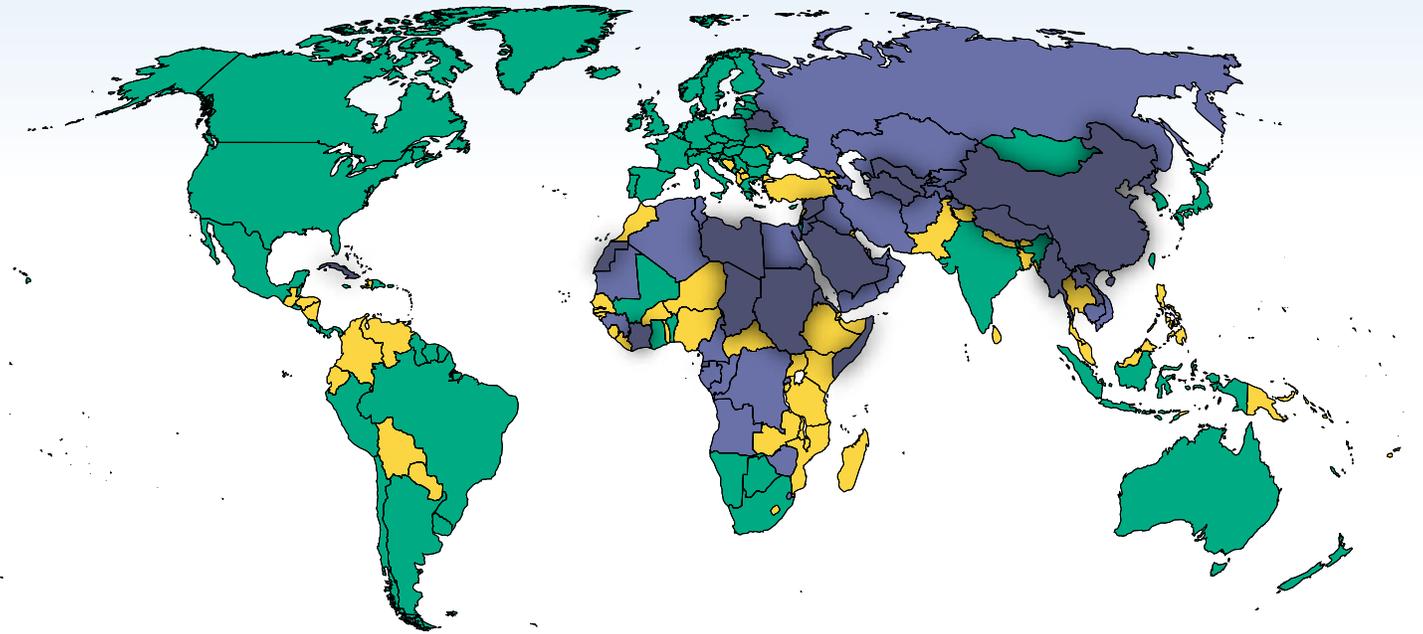


Worst of the Worst 2011

THE WORLD'S MOST REPRESSIVE SOCIETIES



SELECTED DATA FROM *FREEDOM IN THE WORLD*, FREEDOM HOUSE'S
ANNUAL GLOBAL SURVEY OF POLITICAL RIGHTS AND CIVIL LIBERTIES

BELARUS—BURMA—CHAD—CHINA—CÔTE D'IVOIRE—CUBA
EQUATORIAL GUINEA—ERITREA—LAOS—LIBYA—NORTH KOREA
SAUDI ARABIA—SOMALIA—SUDAN—SYRIA—TURKMENISTAN—UZBEKISTAN
TIBET—SOUTH OSSETIA—WESTERN SAHARA



Worst of the Worst 2011: The World's Most Repressive Societies

Freedom House has prepared this special report entitled *Worst of the Worst: The World's Most Repressive Societies*, as a companion to its annual survey on the state of global political rights and civil liberties, *Freedom in the World*. The special report provides summary country reports, tables, and graphical information on the countries that receive the lowest combined ratings for political rights and civil liberties in *Freedom in the World*, and whose citizens endure systematic and pervasive human rights violations.

The purpose of this report is to focus the attention of those who are working to advance respect for fundamental human rights around the world, as well as those who are actively engaged in suppressing such rights. The report serves a reminder that over 1.6 billion people—more than 24 percent of the world's population—suffer every day from the basic indignities of not being able to express their thoughts and opinions, of not having a say in who governs them and how the wealth of their land and labor is spent, and of being unable to obtain justice for crimes perpetrated against them.

In many of these countries, individuals are severely restricted in making personal choices about where to live, work, and travel. Even the freedom to practice, or not practice, a particular religious faith is often limited or becomes a cause for harassment, imprisonment, or loss of life. Hundreds of thousands of human beings in these countries languish every day in prisons or labor camps—generally in subhuman conditions and subject to physical or mental abuse—purely for their political or religious beliefs. This report seeks to highlight their plight and serves as a call to the world's governments, policymakers, human rights organizations, and democracy advocates to speak out and use whatever resources they can bring to bear to improve

respect for the most basic human rights in these countries. In particular, the report is designed to direct the attention of the UN Human Rights Council to states and territories that deserve investigation and condemnation for their widespread violations.

Worst of the Worst

Included in this year's report are nine countries designated as the Worst of the Worst: **Burma, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Libya, North Korea, Somalia, Sudan, Turkmenistan,** and **Uzbekistan.** Also included is one territory, **Tibet,** whose inhabitants suffer similarly intense repression. All 10 received *Freedom in the World's* lowest ratings: 7 for political rights and 7 for civil liberties (based on a 1 to 7 scale, with 1 representing the most free and 7 the least free). Within these entities, state control over daily life is pervasive, independent organizations and political opposition are banned or suppressed, and fear of retribution for independent thought and action is ubiquitous.

On the Threshold

The report includes eight additional countries whose ratings fall just short of the bottom of Freedom House's ratings scale: **Belarus, Chad, China, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Laos, Saudi Arabia,** and **Syria.** Two territories, **South Ossetia** and **Western Sahara,** also fall into this group. All 10—which received ratings of 7 for political rights and 6 for civil liberties—offer very limited scope for private discussion, while severely suppressing opposition political activity, impeding independent organizing, and censoring or punishing criticism of the state.

Equatorial Guinea: This country's deplorable human rights record drew attention in 2010 when activists convinced UNESCO to suspend plans for a prize sponsored by longtime authoritarian president Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo. Security forces continued to act with impunity, and trials in connection with a 2009 coup attempt resulted in four executions that were decried by international human rights organizations.

Libya: In response to antigovernment protests inspired by recent revolutions in Egypt and Tunisia, Libyan leader Mu'ammar al-Qadhafi allegedly ordered military attacks on innocent Libyan civilians. Such attacks have escalated in the civil conflict that ensued, resulting in thousands of deaths since early 2011.

North Korea: The regime in this severely isolated country holds its nearly 23 million citizens in a state of virtual slavery. Over 200,000 people are confined in a network of *kwan li so*, or political prison camps, where they endure horrific conditions including forced labor, severe malnutrition, and torture.

Somalia: The Somali state has in many respects ceased to exist, and there is no governing authority with the ability to protect political rights and civil liberties. The main insurgent group, the Shabaab, tightened its grip over much of southern and central Somalia in 2010, enforcing a brutal form of Islamic law in areas under its control.

Tibet: Under Chinese rule, Tibetans lack the right to determine their political future or freely elect their own leaders. As of October 2010, at least 800 political and religious prisoners reportedly remained in custody. In March of that year, approximately 400 Tibetans were detained by authorities ahead of the sensitive anniversary of the Dalai Lama's flight from Tibet.

Change in the Most Repressive Societies

Only one country, **North Korea**, has been at the bottom of the ratings scale every year since the *Freedom in the World* survey began nearly 40 years ago, and only **Somalia** has been either at the bottom or one step above every year. However, three-fourths of the countries included in this year's special report have spent over 25 years in at least one of

those two positions, whether consecutively or non-consecutively, illustrating the deep entrenchment of the antidemocratic power structures in these countries and the difficulty of influencing them in any meaningful way.

Yet change is not impossible. In the 2011 edition of *Freedom in the World*, which covers events in 2010, **Guinea** pulled back from its Worst of the Worst threshold position and received a freedom status improvement from Not Free to Partly Free due to a transition from military to civilian rule, credible presidential election held in November 2010, and heightened observance of freedoms of expression and association. Likewise, in 2006, **Haiti** rose from the Worst of the Worst threshold and attained a Partly Free status following presidential, municipal, and parliamentary elections that were deemed to be the fairest in Haitian history. Less significant gains also occurred in **Zimbabwe**, though human rights violations there remain severe and the country continues to be designated Not Free.

On the negative side, **Côte d'Ivoire** returned to the Worst of the Worst threshold this year after a four-year absence due to incumbent president Laurent Gbagbo's refusal to step down or recognize the November 2010 electoral victory of opposition presidential candidate Alassane Ouattara, as well as political violence that stemmed from the postelection standoff, including state security forces' targeting of ethnic minority groups that supported Ouattara. It remains to be seen whether the arrest of Gbagbo and the defeat of his forces with the help of French and UN troops in April 2011 will restore the rule of law and improve the observance of human rights in the country.

While *Freedom in the World 2011* assesses developments during 2010, there have been a number of disturbing events in 2011 that have resulted in a rapid deterioration in human rights conditions in

several Worst of the Worst countries. Violent crackdowns on antigovernment protesters by the regimes in both **Libya** and **Syria** since February 2011 have resulted in hundreds of deaths and an even more dangerous environment for journalists attempting to cover the crises. In **China**, the arbitrary detention of activists has intensified in 2011, as has harassment and intimidation of human rights lawyers, among others. In addition, a violent postelection crackdown and arbitrary arrests in **Belarus**, a country that has ranked among the Worst of the Worst since 2004, has contributed to the downward spiral of human rights in an already repressive regime.

Long-Term Global Trends

The last five years have featured an overall decline in global respect for the values of liberal democracy: multiparty elections, the rule of law, freedom of association, freedom of speech, the rights of minorities, and other fundamental, universal human rights. The consecutive annual declines represent the longest period of erosion in political rights and civil liberties in the nearly 40-year history of *Freedom in the World*. New threats have emerged in nearly every region of the world, including heightened attacks on human rights defenders and civil society, increased limits on press freedom and attacks on journalists, and significant restrictions on freedom of expression and association. The countries identified in this report represent the worst-case scenario stemming from these threats. If the negative global trend continues, the number of people living in similarly dire conditions will only grow.

