prisoners, technologists, and human-rights lawyers. They will not agree on every policy question. They should not be expected to. The WLC's first principle established the common frame: the struggle is not left versus right, religious versus secular, or East versus West. It is freedom versus oppression, rooted in human dignity and self-determination. Principle 9 takes that foundation and turns it into practice.

“Coordination means strategic cooperation around shared goals, not total agreement on everything.”

Most democratic coalitions do not collapse because people disagree. They collapse because they lack rules for disagreement. The most common sources of breakdown are familiar to anyone who has worked inside an opposition coalition under authoritarian pressure: personal leadership rivalries, suspicion between parties and civil society, exile-versus-internal tensions, generational distrust, ideological purity tests, unclear decision-making rules, donor-driven competition, disputes over candidate selection, public attacks among democratic actors, the absence of mechanisms to resolve conflict, the absence of trusted ways to measure public support, and the fear that one faction will capture the coalition for itself.

A dictatorship can exploit every one of these. It can disqualify candidates, arrest leaders, infiltrate meetings, leak partial information, create fake opposition groups, sponsor smear campaigns, manipulate electoral calendars, and push opposition actors to distrust one another at the precise moment when their unity matters most. Coordination therefore requires more than goodwill. It requires architecture.



SECTION II

Three things every coalition must separate

A coalition should separate three things that movements usually conflate. The discipline of keeping them distinct is one of the most reliable predictors of whether a coalition will survive its first serious internal disagreement.

1. The platform

The platform is the minimum democratic agreement: release of political prisoners, restoration of civic space, free elections, rule of law, independent media, protection of conscience and association, rejection of vengeance, commitment to pluralism, and protection of vulnerable groups. The platform should be broad enough for many actors to join, but strong enough to exclude authoritarian substitutes. It is what makes the coalition a democratic coalition rather than simply a coalition.

2. The strategy

The strategy is the sequence of action: advocacy, civic mobilization, legal work, international pressure, electoral strategy, prisoner support, sanctions, diaspora mobilization, negotiations, and transition planning. Actors may, and often will, disagree on strategy even when they agree on the platform. Those disagreements should be debated and resolved through agreed mechanisms, not allowed to

escalate into doubts about whether participants belong to the coalition at all. Strategic disagreement is normal. Strategic unmanaged disagreement is fatal.

3. The leadership mechanism

The leadership mechanism is the method for deciding who speaks, who represents, who negotiates, who runs, who coordinates, and who carries the coalition's name in public moments. This is where many coalitions fail. They try to solve leadership through endless consensus. When consensus fails, they either split or impose a leader through elite bargaining that produces resentment on every side. Principle 9 offers a democratic alternative: when consensus cannot settle leadership disputes, a coalition can use procedures, including primaries, to convert internal competition into public legitimacy.



SECTION III

Primaries as a democratic instrument

Primaries are not magic. They are not appropriate in every context. They can be dangerous under extreme repression. But, designed carefully, primaries can help opposition movements solve one of their most persistent problems: how to choose a common leadership or candidacy when no consensus exists. A primary is a method of converting internal competition into public legitimacy. Instead of allowing opposition factions to fight indefinitely over who represents the people, a primary asks citizens, or a defined opposition electorate, to decide.

A primary, when it works, can do several things at once. It gives the chosen leader a visible mandate. It reduces backroom bargaining. It expands citizen participation. It forces candidates to speak beyond their factions. It tests organizational capacity. It creates data on support that elite negotiation cannot. It can energize demoralized citizens. It can expose the regime's fear of genuine participation. But primaries also create real risks. They may expose voters, volunteers, donors, and organizers. They may provoke repression. They may deepen divisions if losers refuse the result. They may be manipulated if rules are unclear. They may generate unrealistic expectations if the winner is later banned or arrested. They may produce lists of participants the regime can target.

Therefore, primaries should be treated as a strategic instrument, not as a ritual.

Ten formats opposition movements can choose from

Movements should choose the format that matches their context, risk level, legal environment, organizational capacity, and diaspora structure. The ten formats below are not mutually exclusive. They can be combined or sequenced.

