

Discarding Democracy:
Return to the Iron Fist



FREEDOM IN THE WORLD 2015



Highlights from Freedom House's annual report on political rights and civil liberties

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Cover photo: Egyptian riot policemen standing guard outside the Police Academy in Cairo, February 2014. AFP/Getty Images.

Discarding Democracy: A Return to the Iron Fist

by Arch Puddington, *Vice President for Research*

In a year marked by an explosion of terrorist violence, autocrats' use of more brutal tactics, and Russia's invasion and annexation of a neighboring country's territory, the state of freedom in 2014 worsened significantly in nearly every part of the world.

For the ninth consecutive year, *Freedom in the World*, Freedom House's annual report on the condition of global political rights and civil liberties, showed an overall decline. Indeed, acceptance of democracy as the world's dominant form of government—and of an international system built on democratic ideals—is under greater threat than at any point in the last 25 years.

Even after such a long period of mounting pressure on democracy, developments in 2014 were exceptionally grim. The report's findings show that nearly twice as many countries suffered declines as registered gains, 61 to 33, with the number of gains hitting its lowest point since the nine-year erosion began.

This pattern held true across geographical regions, with more declines than gains in the Middle East and North Africa, Eurasia, sub-Saharan Africa, Europe, and the Americas, and an even split in Asia-Pacific. Syria, a dictatorship mired in civil war and ethnic division and facing uncontrolled terrorism, received the lowest *Freedom in the World* country score in over a decade.

The lack of democratic gains around the world was conspicuous. The one notable exception was Tunisia, which became the first Arab country to achieve the status of Free since Lebanon was gripped by civil war 40 years ago.

By contrast, a troubling number of large, economically powerful, or regionally influential countries moved backward: Russia, Venezuela, Egypt, Turkey, Thailand, Nigeria, Kenya, and Azerbaijan. Hungary, a European Union member state, also saw a sharp slide in its democratic standards as part of a process that began in 2010.

There were also net declines across five of the seven categories of democratic indicators assessed by the report. Continuing a recent trend, the worst reversals affected freedom of expression, civil society, and the rule of law. In a new and disquieting development, a number of countries lost ground due to state surveillance, restrictions on internet communications, and curbs on personal autonomy—including the freedom to make decisions about education and employment and the ability to travel freely.

A more explicit rejection of democratic standards

Just as disturbing as the statistical decline was the open disdain for democratic standards that colored the words and actions of autocratic governments during the year. Until recently, most authoritarian regimes claimed to respect international agreements and paid lip service to the norms of competitive elections and human rights. They now increasingly flout democratic values, argue for the superiority of what amounts to one-party rule, and seek to throw off the constraints of fundamental diplomatic principles.

Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, including the outright seizure and formal annexation of Crimea, is the prime example of this phenomenon. The Russian intervention was in direct violation of an international agreement that had guaranteed Ukraine’s territorial integrity. President Vladimir Putin made his contempt for the values of liberal democracy unmistakably clear. He and his aides equated raw propaganda with legitimate journalism, treated human rights activists as enemies of the state, and denounced the LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender) community as moral degenerates.

In Egypt, the rise of President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi has been accompanied by a relentless campaign to roll back the gains of the Arab Spring. In an unprecedented trampling of the rule of law, Egyptian courts sentenced 1,300 political detainees to death in a series of drumhead trials that lacked the most basic

elements of due process. Under Sisi, a once-vibrant media sector has been bent into submission, human rights organizations suppressed to the point that they can no longer operate, foreign scholars barred, and domestic critics (both secular and Islamist) arrested or forced into exile. As the year drew to a close, a court dismissed charges against former president Hosni Mubarak for the murder of demonstrators in 2011, a depressing symbol of the country’s undisguised return to autocratic rule.

In Turkey, President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan consolidated power during the year and waged an increasingly aggressive campaign against democratic pluralism. He openly demanded that media owners censor coverage or fire critical journalists, told the Constitutional Court he does not respect its rulings, threatened reporters (and rebuked women journalists), and ordered radical, even bizarre changes to the school curriculum. Having risen from the premiership to the presidency in August, he formed a “shadow cabinet” that allows him to run the country from the presidential palace, circumventing constitutional rules and the ministries of his own party’s government.

In China, President Xi Jinping continued to centralize authority and maintain hands-on involvement in policy areas ranging from domestic security to internet management to ethnic relations, emerging as the most powerful Chinese Communist Party leader since Deng Xiaoping. He continued to bolster China’s

Freedom in the World Methodology

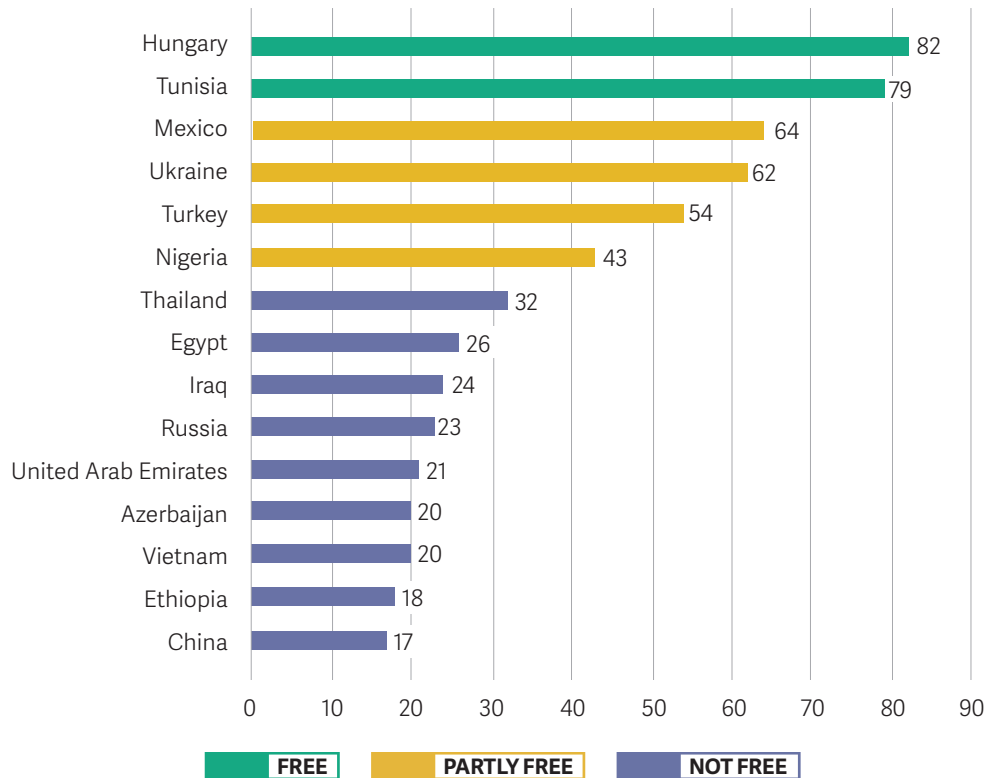
Freedom in the World 2015 evaluates the state of freedom in 195 countries and 15 territories during 2014. Each country and territory is assigned two numerical ratings—from 1 to 7—for political rights and civil liberties, with 1 representing the most free and 7 the least free. The two ratings are based on scores assigned to 25 more detailed indicators. The average of a country or territory’s political rights and civil liberties ratings determines whether it is Free, Partly Free, or Not Free.

The methodology, which is derived from the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, is applied to all countries and territories, irrespective of geographic location, ethnic or religious composition, or level of economic development.

Freedom in the World assesses the real-world rights and freedoms enjoyed by individuals, rather than governments or government performance per se. Political rights and civil liberties can be affected by both state and nonstate actors,

including insurgents and other armed groups.

For complete information on the methodology, visit <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/freedom-world-2015/methodology>.

AGGREGATE SCORES OF SELECTED COUNTRIES OF INTEREST IN 2014


sweeping maritime territorial claims with armed force and personnel, and while his aggressive anticorruption campaign reached the highest echelons of the party, culminating in the arrest of former security czar Zhou Yongkang, it remained selective and ignored the principles of due process. Moreover, the campaign has been compromised by an intensified crackdown on grassroots anticorruption activists and other elements of civil society, including a series of politically motivated convictions. The government also intensified its persecution of the Uighur community, imposing layers of restriction on Uighurs' ability to observe their Muslim faith and sentencing activists and journalists to long prison terms.

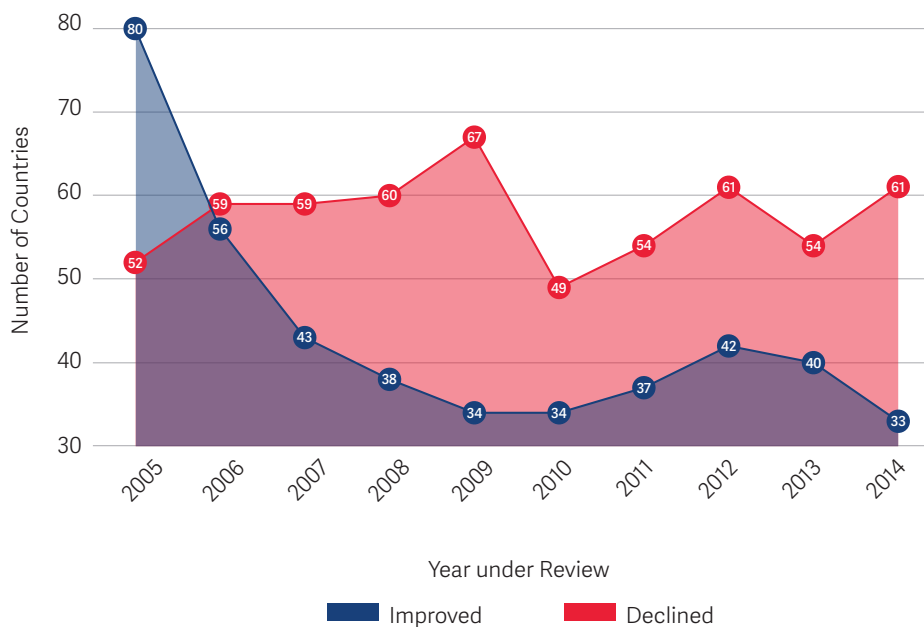
The Communist authorities also tightened China's sophisticated system of internet control, taking steps such as the shuttering of dozens of accounts on the popular WeChat messaging service that had been used to disseminate news. And despite official rhetoric about improving the rule of law, an array of extralegal forms of detention for political and religious dissidents continued to proliferate.

