

The international rules based system

I hear a lot these days from people who say we need to defend the international rules based system. I thought it might be a good idea to see which rules people think are really important, and to check those who believe in the rules based system believe in it regardless of the decisions reached. May I suggest some good rules for the better conduct of open democracy?

1. Where a country holds a legal referendum which attracts a substantial turnout the government accepts the need to implement the wishes of the people, whether it was in favour of the result or not. If it does not wish to do this it should give power to a government that does.
2. Where a country or region within a Union or larger country has a strong body of opinion that wants to be independent, and evidence in elections that that body of opinion is prepared to vote accordingly, there should be a referendum on whether to create an independent country or not. The result should be binding. There should not normally be a repeat of such a vote for at least a generation, with all agreeing to accept the result.
3. Where a part of a country elects a large number of nationalists to elected bodies but is not granted a referendum, those elected should not be arrested for wishing to pursue an independence agenda by peaceful means.
4. Unelected international bodies have to respect the views of elected governments. They may of course insist that the government adheres to binding Treaty commitments made in the past by that country, or agree to arrangements for the country to leave the organisation if the disagreement persists. International law should not be used to prevent a fairly elected government pursuing a chosen course of policy which meets normal standards of behaviour towards others.