

FREEDOM
IN THE WORLD
2014

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The Democratic Leadership Gap

by Arch Puddington, Vice President for Research

As the year 2013 neared its end, the world stepped back from ordinary affairs of state to signal its deep respect for a true giant of the freedom struggle, Nelson Mandela. Praise for Mandela's qualities as dissident, statesman, and humanitarian came from every part of the globe and from people of all stations in life. Former U.S. president Bill Clinton tellingly described Mandela as "a man of uncommon grace and compassion, for whom abandoning bitterness and embracing adversaries was not just a political strategy but a way of life."

But the praise bestowed on the father of post-apartheid South Africa was often delivered with more than a note of wistfulness. For it was apparent to many that the defining convictions of Mandela's career—commitment to the rule of law and democratic choice, rejection of score settling and vengeance seeking, recognition that regarding politics as a zero-sum game was an invitation to authoritarianism and civil strife—are in decidedly short supply among today's roster of political leaders.

Indeed, the final year of Mandela's life was marked by a disturbing series of setbacks to freedom. For the eighth consecutive year, *Freedom in the World*, the report on the condition of global political rights and civil liberties issued annually by Freedom House, showed a decline in freedom around the world.

While the overall level of regression was not severe—54 countries registered declines, as opposed to 40 where gains took place—the countries experiencing setbacks included a worrying number of strategically or economically significant states whose political

trajectories influence developments well beyond their borders: Egypt, Turkey, Russia, Ukraine, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Indonesia, Thailand, Venezuela. The year was also notable for the growing list of countries beset by murderous civil wars or relentless terrorist campaigns: Central African Republic, South Sudan, Afghanistan, Somalia, Iraq, Yemen, Syria.

In short, this was not a year distinguished by political leaders who showed much inclination toward "abandoning bitterness and embracing adversaries." To make matters worse, some of those who bear responsibility for serious atrocities and acts of repression were not only spared the world's opprobrium, but in some cases drew admiring comments for their "strong leadership" and "statesmanship."

Perhaps the most troubling developments took place in Egypt, whose first competitively elected president, Mohamed Morsi, was removed from office in an old-fashioned military coup, albeit backed by the acclamation of many citizens. While Morsi and his political movement, the Muslim Brotherhood,

had exhibited authoritarian tendencies during their short period of leadership, the military and allied forces arrayed around General Abdul Fattah al-Sisi have moved ruthlessly to both eliminate the Brotherhood from political life and marginalize the liberal secular opposition and other elements of society that are critical of the interim government. Since the July takeover, the authorities have killed well over a thousand demonstrators, arrested practically the entire Brotherhood leadership, coopted or intimidated the media, persecuted civil society organizations, and undermined the rule of law. The government also failed to quell a rise in Islamist militancy, including attacks on security forces and sectarian violence in the form of arson and lynchings aimed at the Coptic Christian community.

In just six months, Egypt's post-coup leadership systematically reversed a democratic transition that had made halting progress since 2011. The interim authorities are coming to resemble, and in some areas exceed, the regime of deposed strongman Hosni Mubarak. Meanwhile, the U.S. government has refused to label the seizure of power a coup, issued little more than pro forma objections to the authorities' killings and arrests, and on occasion praised the conduct and supposed democratic aspirations of the military leadership. Other countries have moved to solidify relations with al-Sisi.

In Syria, the regime of Bashar al-Assad managed to deflect criticism of its criminal brutality by agreeing to the removal of chemical weapons whose existence it had long denied, even as its ruthless drive to wipe out the opposition intensified. Chemical arms were never central to Assad's military strategy, and their abandonment has had no effect on aerial bombing and artillery barrages, often directed at urban civilian targets, or the use of blockades on food and humanitarian aid as a war tactic. These and other abuses have combined to produce over 115,000 deaths, two million refugees, and five million internally displaced persons. Syria now earns the lowest scores in the entire *Freedom in the World* report.

Assad is not the only leader to distract the world from domestic repression through superficial, self-serving gestures of reasonableness. A series of opportunistic maneuvers by Vladimir Putin—brokering the Syrian chemical weapons agreement, granting political asylum to former American intelligence contractor Edward Snowden, and approving pardons for several high-profile political prisoners—were enough to change the subject from the Russian leader's persecution of vulnerable populations at home and campaign of intimidation against neighboring countries just months before the opening of the Winter Olympics in Sochi.

In fact, the authoritarian regime created by Putin, now in his 15th year as the country's paramount leader, committed a string of fresh outrages during 2013. The authorities brought spurious criminal charges against protesters and opposition leaders, convicted a dead man—corruption whistleblower Sergey Magnitsky—of tax evasion in an absurd bid to discredit him, and adopted a measure that outlawed “propaganda of nontraditional sexual relations,” triggering violence, job dismissals, and venomous verbal attacks against LGBT people by parliamentarians and other public figures.

Modern Authoritarianism in Action

While freedom suffered from coups and civil wars during the year, an equally significant phenomenon was the reliance on more subtle, but ultimately more effective, techniques by those who practice what is known as modern authoritarianism. Such leaders devote full-time attention to the challenge of crippling the opposition without annihilating it, and flouting the rule of law while maintaining a plausible veneer of order, legitimacy, and prosperity.

Central to the modern authoritarian strategy is the capture of institutions that undergird political pluralism. The goal is to dominate not only the executive and legislative branches, but also the media, the judiciary, civil society, the economy, and the security forces. While authoritarians still consider it imperative to ensure favorable electoral outcomes through a certain amount of fraud, gerrymandering, handpicking of election commissions, and other such rigging techniques, they give equal or even more importance to control of the information landscape, the marginalization of civil society critics, and effective command of the judiciary. Hence the seemingly contradictory trends in *Freedom in the World* scores over the past five years: Globally, political rights scores have actually improved slightly, while civil liberties scores have notably declined, with the most serious regression in the categories of freedom of expression and belief, rule of law, and associational rights.

A result of this approach is that elections are more likely to be peaceful and at least superficially competitive, even as authoritarian (or aspiring authoritarian) incumbents use multiple tools to manipulate the electoral environment as needed. In Zimbabwe, for example, the elections of 2013 were less objectionable than in past years, if only due to the absence of widespread violence perpetrated by security forces

loyal to President Robert Mugabe. Although observers judged that procedures on election day were relatively fair, the outcome was strongly influenced by policies and abuses meant to tilt the playing field months before the balloting took place.

The past year was notable for an intensification of efforts to control political messages through domination of the media and the use of legal sanctions to punish vocal critics.

