

Freedom in the World 2019 Methodology

INTRODUCTION

Freedom in the World is an annual global report on political rights and civil liberties, composed of numerical ratings and descriptive texts for each country and a select group of territories. The 2019 edition covers developments in 195 countries and 14 territories from January 1, 2018, through December 31, 2018.

The report's methodology is derived in large measure from the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1948. *Freedom in the World* is based on the premise that these standards apply to all countries and territories, irrespective of geographical location, ethnic or religious composition, or level of economic development. *Freedom in the World* operates from the assumption that freedom for all people is best achieved in liberal democratic societies.

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

Freedom House does not believe that legal guarantees of rights are sufficient for on-the-ground fulfillment of those rights. While both laws and actual practices are factored into scoring decisions, greater emphasis is placed on implementation.

Territories are selected for assessment in *Freedom in the World* based on the following criteria: whether the area is governed separately from the rest of the relevant country or countries, either de jure or de facto; whether conditions on the ground for political rights and civil liberties are significantly different from those in the rest of the relevant country or countries, meaning a separate assessment is likely to yield different ratings; whether the territory is the subject of enduring popular or diplomatic pressure for autonomy, independence, or incorporation into another country; whether the territory's boundaries are sufficiently stable to allow an assessment of conditions for the year under review, and whether they can be expected to remain stable in future years so that year-on-year comparisons are possible; and whether the territory is large and/or politically significant. Freedom House typically takes no position on territorial or separatist disputes as such, focusing instead on the level of political rights and civil liberties in a given geographical area.

HISTORY OF *FREEDOM IN THE WORLD*

Freedom House's first year-end reviews of freedom began in the 1950s as the *Balance Sheet of Freedom*. This modest report provided assessments of political trends and their implications for

individual freedom. In 1972, Freedom House launched a new, more comprehensive annual study called *The Comparative Study of Freedom*. Raymond Gastil, a Harvard-trained specialist in regional studies from the University of Washington in Seattle, developed the methodology, which assigned political rights and civil liberties ratings to 151 countries and 45 territories and categorized them as Free, Partly Free, or Not Free. The findings appeared each year in Freedom House's bimonthly journal *Freedom at Issue* (later titled *Freedom Review*). *Freedom in the World* first appeared in book form in 1978 and included short narratives for each country and territory rated in the study, as well as a series of essays by leading scholars on related issues. *Freedom in the World* continued to be produced by Gastil until 1989, when a larger team of in-house analysts was established. In the mid-1990s, the expansion of the country and territory narratives necessitated the hiring of outside analysts—a group of regional experts from the academic, media, and human rights communities—and the project has continued to grow in size and scope in the years since.

A number of modest updates have been made to the methodology over time to adapt to evolving ideas about political rights and civil liberties. These changes are introduced incrementally in order to ensure the comparability of the ratings from year to year.

METHODOLOGY REVIEW, 2016–17

In 2016–17, Freedom House engaged a team of external experts to assist the staff in a thorough review of the *Freedom in the World* methodology. This represented the first such review since 2002. Approximately 20 experts with global, regional, and issue-based expertise participated in the exercise. A list of methodology review committee members may be found online at www.freedomhouse.org.

Following the review, the methodology's basic structure and most methodology questions remained the same. The review therefore does not affect the integrity of the *Freedom in the World* time-series data. Notable improvements include greater precision in the definition of each indicator, additional guidance on the handling of various real-world situations, and further detail on the interplay of new technological developments and fundamental freedoms. The review also led to the important step of including gender-related guidance questions under all relevant indicators.

One structural change that affected a very small number of countries was the elimination of Additional Discretionary Political Rights Question A. This indicator had awarded points to traditional monarchies that had no political parties or significant electoral processes but provided for some form of consultation with the public. Such consultation will now be addressed elsewhere in the methodology.

The revised methodology questions, appended below, were first used for the 2018 edition of *Freedom in the World*.

RESEARCH AND RATINGS REVIEW PROCESS

Freedom in the World is produced each year by a team of in-house and external analysts and expert advisers from the academic, think tank, and human rights communities. The 2019 edition involved more than 100 analysts and more than 30 advisers. The analysts, who prepare the draft reports and scores, use a broad range of sources, including news articles, academic analyses, reports from nongovernmental organizations, individual professional contacts, and on-the-ground research. The analysts score countries and territories based on the conditions and events within their borders during the coverage period. The analysts' proposed scores are discussed and defended at a series of review meetings, organized by region and attended by Freedom House staff and a panel of expert advisers. The final scores represent the consensus of the analysts, advisers, and staff. Although an element of subjectivity is unavoidable in such an enterprise, the ratings process emphasizes methodological consistency, intellectual rigor, and balanced and unbiased judgments.