The effects and causes of terrorism

In a variety of ways, lack of democratic governance creates an enabling environment for terrorism, and the problem rapidly metastasized as a threat to human life and human freedom during 2014. In a wide swath of the globe stretching from West Africa through the Middle East to South Asia, radical jihadist forces plagued local governments and populations. Their impact on countries like Iraq, Syria, Pakistan, and Nigeria was devastating, as they massacred security forces and civilians alike, took foreigners hostage, and killed or enslaved religious minorities, including Muslims whom they did not recognize as such. Women were particular targets: Young women and teenage girls were seized as war prizes, schoolgirls were kidnapped and raped, women educators and health workers were assassinated, and women suffered disproportionately in refugee camps. As horror followed horror, the year ended with a slaughter of more than 130 schoolchildren by the Pakistani Taliban.

The spike in terrorist violence laid bare widespread corruption, poor governance, and counterproductive security strategies in a number of countries with

COUNTRIES WITH DECLINES IN FREEDOM HAVE OUTNUMBERED THOSE WITH GAINS FOR THE PAST NINE YEARS



weak or nonexistent democratic institutions. The Syrian regime had opened the door to the growth of the Islamic State and other extremist movements by brutally repressing first peaceful protesters and the political opposition, then the various rebel groups that rose up to defend them. The Iraqi government of Nouri al-Maliki also smoothed the militants' path by persecuting opposition leaders, rebuking peaceful Sunni protests, and fostering corruption and cronyism in the security forces. More recently, the Sisi government in Egypt has made the same mistake in its remorseless drive to eliminate the Muslim Brotherhood, indirectly fueling an armed insurgency and contributing to the formation of an Islamic State affiliate in the country.

In Nigeria, neither the government nor the military has proved capable of dealing effectively with Boko Haram, which operates with impunity in parts of the country's north. While the military has for decades played a large role in Nigerian political life, it has proved poorly equipped, badly trained, hollowed out by graft, and prone to scattershot tactics that fail to distinguish between terrorists and civilians. In Pakistan, the military and intelligence services have a long history of colluding with certain extremist groups, including

some that are responsible for mass killings of civilians. When they do move against militant bastions, they too often resort to indiscriminate violence and fail to follow up with improved governance.

Many governments have exploited the escalation of terrorism as a justification for new and essentially unrelated repressive measures. While a vigorous debate over how democracies should respond to terrorism at home and abroad is under way in Europe, Australia, and North America, leaders elsewhere are citing the threat as they silence dissidents, shutter critical media, and eliminate civil society groups. Thus the regime of Venezuelan president Nicolás Maduro has imprisoned opposition political figures as terrorists, Kenyan authorities have deregistered hundreds of nongovernmental organizations and unleashed security agencies while pursuing links to Somali militants, and China has invoked terrorism to support harsh prison sentences against nonviolent Uighur activists and internet users, including a life sentence for well-known Uighur scholar Ilham Tohti.

A return to cruder authoritarian methods

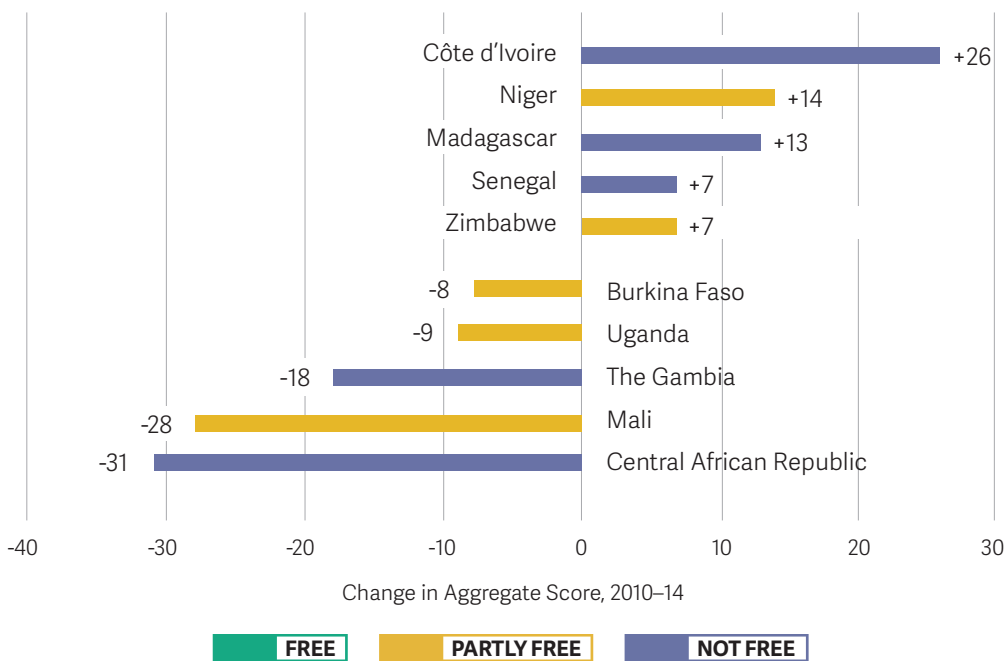
The exploitation of the terrorism threat is just one aspect of a general trend in which repressive regimes are returning to blunt, retrograde tactics in their ongoing effort to preserve political control. In recent decades, autocrats had favored more “modern,” nuanced methods that aimed to protect de facto monopolies on power while maintaining a veneer of democratic pluralism and avoiding practices associated with the totalitarian regimes and military dictatorships of the 20th century.

Over the past year, however, there were signs that authoritarian regimes were beginning to abandon the quasi-democratic camouflage that allowed them to survive and prosper in the post-Cold War world. Again, the most blatant example is Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, whose official justifications included ethnic nationalist, irredentist claims and which quickly drew comparisons to the land grabs of Hitler or Stalin. The move exposed Moscow as a committed enemy of European peace and democratization rather than a would-be strategic partner. China’s government responded to public discontent with campaigns reminiscent of the Mao era, including televised

confessions that have gained prominence under Xi Jinping. The Chinese authorities are also resorting to criminal and administrative detention to restrict activists instead of softer tactics like house arrest or informal interrogations. Both China and Russia have made use of one of the Cold War’s most chilling instruments, the placement of dissidents in psychiatric hospitals.

In Venezuela and Azerbaijan, the ranks of political prisoners steadily increased in 2014, as leading officials railed against foreign conspiracies aimed at fomenting revolution. Meanwhile, rulers in Egypt, Bahrain, and other Middle Eastern countries, which just a decade ago felt obliged to move toward competitive elections, now resort to violent police tactics, sham trials, and severe sentences as they seek to annihilate political opposition. And whereas the most successful authoritarian regimes previously tolerated a modest opposition press, some civil society activity, and a comparatively vibrant internet environment, they are now reducing or closing these remaining spaces for dissent and debate.

MANY OF LARGEST GAINS AND DECLINES IN AGGREGATE SCORES OVER PAST FIVE YEARS WERE IN AFRICA



The return to older authoritarian practices has included increased military involvement in governance and political affairs. In Thailand, the military leaders responsible for the removal of Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra and her elected government made clear that a return to democratic rule will not take place in the foreseeable future. The military commandeered the political transition after the ouster of the president in Burkina Faso, and armed forces continued to play a major role in a number of other African states, including Ethiopia, Rwanda, Uganda, and Zimbabwe. In Egypt, the Sisi government has cemented the military's position as the leading force in society. A similar phenomenon has emerged in Venezuela, where the armed forces are involved in the economy, social programs, and internal security, and are thought to play a critical part in drug trafficking and other criminal ventures.

Notable developments in 2014

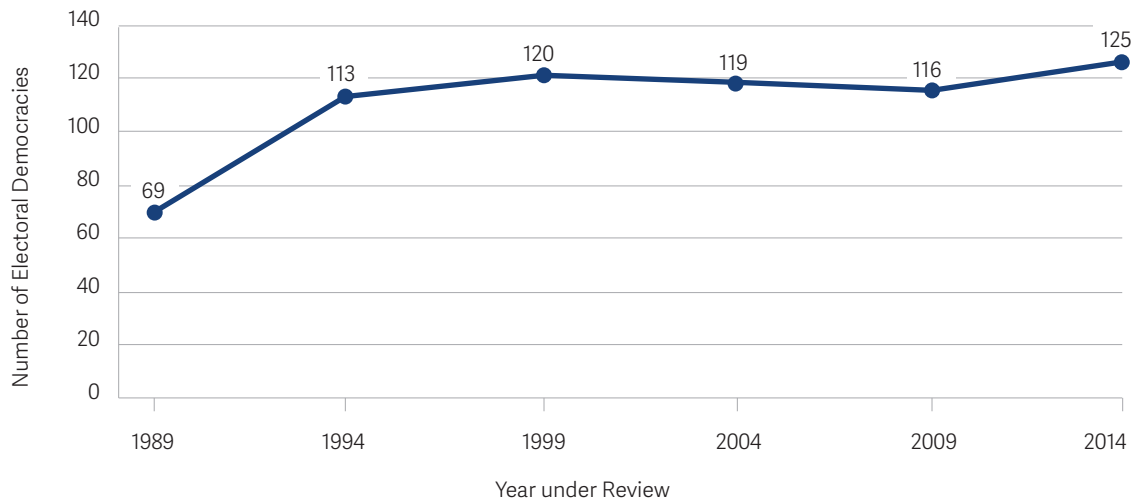
In addition to those described above, five major phenomena stood out during the year:

Humanitarian crises rooted in undemocratic governance: In Africa, the Middle East, and parts of Asia, millions of refugees were forced into squalid

camp, risked their lives in overcrowded boats, or found tenuous shelter on the margins of foreign societies. Authoritarian misrule was a primary cause of these humanitarian crises. In Syria, the civil war was originally sparked by the regime's attacks on demonstrators who were protesting the torture of students accused of antigovernment graffiti. In South Sudan, a political dispute between the president and his former vice president—in the context of an interim constitution that gives sweeping powers to the executive—led to fighting within the army that developed into full-scale civil war. The combatants have targeted civilians, who are also facing acute food shortages and massive internal displacement. While the conflict in Ukraine has not reached the same level, authoritarian Russia's invasion has created a crisis like none seen in Europe since the Balkan wars of the 1990s. The aggression was precipitated in part by a confrontation between the Ukrainian people and their increasingly authoritarian president, following decades of corrupt Ukrainian administrations.