1. Open primary

Any citizen who identifies with the democratic objective may vote. Strengths: broad legitimacy, high participation, useful when the coalition wants to demonstrate mass support. Risks: easier for the regime to infiltrate, intimidate, monitor, or manipulate; more expensive and logistically demanding. Best used when civic space is partially open, the coalition has trusted volunteers, and participation can be reasonably protected.

2. Closed primary

Only registered members of participating parties or organizations may vote. Strengths: easier to manage, lower risk of manipulation, clearer electorate. Risks: narrower legitimacy, may exclude independents and civil society, may reinforce party control. Best used when parties are strong and trusted, and the purpose is to unify formal political actors.

3. Semi-open primary

Citizens may vote if they register in advance or sign a democratic commitment. Strengths: balances openness with some control; helps build a database of supporters. Risks: registration may expose citizens if data security is weak. Best used when the coalition can protect data and wants to grow a civic base.

4. Delegated primary or convention

Local committees, parties, civil-society groups, regional caucuses, or diaspora chapters select delegates, and delegates vote. Strengths: safer and cheaper; useful under repression; allows representation of sectors and regions. Risks: may be perceived as elite-controlled; vulnerable to internal bargaining. Best used when mass voting is too dangerous but a visible and rules-based process is still needed.

5. Ranked-choice primary

Voters rank candidates in order of preference. If no one wins a majority, lower-ranked candidates are eliminated and preferences are redistributed. Strengths: encourages coalition behavior; reduces winner-takes-all bitterness; rewards candidates who can be acceptable to broader sectors. Risks: more complex to explain and administer. Best used when there are many candidates and the coalition wants the winner to have broad acceptability, not merely a plurality.

6. Two-round primary

If no candidate reaches a threshold in the first round, the top two compete in a second round. Strengths: simple and familiar; gives the winner stronger legitimacy. Risks: expensive, time-consuming, and may lengthen conflict. Best used when there is enough time, security, and public enthusiasm.

7. Consensus-first, primary-second model

The coalition first attempts consensus. If no agreement is reached by a fixed deadline, it automatically moves to a primary. Strengths: respects negotiation but prevents endless paralysis. Risks: actors may pretend to negotiate while preparing for the primary. Best used when leaders want to preserve unity but need a credible fallback mechanism.

8. Diaspora-inclusive primary

Citizens abroad are allowed to vote through in-person centers, secure registration, mail where feasible, or other legally and technically appropriate methods. Strengths: recognizes exile as part of the nation; mobilizes international attention; activates diaspora resources. Risks: logistical complexity, data-security concerns, disputes over eligibility. Best used when exile communities are large, politically active, and connected to inside priorities. The Venezuelan opposition primary of 2023 used a version of this format.

9. Consultative primary or civic poll

A lower-risk mechanism used to measure preferences without formally selecting a candidate. Strengths: useful under severe repression; can inform coalition negotiations. Risks: less authoritative; may be dismissed as informal. Best used when formal primaries are impossible but public preference matters.

10. Digital or hybrid primary

Voting uses online tools, sometimes combined with in-person verification. Strengths: useful for diaspora and dispersed populations. Risks: high cyber risk, surveillance, identity theft, data exposure, credibility challenges. Best used when cybersecurity capacity is strong and anonymity can be protected. In many authoritarian settings, digital voting may be too dangerous.



SECTION IV

Two cases that frame the strategic choice

The Venezuelan opposition primary of October 2023 and the Nicaraguan electoral crisis of 2021 represent the two ends of the spectrum within which leadership-

selection decisions must be made. Members of the WLC operating in pre-electoral or transitional contexts will rarely face conditions identical to either, but understanding how each unfolded clarifies the strategic choice in their own context.