SCORING PROCESS

Freedom in the World uses a three-tiered system consisting of **scores**, **ratings**, and **status**. The complete list of the questions used in the scoring process, and the tables for converting scores to ratings and ratings to status, appear at the end of this essay.

Scores – A country or territory is awarded 0 to 4 points for each of 10 political rights indicators and 15 civil liberties indicators, which take the form of questions; a score of 0 represents the smallest degree of freedom and 4 the greatest degree of freedom. The political rights questions are grouped into three subcategories: Electoral Process (3 questions), Political Pluralism and Participation (4), and Functioning of Government (3). The civil liberties questions are grouped into four subcategories: Freedom of Expression and Belief (4 questions), Associational and Organizational Rights (3), Rule of Law (4), and Personal Autonomy and Individual Rights (4). The political rights section also contains an additional discretionary question. For the discretionary question, a score of 1 to 4 may be subtracted, as applicable (the worse the situation, the more points may be subtracted). The highest overall score that can be awarded for political rights is 40 (or a score of 4 for each of the 10 questions). The highest overall score that can be awarded for civil liberties is 60 (or a score of 4 for each of the 15 questions). The scores from the previous edition are used as a benchmark for the current year under review. A score is typically changed only if there has been a real-world development during the year that warrants a decline or improvement (e.g., a crackdown on the media, the country's first free and fair elections), though gradual changes in conditions—in the absence of a signal event—are occasionally registered in the scores.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties Ratings – A country or territory is assigned two ratings—one for political rights and one for civil liberties—based on its total scores for the political rights and civil liberties questions. Each rating of 1 to 7, with 1 representing the greatest degree of freedom and 7 the smallest degree of freedom, corresponds to a specific range of total scores (see tables 1 and 2).

Free, Partly Free, Not Free Status – The average of a country or territory’s political rights and civil liberties ratings is called the Freedom Rating, and it is this figure that determines the status of Free (1.0 to 2.5), Partly Free (3.0 to 5.0), or Not Free (5.5 to 7.0) (see table 3).

Trend Arrows – A country or territory may be assigned an upward or downward trend arrow to highlight developments of major significance or concern. These developments may include a positive or negative shift over multiple years, an especially notable change in a single year, or an important event in a country that is particularly influential in its region or the world. A trend arrow must be linked to a specific change or changes in score, and cannot be assigned if the country had no net change in score. Most score changes do not warrant trend arrows. Decisions on whether a country or territory should receive a trend arrow are made by Freedom House staff, after consultation with the analyst and expert advisers.

Electoral Democracy – *Freedom in the World* assigns the designation “electoral democracy” to countries that have met certain minimum standards for political rights and civil liberties; territories are not included in the list of electoral democracies. According to the methodology, an electoral democracy designation requires a score of 7 or better in the Electoral Process subcategory, an overall political rights score of 20 or better, *and* an overall civil liberties score of 30 or better. (The civil liberties threshold was added as part of the 2016–17 methodology review.) Freedom House’s “electoral democracy” designation should not be equated with “liberal democracy,” a term that implies a more robust observance of democratic ideals and a wider array of civil liberties. In *Freedom in the World*, most Free countries could be considered liberal democracies, while some Partly Free countries might qualify as electoral, but not liberal, democracies.

RATINGS AND STATUS CHARACTERISTICS

POLITICAL RIGHTS

1 – Countries and territories with a rating of 1 enjoy a wide range of political rights, including free and fair elections. Candidates who are elected actually rule, political parties are competitive, the opposition plays an important role and enjoys real power, and the interests of minority groups are well represented in politics and government.

2 – Countries and territories with a rating of 2 have slightly weaker political rights than those with a rating of 1 because of such factors as political corruption, limits on the functioning of political parties and opposition groups, and flawed electoral processes.

3, 4, 5 – Countries and territories with a rating of 3, 4, or 5 either moderately protect almost all political rights or strongly protect some political rights while neglecting others. The same factors that undermine freedom in countries with a rating of 2 may also weaken political rights in those with a rating of 3, 4, or 5, but to a greater extent at each successive rating.