Tunisia's exceptional success story: In 2014, Tunisia took its place among the Free countries of the world. This is remarkable not just because it was ranked Not Free only five years ago, with scores that placed it among some of the most repressive regimes in

NUMBER OF ELECTORAL DEMOCRACIES HAS NOT CHANGED DRAMATICALLY SINCE EARLY 1990s



the world, but also because Tunisia is so far the only successful case among the many Arab countries that exhibited some political opening in the 2011 Arab Spring. The improvements that pushed it into the Free category included a progressive constitution adopted in January 2014 and well-regarded elections for parliament and president later in the year. As the only full-fledged Arab democracy, Tunisia can set a strong positive example for the region and for all countries that still struggle under authoritarian rule.

The decline of internet freedom: Restrictions on internet freedom have long been less severe than those imposed on traditional media, but the gap is closing as governments crack down on online activity. Censorship and surveillance, repressive new laws, criminal penalties, and arrests of users have been on the rise in numerous settings. For example, officials in Ecuador increased online monitoring in 2014, hiring firms to remove content deemed unfavorable to the government from sites like YouTube and invoking the 2013 communications law to prosecute social media users who were critical of the president. The Rwandan government stepped up use of a new law that allows security officials to monitor online communications, and surveillance appears to have increased in practice. Such restrictions affect Free countries as well. After the Sewol ferry accident in South Korea in April and related criticism and rumors surrounding the president, the government began routine monitoring and censorship of online discussions. Israel also featured a stricter environment for discussion on social media this year, especially regarding controversial views on the situation in the Gaza Strip.

Personal autonomy under pressure: In addition to continued declines in freedom of expression and civil society rights, there were notable declines in freedom of movement during 2014. In some cases, a tightening of government control prevented ordinary people from moving within their own country or traveling abroad. Restrictions imposed by the authoritarian governments of Egypt and Russia were politically motivated. In Liberia and Sierra Leone, authorities limited movement due to the Ebola crisis, at times using measures beyond those necessary to control the disease's spread. The most extreme example was a 10-day quarantine on the impoverished neighborhood of West Point in Monrovia, Liberia, which according to many experts actually increased the risk of contagion. In Libya, the worsening civil war hampered internal movement. In El Salvador and Honduras, worsening

gang-related violence and lawlessness limited where people could safely travel.

Overlooked autocrats: While some of the world's worst dictatorships regularly made headlines, others continued to fly below the radar. Azerbaijani president Ilham Aliyev won a landslide reelection victory against an opposition that was crippled by arrests and legal constraints, and the regime stepped up its jailing of human rights activists, journalists, and other perceived enemies. Despite year after year of declines in political rights and civil liberties, however, Azerbaijan has avoided the democratic world's opprobrium due to its energy wealth and cooperation on security matters. Vietnam is also an attractive destination for foreign investment, and the United States and its allies gave the country special attention in 2014 as the underdog facing Chinese aggression in the South China Sea. But like China, Vietnam remains an entrenched one-party state, and the regime imposed harsher penalties for free speech online, arrested protesters, and continued to ban work by human rights organizations. Ethiopia is held up as a model for development in Africa, and is one of the world's largest recipients of foreign assistance. But in 2014 its security forces opened fire on protesters, carried out large-scale arrests of bloggers and other journalists as well as members of the political opposition, and evicted communities from their land to make way for opaque development projects. Finally, while several countries in the Middle East—most notably oil-rich Saudi Arabia—receive special treatment from the United States and others, the United Arab Emirates stands out for how little international attention is paid to its systematic denial of rights for foreign workers, who make up the vast majority of the population; its enforcement of one of the most restrictive press laws in the Arab world; and its dynastic political system, which leaves no space for opposition.

Global findings

The number of countries designated by *Freedom in the World* as Free in 2014 stood at 89, representing 46 percent of the world's 195 polities and nearly 2.9 billion people—or 40 percent of the global population. The number of Free countries increased by one from the previous year's report.

The number of countries qualifying as Partly Free stood at 55, or 28 percent of all countries assessed, and they were home to just over 1.7 billion people, or 24

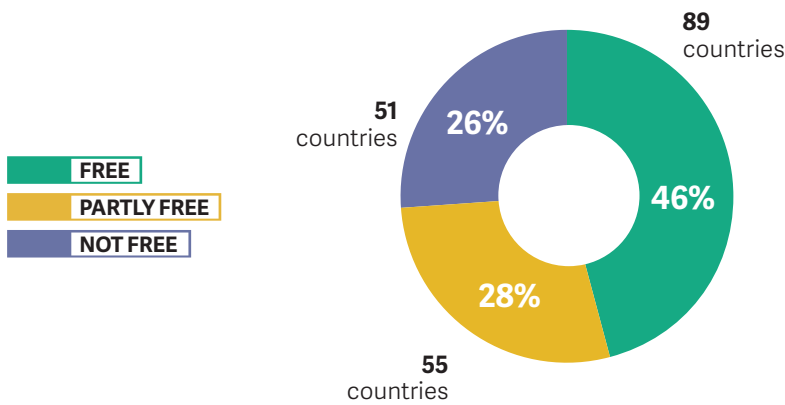
percent of the world's total. The number of Partly Free countries decreased by four from the previous year.

A total of 51 countries were deemed Not Free, representing 26 percent of the world's polities. The number of people living under Not Free conditions stood at 2.6 billion people, or 36 percent of the global population, though it is important to note that more than half of this number lives in just one country: China. The number of Not Free countries increased by three from 2013.

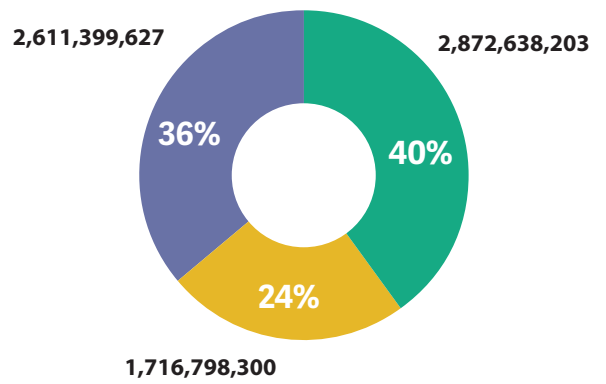
The number of electoral democracies stood at 125, three more than in 2013. Five countries achieved electoral democracy status: Fiji, Kosovo, Madagascar, the Maldives, and the Solomon Islands. Two countries, Libya and Thailand, lost their designation as electoral democracies.

Tunisia rose from Partly Free to Free, while Guinea-Bissau improved from Not Free to Partly Free. Four countries fell from Partly Free to Not Free: Burundi, Libya, Thailand, and Uganda.

GLOBAL: STATUS BY COUNTRY

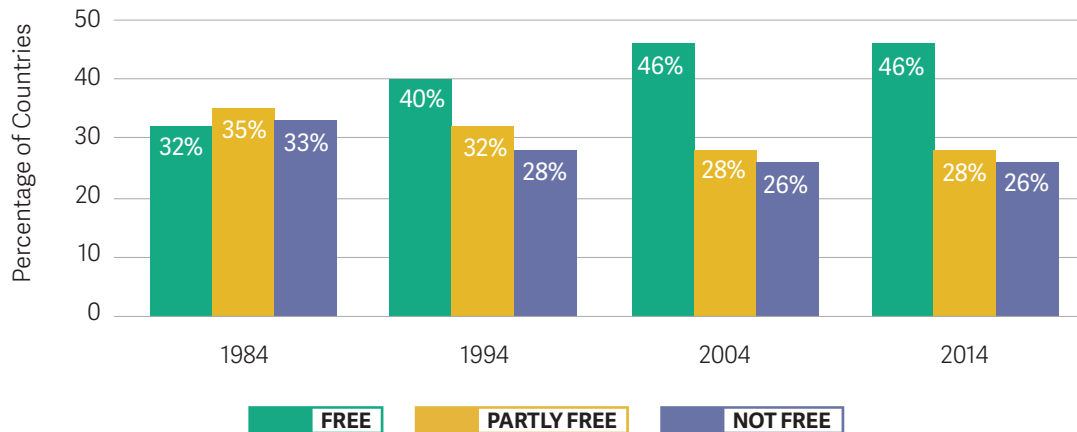


GLOBAL: STATUS BY POPULATION



Total population: 7,215,543,130

WHILE OVERALL FREEDOM HAS INCREASED SINCE 1984, IT HAS RECENTLY PLATEAUED



Regional Trends

The negative pattern in 2014 held true across geographical regions, with more declines than gains in the Middle East and North Africa, Eurasia, sub-Saharan Africa, Europe, and the Americas, and an even split in Asia-Pacific.

Middle East and North Africa: Tunisia a bright spot in troubled region

Although Tunisia became the Arab world's only Free country after holding democratic elections under a new constitution, the rest of the Middle East and North Africa was racked by negative and often tragic events. The Syrian civil war ground on, the Islamic State and other extremist militant factions dramatically extended their reach, and Libya's tentative improvements following the downfall of Mu'ammar al-Qadhafi rapidly disintegrated as the country fell into a new internal conflict. Rival armed groups also overran a fragile political process in Yemen, and the effects of the Syrian war paralyzed elected institutions in Lebanon. Egypt continued its rollback of post-Mubarak reforms and solidified its return to autocracy with sham elections and a crackdown on all forms of dissent.

Following high-profile killings of Israeli and Palestinian civilians and a campaign of rocket attacks on Israel by Gaza-based militants, the Israel Defense Forces launched a 50-day air and ground offensive in Gaza over the summer. More than 2,200 people died, mostly Gazan civilians, and tens of thousands of homes in Gaza were damaged or destroyed. Israel was criticized for responding to attacks by Hamas militants in a disproportionate way, while Hamas was criticized for entrenching rocket launchers and fighters in civilian neighborhoods.