Venezuela 2023: a primary that built a mandate

Venezuela, October 2023. The opposition primary organized by the National Primary Commission drew more than 2.4 million voters inside the country and abroad. María Corina Machado was declared the winner with roughly 93 percent of the vote. The result clarified leadership in a fragmented opposition, demonstrated public appetite for change, and forced the regime into a reactive position. The Venezuelan Supreme Court later suspended the primary process and demanded organizer documentation, raising fears about voter confidentiality and signaling the regime's recognition that the primary had produced a result it could not ignore.

The importance of Venezuela's 2023 primary was not only that Machado won. It was that millions of Venezuelans participated in a process outside the full control of the Maduro regime, sending a signal that citizens still wanted democratic choice despite repression, disqualification, exile, fatigue, and institutional capture. The primary gave Machado a mandate that elite bargaining alone could not have produced. It revealed social energy that had been hidden by years of demobilization. It generated international visibility at a moment when international attention had drifted elsewhere. And it forced the regime to reveal, in its repressive response, the depth of its fear of authentic public participation.

Several practical lessons emerge for members considering a similar process:

- A primary can transform a leadership dispute into a public mandate.
- A primary can build morale and reveal social energy that demobilization had hidden.
- A primary can create international visibility at moments when it is most needed.
- A primary can expose the regime's fear of participation by forcing it into visible repression.
- A primary must anticipate repression, data risks, disqualification, and the possibility that the winner may need to transfer or delegate electoral representation later.

The strategic question is therefore not whether to hold a primary. It is what political problem a primary would solve, and whether the movement can manage the risks the primary will create.

Nicaragua 2021: when the regime criminalizes the field

Nicaragua, May to November 2021. The Daniel Ortega regime did not merely manipulate the electoral field. It arrested and neutralized much of the opposition's potential presidential leadership before the November vote. Beginning in May 2021, the Ortega administration used repressive legislation to arrest dozens of opposition candidates, party members, and critics. Those detained included Cristiana Chamorro, Arturo Cruz, Félix Maradiaga, Juan Sebastián Chamorro, Miguel Mora, Medardo Mairena, and Noel Vidaurre. Human Rights Watch documented the arbitrary detention of thirty-six critics in the run-up to the election. The case demonstrates what happens when a regime decides that the opposition's leadership-selection process is itself the target.

Nicaragua's 2021 case offers a starker warning. In a fully closed or rapidly closing dictatorship, a primary, or even the visible preparation for one, can become a target map for repression. The regime may not allow the opposition to complete the leadership-selection process. It may arrest candidates, criminalize parties, disqualify platforms, force leaders into exile, and use the electoral calendar itself to identify and decapitate the movement. Several elements of the Nicaraguan experience are worth naming directly: the speed of the arrests, which compressed the entire opposition's leadership pipeline within a matter of weeks; the legal architecture that justified the arrests, built specifically for the purpose in the months before; the international community's relatively slow response; and the regime's subsequent push to denationalize and forcibly exile many of those it had imprisoned.

That does not mean opposition movements in fully closed contexts should never try to coordinate leadership. It means the method must match the risk. In Nicaragua-style contexts, movements may need:

- Protected leadership rotation rather than visible single-candidate selection.
- Decentralized candidate pipelines that the regime cannot decapitate in a single sweep.
- External or diaspora-based consultation mechanisms that produce legitimacy without exposing internal participants.
- Secure, low-visibility leadership development distributed across multiple cells.
- Contingency rules that activate automatically if candidates are arrested.
- Multiple substitute representatives prepared in advance, named or unnamed.
- International pre-warning campaigns so that the cost of repression is partially priced in before it occurs.

- A candidate-arrest protocol agreed before names are announced.
- Legal and diplomatic rapid-response teams ready to activate within hours, not weeks.
- A narrative discipline that frames arrests as proof of regime fear, not as opposition failure.

“In extreme repression, leadership selection must be designed with decapitation risk in mind.”



SECTION V

The role of exile and diaspora in leadership selection

Exiles and diasporas are not spectators. Under authoritarianism, exile becomes a democratic frontline, properly organized, it is a structure that protects people inside, converts credible evidence into decisions in parliaments, courts, multilateral forums, markets, and cities, and provides international visibility for actors who can no longer act publicly inside the country. Diaspora participation in primaries and coalition decisions can strengthen legitimacy enormously. It can also deepen fragmentation if it operates without connection to people inside the country.