6 – Countries and territories with a rating of 6 have very restricted political rights. They are ruled by authoritarian regimes, often with leaders or parties that originally took power by force and have been in office for decades. They may hold tightly controlled elections and grant a few political rights, such as some representation or autonomy for minority groups.

7 – Countries and territories with a rating of 7 have few or no political rights because of severe government oppression, sometimes in combination with civil war. While some are draconian police states, others may lack an authoritative and functioning central government and suffer from extreme violence or rule by regional warlords.

CIVIL LIBERTIES

1 – Countries and territories with a rating of 1 enjoy a wide range of civil liberties, including freedoms of expression, assembly, association, education, and religion. They have an established and generally fair legal system that ensures the rule of law (including an independent judiciary), allow free economic activity, and tend to strive for equality of opportunity for everyone, including women and minority groups.

2 – Countries and territories with a rating of 2 have slightly weaker civil liberties than those with a rating of 1 because of such factors as limits on media independence, restrictions on trade union activities, and discrimination against minority groups and women.

3, 4, 5 – Countries and territories with a rating of 3, 4, or 5 either moderately protect almost all civil liberties or strongly protect some civil liberties while neglecting others. The same factors that undermine freedom in countries with a rating of 2 may also weaken civil liberties in those with a rating of 3, 4, or 5, but to a greater extent at each successive rating.

6 – Countries and territories with a rating of 6 have very restricted civil liberties. They strongly limit the rights of expression and association and frequently hold political prisoners. They may allow a few civil liberties, such as some religious and social freedoms, some highly restricted private business activity, and some open and free private discussion.

7 – Countries and territories with a rating of 7 have few or no civil liberties. Their governments or powerful nonstate actors allow virtually no freedom of expression or association, do not protect the rights of detainees and prisoners, and often control most economic activity.

The gap between a country or territory's political rights and civil liberties ratings is rarely more than two points. Politically oppressive states typically do not allow a well-developed civil society, for example, and it is difficult, if not impossible, to maintain political freedoms in the absence of civil liberties like press freedom and the rule of law.

Because the designations of Free, Partly Free, and Not Free each cover a broad swath of the available scores, countries or territories within any one category, especially those at either end of the range, can have quite different human rights situations. For example, those at the lowest end of the Free category (2 in political rights and 3 in civil liberties, or 3 in political rights and 2 in civil liberties) differ from those at the upper end of the Free group (1 for both political rights and civil liberties). Also, a designation of Free does not mean that a country or territory enjoys perfect freedom or lacks serious problems, only that it enjoys comparatively more freedom than those rated Partly Free or Not Free (and some others rated Free).

FREEDOM IN THE WORLD 2019

METHODOLOGY QUESTIONS

The bulleted subquestions are intended to provide guidance to the analysts regarding what issues are meant to be considered in scoring each checklist question. The analysts do not need to consider every subquestion during the scoring process, as the relevance of each varies from one place to another.

POLITICAL RIGHTS (0–40 points)

A. ELECTORAL PROCESS (0–12 points)

A1. Was the current head of government or other chief national authority elected through free and fair elections? (Note: Heads of government chosen through various electoral frameworks, including direct elections for president, indirect elections for prime minister by parliament, and the electoral college system for electing presidents, are covered under this question. In cases of indirect elections for the head of government, the elections for the legislature or other body that chose the head of government, as well as the selection process for the head of government itself, should be taken into consideration. In systems where executive authority is formally divided between a head of state and a head of government, greater weight should be given to elections for the official with the most executive authority.)

- Did independent, established, and reputable national and/or international election monitoring organizations judge the most recent election for head of government to have met democratic standards?
- Was the most recent election for head of government called in a timely manner, without undue, politically motivated delays or an accelerated schedule that unfairly limited campaign opportunities for some candidates?
- Was the registration of voters and candidates conducted in an accurate, timely, transparent, and nondiscriminatory manner?
- Were women allowed to register and run as candidates?
- Could all candidates make speeches, hold public meetings, and enjoy fair or proportionate media access throughout the campaign, free of intimidation?
- Did voting take place by secret ballot?
- Were voters able to vote for the candidate or party of their choice without undue pressure or intimidation?
- Was the vote count transparent and timely, and were the official results reported honestly to the public?
- Could election monitors from independent groups and representing parties/candidates watch the counting of votes to ensure its honesty?
- Did voters have equal access to polling places and opportunities to cast ballots?
- Has the most recently elected head of government been removed from office through violent, irregular, unconstitutional, or otherwise undemocratic means? (Note: Although a bloodless coup may ultimately lead to a positive outcome—particularly if it removes a head of government who was not freely and fairly

elected—the new leader has not been freely and fairly elected and cannot be treated as such.)