Despite the recent setbacks, however, the world in 2011 is still significantly freer than it was 30 years ago. Dozens of states have replaced right- or left-wing dictatorships and authoritarian regimes with democratically elected governments that largely respect the rule of law and basic civil liberties. *Freedom*

in the World 2011 finds that of 194 countries, 87 (45 percent) are Free and can be said to respect a broad array of basic human rights and political freedoms. An additional 60 (31 percent) are Partly Free, with some abridgments of basic rights and weak enforcement of the rule of law, and 47 countries (24 percent) are Not Free, denying their citizens most basic political and civil rights. In 1980, by contrast, only 31 percent of the world's countries were Free, while 31 percent were Partly Free, and 37 percent were Not Free. In all, some three billion people—43 percent of the world's population—currently live in Free states.

Role of the United Nations

The expansion of democratic governance over the last several decades has important implications for the United Nations and other international organizations. Today, states that respect basic freedoms and the rule of law have greater potential than ever to positively influence global and regional institutions. But they can only achieve that potential by working cooperatively and cohesively on issues of democracy and human rights.

Nowhere is the need for international democratic cooperation more essential than at the UN Human Rights Council. The failure of the council's predecessor, the UN Commission on Human Rights, to effectively address the world's most pressing human rights problems was at the heart of the decision to replace it with the current institution in 2006. Yet the first four years of the council's existence featured few tangible improvements over the defunct commission, despite a clear majority of largely rights-respecting countries among the council's membership.

Fortunately, a number of positive developments at the council in the past year have revealed the body's ability to promote and protect human rights when democratic member states demonstrate the will to elevate

such priorities over regional, economic, and political concerns. The establishment of a new thematic special procedures mandate on freedom of association and a country mandate on Iran, as well as the convening of special sessions and the passage of strong resolutions on Libya and Syria, sent a strong message to the world's worst human rights abusers, warning them that their actions will not be tolerated by the international community. It is our sincere desire that these hard-won accomplishments lead to additional progress at the council, and we offer this report in the hope that it will assist the democratic world in pressing the case for freedom at the United Nations and in other forums.

Paula Schriefer
Director of Advocacy, Freedom House
May 2011

Worst of the Worst 2011:

The World's Most Repressive Societies

Independent Countries

Country	PR	CL	Combined Average Rating	Freedom Status
Belarus	7	6	6.5	Not Free
Burma	7	7	7	Not Free
Chad	7	6	6.5	Not Free
China	7	6	6.5	Not Free
Côte d'Ivoire	7▼	6▼	6.5	Not Free
Cuba	7	6	6.5	Not Free
Equatorial Guinea	7	7	7	Not Free
Eritrea	7	7	7	Not Free
Laos	7	6	6.5	Not Free
Libya	7	7	7	Not Free
North Korea	7	7	7	Not Free
Saudi Arabia	7	6	6.5	Not Free
Somalia	7	7	7	Not Free
Sudan	7	7	7	Not Free
Syria	7	6	6.5	Not Free
Turkmenistan	7	7	7	Not Free
Uzbekistan	7	7	7	Not Free

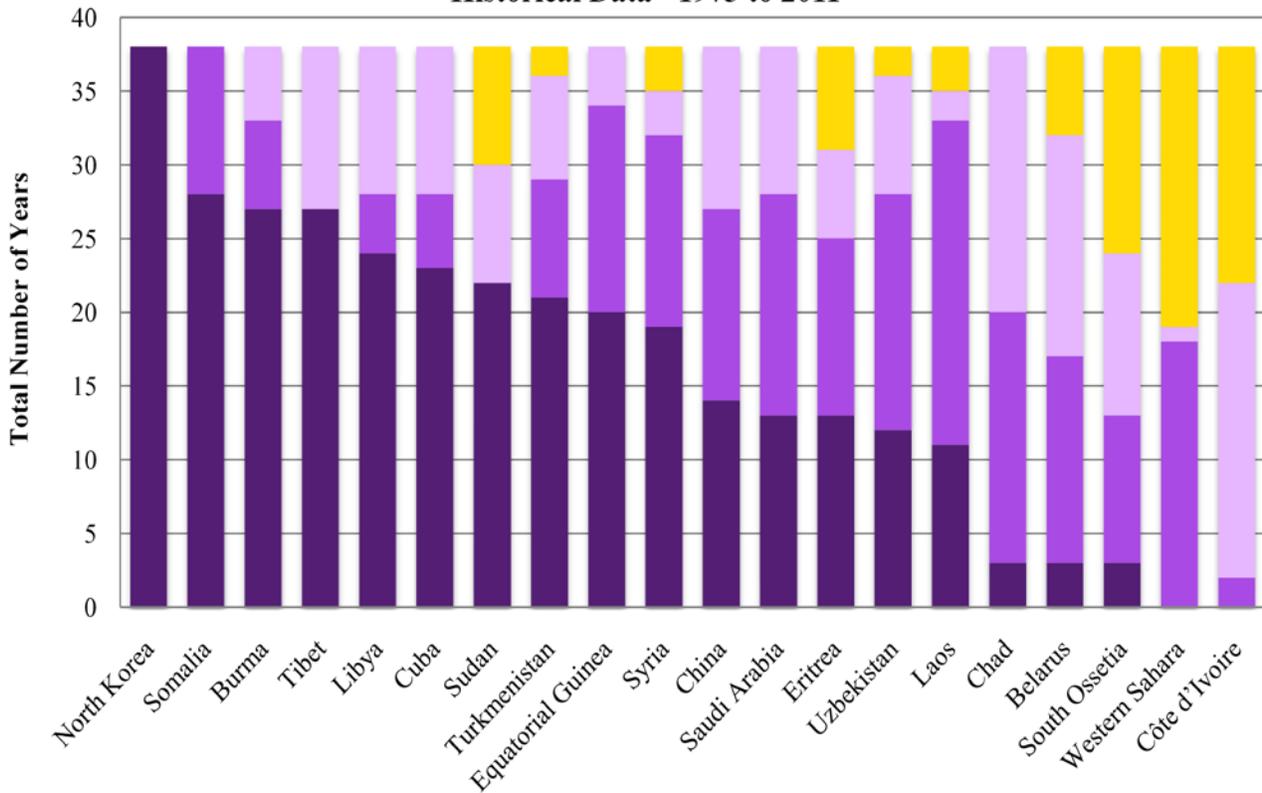
Related and Disputed Territories

Territory	PR	CL	Combined Average Rating	Freedom Status
South Ossetia	7	6	6.5	Not Free
Tibet	7	7	7	Not Free
Western Sahara	7	6	6.5	Not Free

PR and CL stand for political rights and civil liberties, respectively; 1 represents the most free and 7 the least free rating. The ratings reflect an overall judgment based on survey results.

▲ ▼ up or down indicates a change in political rights, civil liberties, or status since the last survey.

**Current Worst of the Worst and Threshold Countries and Territories
Historical Data - 1973 to 2011**



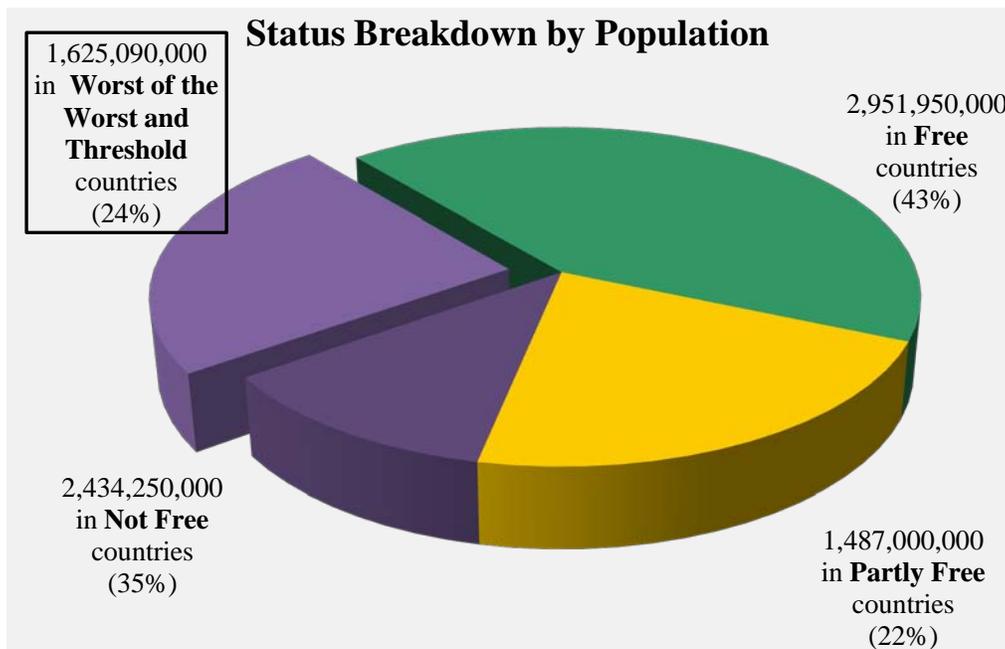
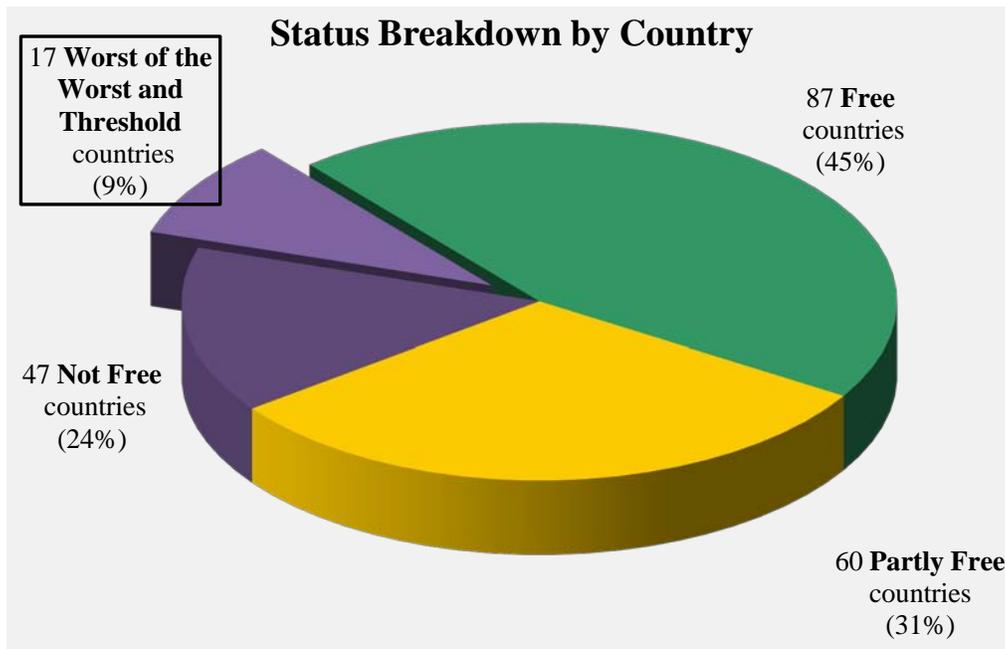
- Combined Average Rating of 7 (Worst of the Worst country or territory)
- Combined Average Rating of 6.5 (Threshold country or territory)
- Combined Average Rating of 5.5–6 (Not Free country or territory)
- Combined Average Rating of 3–5 (Partly Free country or territory)

All countries and territories with a Combined Average Rating of 5.5–7 are Not Free.