Diaspora roles in leadership selection may include:

- Hosting voting centers where safe and legal.
- Providing volunteers and logistical support.
- Helping finance transparent primary processes.
- Monitoring and communicating irregularities to international media.
- Amplifying results internationally.
- Protecting candidates and organizers through visibility and rapid alert systems.
- Providing technical support for voter registries and digital infrastructure.
- Building international recognition of the process before, during, and after.
- Preparing contingency advocacy if the regime represses participants.

Diaspora communities are not homogeneous. They include early political exiles, established diasporas, circular workers, second-generation civic heirs, and economically motivated migrants who later politicize. Treating them as one bloc leads to duplication, mistrust, and fatigue. Effective coordination requires strategic

segmentation: mapping who can do what, from where, and with whom. Different cohorts can play different roles. Early political exiles often provide testimony and political urgency. Established diasporas can provide fundraising, policy access, and institutional legitimacy. Second-generation leaders can translate the message into host-country media and legal language. Newer migrants can provide turnout, logistics, and community mobilization. Professional networks in technology, law, finance, and communications can provide the technical infrastructure that an opposition primary requires.

A diaspora-inclusive primary must preserve what the WLC's Freedom in Exile work calls the umbilical cord with domestic actors. Exile becomes leverage only when it remains tethered to those inside. The recommended practice is an inside-outside compact that clarifies decision rights, attribution, risk, and authorization thresholds before the primary is launched, not after the first dispute arises.



SECTION VI

When and how to use a primary

The most consequential decision a coalition will make about its leadership-selection process is whether to hold a primary at all. The criteria below are intended as a working judgment, not a formula.

Conditions favoring a primary

- There is no consensus candidate, and continued elite negotiation is consuming time without producing convergence.
- The coalition needs a visible mandate that elite bargaining cannot produce.
- Multiple candidates have real, demonstrable support.
- The public is asking to participate.
- The process can expand unity rather than destroy it.
- Security risks can be reasonably mitigated.
- The coalition has agreed in advance, in writing, to respect the result.
- There is a contingency plan if the winner is banned, arrested, exiled, or disqualified.
- The primary is connected to a broader strategy, not treated as the strategy itself.

Conditions against a primary

- The regime can easily identify and punish voters.
- The coalition has no agreement to respect the outcome.
- Participant data cannot be protected.
- The process is being rushed under external or political pressure.
- Losers are likely to defect rather than integrate into the coalition.
- The winner has no plausible path to act afterward.
- Participation will expose internal networks the movement has worked years to protect.
- The primary is becoming a personality contest rather than the affirmation of a shared democratic platform.
- The movement has no security, legal, or communications plan ready for activation.

The rule is short: use primaries when they solve a coordination problem better than elite bargaining, and when the movement can protect participants and preserve unity afterward.

The design checklist

Before launching a primary, the coalition should answer the following questions in writing. The answers are themselves the coordination work, because the act of writing them down forces the conversations that informal coalitions usually avoid.

PURPOSE

What problem is the primary solving? Is it selecting a candidate, a spokesperson, a negotiating team, a coordination council, or symbolic leadership? What happens after the primary, regardless of who wins?

ELIGIBILITY

Who can vote? Citizens only, or party members, diaspora, exiles, youth, political prisoners symbolically? What documentation is required, and how will voters be protected?

CANDIDATE RULES

Who can run? What democratic commitments must candidates sign? What happens if a candidate is arrested, exiled, disqualified, or banned? Will candidates agree in advance to support the winner? Will there be a substitute mechanism?

ELECTORAL SYSTEM

Plurality, majority, two rounds, ranked choice, delegates, regional quotas, diaspora votes, weighted or equal vote? What threshold gives the winner sufficient legitimacy?

GOVERNANCE

Who administers the primary? Is there an independent commission? How are disputes resolved? How are results verified? Who audits the process?