- Has the head of government’s electorally mandated term expired or been extended without new elections?
- In cases where elections for regional, provincial, or state governors and/or other subnational executive officials differ significantly in conduct from national elections, does the conduct of the subnational elections reflect an opening toward improved political rights in the country, or, alternatively, a worsening of political rights?

A2. Were the current national legislative representatives elected through free and fair elections?

- Did independent, established, and reputable domestic and/or international election monitoring organizations judge the most recent national legislative elections to have met democratic standards?
- Were the most recent legislative elections called in a timely manner, without undue, politically motivated delays or an accelerated schedule that unfairly limited campaign opportunities for some parties or candidates?
- Was the registration of voters and candidates conducted in an accurate, timely, transparent, and nondiscriminatory manner?
- Were women allowed to register and run as candidates?
- Could all candidates make speeches, hold public meetings, and enjoy fair or proportionate media access throughout the campaign, free of intimidation?
- Did voting take place by secret ballot?
- Were voters able to vote for the candidate or party of their choice without undue pressure or intimidation?
- Was the vote count transparent and timely, and were the official results reported honestly to the public?
- Could election monitors from independent groups and representing parties/candidates watch the counting of votes to ensure its honesty?
- Have members of the most recently elected national legislature been removed from office through violent, irregular, unconstitutional, or otherwise undemocratic means? (Note: Although a bloodless coup may ultimately lead to a positive outcome—particularly if it removes a legislature that was not freely and fairly elected—an appointed postcoup legislative body has not been freely and fairly elected and cannot be treated as such.)
- Has the legislature’s electorally mandated term expired or been extended without new elections?
- In cases where elections for subnational councils/parliaments differ significantly in conduct from national elections, does the conduct of the subnational elections reflect an opening toward improved political rights in the country, or, alternatively, a worsening of political rights?

A3. Are the electoral laws and framework fair, and are they implemented impartially by the relevant election management bodies?

- Is there a clear, detailed, and fair legislative framework for conducting elections? (Note: Changes to electoral laws should not be made immediately preceding an

election if these changes infringe on the ability of voters, candidates, or parties to fulfill their roles in the election.)

- Does the composition of election commissions ensure their independence?
- Are election commissions or other election authorities free from government or other pressure and interference?
- Do adult citizens enjoy universal and equal suffrage?
- Is the drawing of election districts conducted in a fair and nonpartisan manner, as opposed to malapportionment or gerrymandering for personal or partisan advantage?
- Has the selection of a system for choosing legislative representatives (such as proportional versus majoritarian) been improperly manipulated to advance certain political interests or to influence the electoral results?
- Are procedures for changing the electoral framework at the constitutional level, including referendums, carried out fairly and transparently, with adequate opportunity for public debate and discussion?

B. POLITICAL PLURALISM AND PARTICIPATION (0–16 points)

B1. Do the people have the right to organize in different political parties or other competitive political groupings of their choice, and is the system free of undue obstacles to the rise and fall of these competing parties or groupings?

- Do political parties encounter undue legal or practical obstacles in their efforts to form and operate, including onerous registration requirements, excessively large membership requirements, etc.?
- Do parties face discriminatory or onerous restrictions in holding meetings or rallies, accessing the media, or engaging in other peaceful activities?
- Are laws and regulations governing party financing fair and equitably enforced? Do they impose excessive obstacles to political and campaign activity, or give an effective advantage to certain parties?
- Are party members or leaders intimidated, harassed, arrested, imprisoned, or subjected to violent attacks as a result of their peaceful political activities?
- In systems dominated by political parties, can independent candidates register and operate freely?

B2. Is there a realistic opportunity for the opposition to increase its support or gain power through elections?

- Are various legal/administrative restrictions selectively applied to opposition parties to prevent them from increasing their support base or successfully competing in elections?
- Are there genuine opposition forces in positions of authority, such as in the national legislature or in subnational governments?
- Does intimidation, harassment, arrest, imprisonment, or violent attack as a result of peaceful political activities affect the ability of opposition party members or leaders to increase their support or gain power through elections?
- Is there a significant opposition vote?

- Did major opposition parties choose to boycott the most recent elections rather than participate in a flawed process?

B3. Are the people’s political choices free from domination by the military, foreign powers, religious hierarchies, economic oligarchies, or any other powerful group that is not democratically accountable?