Notes:

- Belarus: total number of years includes the ratings for the USSR from 1973 to 1991.
- Eritrea: total number of years includes the ratings for Ethiopia from 1973 to 1993.
- South Ossetia: total number of years includes the ratings for the USSR from 1973 to 1991 and Russia from 1992 to 2008.
- Tibet: total number of years includes the ratings for China from 1973 to 1990.
- Turkmenistan: total number of years includes the ratings for the USSR from 1973 to 1991.
- Uzbekistan: total number of years includes the ratings for the USSR from 1973 to 1991.
- Western Sahara: total number of years includes the ratings for Morocco from 1973 to 1989.

Freedom in the World 2011



*Of the 194 countries evaluated by Freedom House in the *Freedom in the World 2011* survey, 47 are designated as Not Free. Of the 47 Not Free countries, 17 qualify as the world's most repressive societies, with average combined political rights and civil liberties ratings of 6.5 or 7. They comprise 9 percent of the world's countries and 24 percent of the world's population.

Belarus

Political Rights:	7	Population:	9,500,000
Civil Liberties:	6	Capital:	Minsk
Status:	Not Free		

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline for Year under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

Year Under Review	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Rating	6,6,NF	6,6,NF	6,6,NF	7,6,NF						

2010 Key Developments: Alyaksandr Lukashenka won a fourth term as president in a December 2010 election that was neither free nor fair. Although the nine opposition candidates enjoyed some media access during the campaign, the government stacked local electoral commissions to manipulate the ballot count. In a postelection crackdown, Lukashenka's government arrested seven of the former candidates and launched a series of repressive actions that lasted through the end of the year. In September, the controversial death of internet news portal founder Aleh Byabenin added to existing intimidation of independent journalists, though his site, Charter97.org, continued to post reports that were critical of the regime.

Political Rights: Belarus is not an electoral democracy. Serious and widespread irregularities have marred all recent elections, including the December 2010 presidential poll. The constitution vests most power in the president, giving him control over the government, courts, and even the legislative process by stating that presidential decrees have a higher legal force than ordinary legislation. The National Assembly serves largely as a rubber-stamp body. The president is elected for five-year terms, and there are no term limits. Opposition parties have no representation in the National Assembly, while pro-presidential parties serve only superficial functions. During the local elections in April 2010, approximately 360 opposition candidates competed for the 21,000 seats, but many withdrew, claiming that the authorities obstructed their campaigns. Corruption continues to be a serious problem and is fed by the state's dominance of the economy and the overall lack of transparency and accountability in government.

Civil Liberties: Lukashenka's government systematically curtails press freedom. Libel is both a civil and a criminal offense, and an August 2008 media law gives the state a monopoly on information about political, social, and economic affairs. The law gives the cabinet control over internet-based media. State media are subordinated to the president, and harassment and censorship of independent media are routine. A June 2010 presidential decree requires internet cafe owners to identify users and track their online activities. Despite constitutional guarantees that "all religions and faiths shall be equal before the law," government decrees and registration requirements have increasingly restricted religious activity. The Lukashenka government restricts freedom of assembly for critical independent groups. Protests and rallies require authorization from local authorities, who can arbitrarily withhold or revoke permission. When public demonstrations do occur, police frequently break them up and arrest participants. Freedom of association is severely restricted, with more than a hundred of the most active nongovernmental organizations forced to close down between 2003 and 2005. Although the country's constitution calls for judicial independence, courts are subject to significant executive influence. The right to a fair trial is often not respected in cases with political overtones. An internal passport system, in which a passport is required for domestic travel and to secure permanent housing, limits freedom of movement and choice of residence. Ethnic Poles and Roma often face discrimination. There are significant discrepancies in income between men and women, and women are poorly represented in leading government positions. As a result of extreme poverty, many women have become victims of the international sex trade.

Burma (Myanmar)

Political Rights:	7	Population:	53,400,000
Civil Liberties:	7	Capital:	Rangoon [Note: Nay Pyi Taw serves as the administrative capital.]
Status:	Not Free		

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline for Year under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

Year Under Review	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Rating	7,7,NF									

2010 Key Developments: In November 2010, the military junta oversaw Burma’s first parliamentary elections since 1990, thoroughly rigging the process to ensure a sweeping victory for the pro-military Union Solidarity and Development Party. The country’s main opposition party, the National League for Democracy, refused to contest elections it deemed undemocratic and was formally dissolved by the government in September. However, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, the party’s longtime leader, was released in mid-November after years under house arrest. The authorities cancelled voting in several border areas populated by ethnic minorities, where the government had limited control and low-intensity civil conflict continued.

Political Rights: Burma is not an electoral democracy. The military junta long ruled by decree; it controlled all executive, legislative, and judicial powers, suppressed nearly all basic rights, and committed human rights abuses with impunity. Although the 2008 constitution, which the 2010 elections put into effect, establishes a parliament and a civilian president, it also entrenches military dominance, and allows the military to dissolve the civilian government if it determines that the “disintegration of the Union or national solidarity” is at stake. Criticism of the constitution is banned by a 1996 order that carries a penalty of 20 years in prison. The military retains the right to administer its own affairs, and members of the outgoing military government receive blanket immunity for all official acts. Given the lack of transparency and accountability, corruption and economic mismanagement are rampant at both the national and local levels.

Civil Liberties: The junta drastically restricts press freedom and owns or controls all newspapers and broadcast media. Media crackdowns continued in 2010, with at least 10 journalists detained during the year and two video journalists receiving multidecade prison sentences under the repressive Electronic Act. The authorities practice surveillance at internet cafes and regularly jail bloggers. The 2008 constitution provides for freedom of religion. It distinguishes Buddhism as the majority religion but also recognizes Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, and animism. At times the government interferes with religious assemblies and discriminates against minority religious groups. Buddhist temples and monasteries have been kept under close surveillance since the 2007 monk-led protests and subsequent crackdown. Academic freedom is severely limited. Teachers are subject to restrictions on freedom of expression and are held accountable for the political activities of their students. Since the 1988 student prodemocracy demonstrations, the junta has sporadically closed universities and relocated many campuses to relatively isolated areas to disperse the student population. The judiciary is not independent. Judges are appointed or approved by the junta and adjudicate cases according to its decrees. Some of the worst human rights abuses take place in areas populated by ethnic minorities, who comprise roughly 35 percent of Burma’s population. In these border regions the military arbitrarily detains, beats, rapes, and kills civilians. Burmese women have traditionally enjoyed high social and economic status, but domestic violence and trafficking are growing concerns. In the 2010 elections, only 114 out of 3,000 candidates were women. The Women’s League of Burma has accused the military of systematically using rape and forced marriage as a weapon against ethnic minorities.

Chad

Political Rights:	7	Population:	11,500,000
Civil Liberties:	6	Capital:	N'Djamena
Status:	Not Free		

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline for Year under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

Year Under Review	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Rating	6,5,NF	6,5,NF	6,5,NF	6,5,NF	6,5,NF	6,6,NF	7,6,NF	7,6,NF	7,6,NF	7,6,NF

2010 Key Developments: The Chadian government continued to struggle with rebel groups in 2010, but it significantly improved relations with the Sudanese government as the two sides worked to suppress cross-border rebel activity. Also during the year, long-delayed legislative and municipal elections scheduled for November and December were postponed again until February and March 2011, respectively.

Political Rights: Chad is not an electoral democracy. The country has never experienced a free and fair transfer of power through elections. The president is elected for five-year terms, and a 2005 constitutional amendment abolished term limits. The 2006 presidential election was held shortly after a rebel assault on the capital despite calls for a postponement. Many opposition members boycotted the balloting, which was reportedly marred by irregularities, and voter turnout may have been as low as 10 percent in some areas. Legislative elections due in 2006 were repeatedly postponed, and in September 2010 they were pushed back again to February 2011. The next presidential election and municipal elections have been scheduled for the spring of 2011. However, the main opposition bloc has threatened to boycott the polls. The executive branch dominates the judicial and legislative branches, and the president appoints the prime minister. Despite rivalries within President Idriss Deby's northeastern Zaghawa ethnic group, members of that and other northern ethnic groups continue to control Chad's political and economic systems, causing resentment among the country's more than 200 other ethnic groups. Corruption is rampant within Deby's inner circle.

