

# EURASIA

Authoritarian regimes in Eurasia, with Russia at the forefront, have shown open disdain for international human rights standards, manipulated public sentiment through propaganda and false narratives to fuel public hostility toward democratic principles, and brazenly crushed political dissent and independent expression.

Freedom House challenges the false narratives peddled by dictatorships and supports the efforts of brave civic actors to demand respect for human rights and hold governments to account. Highlights of our impact include:

- ▷ In its annual reports on *Freedom in the World* and *After Transit*, Freedom House has systematically documented the steady decline of democracy in Eurasia, including the intensified suppression of independent voices in Russia. According to these reports, the number of consolidated authoritarian regimes in Eurasia has doubled since 2000, and freedom in the region has deteriorated almost to the level of the Middle East.
- ▷ In collaboration with the Institute of Mass Information, Freedom House has provided bulletproof vests and other safety equipment to journalists covering the conflict in Ukraine's east. Freelance journalist Timofei Zlatkin was hit by a stray bullet near Donetsk and fell to the ground bleeding, but he was saved by the bulletproof vest and after receiving medical treatment made a full recovery.
- ▷ Freedom House's Democracy Shelter in Vilnius has provided safety for more than a dozen activists who were forced to leave Russia or escape impending threats due to their work, and has allowed them to continue their work remotely. This path to safety is highly sought after, because Freedom House is able to arrange for activists to leave Russia within 24 hours.
- ▷ In Chechnya, where it is considered taboo for women to publicly raise domestic or personal grievances against family members, Freedom House has supported direct legal assistance in 24 cases; in 21 of them, the court ruled in favor of the woman. In one case, the police refused to accept a mother's complaint alleging a father's sexual assault on his 12-year-old daughter. A lawyer supported by Freedom House succeeded in pushing for a full investigation, which resulted in the collection of compelling evidence and the father's arrest, allowing the mother and her two daughters to move to a safe location.



Photo credit: Stepan Rudik