- Do such groups offer bribes or other incentives to voters in order to influence their political choices?
- Do such groups offer bribes or other incentives to political figures and/or parties in order to influence their political choices?
- Do such groups intimidate, harass, or attack voters and/or political figures in order to influence their political choices?
- Do major private or public-sector employers directly or indirectly control the political choices of their workers?

B4. Do various segments of the population (including ethnic, religious, gender, LGBT, and other relevant groups) have full political rights and electoral opportunities?

- Do national political parties of various ideological persuasions address issues of specific concern to minority or other relevant groups?
- When other parties fail to address the interests of certain groups, are political parties that are focused on those groups—provided they espouse peaceful, democratic values—legally permitted and de facto allowed to operate?
- Does the government inhibit the participation of certain groups in national or subnational political life through laws and/or practical obstacles—for example, by limiting access to voter registration or failing to publish public documents in certain languages?
- Are the interests of women represented in political parties—for example, through party manifestos that address gender issues, gender equality policies within parties, and mechanisms to ensure women’s full and equal participation in internal party elections and decision-making?
- Are there unusually excessive or discriminatory barriers to acquiring citizenship that effectively deny political rights to a majority or large portion of the native-born or legal permanent population, or is citizenship revoked to produce a similar result?

C. FUNCTIONING OF GOVERNMENT (0–12 points)

C1. Do the freely elected head of government and national legislative representatives determine the policies of the government? (Note: Because the score for question C1 is partly dependent on the presence of a freely elected head of government and national legislative representatives, under most circumstances it will not exceed the average of the scores for questions A1 and A2.)

- Are the candidates who were elected freely and fairly duly installed in office, and were they able to form a functioning government within a reasonable period of time?

- Do other appointed or non–freely elected state actors interfere with or prevent freely elected representatives from adopting and implementing legislation and making meaningful policy decisions?
- Do nonstate actors, including criminal gangs and insurgent groups, interfere with or prevent elected representatives from adopting and implementing legislation and making meaningful policy decisions?
- Do the armed forces or other security services control or enjoy a preponderant influence over government policy and activities, including in countries that are nominally under civilian control?
- Do foreign governments control or enjoy a preponderant influence over government policy and activities by means including the presence of foreign military troops and the use of significant economic threats or sanctions? (Note: If a treaty was signed and ratified by a freely elected government, adherence to that treaty is typically not considered an improper external influence on policymaking, even if it limits a government’s options in practice.)
- Is the freely elected government able to implement its decisions across the entire territory without interference from nonstate actors?
- Does the executive exhibit excessive dominance over the legislature?
- Has partisan polarization or obstructionism seriously impaired basic executive or legislative functions, such as approving a budget or filling important vacancies?

C2. Are safeguards against official corruption strong and effective?

- Has the government implemented effective anticorruption laws or programs to prevent, detect, and punish corruption among public officials, including conflicts of interest?
- Is the government free from excessive bureaucratic regulations, registration requirements, or other controls that increase opportunities for corruption?
- Are there independent and effective auditing and investigative bodies that function without impediment or political pressure or influence?
- Are allegations of corruption involving government officials thoroughly investigated and prosecuted without prejudice or political bias?
- Are allegations of corruption given extensive and substantive airing in the media?
- Do whistleblowers, anticorruption activists, investigators, and journalists enjoy legal protections that allow them to freely and safely report abuses?

C3. Does the government operate with openness and transparency?

- Do citizens have the legal right and practical ability to obtain information about state operations and the means to petition government agencies for it?
- Does the government publish information online, in machine-readable formats, for free, and is this information accessible by default?
- Are civil society groups, interest groups, journalists, and other citizens given a fair and meaningful opportunity to comment on and influence pending policies or legislation?
- Are elected representatives accessible to their constituents?
- Is the budget-making process subject to meaningful legislative review and public scrutiny?

- Does the state ensure transparency and effective competition in the awarding of government contracts?
- Are the asset declarations of government officials open to public and media scrutiny and verification?

ADDITIONAL DISCRETIONARY POLITICAL RIGHTS QUESTION:

ADD Q. 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? (–4 to 0 points)

- Is the government providing economic or other incentives to certain people in order to change the ethnic composition of a region or regions?
- Is the government forcibly moving people in or out of certain areas in order to change the ethnic composition of those regions?
- Is the government arresting, imprisoning, or killing members of certain ethnic groups in order change the ethnic composition of a region or regions?