In Venezuela, the leading independent television station, Globovision, was neutralized as a critical voice after it was sold under government pressure to business interests that changed its political coverage. In Ecuador, President Rafael Correa, having pushed through legislation in 2012 that threatened to cripple media coverage of elections, ensured that the law was implemented during the balloting in 2013. In Russia, the Putin regime, having gained dominance over the national television sector, folded a respected state-run news agency, RIA Novosti, into a consolidated media entity, Russia Today, that is likely to be more aggressively propagandistic. Among other alarming remarks, designated Russia Today chief Dmitry Kiselev has said that gay people “should be banned from donating blood, sperm. And their hearts, in case of the automobile accident, should be buried in the ground or burned as unsuitable for the continuation of life.” In Ukraine, associates of President Viktor Yanukovich and his family have gained control of key media outlets and censored coverage of major political issues. In China, the authorities pressured foreign news organizations by delaying or withholding visas for correspondents who had exposed human rights abuses or whose outlets published investigative reports about the business dealings of political leaders and their families. And in Turkey, a range of tactics have been employed to minimize criticism of Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. They include jailing reporters (Turkey leads the world in the number of imprisoned journalists), pressuring independent publishers to sell their holdings to government cronies, and threatening media owners with reprisals if critical journalists are not silenced.

Freedom in the World Methodology

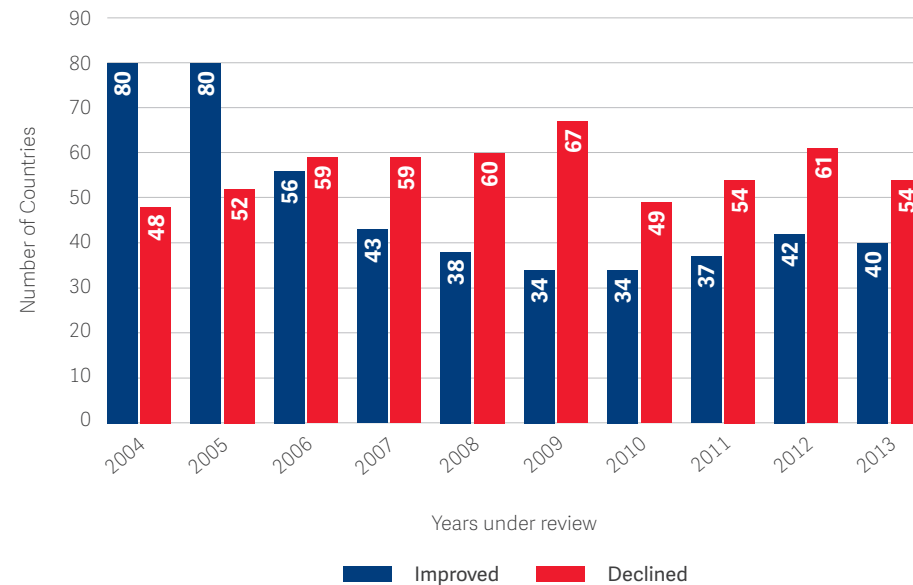
Freedom in the World 2014 evaluates the state of freedom in 195 countries and 14 territories during 2013. Each country and territory is assigned two numerical ratings—from 1 to 7—for political rights and civil liberties, with 1 representing the most free and 7 the least free. The two ratings are based on scores assigned to 25 more detailed indicators. The average of a country or territory's political rights and civil liberties ratings determines whether it is Free, Partly Free, or Not Free.

The methodology, which is derived from the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, is applied to all countries and territories, irrespective of geographic location, ethnic or religious composition, or level of economic development.

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.

For complete information on the methodology, visit <http://www.freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world-2014/methodology>.

IMPROVEMENTS OR DECLINES IN AGGREGATE SCORES



Freedom's Trajectory in 2013

As in the seven preceding years, the number of countries exhibiting gains for 2013, 40, lagged behind the number with declines, 54. Several of the countries experiencing gains were in Africa, including Mali, Côte d'Ivoire, Senegal, Madagascar, Rwanda, Togo, and Zimbabwe. However, some of these improvements represented fragile recoveries from devastating crises or slight increases from quite low baselines. There were also important declines on the continent, including in Central African Republic, Sierra Leone, Uganda, South Sudan, the Gambia, Tanzania, and Zambia. In the Middle East, in addition to Egypt and Syria, deterioration was recorded for Bahrain, Lebanon, and the territory of Gaza.

An assessment of the *Freedom in the World* political rights indicators over the past five years shows the most pronounced declines in sub-Saharan Africa and the greatest gains in the Asia-Pacific and Middle East and North Africa (MENA) regions, though there has been significant rollback of the improvements associated with the Arab Spring. Eurasia registered the lowest scores for political rights, while MENA had the worst scores for civil liberties categories. Latin America saw declines on most indicators, especially in the civil liberties categories, such as freedom of expression and freedom of association.

Major developments and trends in 2013 included:

Anti-LGBT Measures in Russia, Africa: There were some positive developments for the rights of LGBT people, especially in the United States, where state-level legislative action and court decisions significantly expanded marriage rights, and in several European and Latin American countries. But these gains were overshadowed by hostile measures adopted or more vigorously enforced in other countries, most notably Russia and parts of Africa. In Cameroon, the penal code forbids "sexual relations with a person of the same sex," but people are prosecuted on the mere suspicion of being gay. During the year the executive director of the Cameroon Foundation for AIDS was found murdered in Yaoundé, his neck broken, feet smashed, and face burned with an iron. In Zambia, same-sex relations are punishable by prison sentences of up to 15 years, and members of the LGBT community have faced increased persecution, including arrests and trials. In Uganda, an anti-LGBT bill passed by the parliament (though not signed by President Yoweri Museveni at year's end) allows penalties of up to life in prison for banned sexual activity. It would also punish individuals for the "promotion" of homosexuality and for not reporting violations within 24 hours, a provision likely to affect health workers and advocates for LGBT rights.

Volatility in South Asia: At year's end, events in Bangladesh seemed ready to spin out of control, with demonstrations, strikes, an election boycott, and repressive measures against the political opposition. Yet developments elsewhere in South Asia suggested some reason for hope in a subregion that has experienced years of violence and political instability. Pakistan held elections that were deemed competitive and reasonably honest, allowing the first successful transfer of power between two elected, civilian governments. Bhutan benefited from a peaceful rotation of power after the opposition won parliamentary elections for the first time. The Maldives held a largely free and fair presidential election despite several delays and repeated interference by the Supreme Court, and there were also successful elections amid many obstacles in Nepal. On a less positive note, Sri Lanka experienced a decline due to violence directed at religious minorities by hard-line Buddhist groups, often with official sanction.

