

## *Nations in Transit 2016 Methodology*

*Nations in Transit 2016* measures progress and setbacks for democratization in 29 countries from Central Europe to Central Asia. The 21th edition of this annual study covers events from January 1 through December 31, 2015. In consultation with country report authors, a panel of academic advisers, and a group of regional expert reviewers, Freedom House provides numerical ratings for each country on seven indicators:

- **National Democratic Governance.** Considers the democratic character and stability of the governmental system; the independence, effectiveness, and accountability of legislative and executive branches; and the democratic oversight of military and security services.
- **Electoral Process.** Examines national executive and legislative elections, electoral processes, the development of multiparty systems, and popular participation in the political process.
- **Civil Society.** Assesses the growth of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), their organizational capacity and financial sustainability, and the legal and political environment in which they function; the development of free trade unions; and interest group participation in the policy process.
- **Independent Media.** Addresses the current state of press freedom, including libel laws, harassment of journalists, and editorial independence; the emergence of a financially viable private press; and internet access for private citizens.
- **Local Democratic Governance.** Considers the decentralization of power; the responsibilities, election, and capacity of local governmental bodies; and the transparency and accountability of local authorities.
- **Judicial Framework and Independence.** Highlights constitutional reform, human rights protections, criminal code reform, judicial independence, the status of ethnic minority rights, guarantees of equality before the law, treatment of suspects and prisoners, and compliance with judicial decisions.
- **Corruption.** Focuses on public perceptions of corruption, the business interests of top policymakers, laws on financial disclosure and conflict of interest, and the efficacy of anticorruption mechanisms.

The ratings are based on a scale of 1 to 7, with 1 representing the highest and 7 the lowest level of democratic progress. Minor to moderate developments typically warrant a positive or negative change of a quarter point (0.25), while significant developments warrant a half point (0.50). It is rare for any category to fluctuate more than a half point in a single year. A country's **Democracy Score** is the average of its ratings on all seven indicators covered by *Nations in Transit*. Based on the Democracy Score, Freedom House assigns each country to one of the following regime types:

**Consolidated Democracies (1.00-2.99):** Countries receiving this score embody the best policies and practices of liberal democracy, but may face challenges—often associated with corruption—that contribute to a slightly lower score.

**Semi-Consolidated Democracies (3.00-3.99):** Countries receiving this score are electoral democracies that meet relatively high standards for the selection of national leaders but exhibit weaknesses in their defense of political rights and civil liberties.

**Transitional or Hybrid Regimes (4.00-4.99):** Countries receiving this score are typically electoral democracies where democratic institutions are fragile, and substantial challenges to the protection of political rights and civil liberties exist.

**Semi-Consolidated Authoritarian Regimes (5.00-5.99):** Countries receiving this score attempt to mask authoritarianism or rely on informal power structures with limited respect for the institutions and practices of democracy. They typically fail to meet even the minimum standards of electoral democracy.

**Consolidated Authoritarian Regimes (6.00-7.00):** Countries receiving this score are closed societies in which dictators prevent political competition and pluralism and are responsible for widespread violations of basic political, civil, and human rights.

*Nations in Transit* does not rate governments per se, nor does it rate countries based on governmental intentions or legislation alone. Rather, a country's ratings are determined by considering the practical effect of the state and nongovernmental actors on an individual's rights and freedoms. A more detailed description of the methodology, including complete checklist questions for each democracy indicator, can be found at <https://freedomhouse.org/report/nations-transit-2016/methodology>.