Notable gains or declines:

Bahrain's political rights rating declined from 6 to 7 due to grave flaws in the 2014 legislative elections and the government's unwillingness to address long-standing grievances among the majority Shiite community about the drawing of electoral districts and the possibility of fair representation.

Egypt received a downward trend arrow due to the complete marginalization of the opposition, state surveillance of electronic communications, public exhortations to report critics of the government to the authorities, and the mass trials and unjustified imprisonment of members of the Muslim Brotherhood.

Iraq's political rights rating declined from 5 to 6 due to the Islamic State's attempts to destroy Christian, Shiite, Yazidi, and other communities under its control, as well as attacks on Sunnis by state-sponsored Shiite militias.

Lebanon received a downward trend arrow due to the parliament's repeated failure to elect a president and its postponement of overdue legislative elections for another two and a half years, which left the country with a presidential void and a National Assembly whose mandate expired in 2013.

Libya's political rights rating declined from 4 to 6, its civil liberties rating declined from 5 to 6, and its

status declined from Partly Free to Not Free due to the country's descent into a civil war, which contributed to a humanitarian crisis as citizens fled embattled cities, and led to pressure on civil society and media outlets amid the increased political polarization.

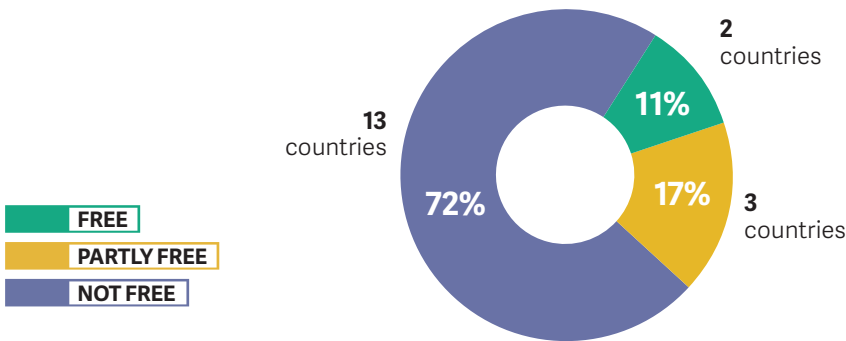
Syria received a downward trend arrow due to worsening religious persecution, weakening of civil society groups and rule of law, and the large-scale starvation and torture of civilians and detainees.

Tunisia's political rights rating improved from 3 to 1 and its status improved from Partly Free to Free

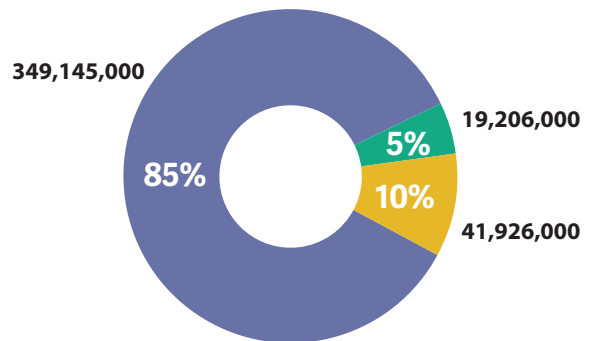
due to the adoption of a progressive constitution, governance improvements under a consensus-based caretaker administration, and the holding of free and fair parliamentary and presidential elections, all with a high degree of transparency.

Yemen received a downward trend arrow due to the Houthi militant group's seizure and occupation of the capital city, its forced reconfiguration of the cabinet, and its other demands on the president, which paralyzed Yemen's formal political process.

MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA: STATUS BY COUNTRY



MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA: STATUS BY POPULATION



Total population: 410,277,000

Eurasia:

Ukraine in turmoil, conditions worsen in Central Asia

Events in Eurasia in 2014 were dominated by the upheaval in Ukraine. Gains related to the ouster of President Viktor Yanukovich through the Euromaidan protests in February, which led to the election of a new president and parliament later in the year, were offset by Russia's seizure of Crimea in March and ongoing battles with pro-Russian separatists in eastern Ukraine. Crimea, evaluated separately for the first time for *Freedom in the World 2015*, emerged with a dismal freedom rating of 6.5 on a 7-point scale and a Not Free status, reflecting repressive conditions in which residents—especially Tatars and others who opposed the forced annexation—were deprived of their political rights and civil liberties.

The Russian government coupled its rejection of international pressure over Ukraine with intensified domestic controls on dissent, tightening its grip on the media sector and nongovernmental organizations.

Central Asia also took a turn for the worse in 2014. Kyrgyzstan, typically rated better than its neighbors, suffered from increased government restrictions on freedom of assembly and civil society groups. In Tajikistan, a sustained offensive against political pluralism continued with the persecution of opposition parties and the designation of one opposition movement, Group 24, as an extremist organization.

The government of Azerbaijan similarly renewed its assault on dissent in 2014, targeting traditional media

and civil society organizations for legal harassment, arbitrary detention, and physical abuse.

Ratings for the region as a whole are the second worst in the world after the Middle East, and Crimea joins three other Eurasian states—Belarus, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan—on Freedom House’s list of the world’s most repressive countries and territories for 2014.

Notable gains or declines:

Azerbaijan received a downward trend arrow due to an intensified crackdown on dissent, including the imprisonment and abuse of human rights advocates and journalists.

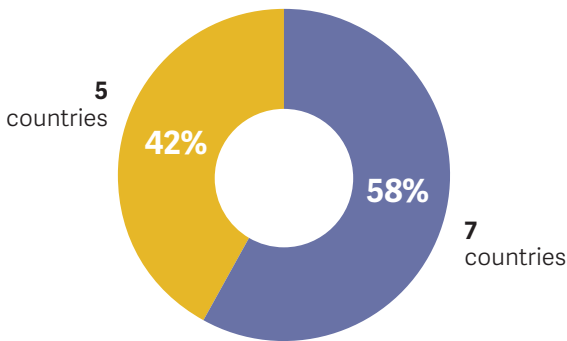
Kyrgyzstan received a downward trend arrow due to a government crackdown on freedom of assembly and the ability of nongovernmental organizations to operate.

Russia’s civil liberties rating declined from 5 to 6 due to expanded media controls, a dramatically increased level of propaganda on state-controlled television, and new restrictions on the ability of some citizens to travel abroad.

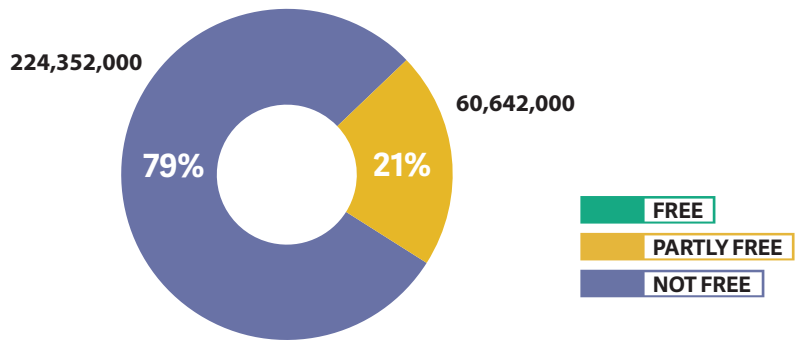
Tajikistan received a downward trend arrow due to constant abuse of opposition parties at the local level in the run-up to parliamentary elections, the designation of the political reform and opposition movement Group 24 as an extremist entity in October, and the arrest and temporary detention of academic researcher Alexander Sodiqov on treason charges.

Ukraine’s political rights rating rose from 4 to 3 due to improvements in political pluralism, parliamentary elections, and government transparency following the departure of President Viktor Yanukovich.

EURASIA: STATUS BY COUNTRY



EURASIA: STATUS BY POPULATION



Total population: 284,994,000

Asia-Pacific: Fair elections, a coup, and stalled reforms

Citizens of three major Asian states—India, Japan, and Indonesia—went to the polls in 2014, handing their leaders strong mandates through what were largely open and fair electoral processes. These positive achievements contrasted sharply with the coup d’état in Thailand, in which the military ousted an elected government, suspended the constitution, and implemented martial law restrictions that drastically rolled back political rights and civil liberties.

Myanmar, which has only partly abandoned military rule, began to veer from the path to democracy. Journalists and demonstrators faced greater restrictions, the Rohingya minority continued to suffer from violence and official discrimination, and proposed laws that would ban religious conversions and interfaith marriages threatened to legitimize anti-Muslim extremism.

Notable gains or declines:

Afghanistan received a downward trend arrow due to increased violence against journalists and civilians amid the withdrawal of international combat troops.

Bangladesh's political rights rating declined from 3 to 4 due to national elections that were marred by an opposition boycott, as well as widespread violence and intimidation by a range of political parties.

East Timor's civil liberties rating improved from 4 to 3 due to a decrease in restrictions on peaceful assembly and an overall improvement in the internal security situation over the past several years.

Fiji's political rights rating improved from 6 to 3 due to September general elections—the first since a 2006 coup—that were deemed free and fair.

Hong Kong received a downward trend arrow due to restrictions on press freedom and freedom of assembly surrounding protests against a Chinese government decision to limit candidate nominations for future executive elections.

Malaysia received a downward trend arrow due to the government's use of the Sedition Act to intimidate political opponents, an increase in arrests and harassment of Shiite Muslims and transgender Malaysians, and more extensive use of defamation laws to silence independent or critical voices.

Myanmar's civil liberties rating declined from 5 to 6 due to restrictions on media freedom, including the arrest and imprisonment of a number of journalists.

Nauru's civil liberties rating declined from 1 to 2 due to government attempts to limit freedom of expression among foreign journalists and opposition figures, as well as the dismissal of judicial officials who refused the government's push to try asylum seekers charged with rioting at a detention center in 2013.

Nepal's political rights rating improved from 4 to 3 due to the functioning of a stable government for the first time in over five years following 2013 elections, and significant progress by the main political parties toward the completion of a draft constitution.