Rebounding from Conflict in West Africa: Both Mali and Côte d'Ivoire registered impressive improvements after suffering through periods of lethal internal conflict. In 2012, Mali's designation had plummeted from Free to Not Free after Islamist militants gained control of the country's northern regions and a military coup overthrew the elected government in the south. But French-led forces succeeded in driving back the militants, and civilian government was restored through presidential and parliamentary elections.

These developments enabled Mali to achieve a Partly Free designation for 2013. Côte d'Ivoire's years of political and ethnic strife were punctuated by a 2011 conflict that erupted after President Laurent Gbagbo refused to accept the election victory of his rival, Alassane Ouattara. Since Gbagbo's surrender and arrest, the country has made steady progress toward the consolidation of democratic institutions, especially during 2013, with major improvements in the civil liberties environment.

Xenophobia in Central Europe: While attention has focused on the rise of anti-immigration and Euroskeptical parties in Britain, France, the Netherlands, Austria, and other Western European countries, more virulently xenophobic groups have been at work to the east. Like Golden Dawn in Greece, Bulgaria's Ataka party has gained strength at the expense of the political mainstream as the country's economy has suffered, and the current protest-battered government relies on it for a legislative majority. Ataka and smaller ultranationalist parties regularly used racist rhetoric in their electoral campaigns in 2013, and they have recently targeted refugees from Syria and Muslim citizens. In Hungary, Jobbik focuses its attacks on Jews and Roma, and although its popularity has softened over the past several years, it still holds 11 percent of the seats in parliament. The Slovak National Party (SNS) currently has no seats in that country's legislature, but its slurs against Roma, Hungarians, and LGBT people continue to poison the political atmosphere.

20 Largest Score Changes, 2009–2013

The following countries and territories had the largest net gains or losses in total aggregate score (0–100 points) between 2009 and 2013, as measured in *Freedom in the World 2010* and *Freedom in the World 2014*:

Gains		Losses	
Tunisia	40	Central African Republic	-33
Libya	33	Mali	-27
Guinea	26	The Gambia	-18
Burma	24	Ukraine	-17
Tonga	20	Bahrain	-16
Côte d'Ivoire	19	Guinea-Bissau	-16
Niger	14	Ethiopia	-13
Bhutan	12	Burundi	-11
Zimbabwe	11	Sri Lanka	-10
Thailand	10	Maldives	-9

Global Findings

The number of countries designated by *Freedom in the World* as Free in 2013 stood at 88, representing 45 percent of the world's 195 polities and slightly more than 2.8 billion people—or 40 percent of the global population. The number of Free countries decreased by two from the previous year's report.

The number of countries qualifying as Partly Free stood at 59, or 30 percent of all countries assessed, and they were home to just over 1.8 billion people, or 25 percent of the world's total. The number of Partly Free countries increased by one from the previous year.

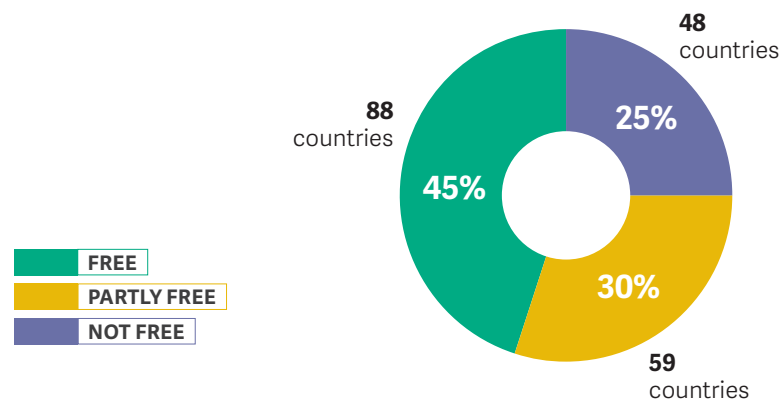
A total of 48 countries were deemed Not Free, representing 25 percent of the world's polities. The number

of people living under Not Free conditions stood at nearly 2.5 billion people, or 35 percent of the global population, though it is important to note that more than half of this number lives in just one country: China. The number of Not Free countries increased by one from 2012.

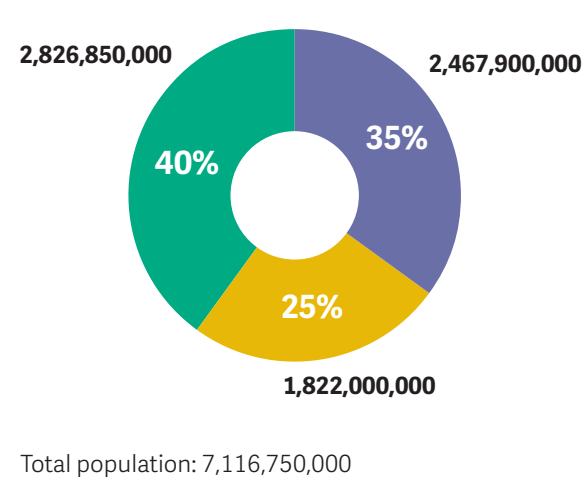
The number of electoral democracies stood at 122, four more than in 2012. The four countries that achieved electoral democracy status were Honduras, Kenya, Nepal, and Pakistan.

One country rose from Not Free to Partly Free: Mali. Sierra Leone and Indonesia dropped from Free to Partly Free, while the Central African Republic and Egypt fell from Partly Free to Not Free.

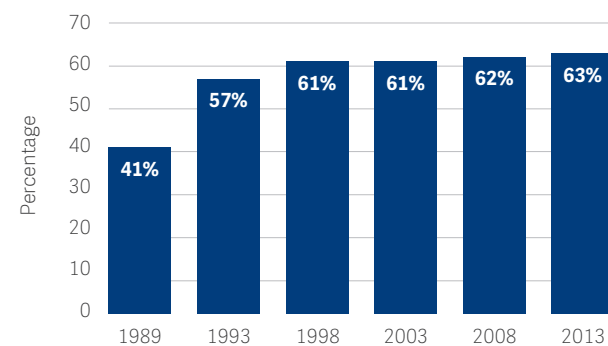
GLOBAL STATUS BY COUNTRY



GLOBAL STATUS BY POPULATION



PERCENTAGE OF COUNTRIES THAT ARE ELECTORAL DEMOCRACIES



Regional Trends

The year-by-year assault on democratic freedoms through much of Eurasia has brought it to the point where its scores on political rights indicators are lower than those of any other region, now slightly worse than the aggregate scores for Middle Eastern countries.