CIVIL LIBERTIES (0–60 points)

D. FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AND BELIEF (0–16 points)

D1. Are there free and independent media? (Note: “Media” refers to all relevant sources of news and commentary—including formal print, broadcast, and online news outlets, as well as social media and communication applications when they are used to gather or disseminate news and commentary for the general public. The question also applies to artistic works in any medium.)

- Are the media directly or indirectly censored?
- Is self-censorship common among journalists (the term includes professional journalists, bloggers, and citizen journalists), especially when reporting on sensitive issues, including politics, social controversies, corruption, or the activities of powerful individuals?
- Are journalists subject to pressure or surveillance aimed at identifying their sources?
- Are libel, blasphemy, security, or other restrictive laws used to punish journalists who scrutinize government officials and policies or other powerful entities through either onerous fines or imprisonment?
- Is it a crime to insult the honor and dignity of the president and/or other government officials? How broad is the range of such prohibitions, and how vigorously are they enforced?
- If media outlets are dependent on the government for their financial survival, does the government condition funding on the outlets’ cooperation in promoting official points of view and/or denying access to opposition parties and civic critics? Do powerful private actors engage in similar practices?

- Do the owners of private media exert improper editorial control over journalists or publishers, skewing news coverage to suit their personal business or political interests?
- Is media coverage excessively partisan, with the majority of outlets consistently favoring either side of the political spectrum?
- Does the government attempt to influence media content and access through means including politically motivated awarding or suspension of broadcast frequencies and newspaper registrations, unfair control and influence over printing facilities and distribution networks, blackouts of internet or mobile service, selective distribution of advertising, onerous operating requirements, prohibitive tariffs, and bribery?
- Are journalists threatened, harassed online, arrested, imprisoned, beaten, or killed by government or nonstate actors for their legitimate journalistic activities, and if such cases occur, are they investigated and prosecuted fairly and expeditiously?
- Do women journalists encounter gender-specific obstacles to carrying out their work, including threats of sexual violence or strict gender segregation?
- Are works of literature, art, music, or other forms of cultural expression censored or banned for political purposes?

D2. Are individuals free to practice and express their religious faith or nonbelief in public and private?

- Are registration requirements employed to impede the free functioning of religious institutions?
- Are members of religious groups, including minority faiths and movements, harassed, fined, arrested, or beaten by the authorities for engaging in their religious practices?
- Is state monitoring of peaceful religious activity so indiscriminate, pervasive, or intrusive that it amounts to harassment or intimidation?
- Are religious practice and expression impeded by violence or harassment by nonstate actors?
- Does the government appoint or otherwise influence the appointment of religious leaders?
- Does the government control or restrict the production and distribution of religious writings or materials?
- Is the construction of religious buildings banned or restricted?
- Does the government place undue restrictions on religious education? Does the government require religious education?
- Are individuals free to eschew religious beliefs and practices in general?

D3. Is there academic freedom, and is the educational system free from extensive political indoctrination?

- Are teachers and professors at both public and private institutions free to pursue academic activities of a political and quasi-political nature without fear of physical violence or intimidation by state or nonstate actors?
- Does the government pressure, strongly influence, or control the content of school curriculums for political purposes?

- Is the allocation of funding for public educational institutions free from political manipulation?
- Are student associations that address issues of a political nature allowed to function freely?
- Does the government, including through school administration or other officials, pressure students and/or teachers to support certain political figures or agendas, including by requiring them to attend political rallies or vote for certain candidates? Conversely, does the government, including through school administration or other officials, discourage or forbid students and/or teachers from supporting certain candidates and parties?

D4. Are individuals free to express their personal views on political or other sensitive topics without fear of surveillance or retribution?

- Are people able to engage in private discussions, particularly of a political nature, in public, semipublic, or private places—including restaurants, public transportation, and their homes, in person or on the telephone—without fear of harassment or detention by the authorities or nonstate actors?
- Do users of personal online communications—including direct messages, voice or video applications, or social media accounts with a limited audience—face legal penalties, harassment, or violence from the government or powerful nonstate actors in retaliation for critical remarks?
- Does the government employ people or groups to engage in public surveillance and to report alleged antigovernment conversations to the authorities?

E. ASSOCIATIONAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL RIGHTS (0–12 points)

E1. Is there freedom of assembly?