Civil Liberties: Freedom of expression is severely restricted, and self-censorship is common. Broadcast media are controlled by the state. A new media bill passed in August 2010 eliminated imprisonment as a penalty for journalists who commit libel or insult the president, but it prescribed prison terms for "inciting racial and ethnic hatred and condoning violence." Although Chad is a secular state, religion is a divisive force. Muslims, who make up slightly more than half of the population, hold a disproportionately large number of senior government posts, and some policies favor Islam in practice. At the same time, the authorities have banned Muslim groups that are seen as promoting violence. The government does not restrict academic freedom. Despite the constitutional guarantee of free assembly, the authorities ban demonstrations by groups thought to be critical of the government. Insecurity in the east and south has severely hindered the activities of humanitarian organizations in recent years. The constitution guarantees the rights to strike and unionize, but a 2007 law imposed new limits on public-sector workers' right to strike. The rule of law and the judicial system remain weak, with courts heavily influenced by the political leadership. Human rights groups credibly accuse the security forces and rebel groups of killing and torturing with impunity. The army and its paramilitary forces, as well as rebel forces, have recruited child soldiers. Chadian women face widespread discrimination and violence. Female genital mutilation is illegal but routinely practiced by several ethnic groups.

China

Political Rights:	7	Population:	1,338,100,000
Civil Liberties:	6	Capital:	Beijing
Status:	Not Free		

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline for Year under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

Year Under Review	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Rating	7,6,NF									

2010 Key Developments: While China’s activist community was encouraged by the decision to grant the 2010 Nobel Peace Prize to jailed democracy advocate Liu Xiaobo, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) responded with a crackdown on Liu’s associates and widespread censorship of the news. The repression reflected a broader trend toward a strengthened state security apparatus. In 2010, internet censorship and forced evictions increased; judicial procedures in commercial cases showed signs of political intervention; leading human rights lawyers were harassed, disbarred, and “disappeared”; and new regulations made it more difficult for civil society groups to obtain funding from overseas donors. Nevertheless, many citizens continued to defy government hostility and asserted their rights to free expression and association.

Political Rights: China is not an electoral democracy. The CCP has a monopoly on political power; its nine-member Politburo Standing Committee sets government policy. A 3,000-member National People’s Congress is, in principle, China’s parliament, but it remains subordinate to the party and meets for just two weeks a year. The only competitive elections are for village committees and urban residency councils, but these are often closely controlled by local party branches, whose role includes vetting candidates. Opposition groups are suppressed, and activists publicly calling for reform of the one-party political system risk arrest and imprisonment. In addition to Nobel laureate Liu Xiaobo, who is serving an 11-year prison sentence for drafting and circulating the prodemocracy manifesto Charter 08, tens of thousands of others are thought to be held in prisons and extrajudicial forms of detention for their political or religious views. Despite thousands of prosecutions launched each year and new regulations on open government, corruption remains endemic, particularly at the local level.

Civil Liberties: Freedom of the press remains severely restricted, particularly on topics deemed sensitive by the CCP. Journalists who do not adhere to party directives are harassed, fired, or jailed. In 2010, physical violence against journalists increased, culminating with the December killing of a reporter in Xinjiang who had written about the demolition of a factory to make way for housing for government officials. While China is home to the largest number of internet users globally, the government maintains an elaborate apparatus for censoring and monitoring internet use, frequently blocking websites and deleting content it deems politically threatening. In 2010, conditions for ethnic and religious minorities remained harsh, and in some cases worsened. Ethnic Uighur webmasters and journalists were sentenced to long prison terms after unfair trials, including two who received sentences of life imprisonment; the persecution of unauthorized Christian groups intensified toward year’s end; and the Falun Gong spiritual group was a key target of crackdowns ahead of the Shanghai World Expo as well as a reinvigorated three-year forced conversion program. Freedoms of assembly and association are severely curtailed. Nongovernmental organizations are required to register and follow strict regulations, including vague prohibitions on advocating non-CCP rule, “damaging national unity,” or “upsetting ethnic harmony.” The only legal labor union is government controlled. Collective bargaining is legal but does not occur in practice, and independent labor leaders are harassed. Nevertheless, a series of workers’ strikes at foreign-owned factories in 2010 yielded increased wages. The CCP controls the judiciary and directs verdicts and sentences, particularly in politically sensitive cases. Torture remains widespread, with coerced confessions routinely admitted as evidence. Serious violations of women’s rights continue, including domestic violence, human trafficking, and the use of coercive methods to enforce the one-child policy.

Côte d'Ivoire

Political Rights: 7 ↓
Civil Liberties: 6 ↓
Status: Not Free

Population: 22,000,000
Capital: Yamoussoukro (official),
Abidjan (de facto)

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline for Year under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

Year Under Review	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Rating	5,4,PF	6,6,NF	6,5,NF	6,6,NF	6,6,NF	7,6,NF	7,5,NF	6,5,NF	6,5,NF	7,6,NF

Ratings Change: Côte d'Ivoire's political rights rating declined from 6 to 7 and its civil liberties rating declined from 5 to 6 due to incumbent president Laurent Gbagbo's refusal to step down or recognize the November 2010 electoral victory of opposition presidential candidate Alassane Ouattara, as well as political violence that stemmed from the postelection standoff, including state security forces' targeting of ethnic minority groups that supported Ouattara.

2010 Key Developments: A long-delayed presidential election, required under a 2007 peace accord signed by Gbagbo and rebel leader Guillaume Soro, was finally held in 2010 despite the failure of a disarmament program and problems with the voter registration process. While the October first round was peaceful and deemed relatively free and fair by the international community, Gbagbo refused to concede his loss to the internationally recognized winner of the November runoff, Alassane Ouattara. A curfew was imposed, international media were banned, and the country's borders were closed as violence escalated between the two men's supporters at year's end.

Political Rights: Côte d'Ivoire is not an electoral democracy. The constitution provides for the popular election of a president and a 225-seat unicameral National Assembly for five-year terms. However, the last legislative elections were held in 2000, and the 2010 presidential election degenerated into a violent stalemate, with both candidates declaring themselves president and the prime minister resigning in protest. Corruption is a serious problem, and perpetrators rarely face prosecution or public exposure. Earnings from informal taxes and the sale of cocoa, cotton, and weapons have given many of those in power—including members of the military and rebel forces—an incentive to obstruct peace and political normalization.

Civil Liberties: Despite constitutional protections, press freedom is generally not respected in practice. Violence against journalists increased in the period surrounding the 2010 presidential election. Legal guarantees of religious freedom are typically upheld. However, the north-south political divide corresponds roughly with the distribution of the Muslim and Christian populations, and the voter registration effort of recent years was designed in part to address claims of disenfranchisement among Muslim ethnic groups. The government, which owns most educational facilities, inhibits academic freedom by requiring authorization for all political meetings held on campuses. The constitution protects the right to free assembly, but it is often denied in practice. While workers have the constitutional right to organize and join labor unions, a number of strikes were harshly suppressed in 2010. The judiciary is not independent. Judges are political appointees without tenure and are highly susceptible to external interference and bribes. Côte d'Ivoire has made symbolic efforts to combat child trafficking, but tens of thousands of children from all over the region are believed to be working on Ivorian plantations. Women suffer widespread discrimination, and rape associated with the country's various armed factions was a serious problem in 2010.

Cuba

Political Rights: 7
Civil Liberties: 6
Status: Not Free

Population: 11,300,000
Capital: Havana

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline for Year under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

Year Under Review	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Rating	7,7,NF	7,6,NF	7,6,NF	7,6,NF						

2010 Key Developments: After prolonged negotiations with the Roman Catholic Church and the Spanish government, Cuban authorities in 2010 began releasing the 52 remaining political prisoners from a 2003 crackdown on independent journalists and dissidents. In September, the government announced that it would lay off 500,000 employees, about 10 percent of the country's labor force, and opened 178 activities and professions for self-employment and private cooperatives. In November, President Raúl Castro announced that the long-delayed sixth congress of the Cuban Communist Party would be held in April 2011.

Political Rights: Cuba is not an electoral democracy. Longtime president Fidel Castro and his brother, current president Raúl Castro, dominate the one-party political system. The Communist Party of Cuba (PCC) controls all government entities from the national to the local level. All political organization outside the PCC is illegal. Political dissent, whether spoken or written, is a punishable offense, and dissidents frequently receive years of imprisonment for seemingly minor infractions. The absolute number of political prisoners in Cuba decreased from 201 in 2009 to 163 in 2010. While the government agreed in July to release the remaining 52 people arrested in the March 2003 crackdown, it missed a November 7 deadline for all 52 to be released, as a final group of 13 prisoners refused to agree to leave Cuba. Official corruption remains a serious problem.

Civil Liberties: Freedom of the press is sharply curtailed, and the media are controlled by the state and the PCC. The government considers the independent press to be illegal. Independent journalists are subjected to ongoing repression, including terms of hard labor and assaults by state security agents. Access to the internet remains tightly restricted, and it is difficult for most Cubans to connect in their homes. While the Roman Catholic Church inaugurated its first seminary in the country since the 1959 revolution in 2010, official obstacles to religious freedom remain substantial. Churches are not allowed to conduct educational activities, and church-based publications are subject to censorship by the Office of Religious Affairs. The government restricts academic freedom. Teaching materials for subjects including mathematics and literature must contain ideological content. Limited rights of assembly and association are permitted under the constitution. However, as with other constitutional rights, they may not be "exercised against the existence and objectives of the Socialist State." The unauthorized assembly of more than three people is punishable with up to three months in prison and a fine. This rule is selectively enforced and is often used to imprison human rights advocates. The Council of State, headed by Raúl Castro, controls both the courts and the judicial process as a whole. Freedom of movement and the right to choose one's residence and place of employment are severely restricted. Attempting to leave the island without permission is a punishable offense. Cuba has performed well on gender equality issues; about 40 percent of all women work, and they are well represented in most professions.

Equatorial Guinea

Political Rights:	7	Population:	690,000
Civil Liberties:	7	Capital:	Malabo
Status:	Not Free		

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline for Year under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

Year Under Review	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Rating	6,6,NF	7,6,NF	7,6,NF	7,6,NF	7,6,NF	7,6,NF	7,6,NF	7,7,NF	7,7,NF	7,7,NF

2010 Key Developments: After winning reelection with 95.4 percent of the vote in late 2009, President Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo reappointed nearly all of his former cabinet ministers in January 2010, including members of his family. His son and favored successor, Teodoro Nguema Obiang Mangue, who faced money-laundering allegations by a U.S. Senate subcommittee, was appointed vice president of the ruling Democratic Party of Equatorial Guinea. Trials in connection with a 2009 coup attempt resulted in four executions that were decried by international human rights organizations. Meanwhile, UNESCO suspended plans to grant a prize sponsored by President Obiang after human rights groups lobbied against it.

