

## Methodology

*Freedom in the World 2014* is the 41st edition of Freedom House's flagship annual report assessing the progress and decline of political rights and civil liberties around the globe.

### **What is *Freedom in the World*?**

*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 related and disputed territories. This year's edition covers 195 countries and 14 territories. Each edition assesses conditions and events in the previous calendar year, meaning *Freedom in the World 2014* covers the period from January 1, 2013, through December 31, 2013. However, in past decades the coverage period has shifted from time to time, for example covering the last two months of one calendar year and the first 10 months of the next.

### **What is the basis for the methodology?**

The report's methodology is derived 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 geographic location, ethnic or religious composition, or level of economic development.

### **What does *Freedom in the World* measure?**

*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 equate legal guarantees of rights with the on-the-ground fulfillment of those rights. While both laws and actual practices are factored into the ratings decisions, greater emphasis is placed on implementation.

### **Which issues does *Freedom in the World* examine?**

The *Freedom in the World* ratings and reports focus on the following issues, which are grouped into 3 topical

subcategories under Political Rights and 4 under Civil Liberties. For the full list of questions used to score countries, please refer to the methodology chapter on our website at [www.freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world-2014/methodology](http://www.freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world-2014/methodology).

#### Political Rights

- Electoral process—executive elections, legislative elections, and electoral framework
- Political pluralism and participation—party systems, political opposition and competition, political choices dominated by powerful groups, and minority voting rights
- Functioning of government—corruption, transparency, and ability of elected officials to govern in practice

#### Civil Liberties

- Freedom of expression and belief—media, religious, and academic freedoms, and free private discussion
- Associational and organizational rights—free assembly, civic groups, and labor union rights
- Rule of law—independent judges and prosecutors, due process, crime and disorder, and legal equality for minority and other groups
- Personal autonomy and individual rights—freedom of movement, business and property rights, women's and family rights, and freedom from economic exploitation

### **How does the rating system work?**

*Freedom in the World* uses a three-tier rating system, consisting of scores, ratings, and status. At the score level, a country is awarded 0 to 4 points for each of 10 Political Rights 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. These questions are grouped into the 3 topical subcategories under Political Rights and 4 under Civil Liberties summarized above. A country is then assigned two ratings (7 to 1)—one for Political Rights and one for Civil Liberties—based on its total scores for the 10 Political Rights and 15 Civil Liberties questions. The average of a country's Political Rights and Civil Liberties ratings is called the Freedom Rating, and it is this figure that finally determines the country's status of Free (1.0 to 2.5), Partly Free (3.0 to 5.0), or Not Free (5.5 to 7.0). For a more complete explanation of the rating system, please refer to the methodology chapter on our website.

#### **How are the scores determined?**

The scores are assigned each year through evaluation by a team of in-house and external analysts and expert advisers from the academic, think tank, and human rights communities. The 2014 edition involved more than 60 analysts and nearly 30 advisers. The country analysts, who prepare the draft reports and scores, use a broad range of sources, including news articles, academic analyses, reports from nongovernmental organizations, and individual professional contacts. The analysts score countries based on the conditions and events within its borders during the coverage period. They are guided by the main 25 questions, as well as supplemental questions designed

to provide more detail on the types of issues covered under each indicator. The analyst's proposed scores are discussed and defended at annual review meetings, organized by region and attended by Freedom House staff and a panel of the expert advisers. The final scores represent the consensus of the analysts, advisers, and staff, and are intended to be comparable from year to year and across countries and regions. The advisers also provide a detailed review of and commentary on a number of key country reports.

#### **What is a trend arrow?**

A country may be assigned an upward or downward trend arrow to highlight developments of particular significance or concern. A trend arrow must be linked to a specific score change and can be assigned only when the score change is not large enough to trigger a broader ratings change. Whether a country should receive a trend arrow is left to the discretion of the country analyst, in consultation with the expert advisers and Freedom House staff.

#### **What is an "electoral democracy"?**

According to the *Freedom in the World* methodology, an "electoral democracy" designation requires a score of 7 or better in the Electoral Process subcategory and an overall Political Rights score of 20 or better.