- Are peaceful protests, particularly those of a political nature, banned or severely restricted?
- Are the legal requirements to obtain permission to hold peaceful demonstrations particularly cumbersome or time-consuming?
- Are participants in peaceful demonstrations intimidated, arrested, or assaulted?
- Are peaceful protesters detained by police in order to prevent them from engaging in such actions?
- Are organizers blocked from using online media to plan or carry out a protest, for example through DDoS attacks or wholesale blackouts of internet or mobile services?
- Are similar restrictions and obstacles used to impede other public events, such as conferences, panel discussions, and town hall–style meetings?
- Are public petitions, in which citizens gather signatures to support a particular policy or initiative, banned or severely restricted?

E2. Is there freedom for nongovernmental organizations, particularly those that are engaged in human rights– and governance-related work? (Note: This includes civic organizations, interest groups, foundations, think tanks, gender rights groups, etc.)

- Are registration and other legal requirements for nongovernmental organizations particularly onerous or intended to prevent them from functioning freely?

- Are laws related to the financing of nongovernmental organizations unduly complicated and cumbersome, or are there obstacles to citizens raising money for charitable causes or civic activism?
- Are donors and funders of nongovernmental organizations free from government pressure?
- Are members of nongovernmental organizations intimidated, arrested, imprisoned, or assaulted because of their work?

E3. Is there freedom for trade unions and similar professional or labor organizations?

- Are trade unions allowed to be established and to operate without government interference?
- Are workers pressured by the government or employers to join or not to join certain trade unions, and do they face harassment, violence, or dismissal from their jobs if they fail to comply?
- Are workers permitted to engage in strikes, and do participants in peaceful strikes face reprisals? (Note: This question may not apply to workers in narrowly defined essential government services or public safety jobs.)
- Are unions able to bargain collectively with employers and negotiate agreements that are honored in practice?
- For states with primarily agricultural economies that do not necessarily support the formation of trade unions, does the government allow for the establishment of agricultural workers' organizations or their equivalents? Is there legislation expressly forbidding the formation of trade unions?
- Are professional organizations, including business associations, allowed to operate freely and without government interference?

F. RULE OF LAW (0–16 points)

F1. Is there an independent judiciary?

- Is the judiciary subject to interference from the executive branch of government or from other political, economic, or religious influences?
- Are judges appointed and dismissed in a fair and unbiased manner?
- Do judges rule fairly and impartially, or do they commonly render verdicts that favor the government or particular interests, whether in return for bribes or for other reasons?
- Do executive, legislative, and other governmental authorities comply with judicial decisions, and are these decisions effectively enforced?
- Do powerful private entities comply with judicial decisions, and are decisions that run counter to the interests of powerful actors effectively enforced?

F2. Does due process prevail in civil and criminal matters?

- Are defendants' rights, including the presumption of innocence until proven guilty, protected?
- Do detainees have access to independent, competent legal counsel regardless of their financial means?

- Are defendants given a fair, public, and timely hearing by a competent, independent, and impartial tribunal?
- Is access to the court system in general dependent on an individual's financial means?
- Are prosecutors independent of political control and influence?
- Are prosecutors independent of powerful private interests, whether legal or illegal?
- Do law enforcement and other security officials operate professionally, independently, and accountably?
- Do law enforcement officials make arbitrary arrests and detentions without warrants, or fabricate or plant evidence on suspects?
- Do law enforcement and other security officials fail to uphold due process because of influence by nonstate actors, including organized crime, powerful commercial interests, or other groups?

F3. Is there protection from the illegitimate use of physical force and freedom from war and insurgencies?

- Do law enforcement officials beat detainees during arrest or use excessive force or torture to extract confessions?
- Are conditions in pretrial detention facilities and prisons humane and respectful of the human dignity of inmates?
- Do citizens have the means of effective petition and redress when they suffer physical abuse by state authorities?
- Is violent crime common, either in particular areas or among the general population?
- Is the population subjected to physical harm, forced removal, or other acts of violence or terror due to civil conflict or war?

F4. Do laws, policies, and practices guarantee equal treatment of various segments of the population?

- Are members of various distinct groups—including ethnic, religious, gender, LGBT, and other relevant groups—able to effectively exercise their human rights with full equality before the law?
- Is violence against such groups considered a crime, is it widespread, and are perpetrators brought to justice?
- Do members of such groups face legal and/or de facto discrimination in areas including employment, education, and housing because of their identification with a particular group?
- Do noncitizens—including migrant workers and noncitizen immigrants—enjoy basic internationally recognized human rights, including the right not to be subjected to torture or other forms of ill-treatment, the right to due process of law, and the freedoms of association, expression, and religion?
- Do the country's laws provide for the granting of asylum or refugee status in accordance with the 1951 UN Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, its 1967 Protocol, and other regional treaties regarding refugees? Has the government established a system for providing protection to refugees, including against *refoulement* (the return of persons to a country where there is reason to believe they would face persecution)?