Political Rights: Equatorial Guinea is not an electoral democracy and has never held credible elections. President Obiang dominates the political system. The 100 members of the unicameral House of People's Representatives wield little power, and 99 seats are held by the ruling pro-presidential coalition. The activities of the few opposition parties are closely monitored by the government. Equatorial Guinea is considered one of the most corrupt countries in the world, and Obiang and members of his inner circle continue to amass huge personal fortunes stemming from the oil industry.

Civil Liberties: Although the constitution guarantees press freedom, the 1992 press law authorizes government censorship. Libel remains a criminal offense, and all journalists are required to register with the government. The state holds a monopoly on broadcast media, with the exception of RTV-Asonga, a private radio and television outlet owned by the president's son. The government reportedly does not restrict access to the internet or monitor e-mail. The constitution protects religious freedom, though in practice it is sometimes affected by the country's broader political repression, and official preference is given to the Roman Catholic Church and the Reform Church of Equatorial Guinea. Freedoms of assembly and association are severely restricted, and political gatherings must have official authorization to proceed. The few international nongovernmental organizations in the country promote social and economic improvements rather than political and civil rights. The constitution provides for the right to organize unions, but there are many legal barriers to collective bargaining. The judiciary is not independent, and security forces generally act with impunity. Prison conditions are deplorable. The authorities have been accused of widespread human rights abuses, including torture, detention of political opponents, and extrajudicial killings. All citizens are required to obtain exit visas to travel abroad, and some members of opposition parties have been denied such visas. Constitutional and legal guarantees of equality for women are largely ignored, and violence against women is reportedly widespread.

Eritrea

Political Rights: 7
Civil Liberties: 7
Status: Not Free

Population: 5,200,000
Capital: Asmara

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline for Year under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

Year Under Review	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Rating	7,6,NF	7,7,NF	7,7,NF							

2010 Key Developments: The political system remained frozen in 2010, with no plans for national elections despite 17 years of independence and 10 years of tense peace with Ethiopia. The government continued to use the threat of arrest and an onerous conscription system to maintain control over the population. Diplomatic friction with neighboring Djibouti eased during the year after Eritrea withdrew its forces from contested territory and agreed to a negotiated settlement.

Political Rights: Eritrea is not an electoral democracy. The only legal political party, the Popular Front for Democracy and Justice, maintains complete dominance over the country's political life and has become harshly authoritarian since the end of the war with Ethiopia. The constitution provides for an elected legislature that would choose the president from among its members by a majority vote. However, this system has never been implemented, as national elections have been postponed indefinitely. President Isaias Afwerki has remained in office since independence. Corruption appears to have increased in recent years. Senior military officials have been accused of profiting from the smuggling and sale of scarce goods such as building materials, food, and alcohol; charging fees to assist the growing number of Eritreans who wish to flee the country; and using conscript labor for private building projects.

Civil Liberties: The government controls all broadcasting outlets and banned all privately owned newspapers in a 2001 crackdown. A group of journalists arrested in 2001 remain imprisoned without charge, and as many as half of the original 10 are believed to have died in custody. There was a fresh wave of arrests in 2009, and at least 17 journalists were known to be behind bars at the end of 2010. The government places significant limitations on the exercise of religion. It officially recognizes only four faiths: Islam, Orthodox Christianity, Roman Catholicism, and Lutheranism as practiced by the Evangelical Church of Eritrea. Persecution of minority Christian sects has escalated in recent years. Freedom of assembly is not recognized. Independent nongovernmental organizations are not tolerated, and international human rights groups are barred from the country. In 2010 Eritrea accepted a recommendation by the UN Human Rights Council to establish an independent national human rights institution, but no such body had been formed by year's end. The judiciary has never issued rulings significantly at variance with government positions, and constitutional due process guarantees are often ignored in cases related to state security. Torture, arbitrary detentions, and political arrests are common. The government maintains a network of secret detention facilities and frequently refuses to disclose the location of prisoners to their families. The Kunama people, one of Eritrea's nine ethnic groups, reportedly face severe discrimination. Freedom of movement is heavily restricted, and most able-bodied men and women are subject to the system of obligatory military service, which is often open-ended in practice. The government has made genuine attempts to promote women's rights, but traditional societal discrimination against women persists in rural areas. Female genital mutilation was banned by the government in 2007, but the practice remains widespread.

Laos

Political Rights:	7	Population:	6,400,000
Civil Liberties:	6	Capital:	Vientiane
Status:	Not Free		

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline for Year under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

Year Under Review	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Rating	7,6,NF									

2010 Key Developments: Human rights advocates continued to voice concern over the fate of some 4,000 ethnic Hmong migrants who were forcibly returned to Laos by the Thai government in late 2009 and early 2010. Separately, nine of 300 Lao farmers arrested in 2009 for their plans to protest government land seizures remained in custody at the end of 2010.

Political Rights: Laos is not an electoral democracy. The 1991 constitution makes the Lao People’s Revolutionary Party (LPRP) the sole legal political party and grants it a leading role at all levels of government. The LPRP vets all candidates for election to the rubber-stamp National Assembly, whose 115 members elect the president. Corruption and abuses by government officials are widespread, and laws aimed at curbing corruption are rarely enforced. Government regulation of virtually every facet of life provides corrupt officials with ample opportunities to demand bribes.

Civil Liberties: Freedom of the press is severely restricted. Any journalist who criticizes the government or discusses controversial political topics faces legal punishment. The state owns all media. While very few Lao have access to the internet, its content is not heavily censored because the government lacks the capabilities to monitor and block most web traffic. Religious freedom is tightly constrained. Officials continue to jail Christians or expel them from their villages for proselytizing. The religious practice of the majority Buddhist population is restricted through the LPRP’s control of clergy training and its supervision of temples and other religious sites. Academic freedom is not respected. University professors cannot teach or write about democracy, human rights, or other politically sensitive topics. Government surveillance of the population has been scaled back in recent years, but searches without warrants still occur. The government severely restricts freedom of assembly. Laws prohibit participation in organizations that engage in demonstrations or public protests, or that in any other way cause “turmoil or social instability.” While Laos is home to domestic nongovernmental welfare and professional groups, they are prohibited from pursuing political agendas and are subject to strict state control. All unions must belong to the official Federation of Lao Trade Unions. The courts are corrupt and controlled by the LPRP. Security forces often illegally detain suspects; poor prison conditions and the use of torture remain serious problems. Discrimination against members of minority tribes is common at many levels. The Hmong, who fielded a guerrilla army allied with U.S. forces during the Vietnam War, are particularly distrusted by the government and face harsh treatment. All land is owned by the state, though citizens have rights to use it. On some occasions, the government has awarded land to certain citizens with government connections, money, or links to foreign companies. With no fair or robust system to protect land rights or ensure compensation for displacement, development projects often spur public resentment. Gender-based discrimination and abuse are widespread, and thousands of women and girls are trafficked each year for prostitution.

Libya

Political Rights:	7	Population:	6,600,000
Civil Liberties:	7	Capital:	Tripoli
Status:	Not Free		

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline for Year under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

Year Under Review	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Rating	7,7,NF									

2010 Key Developments: A law granting Libyan women the ability to pass their citizenship to their children was approved in January 2010, though the measure's pervasive ambiguity and lack of enforcement mechanisms left its practical effects in doubt. Government crackdowns on the country's only quasi-independent media group continued in 2010, including a six-month shutdown of two of the group's newspapers and the arrest of 20 journalists in November. The Libyan authorities faced ongoing criticism for their abuse of migrant workers, and in June, the UN refugee agency was expelled from the country without explanation.

Political Rights: Libya is not an electoral democracy. Power theoretically lies with a system of people's committees and the indirectly elected General People's Congress, but in practice those structures are manipulated to ensure the continued dominance of Mu'ammarr al-Qadhafi, who holds no official title. It is illegal for any political group to oppose the principles of the 1969 revolution, which are laid out in al-Qadhafi's *Green Book*, although market-based economic changes in recent years have diverged from the regime's socialist ideals. Political parties have been illegal for over 35 years, and the government strictly monitors political activity. Organizing or joining anything akin to a political party is punishable by long prison terms and even the death penalty. Many Libyan opposition movements and figures operate outside the country. Corruption is pervasive in both the private sector and the government in Libya.

Civil Liberties: There is no independent press. In 2010, the government established the new position of press deputy, tasked with monitoring journalists who report on corruption. Four investigative journalists were arrested in January after uncovering graft in Benghazi. *Quryna* and *Oea*, two newspapers in the Al-Ghad media group, which was nationalized in 2009, said that they were forced to suspend publication from January to July 2010 after publishing articles that were critical of the government. State-owned media largely operate as mouthpieces for the authorities, and journalists work in a climate of fear and self-censorship. Those who displease the regime face harassment or imprisonment on trumped-up charges. The government controls the country's only internet service provider. During 2010, independent news websites were sporadically blocked, as was the video-sharing site YouTube, after users posted what they claimed to be clips of demonstrations in Libya. The government closely monitors mosques for Islamist activity. The few non-Muslims in Libya are permitted to practice their faiths with relative freedom. Academic freedom is tightly restricted. The government also restricts freedom of assembly. Those demonstrations that are allowed to take place are typically meant to support the aims of the regime. The law allows for the establishment of nongovernmental organizations, but those that have been granted authorization to operate are directly or indirectly linked to the government. There are no independent labor unions. The People's Court, infamous for punishing political dissidents, was abolished in 2005, but the judicial authority has since created the State Security Court, which carries out a similar function. The judiciary as a whole remains subservient to the political leadership. Incommunicado detention and disappearances of political dissidents are common in Libya, and the fate of thousands of prisoners taken into custody over the last 30 years remains unknown. These include up to 1,200 prisoners who were massacred at Abu Salim prison in 1996, when guards violently crushed an inmate revolt. Women enjoy many of the same legal protections as men, but certain laws and social norms perpetuate discrimination, particularly in areas such as marriage, divorce, and inheritance.