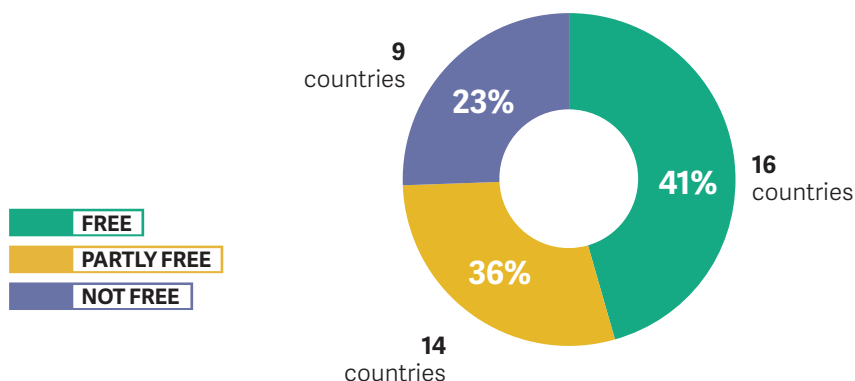
The **Solomon Islands'** political rights rating improved from 4 to 3 as a result of relatively successful October elections, which featured biometric registration and were accepted as legitimate by both the opposition and voters.

South Korea received a downward trend arrow due to the increased intimidation of political opponents of President Park Geun-hye and crackdowns on public criticism of her performance following the *Sewol* ferry accident.

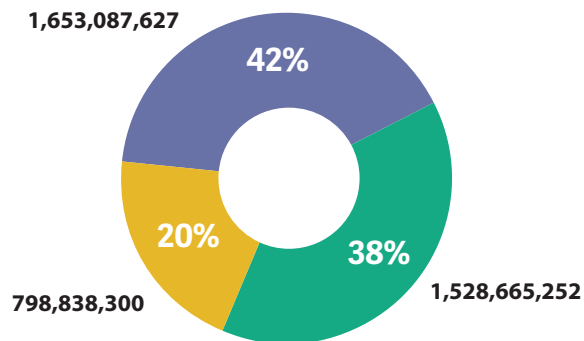
Sri Lanka's civil liberties rating declined from 4 to 5 due to increased pressure on freedom of expression and association, including curbs on traditional media and internet-based news and opinion, and surveillance and harassment of civil society activists.

Thailand's political rights rating declined from 4 to 6, its civil liberties rating declined from 4 to 5, and its status declined from Partly Free to Not Free due to the May military coup, whose leaders abolished the 2007 constitution and imposed severe restrictions on speech and assembly.

ASIA-PACIFIC: STATUS BY COUNTRY



ASIA-PACIFIC: STATUS BY POPULATION



Total population: 3,980,591,179

Europe: Democratic setbacks in Hungary, Turkey

In Hungary, parliamentary and local elections revealed the extent to which recent legislative and other changes have tilted the playing field in favor of the ruling party, Fidesz. Observers noted slanted media coverage, the misuse of state resources, gerrymandering, and campaign spending problems. With its renewed parliamentary supermajority, Fidesz continued to transform the country's institutions, facing few obstacles from the divided and enfeebled opposition.

Turkey drifted much further from democratic norms, with longtime prime minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan rising to the presidency and overseeing government attempts to quash corruption cases against his allies and associates. The media and judiciary both faced greater interference by the executive and legislative branches, including a series of raids and arrests targeting media outlets affiliated with Erdoğan's political enemies.

Notable gains or declines:

Bosnia and Herzegovina's political rights rating declined from 3 to 4 because the government

largely ignored a significant civic movement protesting corruption and calling for reforms in early 2014, and proved generally unresponsive to the population's concerns.

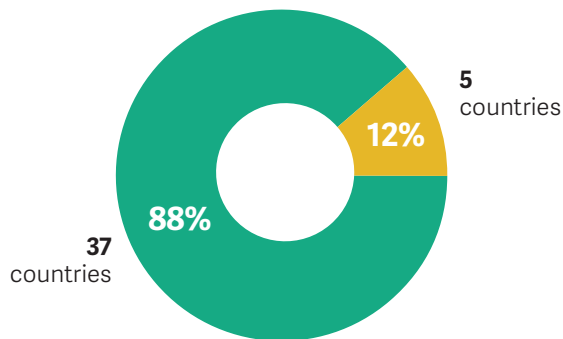
Hungary's political rights rating declined from 1 to 2 due to an election campaign that demonstrated the diminished space for fair competition given legislative and other advantages accrued by the ruling party.

Kosovo's political rights rating improved from 5 to 4 due to the comparatively successful conduct of June elections and a subsequent agreement by rival parties to form a coalition government.

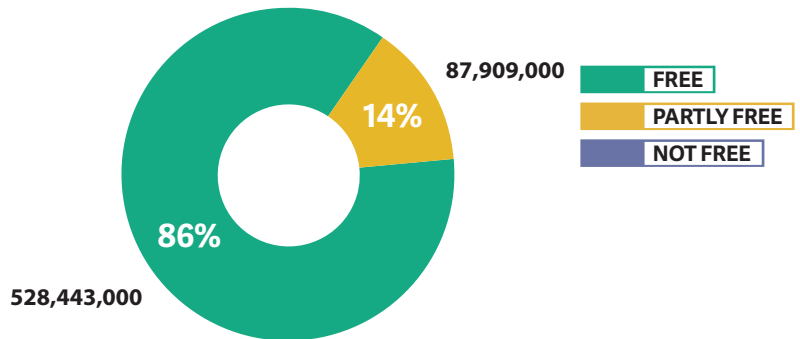
Macedonia's political rights rating declined from 3 to 4 due to serious shortcomings in the April general elections and a related legislative boycott by the opposition.

Turkey received a downward trend arrow due to more pronounced political interference in anticorruption mechanisms and judicial processes, and greater tensions between majority Sunni Muslims and minority Alevis.