**Eurasia:
Few glimmers in a dark year**

Developments in Eurasia during 2013 proved the adage that in global affairs there is one standard for countries with energy wealth and another, more rigorous standard for everyone else. Three states in the subregion that suffered declines for the year—Russia, Azerbaijan, and Kazakhstan—are locked in a downward spiral that has been ongoing for over a decade, but they are rich in natural gas and oil, and thus have largely escaped the condemnation of democratic governments. Russia, in fact, is looking forward to hosting the Winter Olympics next month, while Kazakhstan and Azerbaijan have played host to various other international competitions, cultural festivals, and diplomatic gatherings.

The year-by-year assault on democratic freedoms through much of Eurasia has brought it to the point where its scores on political rights indicators are lower than those of any other region, now slightly worse than the aggregate scores for Middle Eastern countries. Three Eurasian states, Belarus, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan, are included in Freedom House's list of the world's most repressive countries.

A signal development during 2013 was Russia's use of bullying tactics—especially punitive trade restrictions—to discourage neighboring countries from initialing Association Agreements with the European Union. Threats, table thumping, and the promise of tenuous rewards were enough to persuade Armenia

to scuttle its plans for closer EU integration and join a Russian-led customs union instead. In dealing with Ukraine, Russia first employed threats of economic retaliation and then offered a major loan and energy-price deal to convince President Viktor Yanukovich to abandon the EU agreement. Yanukovich's actions came after months of pledges to sign the pact, and the betrayal triggered ongoing, mammoth street protests in Kyiv by Ukrainians demanding a European and democratic orientation for their country.

Georgia and Moldova, which boast Eurasia's best rankings on the *Freedom in the World* scale, did initial their EU agreements despite concerted Russian pressure. In Georgia, a presidential election that was widely regarded as fair and honest marked a further step toward the consolidation of democracy.

Notable gains or declines:

Azerbaijan's civil liberties rating declined from 5 to 6 due to ongoing, blatant property rights violations by the government in a year in which the state also cracked down on the opposition and civil society in advance of presidential elections.

Kazakhstan received a downward trend arrow due to broad extralegal enforcement of its already strict 2011 law on religious activity, with raids by antiterrorism police on gatherings in private homes.

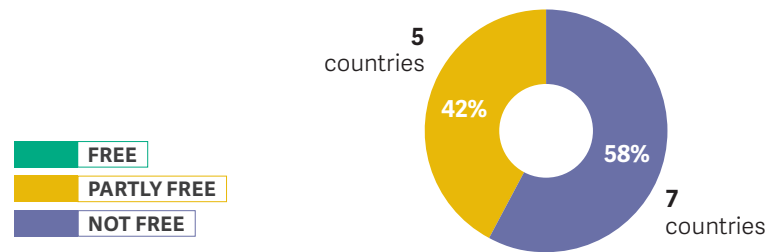
Russia received a downward trend arrow due to increased repression of two vulnerable minority groups in 2013: the LGBT community, through a law prohibiting “propaganda of nontraditional sexual relations,” and migrant laborers, through arbitrary detentions targeting those from the Caucasus, Central Asia, and East Asia. Both efforts have fed public hostility against these groups.

Ukraine received a downward trend arrow due to violence against journalists and media manipulation associated with the controversy over President Viktor Yanukovich’s decision to forego a European Union agreement and accept a financial assistance package from Russia—a decision made without public consultation and against the wishes of a large portion of the Ukrainian people.

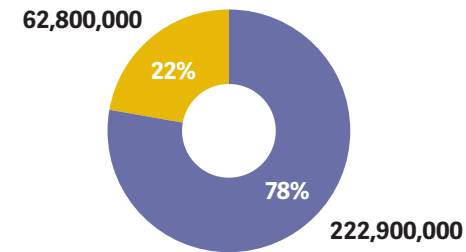
Lebanon received a downward trend arrow due to political paralysis stemming from the Syrian conflict that prevented the passage of a new electoral law and led to the postponement of national elections until late 2014.

Syria received a downward trend arrow due to the worsening conditions for civilians in the past year, the increased targeting of churches for destruction and kidnapping of clergy, the implementation of harsh Sharia-inspired restrictions in some areas, and unchecked violence against women, including the use of rape as a weapon of war.

EURASIA: STATUS BY COUNTRY

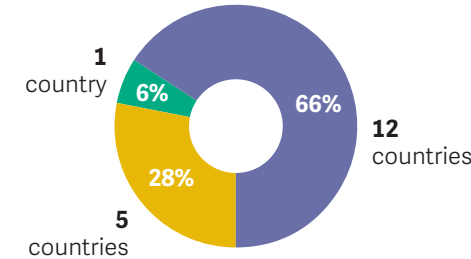


EURASIA: STATUS BY POPULATION

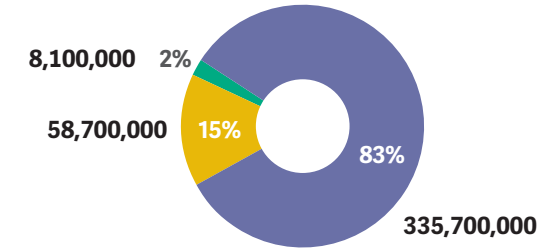


Total population: 285,700,000

MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA: STATUS BY COUNTRY



MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA: STATUS BY POPULATION



Total population: 402,500,000

Middle East and North Africa: Tunisia perseveres on the march to democracy

After two high-profile assassinations of secularist leaders and months of deadlock between the ruling Islamist-led coalition and the largely secularist opposition, Tunisia once again found a way forward in 2013 through compromise and moderation on both sides. The Islamist government agreed to step down in favor of a neutral caretaker government that will rule until elections are held under a new constitution in 2014. The agreement was a significant breakthrough for the country that began the Arab Spring of 2011 and remains the best hope for genuine, stable democracy in the Arab world.

Developments were less positive among the Gulf monarchies, whose bitter resistance to democratic reform included fresh restrictions on the opposition in Bahrain.

Notable gains or declines:

Egypt's political rights rating declined from 5 to 6 and its status declined from Partly Free to Not Free due to the overthrow of elected president Mohamed Morsi in

July, violent crackdowns on Islamist political groups and civil society, and the increased role of the military in the political process.

Tunisia's civil liberties rating improved from 4 to 3 due to gains in academic freedom, the establishment of new labor unions, and the lifting of travel restrictions.

Iraq's political rights rating improved from 6 to 5 due to an increase in political organizing and activity by opposition parties during provincial elections held in April and June.

The Gaza Strip's political rights rating declined from 6 to 7 due to the continued failure to hold new elections since the term of the 2006 Palestinian legislature expired in 2010.

Bahrain received a downward trend arrow due to a new ban on unapproved contact between political societies and foreign officials or organizations as well as a government move to dissolve the Islamic Scholars' Council.