North Korea

Political Rights:	7	Population:	22,800,000
Civil Liberties:	7	Capital:	Pyongyang
Status:	Not Free		

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline for Year under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

Year Under Review	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Rating	7,7,NF									

2010 Key Developments: Following a rare public backlash, authorities apologized in early 2010 for the failed currency reform implemented in late 2009 and allowed market vendors to resume private trading activities. In March, North Korea was accused of sinking a South Korean naval vessel, causing tensions on the peninsula to rise sharply. North Korea made several leadership changes during the year, promoting key members of the ruling Kim family to top positions, presumably to facilitate an eventual dynastic succession. In September, Kim Jong-un, current leader Kim Jong-il's son and heir apparent, was promoted to the Korean Workers' Party Central Committee and formally introduced to the public. While inter-Korean relations had calmed by the fall, tensions flared again in November, when North Korea bombarded South Korea's Yeonpyeong Island in response to joint U.S.–South Korean military exercises.

Political Rights: North Korea is not an electoral democracy. Kim Jong-il has led the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) since the 1994 death of his father, founding leader Kim Il-sung. North Korea's parliament, the Supreme People's Assembly, is a rubber-stamp institution that meets irregularly for only a few days each year. All candidates for office, who run unopposed, are preselected by the ruling Korean Workers' Party and two subordinate minor parties. A delegates' meeting of the Korean Workers' Party convened in September 2010, the first such gathering since 1966, and took actions including the promotion of several members of the Kim family. Kim Jong-un was elected as vice chairman of the Central Military Commission, and was subsequently appointed to the party's Central Committee. Corruption is believed to be endemic at all levels of the state and economy.

Civil Liberties: The constitution provides for freedom of speech and the press, but in practice these rights are nonexistent. All media outlets are run by the state. Televisions and radios are permanently fixed to state channels, and all publications are subject to strict supervision and censorship. Internet access is restricted to a few thousand people with state approval, and foreign websites are blocked. Although freedom of religion is guaranteed by the constitution, it does not exist in practice. Nearly all forms of private communication are monitored by a huge network of informers. Freedom of assembly is not recognized, and there are no known associations or organizations other than those created by the state. Strikes, collective bargaining, and other organized-labor activities are illegal. North Korea does not have an independent judiciary. The UN General Assembly has recognized and condemned severe DPRK human rights violations including the use of torture, public executions, extrajudicial and arbitrary detention, and forced labor; the absence of due process and the rule of law; death sentences for political offenses; and an extensive network of camps for political prisoners. Inmates face brutal conditions, and collective or familial punishment for suspected dissent by an individual is a common practice. There is no freedom of movement, and forced internal resettlement is routine. There have been widespread reports of trafficked women and girls among the tens of thousands of North Koreans who have recently crossed into China.

Saudi Arabia

Political Rights: 7
Civil Liberties: 6
Status: Not Free

Population: 29,200,000
Capital: Riyadh

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline for Year under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

Year Under Review	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Rating	7,7,NF	7,7,NF	7,7,NF	7,7,NF	7,6,NF	7,6,NF	7,6,NF	7,6,NF	7,6,NF	7,6,NF

2010 Key Developments: After several months of violent clashes near the Yemeni border, Saudi Arabia and a Yemeni rebel group agreed to a ceasefire in January 2010. Saudi authorities in March seized several books written by the prominent Saudi reformer Abdullah al-Hamed at the Riyadh International Book Fair. In May, King Abdullah ordered the prosecution of over 40 officials for mismanagement of the response to widespread flooding in Jeddah in November 2009, which resulted in the deaths of 122 people. Also in May, Jamal Khashoggi resigned as editor of *Al-Watan* newspaper after coming under pressure for publishing an opinion piece that criticized conservative Islamic beliefs. Human rights activist Mikhliif bin Dahham al-Shammari was arrested in June for complaining about anti-Shiite discrimination in the kingdom. In August, King Abdullah issued a decree restricting clerics' power to issue religious edicts.

Political Rights: Saudi Arabia is not an electoral democracy. The country's 1992 Basic Law declares that the Koran and the Sunna (the guidance set by the deeds and sayings of the prophet Muhammad) are the country's constitution. The king appoints the 150-member Consultative Council, which serves in an advisory capacity and has limited powers. The Council of Ministers, an executive body appointed by the king, passes legislation that becomes law once ratified by royal decree. In May 2009, municipal elections initially scheduled for later that year were postponed until 2011 at the earliest. Political parties are forbidden, and organized political opposition exists only outside of the country. Corruption is a significant problem, with foreign companies reporting that they often pay bribes to middlemen and government officials to secure business deals.

Civil Liberties: The government tightly controls the content of domestic media and dominates regional print and satellite television coverage. Government officials have banned journalists and editors who publish articles deemed offensive to the ruling authorities or the country's powerful religious establishment. The regime has blocked access to over 400,000 websites that are considered immoral or politically sensitive. Religious freedom does not exist in Saudi Arabia. All Saudis are required by law to be Muslims, and the government prohibits the public practice of any religions other than Islam. Religious practices of the Shiite and Sufi Muslim minority sects are restricted. In 2009, authorities banned the construction of Shiite mosques, marking a significant reversal of policies that had offered Shiites some religious freedom in recent years. Academic freedom is restricted, and informers monitor classrooms for compliance with curriculum rules, such as a ban on teaching secular philosophy and religions other than Islam. Freedoms of association and assembly are not upheld, and the government frequently detains political activists who stage demonstrations or engage in other civic advocacy. Allegations of torture by police and prison officials are common, and access to prisoners by independent human rights and legal organizations is strictly limited. Freedom of movement is restricted in some cases, with the government punishing activists and critics by limiting their ability to travel outside the country. Women are not treated as equal members of society, and many laws discriminate against them. They may not legally drive cars, their use of public facilities is restricted when men are present, and they cannot travel within or outside of the country without a male relative. Daughters generally receive half the inheritance awarded to their brothers, and the court testimony of one man is equal to that of two women. However, education and economic rights for Saudi women have improved somewhat, and now more than half of the country's university students are female.

Somalia

Political Rights:	7	Population:	9,400,000
Civil Liberties:	7	Capital:	Mogadishu
Status:	Not Free		

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline for Year under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

Year Under Review	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Rating	6,7,NF	6,7,NF	6,7,NF	6,7,NF	6,7,NF	7,7,NF	7,7,NF	7,7,NF	7,7,NF	7,7,NF

2010 Key Developments: Somalia's Transitional Federal Government (TFG) clung to office in 2010 in the face of a sustained assault by Islamist insurgents. Internal rivalries between President Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed and Prime Minister Omar Abdirashid Ali Sharmarke resulted in Sharmarke's resignation, further undermining the TFG's credibility. The main insurgent group, the Shabaab, tightened its grip over much of southern and central Somalia, enforcing a brutal form of Islamic law in areas under its control. The Shabaab also launched terrorist attacks domestically and abroad, killing six members of parliament and hundreds of civilians in Mogadishu, as well as 74 people in a series of bombings in Uganda.

Political Rights: Somalia is not an electoral democracy. The Somali state has in many respects ceased to exist, and there is no governing authority with the ability to protect political rights and civil liberties. The TFG is recognized internationally but is deeply unpopular domestically, and its actual territorial control is minimal. There are no effective political parties, and the political process is driven largely by clan loyalty. A draft constitution was completed in July 2010 but had not been adopted by the end of the year. Corruption in Somalia is rampant, and UN monitors have reported extensive graft at all levels of the TFG. Since 1991, the northwestern region of Somaliland has functioned with relative stability as a self-declared independent state, though it has not received international recognition. The autonomous region of Puntland, in the northeastern corner of the country, has not sought full independence, declaring only a temporary secession until Somalia is stabilized. Relations between Puntland and the TFG sharply deteriorated in 2010, due in part to frustration with the underrepresentation of Puntland interests in Mogadishu.

Civil Liberties: Although Somalia's Transitional Federal Charter calls for freedom of speech and the press, these rights are quite limited in practice. Journalists continued to face dangerous conditions in 2010. Militants seized control of two Mogadishu-based radio stations, and a reporter with Horseed FM was jailed for six years for interviewing a warlord accused of supplying arms to the Shabaab. A number of other journalists were killed during the year. Islam is recognized as the official religion, and nearly all Somalis are Sunni Muslims, but there is a very small Christian community. Freedom of assembly is not respected amid the ongoing violence, and the largely informal economy is inhospitable to organized labor. The conflict has forced the nongovernmental organizations and UN agencies operating in Somalia to either reduce or suspend their activities. There is no judicial system functioning effectively at the national level. In many regions, local authorities administer a mix of Sharia (Islamic law) and traditional Somali forms of justice and reconciliation. While the TFG made some efforts to promote human rights, these initiatives had little effect on the ground, where the rights of Somali citizens are routinely abused by the various warring factions. The Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees estimated that there were 1.5 million internally displaced people by year's end, and an estimated 500,000 others taking refuge in neighboring countries. Women in Somalia face considerable discrimination. Female genital mutilation is still practiced in some form on nearly all Somali girls, and sexual violence is rampant.

Sudan

Political Rights: 7
Civil Liberties: 7
Status: Not Free

Population: 43,200,000
Capital: Khartoum

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline for Year under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

Year Under Review	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Rating	7,7,NF									

2010 Key Developments: Sudan's first national, multiparty elections in 24 years, held in April 2010, were marred by fraud involving the main parties in the North and the South. President Omar al-Bashir won another five-year term but faced mounting pressure from the International Criminal Court, which in July issued a warrant for his arrest on charges of genocide in the Darfur region. Fighting intensified in Darfur during the year, after one of the main rebel movements pulled out of peace talks. Meanwhile, the autonomous Government of Southern Sudan (GoSS) prepared to hold a referendum on independence from the North in early 2011.

Political Rights: Sudan is not an electoral democracy. The transitional government and legislature in place until May 2010 were unelected, and the presidential and legislative elections of April 2010 failed to meet international standards. There were irregularities at every stage of the polls and voting period. Most candidates were not allowed to campaign freely, and the National Elections Commission was accused of favoring the ruling National Congress Party (NCP). Much of the opposition boycotted the elections, allowing the NCP to win in the North and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement to win in the South. Sudan is considered one of the world's most corrupt states. Corruption and nepotism are also serious problems in the GoSS, whose institutions are chronically weak. However, an anticorruption commission established by the Southern authorities recovered approximately \$5 million in misappropriated funds in 2010.