G. PERSONAL AUTONOMY AND INDIVIDUAL RIGHTS (0–16 points)

G1. Do individuals enjoy freedom of movement, including the ability to change their place of residence, employment, or education?

- Are there restrictions on foreign travel, including an exit visa system, which may be enforced selectively?
- Is permission required from the authorities or nonstate actors to move within the country?
- Do state or nonstate actors control or constrain a person's ability to change their type and place of employment?
- Are bribes or other inducements needed to obtain the necessary documents to travel, change one's place of residence or employment, enter institutions of higher education, or advance in school?
- Is freedom of movement impaired by general threats to physical safety, such as armed conflict?
- Do women enjoy the same freedom of movement as men?

G2. Are individuals able to exercise the right to own property and establish private businesses without undue interference from state or nonstate actors?

- Are people legally allowed to purchase and sell land and other property, and can they do so in practice without undue interference from the government or nonstate actors?
- Do women face discrimination in property and inheritance rights?
- Are individuals protected from arbitrary expropriation, and do they receive adequate and timely compensation when property is seized?
- Are people legally allowed to establish and operate private businesses with a reasonable minimum of registration, licensing, and other requirements?
- Are bribes or other inducements needed to obtain the necessary legal documents to operate private businesses?
- Do private/nonstate actors, including criminal groups, seriously impede private business activities through such measures as extortion?

G3. Do individuals enjoy personal social freedoms, including choice of marriage partner and size of family, protection from domestic violence, and control over appearance?

- Are personalized forms of violence—including domestic violence, female genital mutilation/cutting, sexual abuse, and rape—widespread, and are perpetrators brought to justice?
- Does the government directly or indirectly control choice of marriage partner or other personal relationships through means such as bans on interfaith marriages, failure to enforce laws against child marriage or dowry payments, restrictions on same-sex relationships, or criminalization of extramarital sex?
- Do individuals enjoy equal rights in divorce proceedings and child custody matters?
- Do citizenship or residency rules undermine family integrity through excessively high or discriminatory barriers for foreign spouses or transmission of citizenship to children?

- Does the government determine the number of children that a couple may have, including by denying access to or imposing birth control, or by criminalizing or imposing abortion?
- Does the government restrict individuals' choice of dress, appearance, or gender expression?
- Do private institutions or individuals, including religious groups or family members, unduly infringe on the personal social freedoms of individuals, including choice of marriage partner, family size, dress, gender expression, etc.?

G4. Do individuals enjoy equality of opportunity and freedom from economic exploitation?

- Do state or private employers exploit their workers through practices including unfairly withholding wages, permitting or forcing employees to work under unacceptably dangerous conditions, or adult slave labor and child labor?
- Does tight government control over the economy, including through state ownership or the setting of prices and production quotas, inhibit individuals' economic opportunity?
- Do the revenues from large state industries, including the energy sector, benefit the general population or only a privileged few?
- Do private interests exert undue influence on the economy—through monopolistic practices, concentration of ownership, cartels, or illegal blacklists—that impedes economic opportunity for the general population?
- Do laws, policies, or persistent socioeconomic conditions effectively impose rigid barriers to social mobility, generally preventing individuals from rising to higher income levels over the course of their lives?
- Is the trafficking of persons for labor, sexual exploitation, forced begging, etc., widespread, and is the government taking adequate steps to address the problem?

KEY TO SCORES, PR AND CL RATINGS, STATUS

TABLE 1

Political Rights (PR)	
Total Scores	PR Rating
36–40	1
30–35	2
24–29	3
18–23	4
12–17	5
6–11	6
0–5*	7

TABLE 2

Civil Liberties (CL)	
Total Scores	CL Rating
53–60	1
44–52	2
35–43	3
26–34	4
17–25	5
8–16	6
0–7	7

TABLE 3

Combined Average of the PR and CL Ratings (Freedom Rating)	Freedom Status
1.0 to 2.5	Free
3.0 to 5.0	Partly Free
5.5 to 7.0	Not Free

* It is possible for a country or territory’s total political rights score to be less than zero (between –1 and –4) if it receives mostly or all zeros for each of the 10 political rights questions *and* it receives a sufficiently negative score for the political rights discretionary question. In such a case, it would still receive a final political rights rating of 7.