Latin America and Caribbean: Venezuela on the brink

The death of Venezuelan president Hugo Chávez in March triggered hopes that his successors might moderate his authoritarian course and seek common ground with the political opposition. Instead, the new president, Nicolás Maduro, moved in the opposite direction. He took measures to reduce the opposition's ability to serve as a check on government policy, blamed opposition leaders (and the United States) for power outages and other symptoms of government ineptitude, further weakened the independent media, made threats against civil society organizations, and dispatched security forces to retail outlets to enforce price controls on consumer goods prior to municipal and regional elections. Many analysts warned at year's end that Venezuela would require a major shift in policy if it is to avoid an economic and social crisis.

A positive note was a national election in Honduras that observers deemed generally fair and competitive. While the vote was an indication of progress toward political normalcy after the 2009 coup that removed President Manuel Zelaya from office (Zelaya's wife was the runner-up in the 2013 presidential race),

Honduras still confronts high rates of poverty and spiraling crime statistics.

Both Chile and Uruguay burnished their images as leading South American democracies. Uruguay adopted several important reform measures, including the legalization of same-sex marriage, while Chile conducted successful elections that returned former president Michelle Bachelet to office for a second term.

Cuba also registered a small step forward due to the easing of visa restrictions and the growth of the private economic sector, though the island remains among the world's most repressive countries as measured by *Freedom in the World*.

Notable gains or declines:

Nicaragua's political rights rating improved from 5 to 4 and its civil liberties rating improved from 4 to 3 due to the positive impact of consultations on proposed constitutional reforms, advances in the corruption and transparency environment, and

gradual progress in women's rights and efforts to combat human trafficking.

The **Dominican Republic's** civil liberties rating declined from 2 to 3 due to a decision by the Constitutional Court to retroactively strip the citizenship of tens of thousands of Dominicans of Haitian descent.

Panama's political rights rating declined from 1 to 2 due to concerns that authorities were not investigating allegations of corruption against President Ricardo Martinelli and other officials, as well as verbal attacks against, and the withholding of information from, journalists who write about government corruption.

Cuba received an upward trend arrow due to a modest decline in state surveillance, a broadening of political discussion in private and on the internet, and increased access to foreign travel and self-employment.

Belize received a downward trend arrow due to reports of corruption across several government ministries related to the sale of passports and other documents, as well as an inadequate response by law enforcement agencies.

Saint Kitts and Nevis received a downward trend arrow due to the government's improper efforts to block consideration of a no-confidence motion that had been submitted by opposition legislators in December 2012.

Venezuela received a downward trend arrow due to an increase in the selective enforcement of laws and regulations against the opposition in order to minimize its role as a check on government power.

trative or extralegal detention to punish human rights defenders, anticorruption activists, petitioners, and religious believers. And despite announced reforms that will increase the number of families permitted to have two children, the intrusive regulations and harsh practices used to enforce the country's long-standing birth quotas remained in place.

A bright spot was the determination of high-profile dissidents as well as large numbers of ordinary citizens to assert their rights and challenge injustice in the face of heavy obstacles. Public protests, online campaigns, journalistic exposés, and activist networks scored several victories during the year, including the release of individuals from wrongful detention. Nevertheless, the ability of Chinese citizens to share breaking news, uncover corruption, or engage in public debate about political and social issues was hampered by increased internet controls and crackdowns on prominent social-media commentators and grassroots antigraft activists.

Notable gains or declines:

Indonesia's civil liberties rating declined from 3 to 4 and its status declined from Free to Partly Free due to the adoption of a law that restricts the activities of nongovernmental organizations, increases bureaucratic oversight of such groups, and requires them to support the national ideology of Pancasila—including its explicitly monotheist component.

Bhutan's political rights rating improved from 4 to 3 due to an increase in government transparency and a peaceful transfer of power after the opposition won parliamentary elections for the first time, and its civil liberties rating improved from 5 to 4 due to an increase in open and critical political speech, the political opposition's greater ability to hold demonstrations, and the growing independence of the judiciary.

Japan's civil liberties rating improved from 2 to 1 due to a steady rise in the activity of civil society organizations and an absence of legal restrictions on religious freedom.

The **Maldives'** political rights rating improved from 5 to 4 due to the largely free and fair presidential election held in November 2013, despite several delays and repeated interference by the Supreme Court.

Papua New Guinea's political rights rating improved from 4 to 3 due to efforts by Prime Minister Peter O'Neill and his government to address widespread official abuse and corruption, enabling successful prosecutions of several former and current high-ranking officials.

Tonga's political rights rating improved from 3 to 2 due to the orderly implementation of constitutional procedures in response to the prime minister's incapacitation by illness, and the opposition's increasing ability to hold politically dominant nobles accountable to the electorate.

South Korea's political rights rating declined from 1 to 2 due to high-profile scandals involving corruption and abuse of authority, including alleged meddling in political affairs by the National Intelligence Service.

Pakistan received an upward trend arrow due to the successful transfer of power between two elected, civilian governments following voting that was widely deemed free and fair.

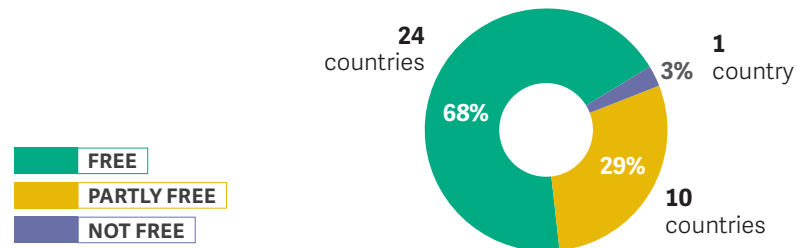
Afghanistan received a downward trend arrow due to the deteriorating security environment linked to the drawdown of NATO troops, which resulted in an increase in violence against aid workers and women in public office.

Bangladesh received a downward trend arrow due to increased legal harassment and attacks on bloggers, the passage of restrictive amendments to the Information and Communication Technology Act, and the deaths of dozens of protesters during demonstrations over verdicts by the country's war crimes tribunal.

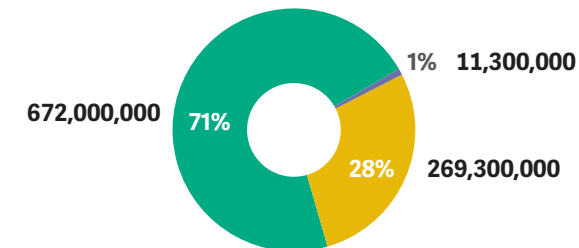
Malaysia received a downward trend arrow due to rampant electoral fraud and structural obstacles designed to block the opposition from winning power, a decision by the highest court to forbid non-Muslims from using the term "Allah" to refer to God, and worsening hostility and prejudice faced by the LGBT community.