Civil Liberties: The news media continue to face significant obstacles. The 2009 Press and Publication Act allows a government-appointed Press Council to prevent publication or broadcast of material it deems unsuitable, temporarily shut down newspapers, and impose heavy fines on those who break the rules. However, numerous privately owned dailies and weeklies were able to provide a range of views, including those of the opposition and the GoSS. Religious freedom, though guaranteed by the 2005 interim constitution, is not upheld in many parts of the country. The Christian minority in the North continues to face discrimination and harassment. The operating environment for nongovernmental organizations remained difficult in 2010, particularly in Darfur, where aid workers faced obstruction from the government and rebel groups. The judiciary is not independent. The police and security forces routinely exceed the authority established under the new National Security Act, which gives the intelligence and security service sweeping powers to seize property, conduct surveillance, search premises, and detain suspects without judicial review. Torture is reportedly common. It is widely accepted that the government has directed and assisted the systematic killing of tens or even hundreds of thousands of people in Darfur since 2003, including through its support for militia groups that have terrorized civilians. Human rights groups have documented the widespread use of rape, the organized burning of villages, and the forced displacement of entire communities. Islamic law denies Northern women equitable rights in marriage, inheritance, and divorce. Female genital mutilation is widely practiced.

Syria

Political Rights: 7
Civil Liberties: 6
Status: Not Free

Population: 22,500,000
Capital: Damascus

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline for Year under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

Year Under Review	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Rating	7,7,NF	7,7,NF	7,7,NF	7,7,NF	7,7,NF	7,6,NF	7,6,NF	7,6,NF	7,6,NF	7,6,NF

2010 Key Developments: While Syria’s first lady promoted the development of civil society activity in apolitical fields in 2010, the authorities continued to impose harsh restrictions on fundamental human rights. Those subjected to monitoring, intimidation, and imprisonment during the year included journalists, dissident writers, suspected Islamists, Kurdish activists, and gay men.

Political Rights: Syria is not an electoral democracy. The president is nominated by the ruling Baath Party and approved by popular referendum for seven-year terms. In practice, these referendums are orchestrated by the regime, as are elections for the 250-seat, unicameral People’s Council, whose members serve four-year terms and hold little independent legislative power. Almost all power rests in the executive branch. The only legal political parties are the Baath Party and its several small coalition partners in the ruling National Progressive Front. Corruption is widespread, and bribery is often necessary to navigate the bureaucracy. Those arrested on corruption charges rarely face serious punishment.

Civil Liberties: Freedom of expression is heavily restricted. It is illegal to publish material that harms national unity, tarnishes the image of the state, or threatens the “goals of the revolution.” Many journalists, writers, and intellectuals have been arrested under these laws. Most broadcast media are state owned, and private print outlets are required to submit all material to government censors. However, satellite dishes are common, giving most Syrians access to foreign broadcasts. More than a dozen privately owned newspapers and magazines have sprouted up in recent years, and criticism of government policy is tolerated, provided it is nuanced and does not criticize the president. Syrians access the internet only through state-run servers, which block more than 160 sites. In June 2010 authorities arrested a blogger who wrote on a popular independent site for Syrian news and analysis, and at least five journalists and online dissidents remained in extended detention as of that month. Although the constitution requires that the president be a Muslim, there is no state religion in Syria, and freedom of worship is generally respected. The government continued its periodic campaign against religious extremism in 2010, and imposed restrictions on the facial veil. Academic freedom is heavily restricted. Public demonstrations are illegal without official permission, which is typically granted only to pro-government groups. All nongovernmental organizations must register with the government, which generally denies registration to reformist or human rights groups. Notwithstanding the first lady’s drive to increase Syrian participation in civil society in 2010, leaders of unlicensed human rights groups have frequently been jailed for publicizing state abuses. The state of emergency in force since 1963 gives the security agencies virtually unlimited authority to arrest suspects and hold them incommunicado for prolonged periods without charge. Many of the estimated 2,500 to 3,000 political prisoners in Syria have never been tried. The security agencies, which operate without judicial oversight, routinely extract confessions by torturing suspects and detaining their family members. The Kurdish minority faces severe restrictions on cultural and linguistic expression. Opposition figures, human rights activists, and relatives of exiled dissidents are often prevented from traveling abroad, and many ordinary Kurds lack the requisite documents to leave the country. The government provides women with equal access to education and appoints women to senior positions, but many discriminatory laws remain in force. Authorities appeared to crack down on homosexuals in 2010.

Turkmenistan

Political Rights:	7	Population:	5,200,000
Civil Liberties:	7	Capital:	Ashgabat
Status:	Not Free		

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline for Year under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

Year Under Review	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Rating	7,7,NF									

2010 Key Developments: Turkmenistan held local elections in 2010, but as with all previous polls, the process and results were orchestrated by the authorities. The ruling Democratic Party remained the only registered political party, and the chairman of the Central Election Commission called for President Gurbanguly Berdymukhammedov to keep his post for life. Also during the year, the government continued to cultivate foreign markets and export routes for its abundant natural gas reserves.

Political Rights: Turkmenistan is not an electoral democracy. The late Saparmurat Niyazov wielded virtually absolute power, serving as “president for life” until his death in 2006. None of the country’s elections—including the February 2007 vote that gave Niyazov’s successor, Berdymukhammedov, a five-year term in office—have been free or fair. A new constitution approved by the National Assembly in 2008 gives citizens the right to form political parties, but only one party, the ruling Democratic Party, is officially registered. Berdymukhammedov made several references to the possibility of forming new political parties in 2010, but no actual changes took place. Local council elections held in July 2009 and December 2010 mimicked the country’s previous stage-managed polls amid reports of low turnout. Corruption is widespread, with public officials often forced to bribe their way into their positions. The government’s lack of transparency affects a variety of public services, including medical care. An April 2010 report by Doctors Without Borders alleged that Turkmen authorities are concealing “a dangerous public health situation.”

Civil Liberties: Freedom of speech and the press is severely restricted by the government, which controls all broadcast and print media. The authorities remain hostile to foreign news services, harassing the few local correspondents. A state-run service provider controls access to the internet and reportedly blocks undesirable websites. The government restricts freedom of religion, and independent groups face persecution. Practicing an unregistered religion remains illegal, with violators subject to fines. The government places significant restrictions on academic freedom, and Niyazov’s writings are still used in the school system, although their prominence appears to be declining gradually. The constitution guarantees freedoms of peaceful assembly and association, but these rights are severely restricted in practice. While not technically illegal, nongovernmental organizations are tightly controlled, and Turkmenistan has no civil society sector to speak of. There are no legal guarantees protecting workers’ rights to form unions and strike, though the constitution does not specifically prohibit such activities. The judicial system is subservient to the president, who appoints and removes judges without legislative review. The authorities frequently deny rights of due process, including public trials and access to defense attorneys. Prisons suffer from overcrowding and inadequate nutrition and medical care, and international organizations are not permitted to visit prisoners. Employment and educational opportunities for ethnic minorities are limited by the government’s promotion of Turkmen national identity. Freedom of movement is restricted, with a reported blacklist preventing some individuals from leaving the country. Traditional social and religious norms, inadequate education, and poor economic conditions limit professional opportunities for women, and anecdotal reports suggest that domestic violence is common.

Uzbekistan

Political Rights:	7	Population:	28,100,000
Civil Liberties:	7	Capital:	Tashkent
Status:	Not Free		

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline for Year under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

Year Under Review	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Rating	7,6,NF	7,6,NF	7,6,NF	7,6,NF	7,7,NF	7,7,NF	7,7,NF	7,7,NF	7,7,NF	7,7,NF

2010 Key Developments: Uzbekistan’s government continued to suppress all political opposition and restrict independent business activity in 2010, and the few remaining civic activists and critical journalists in the country faced prosecution, fines, and lengthy prison terms. Nevertheless, the regime maintained relatively good relations with the United States and Europe as it provided logistical support for NATO operations in Afghanistan.

Political Rights: Uzbekistan is not an electoral democracy. President Islam Karimov and the executive branch dominate the legislature and judiciary, and the government severely represses all political opposition. Karimov’s most recent reelection in December 2007 apparently flouted constitutional rules on term limits. Only four political parties, all progovernment, are registered, and no genuine opposition parties function legally. Members of unregistered opposition groups are subject to discrimination, and many live in exile abroad. In December 2010, police detained and questioned 15 people who met to try to establish a new political party. Corruption is pervasive.

Civil Liberties: Despite constitutional guarantees, freedoms of speech and the press are severely restricted. The state controls major media outlets and related facilities. The government permits the existence of mainstream religions, including approved Muslim, Jewish, and Christian denominations, but treats unregistered activities as a criminal offense. The state exercises strict control over Islamic worship, including the content of sermons. Suspected members of banned Muslim organizations and their relatives have been subjected to arrest, interrogation, and torture. The government reportedly limits academic freedom. Bribes are commonly required to gain entrance to exclusive universities and obtain good grades. Open and free private discussion is limited by the *mahalla* committees—traditional neighborhood organizations that the government has turned into an official system for public surveillance and control. Despite constitutional provisions for freedom of assembly, the authorities severely restrict this right in practice. Freedom of association is tightly constrained, and unregistered organizations face extreme difficulties and harassment. Anti-AIDS activist Maksim Popov was sentenced to a seven-year prison term in January 2010 for distributing informational materials that were deemed incompatible with local traditions. The judiciary is subservient to the president, who appoints all judges and can remove them at any time. Prisons suffer from severe overcrowding and shortages of food and medicine. As with detained suspects, prison inmates—particularly those sentenced for their religious beliefs—are often subjected to abuse or torture. In January 2010, prosecutors opened a case on the alleged 2009 gang rape of three sisters while they were in custody, but the resulting criminal charges against 12 policemen were dropped in April. Restrictions on foreign travel include the use of exit visas, which are often issued selectively. Women’s educational and professional prospects are limited by cultural and religious norms and by ongoing economic difficulties. The trafficking of women abroad for prostitution remains a serious problem. Despite legislation passed in 2009 imposing tougher penalties for child labor, the practice reportedly remained widespread during subsequent cotton harvests.