EUROPE: STATUS BY COUNTRY

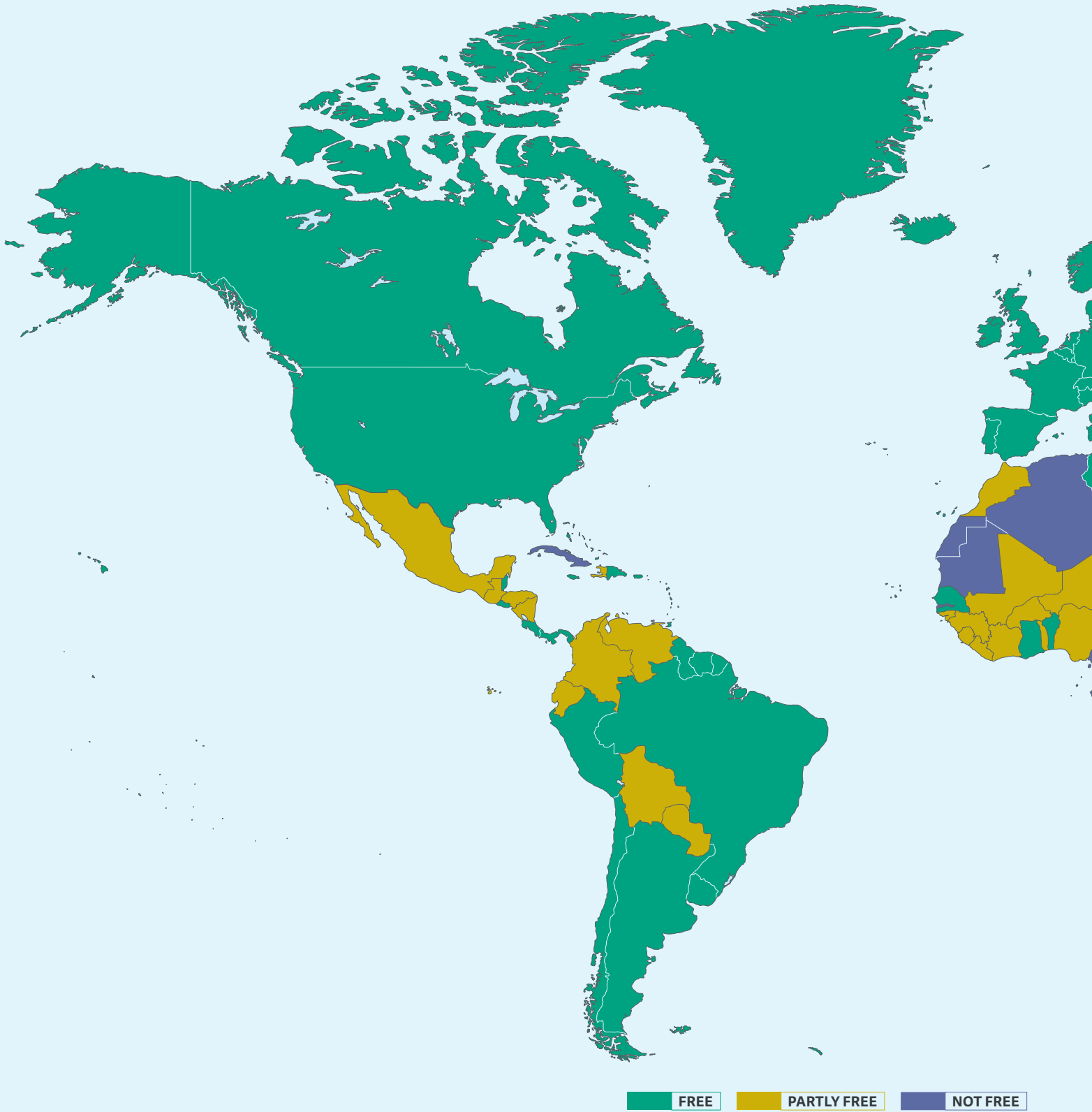


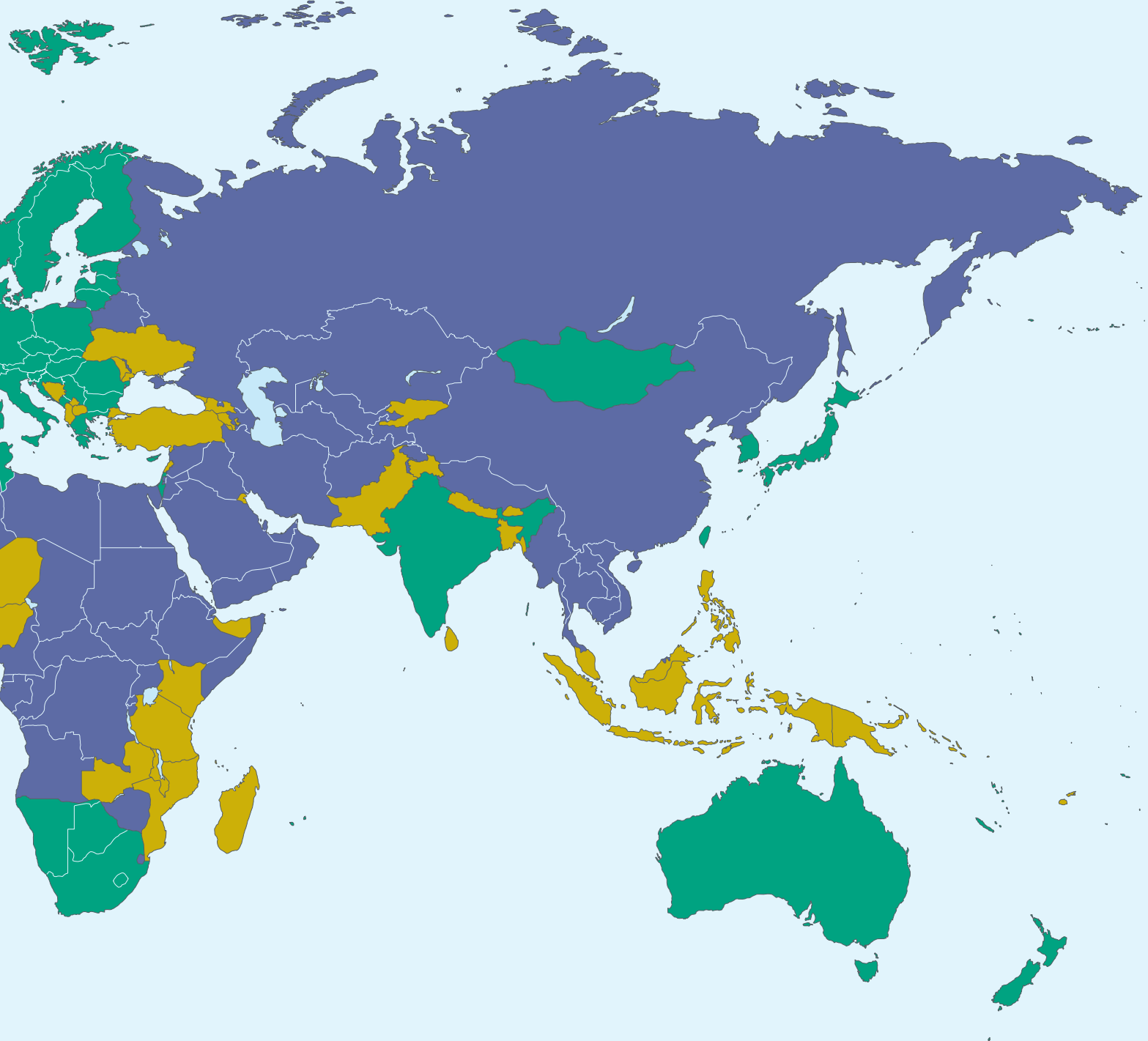
EUROPE: STATUS BY POPULATION



Total population: 616,352,000

FREEDOM IN THE WORLD 2015





Sub-Saharan Africa: Fragile states face challenges from Ebola, Islamist militants

Sub-Saharan Africa again experienced extreme volatility in 2014. News from the continent was dominated by the Ebola outbreak in Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone, and a sharp rise in violence by Islamist militants from Boko Haram in Nigeria and Al-Shabaab in Kenya. However, several other countries, particularly in East Africa, suffered democratic declines during the year, as repressive governments further limited the space for critical views.

In Uganda, a series of recent laws that targeted the opposition, civil society, the LGBT community, and women led to serious rights abuses and increased suppression of dissent. Burundi's government cracked down further on the already-restricted opposition in advance of 2015 elections, and critics of the authorities in Rwanda faced increased surveillance and harassment online.

Civil conflicts sparked by poor governance continued to rage in South Sudan and Central African Republic in 2014. In South Sudan, the war fueled widespread ethnic violence and displacement, and the rival factions failed to agree on a peace deal that would allow the country to hold elections on schedule in 2015. Although Central African Republic formed a transitional government in January in the wake of a March 2013 coup, attacks by Muslim and Christian militias led to a rise in intercommunal clashes and thousands of civilian deaths, and forced more than 800,000 people to flee their homes.

In Burkina Faso, President Blaise Compaoré was forced to resign amid popular protests over his attempt to change the constitution and extend his 27-year rule in 2015. This led to the dissolution of the government and parliament by the military, which took charge of the country.

Improvements were seen in Madagascar and Guinea-Bissau, which held their first elections during late 2013 and 2014 following coups in previous years. It remained uncertain whether these gains would be consolidated.

Notable gains or declines:

Burkina Faso's political rights rating declined from 5 to 6 as a result of the dissolution of the government and parliament by the military, which took charge of the

country after President Blaise Compaoré was forced to resign amid popular protests over his attempt to run for reelection in 2015.

Burundi's political rights rating declined from 5 to 6, and its status declined from Partly Free to Not Free, due to a coordinated government crackdown on opposition party members and critics, with dozens of arrests and harsh sentences imposed on political activists and human rights defenders.

The Gambia received a downward trend arrow due to an amendment to the criminal code that increased the penalty for "aggravated homosexuality" to life in prison, leading to new arrests of suspected LGBT people and an intensified climate of fear.

Guinea-Bissau's political rights rating improved from 6 to 5, and its status improved from Not Free to Partly Free, because the 2014 elections—the first since a 2012 coup—were deemed free and fair by international and national observers, and the opposition was able to compete and increase its participation in government.

Lesotho received a downward trend arrow due to a failed military coup in August, which shook the country's political institutions and left lasting tensions.

Liberia received a downward trend arrow due to the government's imposition of ill-advised quarantines that restricted freedom of movement and employment in some of the country's most destitute areas, as well as several new or revived restrictions on freedoms of the press and assembly.

Madagascar's political rights rating improved from 5 to 4 due to a peaceful transition after recovery from an earlier coup and the seating of a new parliament that included significant opposition representation.

Nigeria's civil liberties rating declined from 4 to 5 due a sharp deterioration in conditions for residents of areas affected by the Boko Haram insurgency, including mass displacement and a dramatic increase in violence perpetrated by both the militants and security forces.

Rwanda's civil liberties rating declined from 5 to 6 due to the narrowing space for expression and

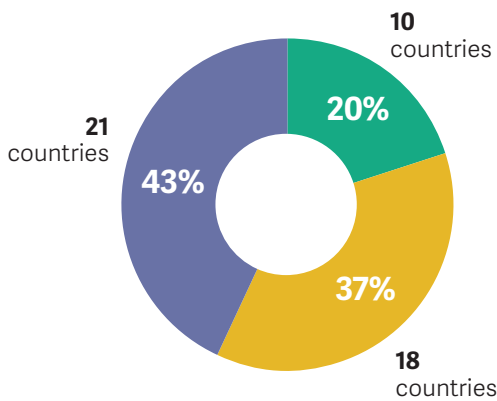
discussion of views that are critical of the government, particularly on the internet, amid increased suspicions of government surveillance of private communications.

South Sudan's political rights rating declined from 6 to 7 due to the intensification of the civil war, which derailed the electoral timetable and featured serious human rights abuses by the combatants, including deliberate attacks on rival ethnic groups for political reasons.

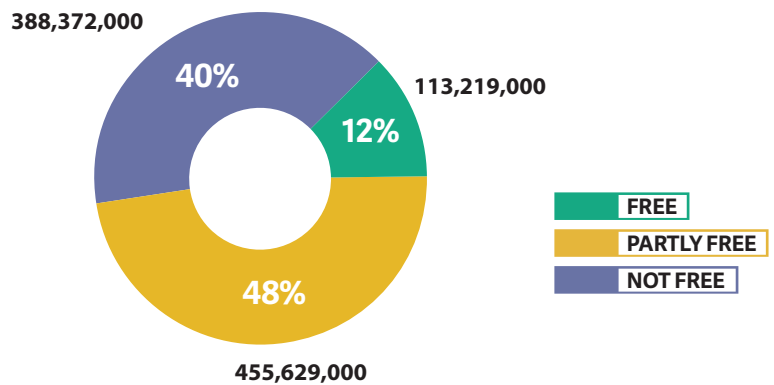
Swaziland received a downward trend arrow due to an intensified crackdown on freedom of expression, including the jailing of a journalist and a lawyer for criticizing the country's chief justice.

Uganda's civil liberties rating declined from 4 to 5, and its status declined from Partly Free to Not Free, due to increased violations of individual rights and the freedoms of expression, assembly, and association, particularly for opposition supporters, civil society groups, women, and the LGBT community.

SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA: STATUS BY COUNTRY



SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA: STATUS BY POPULATION



Total population: 957,220,000

Americas: Insecurity in Mexico, opportunity in Cuba

In Mexico, public outrage at the authorities' failure to stem criminal violence and corruption reached a boiling point after the disappearance of 43 politically active students in Guerrero. Protests initially led by the families of the students, who were killed by a criminal gang linked to local officials, grew into mass demonstrations across the country that challenged the administration of President Enrique Peña Nieto. Organized crime and gang violence also continued to rise in Honduras, Guatemala, and El Salvador, leading thousands of citizens to flee to the United States during the year.

A major development in the region was the announcement that the United States and Cuba had agreed to the normalization of relations after a rupture

of more than 50 years. Although Cuba is the Americas' worst-rated country in *Freedom in the World*, it has shown modest progress over the past several years, with Cubans gaining more rights to establish private businesses and travel abroad. In 2014, Cuba registered improvement for a growth in independent media, most notably the new digital newspaper *14ymedio*. While it remains illegal to print and distribute such media, independent journalists have found ways to share their stories online and via data packets that circulate in the black market. As part of the normalization agreement, Cuba released a number of political prisoners, including U.S. contractor Alan Gross. However, the accord included no other human rights stipulations.