Sri Lanka received a downward trend arrow due to intensified attacks by hard-line Buddhist groups against the Christian and Muslim minorities, including their properties and places of worship, often with official sanction.

AMERICAS: STATUS BY COUNTRY



AMERICAS: STATUS BY POPULATION



Total population: 952,600,000

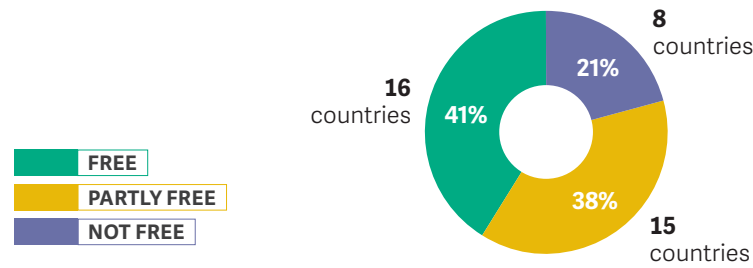
Asia-Pacific: New leadership, little change in China

Despite official rhetoric about fighting corruption, improving the rule of law, and inviting input from society, the new Chinese Communist Party leadership under President Xi Jinping has proven even more intolerant of dissent than its predecessors. After intellectuals and other members of civil society called in early 2013 for the party to adhere to China's constitution and reduce censorship, the authorities responded with campaigns to intensify ideological controls. New judicial guidelines expanded the criminalization of online speech, confessions and "self-criticisms"

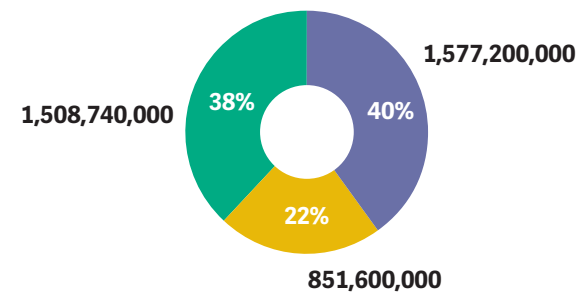
reminiscent of the Mao era reappeared on television screens, and police arrested dozens of activists affiliated with the New Citizens Movement who had advocated reforms including asset disclosures by public officials.

Even potentially positive changes fell short. Although authorities began to close the country's infamous "reeducation through labor" camps, they increasingly turned to criminal charges with potentially longer sentences and various alternative forms of adminis-

ASIA-PACIFIC: STATUS BY COUNTRY



ASIA-PACIFIC: STATUS BY POPULATION



Total population: 3,937,540,000

Sub-Saharan Africa:
A pattern of gains and reversals

For the past decade or so, Africa has been the most volatile region, suffering from a disproportionate share of the world's coups and insurgencies. But its recent history also includes a number of instances in which regimes installed by force have given way to elected civilian rule. In 2013, gains were noted in Mali, Madagascar, and Côte d'Ivoire, all of which were recovering from coups and civil conflicts. The past year also featured modest improvements for countries with authoritarian records, including Rwanda, Togo, and Zimbabwe. At the same time, there were declines for Zambia and Sierra Leone, which had been credited with promising reforms or openings in recent years.

Notable gains or declines:

Mali's political rights rating improved from 7 to 5, its civil liberties rating improved from 5 to 4, and its status improved from Not Free to Partly Free due to the defeat of Islamist rebels, an improved security situation in the north, and successful presidential and legislative elections that significantly reduced the role of the military in politics.

The **Central African Republic's** political rights rating declined from 5 to 7, its civil liberties rating declined from 5 to 7, and its status declined from Partly Free to Not Free due to the Séléka rebel group's ouster of the incumbent president and legislature, the suspension of the constitution, and a general proliferation of violence by criminal bands and militias, spurring clashes between Muslim and Christian communities.

Sierra Leone's political rights rating declined from 2 to 3 and its status declined from Free to Partly Free due to high-profile corruption allegations against bankers, police officers, and government officials as well as long-standing accounting irregularities that led to the country's suspension from the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative.

Côte d'Ivoire's civil liberties rating improved from 5 to 4 due to further openings in the environment for freedoms of expression, assembly, and association, as well as for minority groups, as the security situation stabilized under the new government.

Madagascar's political rights rating improved from 6 to 5 due to the holding of competitive and peaceful presidential and parliamentary elections that were deemed free and fair by international and regional observers.

Rwanda's civil liberties rating improved from 6 to 5 due to increasing critical commentary on social media, as illustrated by the unhindered online debates regarding Paul Kagame's presidential tenure.

Senegal's civil liberties rating improved from 3 to 2 due to improvements in the media environment and for freedom of assembly since President Macky Sall took office in 2012.

Togo's political rights rating improved from 5 to 4 due to successful elections for the national legislature,

which suffered from alleged irregularities but were generally deemed fair by international observers and did not feature serious violence.

Zimbabwe's political rights rating improved from 6 to 5 due to a decline in harassment and violence against political parties and opposition supporters during the 2013 elections.

South Sudan's civil liberties rating declined from 5 to 6 due to increased armed conflict and mass killings along ethnic lines, triggered by intolerance for dissent within the ruling party and politically motivated arrests in December.

Uganda's political rights rating declined from 5 to 6 due to the continued, repeated harassment and arrest of prominent opposition leaders, the passage of the Public Order Management Bill to further restrict opposition and civil society activity, and new evidence of the limited space for alternative voices within the ruling National Resistance Movement.

Benin received a downward trend arrow due to increasing efforts by the executive to consolidate

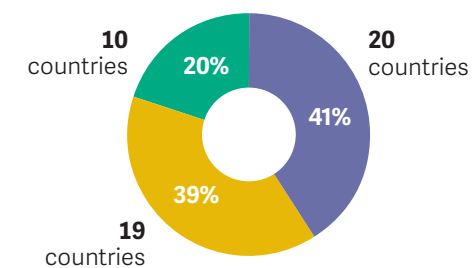
power, as demonstrated by the continued detention of alleged coup plotters despite a judge's dismissal of their charges, the placement of the judge under house arrest, and politicized bans on a number of planned demonstrations and protests throughout the year.

The Gambia received a downward trend arrow due to worsening restrictions on civil liberties, including amendments to the Information and Communication Act and the Criminal Code Act that further limited open and free private discussion, and a ban on the use of Skype and other voice communication programs in internet cafés.