Freedom in the World 2011

Table of 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	3	2	
Argentina*	Free	2	2	
Armenia	Partly Free	6	4	
Australia*	Free	1	1	
Austria*	Free	1	1	
Azerbaijan	Not Free	6	5	
Bahamas*	Free	1	1	
Bahrain	Not Free	6	5	↓
Bangladesh*	Partly Free	3	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	4	5	
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	5	3	
Burma	Not Free	7	7	
Burundi	Partly Free	5 ▼	5	
Cambodia	Not Free	6	5	↓
Cameroon	Not Free	6	6	
Canada*	Free	1	1	
Cape Verde*	Free	1	1	
Central African Republic	Partly Free	5	5	
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	

Country	Freedom Status	PR	CL	Trend Arrow
Congo (Kinshasa)	Not Free	6	6	
Costa Rica*	Free	1	1	
Côte d'Ivoire	Not Free	7 ▼	6 ▼	
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	2	
East Timor*	Partly Free	3	4	
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	6	4	↓
Finland*	Free	1	1	
France*	Free	1	1	↓
Gabon	Not Free	6	5	
The Gambia	Partly Free	5	5	
Georgia	Partly Free	4	3 ▲	
Germany*	Free	1	1	
Ghana*	Free	1	2	
Greece*	Free	1	2	
Grenada*	Free	1	2	
Guatemala*	Partly Free	4	4	
Guinea	Partly Free ▲	5 ▲	5 ▲	
Guinea-Bissau	Partly Free	4	4	↓
Guyana*	Free	2	3	
Haiti	Partly Free	4	5	↓
Honduras	Partly Free	4	4	
Hungary*	Free	1	1	↓
Iceland*	Free	1	1	
India*	Free	2	3	
Indonesia*	Free	2	3	
Iran	Not Free	6	6	↓
Iraq	Not Free	5	6	
Ireland*	Free	1	1	
Israel*	Free	1	2	

Country	Freedom Status	PR	CL	Trend Arrow
Italy*	Free	1	2	
Jamaica*	Free	2	3	
Japan*	Free	1	2	
Jordan	Not Free	6	5	
Kazakhstan	Not Free	6	5	
Kenya	Partly Free	4	3 ▲	
Kiribati*	Free	1	1	
Kosovo	Partly Free	5	4	
Kuwait	Partly Free	4	5 ▼	
Kyrgyzstan	Partly Free ▲	5 ▲	5	
Laos	Not Free	7	6	
Latvia*	Free	2	2 ▼	
Lebanon	Partly Free	5	3	
Lesotho*	Partly Free	3	3	
Liberia*	Partly Free	3	4	
Libya	Not Free	7	7	
Liechtenstein*	Free	1	1	
Lithuania*	Free	1	1	
Luxembourg*	Free	1	1	
Macedonia*	Partly Free	3	3	
Madagascar	Partly Free	6	4	↓
Malawi*	Partly Free	3	4	
Malaysia	Partly Free	4	4	
Maldives*	Partly Free	3	4	
Mali*	Free	2	3	
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	2	2	
Montenegro*	Free	3	2	
Morocco	Partly Free	5	4	
Mozambique	Partly Free	4	3	
Namibia*	Free	2	2	
Nauru*	Free	1	1	
Nepal	Partly Free	4	4	
Netherlands*	Free	1	1	
New Zealand*	Free	1	1	
Nicaragua*	Partly Free	4	4	
Niger	Partly Free	5	4	

Country	Freedom Status	PR	CL	Trend Arrow
Nigeria	Partly Free	4 ▲	4	
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	1	2	
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	5	
Rwanda	Not Free	6	5	↓
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	6	
Senegal*	Partly Free	3	3	
Serbia*	Free	2	2	
Seychelles*	Partly Free	3	3	
Sierra Leone*	Partly Free	3	3	
Singapore	Partly Free	5	4	
Slovakia*	Free	1	1	
Slovenia*	Free	1	1	
Solomon Islands	Partly Free	4	3	
Somalia	Not Free	7	7	
South Africa*	Free	2	2	
South Korea*	Free	1	2	
Spain*	Free	1	1	
Sri Lanka	Partly Free	5 ▼	4	
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	6	
Taiwan*	Free	1	2	

Country	Freedom Status	PR	CL	Trend Arrow
Tajikistan	Not Free	6	5	
Tanzania*	Partly Free	3 ▲	3	
Thailand	Partly Free	5	4	↓
Togo	Partly Free	5	4	
Tonga*	Partly Free	3 ▲	3	
Trinidad and Tobago*	Free	2	2	
Tunisia	Not Free	7	5	
Turkey*	Partly Free	3	3	
Turkmenistan	Not Free	7	7	
Tuvalu*	Free	1	1	
Uganda	Partly Free	5	4	
Ukraine*	Partly Free ▼	3	3 ▼	
United Arab Emirates	Not Free	6	5	
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	5	
Zambia*	Partly Free	3	4	↓
Zimbabwe	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, 2010, through December 31, 2010.

Table of Related Territories

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

Table of Disputed Territories

Territory	Freedom Status	PR	CL	Trend Arrow
Abkhazia	Partly Free	5	5	
Gaza Strip	Not Free	6	6	
Indian Kashmir	Partly Free	4	5 ▼	
Nagorno-Karabakh	Not Free ▼	6 ▼	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	6	

Freedom in the World Methodology

The reports for *Worst of the Worst: The World's Most Repressive Societies* were excerpted from the forthcoming 2011 edition of *Freedom in the World*, an annual Freedom House survey that monitors the progress and decline of political rights and civil liberties in 194 countries and 14 related and disputed territories. The survey rates each country and territory on a scale of 1 to 7 for both political rights and civil liberties, with 1 representing the most free and 7 the least free, and uses the average of those two ratings to assign each country and territory a status of Free (1.0 to 2.5), Partly Free (3.0 to 5.0), or Not Free (5.5 to 7.0). The ratings process is based on a checklist of 10 political rights and 15 civil liberties questions (please refer to the checklist questions on the following pages). Countries and territories that received ratings of 6 for political rights and 7 for civil liberties, 7 for political rights and 6 for civil liberties, or 7 for both political rights and civil liberties are included in the *Worst of the Worst*. Within these groups there are gradations of freedom that make some more repressive than others.

A change in a country's or territory's political rights or civil liberties rating from the previous year is indicated by an arrow next to the rating in question, along with a brief ratings change explanation accompanying the country or territory report. Freedom House also assigned upward or downward "trend arrows" to certain countries and territories which saw general positive or negative trends during the year that were not significant enough to warrant a ratings change. Trend arrows are placed beside the name of the country or territory in question, and a brief explanatory note accompanies each report.

The *Freedom in the World* ratings are not merely assessments of the conduct of governments, but are intended to reflect the reality of daily life. Freedom can be affected by state as well as nonstate actors. Terrorist movements or armed groups use violent methods that can dramatically restrict essential freedoms within a society. Conversely, the existence of nonstate activists or journalists who work courageously and independently despite state restrictions can positively affect the ability of the population to exercise its freedoms.

The survey enables an examination of trends in freedom over time and on a comparative basis across regions with different political and economic systems. The survey, which is produced by a team of in-house regional experts, consultant writers, and academic advisers, derives its information from a wide range of sources. Most valued of these are the many human rights activists, journalists, editors, and political figures around the world who keep us informed of the human rights situation in their countries. *Freedom in the World's* ratings and narrative reports are used by policymakers, leading scholars, the media, and international organizations to monitor the ebb and flow of freedom worldwide.

For a more detailed analysis of last year's survey methodology, please consult the methodology chapter from *Freedom in the World 2010*. The methodology for the forthcoming survey edition will be published in *Freedom in the World 2011*.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties Checklist Questions

POLITICAL RIGHTS CHECKLIST

A. ELECTORAL PROCESS

1. Is the head of government or other chief national authority elected through free and fair elections?
2. Are the national legislative representatives elected through free and fair elections?
3. Are the electoral laws and framework fair?

B. POLITICAL PLURALISM AND PARTICIPATION

1. Do the people have the right to organize in different political parties or other competitive political groupings of their choice, and is the system open to the rise and fall of these competing parties or groupings?
2. Is there a significant opposition vote and a realistic possibility for the opposition to increase its support or gain power through elections?
3. Are the people's political choices free from domination by the military, foreign powers, totalitarian parties, religious hierarchies, economic oligarchies, or any other powerful group?
4. Do cultural, ethnic, religious, or other minority groups have full political rights and electoral opportunities?

C. FUNCTIONING OF GOVERNMENT

1. Do the freely elected head of government and national legislative representatives determine the policies of the government?
2. Is the government free from pervasive corruption?
3. Is the government accountable to the electorate between elections, and does it operate with openness and transparency?

ADDITIONAL DISCRETIONARY POLITICAL RIGHTS QUESTIONS

1. For traditional monarchies that have no parties or electoral process, does the system provide for genuine, meaningful consultation with the people, encourage public discussion of policy choices, and allow the right to petition the ruler?
2. Is the government or occupying power deliberately changing the ethnic composition of a country or territory so as to destroy a culture or tip the political balance in favor of another group?

CIVIL LIBERTIES CHECKLIST

D. FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AND BELIEF

1. Are there free and independent media and other forms of cultural expression? (*Note:* In cases where the media are state-controlled but offer pluralistic points of view, the survey gives the system credit.)
2. Are religious institutions and communities free to practice their faith and express themselves in public and private?
3. Is there academic freedom, and is the educational system free of extensive political indoctrination?
4. Is there open and free private discussion?

E. ASSOCIATIONAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL RIGHTS

1. Is there freedom of assembly, demonstration, and open public discussion?
2. Is there freedom for nongovernmental organizations? (*Note:* This includes civic organizations, interest groups, foundations, etc.)
3. Are there free trade unions and peasant organizations or equivalents, and is there effective collective bargaining? Are there free professional and other private organizations?

F. RULE OF LAW

1. Is there an independent judiciary?
2. Does the rule of law prevail in civil and criminal matters? Are police under direct civilian control?
3. Is there protection from political terror, unjustified imprisonment, exile, or torture, whether by groups that support or oppose the system? Is there freedom from war and insurgencies?
4. Do laws, policies, and practices guarantee equal treatment of various segments of the population?

G. PERSONAL AUTONOMY AND INDIVIDUAL RIGHTS

1. Do citizens enjoy freedom of travel or choice of residence, employment, or institution of higher education?
2. Do citizens have the right to own property and establish private businesses? Is private business activity unduly influenced by government officials, the security forces, political parties/organizations, or organized crime?
3. Are there personal social freedoms, including gender equality, choice of marriage partners, and size of family?
4. Is there equality of opportunity and the absence of economic exploitation?

Freedom in the World 2011

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