The United States experienced a wave of protests over separate police killings of unarmed black males in Missouri, New York, and elsewhere, and the repeated failure of prosecutors to secure indictments of the officers responsible. The protests led to a variety of proposals for reforming police tactics, including the introduction of video cameras to record officers' interactions with civilians. Separately, in December the Senate released a lengthy report on the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA)'s torture and mistreatment of terrorism suspects in the years immediately after the 2001 terrorist attacks on the country. The report detailed the frequency and severity of CIA interrogation techniques, as well as the lack of oversight by the White House and Congress. Human rights groups and others reiterated calls for the prosecution of those responsible for the abuses, but critics said the report was biased, and there were no immediate signs of a new criminal investigation.

The governments of Venezuela and Ecuador continued their pattern of cracking down on the political opposition and other critical voices. Venezuelan authorities responded to opposition-led demonstrations in the spring with particularly repressive measures, including mass arrests, excessive force, and alleged physical abuse of detained protesters.

Notable gains or declines:

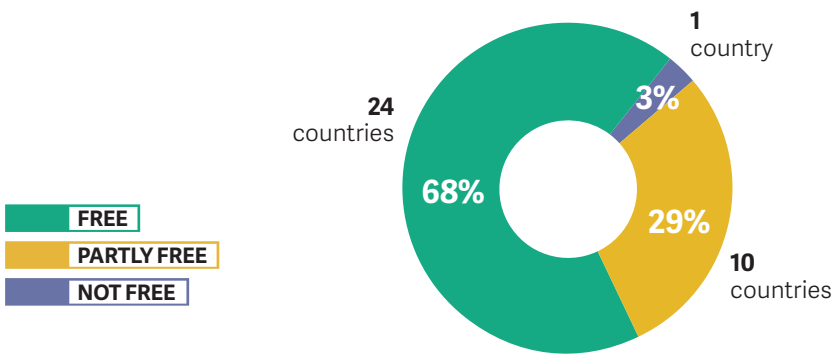
Ecuador received a downward trend arrow due to increased limits on freedom of expression, including the monitoring of online content and harassment of bloggers and social-media users.

Haiti's political rights rating declined from 4 to 5 due to its failure to hold constitutionally mandated parliamentary and municipal elections for three years, use of the judicial system to persecute political opponents and human rights defenders, and tolerance of violence against media that are critical of the government.

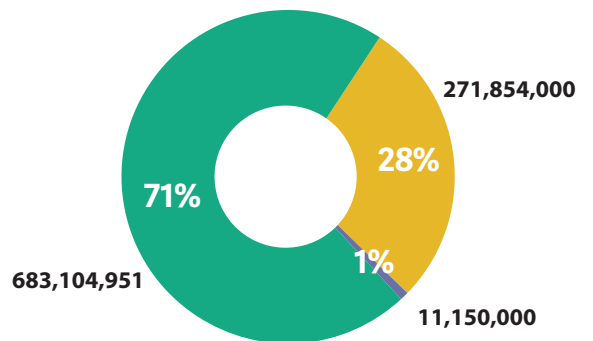
Mexico received a downward trend arrow due to the forced disappearance of 43 students who were engaging in political activities that reportedly angered local authorities in the town of Iguala, Guerrero, an atrocity that highlighted the extent of corruption among local authorities and the environment of impunity in the country.

Venezuela received a downward trend arrow due to the government's repressive response to antigovernment demonstrations, including violence by security forces, the politicized arrests of opposition supporters, and the legal system's failure to protect basic due process rights for all detained Venezuelans.

AMERICAS: STATUS BY COUNTRY



AMERICAS: STATUS BY POPULATION



Total population: 966,108,951

Conclusion: The system of choice

Along with the emergence of popular movements for democratic change, the past year brought clear evidence of crisis in major undemocratic states.

For some time now, the momentum of world politics has favored democracy's adversaries. While the dramatic gains of the late 20th century have not been erased, the institutions meant to ensure fair elections, a combative press, checks on state power, and probity in government and commerce are showing wear and tear in the new or revived democracies of Central Europe, Latin America, and Asia. In the Middle East, the potential of the Arab Spring has given way to the chaos and carnage that prevail in Syria, Iraq, Libya, and Yemen, and to a ruthless dictatorship in Egypt. In Africa, the promise of freedom survives, but the dominant trend is one of corruption, internal conflict, terrorism, and ugly campaigns against the LGBT community. Even in the United States, the year's headlines featured racial strife, a renewed argument over counterterrorism tactics, and political gridlock.

There are, some might say, few compelling advertisements today for the benefits of democratic government, and few signs that the retreat of open political systems can be reversed. However, several major events during 2014 suggest that this gloomy assessment is off the mark.

In Ukraine, hundreds of thousands of people rose up to defy a kleptocratic leadership that offered the country a political and economic dead end. Given the choice between a future course patterned on Russian authoritarianism and a path toward Europe and its democratic standards, the majority did not hesitate in choosing the option of freedom, even with its uncertainties. The Kremlin has imposed a terrible

punishment for this decision, but so far Ukrainians have not wavered in their defiance.

In Hong Kong, the student-led Umbrella Movement emerged after the Communist leadership in Beijing announced that contrary to previous commitments and public expectations, elections for chief executive would require candidates to be nominated by a pro-Beijing committee, making universal suffrage a hollow exercise. The controversy epitomized both Beijing's refusal to countenance the basic tenets of democracy and the ultimate weakness of its legitimacy among the public. It also stood as a powerful reminder that while China's model of state-driven growth combined with strict political control is attractive to elites in authoritarian settings (and to some in democracies as well), ordinary people, and especially the young, find China's rejection of freedom profoundly unappealing. Notably, the people of Taiwan, through student protests and local election results during the year, strongly voiced their preference for a future in which popular sovereignty prevails.

Along with the emergence of popular movements for democratic change, the past year brought clear evidence of crisis in major undemocratic states.

In Venezuela, a toxic mixture of corruption, misrule, and oil-price declines brought shortages, rampant inflation, and enhanced repression. Once touted as a possible template for leftist-populist governments across Latin America, the system set in place by the late Hugo Chávez now stands as a textbook case of political and economic dysfunction.

Worst of the Worst

Of the 51 countries and territories designated as Not Free, 12 have been given the worst possible rating of 7 for both political rights and civil liberties:

- Central African Republic
- Equatorial Guinea
- Eritrea
- North Korea
- Saudi Arabia
- Somalia
- Sudan
- Syria
- Turkmenistan
- Uzbekistan
- Tibet
- Western Sahara

The following 7 countries and 3 territories received ratings that were slightly better than the worst possible, with 7 for political rights and 6 for civil liberties:

- Bahrain
- Belarus
- Chad
- China
- Cuba
- Laos
- South Sudan
- Crimea
- Gaza Strip
- South Ossetia

Plummeting oil prices also revealed the weaknesses of Vladimir Putin's dictatorship. But Russia's problems run deeper than a vulnerability to the energy market. Corruption, cronyism, and the absence of the rule of law have discouraged investment and economic diversification. Pervasive propaganda has virtually eliminated critical voices from policy debates. And the absence of checks on presidential power has led to disastrous foreign adventures and diplomatic blunders.

Tolerating risk

These and other examples from the year should remind the world how much democracy matters. Antidemocratic practices lead to civil war and humanitarian crisis. They facilitate the growth of terrorist movements, whose effects inevitably spread beyond national borders. Corruption and poor governance fuel economic instability, which can also have regional or even global consequences.

Will the world's established democracies come to recognize that the global assault on free institutions poses a threat to their own national interests? The sanctions placed on Russia by the United States, Europe, and others are a welcome development. They send a message that invading one's neighbor will have repercussions. The same might be said for the coalition against the Islamic State.

But such firm messages have been lacking when despotic regimes intimidate, jail, or kill their own people. President Sisi is treated as a strong ruler and a partner in the fight against terrorism despite his enforcement of a level of repression not seen in Egypt in decades. The leaders of democracies compete for China's favor even as Beijing steps up internal controls and pushes its expansive territorial claims. In Latin America, Brazil and other democracies respond to Venezuela's deterioration with silence. In Asia, major democracies like India and Indonesia have declined to use their influence to encourage a return to civilian rule in Thailand.

In short, democracies often seem determined to wait for authoritarian misrule to blossom into international catastrophe before they take remedial action. This is unfortunate, as even the most powerful repressive regimes have shown that they are susceptible to pressures from their own people and from the outside as well. And ordinary citizens have exhibited a willingness to challenge rulers with established histories of bloodletting in the service of political control. Democracies face many problems of their own, but their biggest mistake would be to accept the proposition that they are impotent in the face of strongmen for whom bullying and lies are the fundamental currencies of political exchange. This is clearly not the case, even in such difficult times.

INDEPENDENT COUNTRIES

Country	Freedom Status	PR	CL	Trend Arrow
Afghanistan	Not Free	6	6	↓
Albania*	Partly Free	3	3	
Algeria	Not Free	6	5	
Andorra*	Free	1	1	
Angola	Not Free	6	5	
Antigua and Barbuda*	Free	2	2	
Argentina*	Free	2	2	
Armenia	Partly Free	5	4	
Australia*	Free	1	1	
Austria*	Free	1	1	
Azerbaijan	Not Free	6	6	↓
Bahamas*	Free	1	1	
Bahrain	Not Free	7▼	6	
Bangladesh*	Partly Free	4▼	4	
Barbados*	Free	1	1	
Belarus	Not Free	7	6	
Belgium*	Free	1	1	
Belize*	Free	1	2	
Benin*	Free	2	2	
Bhutan*	Partly Free	3	4	
Bolivia*	Partly Free	3	3	
Bosnia and Herzegovina*	Partly Free	4▼	3	
Botswana*	Free	3	2	
Brazil*	Free	2	2	
Brunei	Not Free	6	5	
Bulgaria*	Free	2	2	
Burkina Faso	Partly Free	6▼	3	
Burundi	Not Free ▼	6▼	5	
Cambodia	Not Free	6	5	
Cameroon	Not Free	6	6	

PR and CL stand for political rights and civil liberties, respectively; 1 represents the most free and 7 the least free rating.

▲ ▼ up or down indicates an improvement or decline in ratings or status since the last survey.

↑ ↓ up or down indicates a trend of positive or negative changes that took place but were not sufficient to result in a change in political rights or civil liberties ratings.

* indicates a country's status as an electoral democracy.