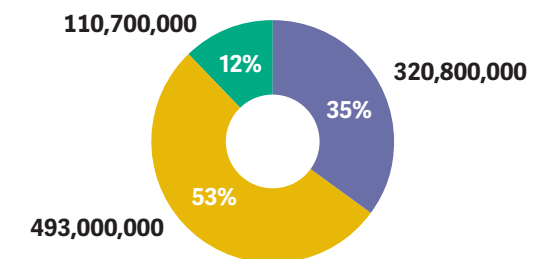
Tanzania received a downward trend arrow due to an increase in acts of extrajudicial violence by security forces, mob and vigilante violence, and violence against vulnerable groups including women, albinos, members of the LGBT community, and those at high risk of contracting HIV.

Zambia received a downward trend arrow due to the ruling party's ongoing repression and harassment of the political opposition, including the increased use of the Public Order Act, hindering its ability to operate in general and to campaign in by-elections.

SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA: STATUS BY COUNTRY



SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA: STATUS BY POPULATION



Total population: 924,500,000

Europe and North America:
Dysfunction in the United States, an uncertain future for Turkey

The United States in 2013 endured a level of government gridlock not seen in over a century. The long-running standoff between the administration of President Barack Obama and his Republican Party opponents in Congress culminated in a two-week partial shutdown of the federal government.

Ultimately, the Republicans backed down and a budget agreement was adopted. But little progress was made on a broad set of important issues. For example, Republican resistance played a major role in thwarting Obama's proposed overhaul of the country's immigration laws, which would

include a path toward citizenship for some undocumented immigrants.

The U.S. government pledged to redouble its efforts to close down the military prison facility at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, where scores of terrorism suspects have been held without trial since 2001. However, only a handful of detainees were released and placed in other countries during 2013; at year's end there were over 150 detainees at the facility.

The administration also found itself under criticism from civil libertarians at home and a number of foreign governments for the eavesdropping and data-collection tactics of the National Security Agency (NSA). The intelligence agency's sprawling activities, including its collection of communications metadata on American citizens and its intrusive monitoring of close foreign allies, was made public through a series of leaks by Edward Snowden, a contractor who had worked for the NSA. Fearing arrest, Snowden fled to Hong Kong and then to Russia, where he was granted asylum.

A special presidential commission set up to review the NSA's practices after the leaks did not find violations of Americans' constitutional rights, but it did recommend a series of changes in intelligence policy and procedures. The administration separately came under fire during the year after prosecutors gained access to the telephone records of journalists who worked for the Associated Press as part of an internal investigation into leaked national security information.

Among the most important developments in Europe during 2013 was the escalating crisis surrounding the Erdoğan government in Turkey. In his early years in power, Erdoğan was widely praised—and credited in this report—for introducing overdue democratic reforms. Then came a period in which reform efforts

seemed to stall. More recently, key democratic institutions have faced intense pressure, and basic civil liberties have experienced setbacks.

A series of "deep state" trials, in which hundreds of prominent Turks have been charged with alleged conspiracies to overthrow the government, have raised serious questions about the rule of law and selective justice. These concerns have only been compounded by the government's ongoing purge of law enforcement officials and prosecutors in response to corruption cases recently brought against Erdoğan's allies. Just as troubling is the prime minister's campaign against critical voices in the media. A government that several years ago was in serious negotiations on EU membership is notorious today as a major adversary of press freedom.

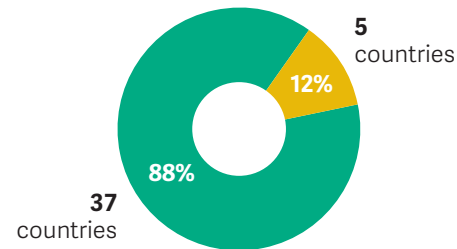
Erdoğan's increasingly authoritarian tendencies were on display in his imperious reaction to the year's protests over a development plan that would eliminate a cherished Istanbul park. Reprisals by the authorities extended to protesters, businesses accused of sheltering them, and social-media users who commented on the events, among others. With increasing frequency, the prime minister and his allies blamed their troubles on supposed plots by international cabals.

Notable gains or declines:

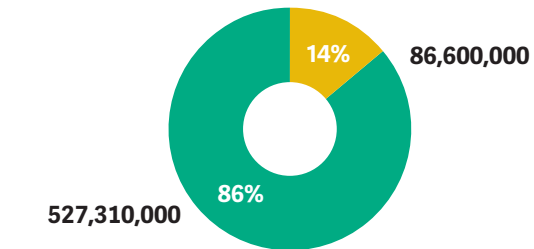
Italy's political rights rating improved from 2 to 1 due to parliamentary elections that were generally considered to be free and fair as well as progress in the adoption and implementation of anticorruption measures.

Turkey received a downward trend arrow due to the harsh government crackdown on protesters in Istanbul and other cities and increased political pressure on private companies to conform with the ruling party's agenda.

EUROPE: STATUS BY COUNTRY



EUROPE: STATUS BY POPULATION



Total population: 613,910,000

Conclusion: Freedom in the World at 41

The state of freedom reached its nadir in 1975, when 40 countries, just 25 percent of the world's independent states, were ranked as Free, compared with 65 countries, or 41 percent, ranked as Not Free.

This year marks the 41st edition of *Freedom in the World*. From the beginning, the survey used scholarly research to inform the policy debate. It was conceived as an instrument that would employ rigorous methods to measure the state of global freedom, after which the findings would be publicized in order to alert policymakers and the press to democracy's gains and setbacks, as well as the major threats to free societies.

At the time the report was launched, there was reason for concern, if not alarm, about the condition of world freedom. For the first time since the early years of the Cold War, democracy seemed to be in retreat, and the world's democratic powers were mired in doubt and confusion. By contrast, the two communist giants, China and the Soviet Union, appeared firmly in control of their societies. The most recent effort at reform in the communist world, the Prague Spring of 1968, had been crushed by military invasion, and the rest of Eastern Europe had digested the message that liberalization was not on the agenda. Asia, Africa, Latin America, and the Middle East were dominated by strongmen, white-minority regimes, military juntas, and absolute monarchs. Even Western Europe, where democracy was generally well entrenched, had its dictatorships—in Greece, Spain, and Portugal.

The state of freedom reached its nadir in 1975, when 40 countries, just 25 percent of the world's independent states, were ranked as Free, compared with 65 countries, or 41 percent, ranked as Not Free. At that point in history, the democratic universe was restricted to Western Europe, North America, and a few other

scattered locales, and recent trends gave little cause for optimism about the future.

But for the next quarter-century, the state of freedom experienced a period of progress unprecedented in human history. After the embrace of democracy by the European dictatorships, military governments gave way to civilian rule in Latin America, followed by the beginning of political change in South Korea, Taiwan, and other Asian states. Then came the unraveling of the communist world, first in the East European satellites and then in the Soviet Union itself. The collapse of Soviet communism—and the effective demise of Marxism as a political system—had additional ripple effects, as elites in Africa, Latin America, and Asia could no longer claim that right-wing dictatorships were necessary to forestall the spread of communist totalitarianism.