SECURITY

What data is collected, where is it stored, who has access? Can voter identity be protected? What happens if authorities seize material? Has a do-no-harm assessment been completed?

COMMUNICATIONS

What is the public message? How will the coalition explain the purpose? How will it respond to regime accusations? How will it prevent internal attacks during the campaign?

INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT

Which democratic governments, NGOs, legislators, media, electoral experts, and diaspora networks should be briefed? What should they do if the regime represses the process? What should they not do?

POST-PRIMARY UNITY

How will losers be integrated into the coalition? What roles will they receive? How will their supporters be kept inside? What is the common campaign or strategy after the vote?

REPRESSION CONTINGENCY

What happens if the winner is arrested? If several candidates are arrested? If the regime suspends results? If the regime demands voter data? If the election is cancelled?

Critical rule on data. Under authoritarian conditions, primary data is sensitive political material. Never collect more voter data than necessary. Never store voter lists without security protocols. Never publish identifiable participation data in high-risk contexts. Never assume digital tools are safe because they are convenient. Never allow diaspora enthusiasm to override inside-country risk. Never launch a primary without a repression-response plan. In extreme contexts, a protected consultative mechanism is wiser than a public primary.



SECTION VII

The Primary Compact

Before any primary, participating actors should sign a short compact. The compact is not a substitute for trust, but it is the document that members of the coalition can refer back to when the inevitable moments of strain arrive. The version below is offered as a template. Coalitions should adapt the language to their context, but the eleven commitments are core.

PRIMARY COMPACT · TEMPLATE LANGUAGE

The undersigned actors agree that:

- The struggle is freedom versus oppression, not faction versus faction.
- The primary is a method of coordination, not a civil war inside the opposition.
- All candidates commit to democratic pluralism, nonviolence, the release of political prisoners, the rule of law, and human dignity.
- All candidates will support the winner, or the agreed post-primary mechanism, regardless of personal preference.
- Losers will be integrated into defined coalition roles agreed in advance, not improvised after the result.
- No candidate will use regime propaganda, regime narratives, or regime-aligned media to attack another democratic actor.
- The coalition will protect voter and volunteer data with serious security protocols.
- The coalition will prepare for arrests, bans, disqualifications, and exile, in writing, before the vote.
- The diaspora will support, not replace, domestic leadership.
- International allies will be briefed in advance and asked to defend the process if repression occurs.
- The primary result belongs to the democratic cause, not to one faction.

The compact should be public where safe and confidential where necessary. In semi-open contexts, the public version of the compact can itself become a tool of legitimacy, signaling to citizens, international allies, and the regime that the opposition has agreed to act under rules of its own making.



SECTION VIII

How the World Liberty Congress supports leadership-selection work

The WLC does not impose primary models on national movements. Principle 2 of this Playbook reminds us that movements need a compass, not recipes. But the WLC can do something that no national movement can typically do for itself: provide comparative learning, technical advice, training, peer review, and international visibility from a network of more than sixty countries that has now lived through dozens of leadership-selection processes under authoritarian pressure.

Through Regional Secretaries, the World Liberty Academy, the Bringing Democracy to Power program, and the Playbook itself, the WLC can help members:

- Analyze whether a primary is the right instrument, given the regime, the moment, and the coalition’s capacity.
- Compare primary models used in other contexts, with attention to the conditions that made each model work or fail.
- Design rules and contingency plans that anticipate regime responses learned from other cases.
- Assess data-security risks with the technical support of the Decentralized Resistance Program.
- Develop candidate codes of conduct and loser-integration mechanisms before the campaign begins.
- Train diaspora volunteers to support, not replace, internal leadership.
- Build international protection around the process through the Democracy Security Compact and partner networks.
- Prepare communications strategy against the regime’s predictable disinformation.
- Draft rapid-response plans if candidates are arrested or the process is criminalized.
- Document lessons for the next movement that faces a comparable choice, through the Playbook and the Academy.

