

A Deafening Disquiet

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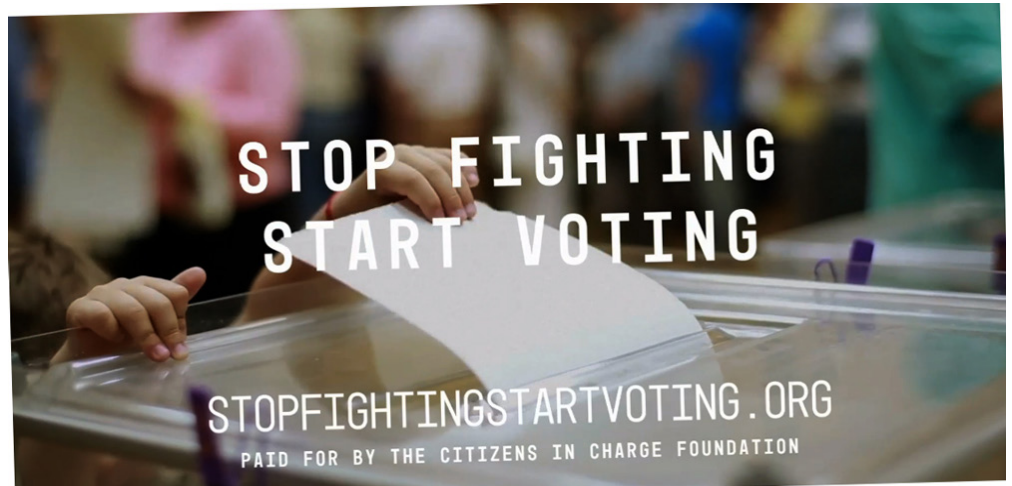
“We are living in a world of disquiet,” offers U.N. Secretary-General António Guterres at the beginning of a one-minute video now running on social digital platforms in the U.S. and worldwide.

The advertisement shows political strife in Hong Kong and Sri Lanka. It is the opening salvo in a campaign called “Stop Fighting Start Voting,” launched by Citizens in Charge Foundation today with support from direct democracy experts and organizations across the globe — researchers, advocates, NGOs, and academics.

As scenes from the Hong Kong protests unfold, a woman tells a newscaster that

Self-determination takes a lot of determination. So does the establishment of basic democracy with human rights.

China’s new “national security law” will “take away our freedoms . . . our rule of law.” The spot then pivots to Sri Lanka, lamenting “possible war crimes” and noting that a U.N. panel found “40,000 Tamil civilians were killed” at the end of the country’s civil war a



little more than a decade ago.

“We hope to have the right to vote,” a Tamil says as the video ends.

The Stop Fighting Start Voting campaign seeks to increase awareness of unresolved conflicts, such as the struggle for basic democracy in Hong Kong or concerning a referendum for the establishment of a separate Tamil homeland in Sri Lanka. We do not advocate for or against the underlying issues in these often bitter disputes, but advance the use of direct democracy, voters weighing in through ballot referendums conducted under accepted international norms and procedures, to achieve a peaceful resolution.

Self-determination takes a lot of determination. So does the establishment of basic democracy with human rights. That’s why non-governmental organizations and concerned citizens must step up.

Don’t leave the future of freedom and democracy in this world to governments alone.

This is Common Sense. I’m Paul Jacob.