NOTE: The ratings reflect global events from January 1, 2014, through December 31, 2014.

INDEPENDENT COUNTRIES *continued*

Country	Freedom Status	PR	CL	Trend Arrow
Canada*	Free	1	1	
Cape Verde*	Free	1	1	
Central African Republic	Not Free	7	7	
Chad	Not Free	7	6	
Chile*	Free	1	1	
China	Not Free	7	6	
Colombia*	Partly Free	3	4	
Comoros*	Partly Free	3	4	
Congo (Brazzaville)	Not Free	6	5	
Congo (Kinshasa)	Not Free	6	6	
Costa Rica*	Free	1	1	
Côte d'Ivoire	Partly Free	5	4	
Croatia*	Free	1	2	
Cuba	Not Free	7	6	
Cyprus*	Free	1	1	
Czech Republic*	Free	1	1	
Denmark*	Free	1	1	
Djibouti	Not Free	6	5	
Dominica*	Free	1	1	
Dominican Republic*	Free	2	3	
East Timor*	Partly Free	3	3▲	
Ecuador*	Partly Free	3	3	↓
Egypt	Not Free	6	5	↓
El Salvador*	Free	2	3	
Equatorial Guinea	Not Free	7	7	
Eritrea	Not Free	7	7	
Estonia*	Free	1	1	
Ethiopia	Not Free	6	6	
Fiji*	Partly Free	3▲	4	
Finland*	Free	1	1	
France*	Free	1	1	
Gabon	Not Free	6	5	
The Gambia	Not Free	6	6	↓
Georgia*	Partly Free	3	3	
Germany*	Free	1	1	
Ghana*	Free	1	2	
Greece*	Free	2	2	

INDEPENDENT COUNTRIES *continued*

Country	Freedom Status	PR	CL	Trend Arrow
Grenada*	Free	1	2	
Guatemala*	Partly Free	3	4	
Guinea	Partly Free	5	5	
Guinea-Bissau	Partly Free ▲	5 ▲	5	
Guyana*	Free	2	3	
Haiti	Partly Free	5 ▼	5	
Honduras*	Partly Free	4	4	
Hungary*	Free	2 ▼	2	
Iceland*	Free	1	1	
India*	Free	2	3	
Indonesia*	Partly Free	2	4	
Iran	Not Free	6	6	
Iraq	Not Free	6 ▼	6	
Ireland*	Free	1	1	
Israel*	Free	1	2	
Italy*	Free	1	1	
Jamaica*	Free	2	3	
Japan*	Free	1	1	
Jordan	Not Free	6	5	
Kazakhstan	Not Free	6	5	
Kenya*	Partly Free	4	4	
Kiribati*	Free	1	1	
Kosovo*	Partly Free	4 ▲	4	
Kuwait	Partly Free	5	5	
Kyrgyzstan	Partly Free	5	5	↓
Laos	Not Free	7	6	
Latvia*	Free	2	2	
Lebanon	Partly Free	5	4	↓
Lesotho*	Free	2	3	↓
Liberia*	Partly Free	3	4	↓

PR and CL stand for political rights and civil liberties, respectively; 1 represents the most free and 7 the least free rating.

▲ ▼ up or down indicates an improvement or decline in ratings or status since the last survey.

↑ ↓ up or down indicates a trend of positive or negative changes that took place but were not sufficient to result in a change in political rights or civil liberties ratings.

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NOTE: The ratings reflect global events from January 1, 2014, through December 31, 2014.

INDEPENDENT COUNTRIES *continued*

Country	Freedom Status	PR	CL	Trend Arrow
Libya	Not Free ▼	6 ▼	6 ▼	
Liechtenstein*	Free	1	1	
Lithuania*	Free	1	1	
Luxembourg*	Free	1	1	
Macedonia*	Partly Free	4 ▼	3	
Madagascar*	Partly Free	4 ▲	4	
Malawi*	Partly Free	3	4	
Malaysia	Partly Free	4	4	↓
Maldives*	Partly Free	4	4	
Mali	Partly Free	5	4	
Malta*	Free	1	1	
Marshall Islands*	Free	1	1	
Mauritania	Not Free	6	5	
Mauritius*	Free	1	2	
Mexico*	Partly Free	3	3	↓
Micronesia*	Free	1	1	
Moldova*	Partly Free	3	3	
Monaco*	Free	2	1	
Mongolia*	Free	1	2	
Montenegro*	Free	3	2	
Morocco	Partly Free	5	4	
Mozambique	Partly Free	4	3	
Myanmar	Not Free	6	6 ▼	
Namibia*	Free	2	2	
Nauru*	Free	1	2 ▼	
Nepal*	Partly Free	4	4	
Netherlands*	Free	1	1	
New Zealand*	Free	1	1	
Nicaragua	Partly Free	4	3	
Niger*	Partly Free	3	4	
Nigeria	Partly Free	4	5 ▼	
North Korea	Not Free	7	7	
Norway*	Free	1	1	
Oman	Not Free	6	5	
Pakistan*	Partly Free	4	5	
Palau*	Free	1	1	
Panama*	Free	2	2	

INDEPENDENT COUNTRIES *continued*

Country	Freedom Status	PR	CL	Trend Arrow
Papua New Guinea*	Partly Free	4 ▼	3	
Paraguay*	Partly Free	3	3	
Peru*	Free	2	3	
Philippines*	Partly Free	3	3	
Poland*	Free	1	1	
Portugal*	Free	1	1	
Qatar	Not Free	6	5	
Romania*	Free	2	2	
Russia	Not Free	6	6 ▼	
Rwanda	Not Free	6	6 ▼	
Saint Kitts and Nevis*	Free	1	1	
Saint Lucia*	Free	1	1	
Saint Vincent and Grenadines*	Free	1	1	
Samoa*	Free	2	2	
San Marino*	Free	1	1	
São Tomé and Príncipe*	Free	2	2	
Saudi Arabia	Not Free	7	7	
Senegal*	Free	2	2	
Serbia*	Free	2	2	
Seychelles*	Partly Free	3	3	
Sierra Leone*	Partly Free	3	3	
Singapore	Partly Free	4	4	
Slovakia*	Free	1	1	
Slovenia*	Free	1	1	
Solomon Islands*	Partly Free	3 ▲	3	
Somalia	Not Free	7	7	
South Africa*	Free	2	2	
South Korea*	Free	2	2	↓
South Sudan	Not Free	7 ▼	6	
Spain*	Free	1	1	

PR and CL stand for political rights and civil liberties, respectively; 1 represents the most free and 7 the least free rating.

▲ ▼ up or down indicates an improvement or decline in ratings or status since the last survey.

↑ ↓ up or down indicates a trend of positive or negative changes that took place but were not sufficient to result in a change in political rights or civil liberties ratings.

* indicates a country's status as an electoral democracy.

NOTE: The ratings reflect global events from January 1, 2014, through December 31, 2014.

Country	Freedom Status	PR	CL	Trend Arrow
Sri Lanka	Partly Free	5	5 ▼	
Sudan	Not Free	7	7	
Suriname*	Free	2	2	
Swaziland	Not Free	7	5	↓
Sweden*	Free	1	1	
Switzerland*	Free	1	1	
Syria	Not Free	7	7	↓
Taiwan*	Free	1	2	
Tajikistan	Not Free	6	6	↓
Tanzania*	Partly Free	3	3	
Thailand	Not Free ▼	6 ▼	5 ▼	
Togo	Partly Free	4	4	
Tonga*	Free	2	2	
Trinidad and Tobago*	Free	2	2	
Tunisia*	Free ▲	1 ▲	3	
Turkey*	Partly Free	3	4	↓
Turkmenistan	Not Free	7	7	
Tuvalu*	Free	1	1	
Uganda	Not Free ▼	6	5 ▼	
Ukraine*	Partly Free	3 ▲	3	
United Arab Emirates	Not Free	6	6	
United Kingdom*	Free	1	1	
United States*	Free	1	1	
Uruguay*	Free	1	1	
Uzbekistan	Not Free	7	7	
Vanuatu*	Free	2	2	
Venezuela	Partly Free	5	5	↓
Vietnam	Not Free	7	5	
Yemen	Not Free	6	6	↓
Zambia*	Partly Free	3	4	
Zimbabwe	Not Free	5	6	

PR and CL stand for political rights and civil liberties, respectively; 1 represents the most free and 7 the least free rating.

▲ ▼ up or down indicates an improvement or decline in ratings or status since the last survey.

↑ ↓ up or down indicates a trend of positive or negative changes that took place but were not sufficient to result in a change in political rights or civil liberties ratings.

* indicates a country's status as an electoral democracy.

NOTE: The ratings reflect global events from January 1, 2014, through December 31, 2014.

RELATED TERRITORIES

Territory	Freedom Status	PR	CL	Trend Arrow
Hong Kong	Partly Free	5	2	↓
Puerto Rico	Free	1	2	

DISPUTED TERRITORIES

Territory	Freedom Status	PR	CL	Trend Arrow
Abkhazia	Partly Free	4	5	
Crimea	Not Free	7	6	
Gaza Strip	Not Free	7	6	
Indian Kashmir	Partly Free	4	4	
Nagorno-Karabakh	Partly Free	5	5	
Northern Cyprus	Free	2	2	
Pakistani Kashmir	Not Free	6	5	
Somaliland	Partly Free	4	5	
South Ossetia	Not Free	7	6	
Tibet	Not Free	7	7	
Transnistria	Not Free	6	6	
West Bank	Not Free	6	5	
Western Sahara	Not Free	7	7	

PR and CL stand for political rights and civil liberties, respectively; 1 represents the most free and 7 the least free rating.

▲ ▼ up or down indicates an improvement or decline in ratings or status since the last survey.

↑ ↓ up or down indicates a trend of positive or negative changes that took place but were not sufficient to result in a change in political rights or civil liberties ratings.

* The electoral democracy designation does not apply to territories.

NOTE: The ratings reflect global events from January 1, 2014, through December 31, 2014.

Antidemocratic practices lead to civil war and humanitarian crisis. They facilitate the growth of terrorist movements, whose effects inevitably spread beyond national borders. Corruption and poor governance fuel economic instability.



Freedom House is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization that supports democratic change, monitors freedom, and advocates for democracy and human rights.

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