The Berlin Manifesto defines the WLC’s job as a catalyst and connector inside a global democratic ecosystem, ensuring that no freedom fighter stands alone. Principle 9 applies that mission to leadership selection and coalition management, where the work is hardest and the stakes are highest. Members preparing for a leadership-selection process under authoritarian pressure are encouraged to engage their Regional Secretary at the earliest stage of planning, well before the moment when public commitments make course correction expensive.



SECTION IX

Practical exercises for the World Liberty Academy

The six exercises below are used in WLC Academy workshops on coalition management and leadership selection. They are most effective in sequence, but each can stand alone.

Exercise 1. Consensus or primary?

Participants receive a scenario: four opposition leaders cannot agree on one candidate. They must decide whether to continue consensus talks, move to a primary, or use a hybrid method. The decision must be justified on the basis of regime type, risk, time, and public trust. The exercise reliably reveals which considerations the team has been treating as primary and which it has been treating as secondary.

Exercise 2. Primary risk map

Participants map who could be endangered by a primary: candidates, voters, volunteers, polling staff, donors, diaspora hosts, digital administrators, and the families of internal participants. The output is the risk landscape the coalition would actually face if the primary went forward, along with the protection plan each category would require.

Exercise 3. Loser-integration plan

Participants design roles for losing candidates before the vote: campaign chair, international envoy, policy coordinator, prisoner-advocacy lead, transition-planning chair, regional organizer. Designing the integration plan in advance prevents the post-primary scramble that has destroyed many otherwise successful coalitions.

Exercise 4. Candidate-arrest simulation

The trainer announces that the leading candidate has been arrested forty-eight hours before voting. Participants must activate the contingency plan: substitute candidate, communications response, international advocacy, legal response, voter protection, narrative framing. The exercise teaches that contingency plans not rehearsed are not plans.

Exercise 5. Diaspora voting design

Participants design a diaspora voting model that balances inclusion, security, cost, credibility, and domestic legitimacy. The exercise must include the inside-outside compact specifying decision rights, attribution, risk, and authorization thresholds.

Exercise 6. Result under attack

Participants respond to a regime-aligned court suspending results, demanding voter data, or accusing organizers of fraud. They prepare legal, communications, international, and protection responses that can be activated within twenty-four hours. The exercise rehearses the moment that follows the primary, which is often more strategically decisive than the primary itself.



CONCLUSION

Coordination without unanimity

Principle 9 is about democratic maturity. It teaches that disagreement is not failure, that paralysis is failure, that factionalism is failure, that personalism is failure, and that refusing to create decision rules is failure. Primaries are one possible democratic method for solving leadership disputes when consensus is impossible. They can produce legitimacy, mobilization, and unity, but only if they are designed with rules, security, contingency planning, and a post-primary integration strategy. The deeper lesson is that coordination does not mean everyone agrees. It means everyone knows how decisions are made. It means disagreement has a process. It means leadership has a mandate. It means losers remain inside the democratic cause. It means exile supports the inside without replacing it. It means the coalition can keep moving when unanimity is impossible.

Authoritarian regimes want opposition movements trapped in endless internal disputes. The architecture of coordination is the way out. The WLC's role is to make that architecture available to members across the network: through Regional Secretaries, through the Academy, through the Bringing Democracy to Power program, and through the comparative learning that more than sixty countries have now produced. No single movement should have to invent this architecture from scratch. None should have to. That is the point of the network.

Disagreement is not failure. Paralysis is.

Unity is not sameness.

Coordination is not silence.

*When consensus fails, procedure can save the coalition.
Primaries are not a miracle, but they are a democratic instrument.*

For WLC members, this principle is the operational heart of Pillar III. The next principle, Domestic Leadership, International Support, addresses the relationship between movements inside the country and the international ecosystem that surrounds them. Both principles operate together. Coordination among domestic actors and coordination with international allies are the same discipline practiced at two scales.

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CONTINUE TO PRINCIPLE 10

Principle 10 of the Playbook for Liberty closes Pillar III. It addresses the relationship between domestic leadership and international support, and the discipline that allows international allies to amplify rather than displace the leadership of those who actually live inside the country and the struggle.

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