Thus by 2000, the number of countries designated as Free had surged to 86, or 45 percent of the total, while the number of Not Free states had declined to 48, or 25 percent. With the end of the 1990s Balkan wars and a modest surge of democratic governance in Africa, the Middle East remained the only major part of the world that had been relatively untouched by what Samuel Huntington labeled the third wave of democracy.

Since then, the state of freedom has been situated somewhere between stagnation and decline. On the one hand, few of the countries that moved toward democracy in the previous decades sank back into authoritarian rule. Europe's postcommunist countries have maintained a high standard of rights

and liberties, in part due to the EU's imposition of democracy criteria for new member states. There have been problems in Latin America—most prominently in Venezuela—but on balance the region has experienced the longest period of stable democracy in its history.

On the other hand, the march of democracy has met with a wall of resistance in three major settings: China, Eurasia, and the Middle East.

The Authoritarian Resistance

During the 1990s, when the foundations for its economic miracle were being set, many predicted that China would rather quickly evolve toward a more liberal and perhaps democratic system. If the immediate results were not democracy as understood in Washington and Brussels, it would at least be a system that was less repressive, more tolerant of criticism, and more subject to the rule of law. Instead, the Chinese Communist Party leadership has developed a complicated apparatus of controls and punishments designed to maintain rigid one-party rule and prevent the expression of dissent, while at the same time enabling China to become a global economic powerhouse.

In the immediate aftermath of the Soviet unraveling, there were also expectations that a number of the new independent states, including Russia, would opt for democracy and reject the authoritarian institutions of communist times. But with a few peripheral exceptions, the bulk of the Eurasian states have remained in or returned to various forms of despotism.

Across the region, the political opposition has been jailed, forced into exile, or made irrelevant; the media have been coopted or censored; and public wealth has been plundered by ruling elites and their cronies in the business community.

The Middle East seemed especially impervious to liberalization until the Arab Spring. Yet the sudden emergence of protest movements in Tunisia, Egypt, and Bahrain, and the armed conflicts arising from similar efforts to overthrow dictatorships in Libya and Syria, were greeted by democratic governments more with apprehension than enthusiasm. Their authoritarian counterparts had no such misgivings, displaying unalloyed hostility toward the prospect of democratic change in the Arab heartland. The region's surviving dictatorships and monarchies have worked actively to undermine local democrats and give encouragement to the forces of repression, counterrevolution, or extremism.

While the official ideologies of today's authoritarian powers vary considerably, their leaders clearly form alliances in order to advance common goals. They have studied how other dictatorships were destroyed and are bent on preventing a similar fate for themselves. At one level, a loose-knit club of authoritarians works to protect mutual interests at the United Nations and other international forums, subverting global human rights standards and blocking precedent-setting actions against fellow despots. More disturbingly, they collaborate to prop up some of the world's most reprehensible regimes. This is most visible at present in Syria, where Russia, China, Iran, and Venezuela have offered diplomatic support, loans, fuel, or direct military aid to the Assad regime.

The Democracies' Crisis of Confidence

In an earlier period, it was the United States and its allies that were the guarantors of political change in the world. Self-assured and optimistic, they provided the material resources and diplomatic muscle that tipped the balance in favor of freedom movements and struggling new democracies. In this undertaking, a range of private actors also played a critical role. Trade unions from North America and Europe made it possible for Poland's Solidarity movement to survive under duress; a transnational alliance of intellectuals mobilized behind Václav Havel during Czechoslovakia's Velvet Revolution; activists worldwide joined together to press for an end to South African apartheid.

If Poland and South Africa were once the causes that inspired freedom's allies, today the animating cause is—or should be—the Middle East. Egypt's coup and Assad's apparent resurgence notwithstanding, the forces of change have been unleashed, and for the first time popular demands for self-government, freedom of thought, and an end to oppression have been placed squarely on the table.

Unfortunately, the American government has failed to recognize the historic moment that presents itself in the region. It is true that there have been setbacks, that democratic forces have made mistakes, and that rigid geostrategic priorities sometimes conflict with the goals of democratic change. But there is a real danger that policymakers will become locked into a defeatist loop, seeing validation for their inaction in the very problems it produces. The Arab world is clearly in flux, and the question is whether those committed to free societies will prevail or whether the Middle East will fall prey to new forms of repressive rule. Observers who might prefer to turn back the clock should remember that decades of authoritarian misrule, not demands for democracy, led to the institutional weaknesses and extremist elements now in plain view.

The cause is far from lost. While today's authoritarians impress many with their self-assurance and determination, a closer examination suggests that modern despots devote much of their time to holding actions against popular demands for change. Recently, the leaderships in Russia and China have attempted to develop overarching ideas that would justify their ruling policies. The predictable answers—"traditional" Russian values and a kind of neo-Maoist nationalism—smack more of incoherence than confidence in the future.

It is noteworthy that those who, at considerable personal risk, have joined the struggle for change in Egypt, Tunisia, and Bahrain are not chanting in praise of the "China Dream" or issuing appeals to Vladimir Putin. The United States may not be the most popular country in the Middle East, but desire for the democratic benefits it enjoys—free elections, freedom of expression, and guarantees against police-state predation—lies at the heart of the ongoing uprising in the Arab world. Similar demands can be heard on the streets or are uttered more furtively in virtually every authoritarian state, Russia and China included.

The democratic world was experiencing a period of self-absorption much like today's when Freedom House launched *Freedom in the World* during the 1970s. Once it had overcome its crisis of confidence, America helped propel a historic surge of democratization in parts of the world where self-government was almost unknown. A similar era of change could be in the offing, and some democracies—including a number in Europe—have done their best to play a constructive role. But if there is no reassertion of American leadership, we could well find ourselves at some future time deploring lost opportunities rather than celebrating a major breakthrough for freedom.

Worst of the Worst

Of the 55 countries and territories designated as Not Free, 12 have been given the worst possible rating of 7 for both political rights and civil liberties:

- Central African Republic
- Equatorial Guinea
- Eritrea
- North Korea
- Saudi Arabia
- Somalia
- Sudan
- Syria
- Turkmenistan
- Uzbekistan
- Tibet
- Western Sahara

The following 5 countries and 2 territories received ratings that were slightly better than the worst possible, with 7 for political rights and 6 for civil liberties:

- Belarus
- Chad
- China
- Cuba
- Laos
- Gaza Strip
- South Ossetia

Jennifer Dunham, Bret Nelson, Aili Piano, Tyler Roylance, and Vanessa Tucker contributed to the preparation of this report.