

The Democratic Leadership Gap

For the eighth consecutive year, *Freedom in the World* showed an overall erosion in global freedom, with 54 countries registering declines and 40 earning gains in the report's scoring system. The events of 2013 were shaped in part by authoritarian powers' active resistance to democratic change and a crisis of confidence among leading democracies, particularly the United States.

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 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 25 percent of the world's population. 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 35 percent of the global population, though China accounts for more than half of this figure. The number of Not Free countries increased by one from 2012.

The number of electoral democracies rose by four to 122, with Honduras, Kenya, Nepal, and Pakistan acquiring the designation.

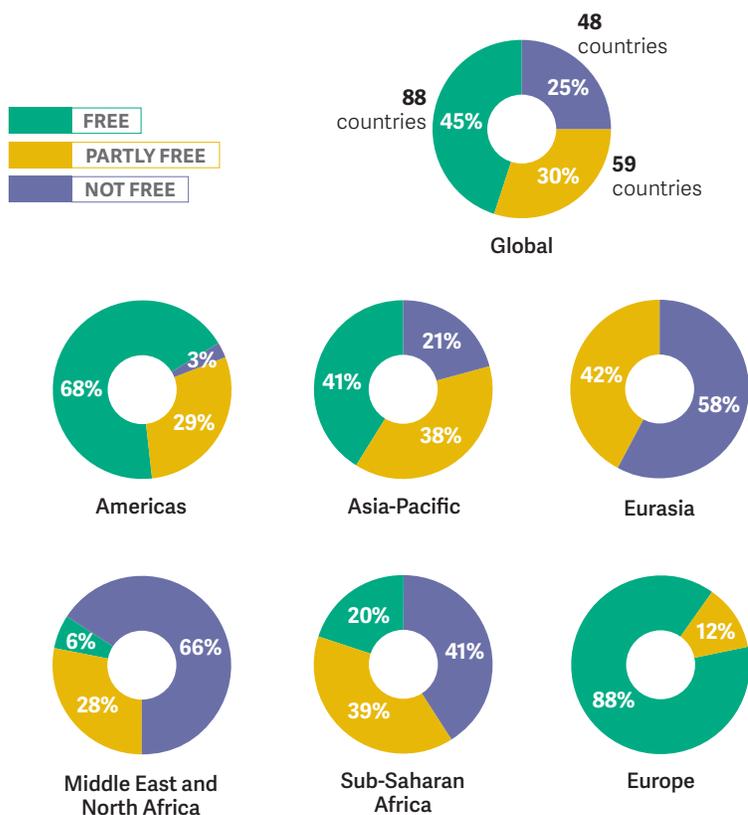
One country rose from Not Free to Partly Free: Mali. Sierra Leone and Indonesia dropped from Free to Partly Free, while the Central African Republic and Egypt fell from Partly Free to Not Free.

Authoritarian Resistance

Since *Freedom in the World* began monitoring the global state of freedom in 1972, waves of democratization have touched almost every region. However, the march of democracy has met with a wall of resistance in three major settings: China, Eurasia, and the Middle East.

Official rhetoric and marginal reforms aside, the new Communist Party leadership in **China** has proven even more intolerant of dissent than its predecessors. In 2013, officials expanded the criminalization of online speech, confessions reminiscent of the Mao era reappeared on television screens, and police arrested dozens of activists who had advocated antigraft reforms.

GLOBAL AND REGIONAL FREEDOM STATUS BY COUNTRY



Eurasia has declined to the point where its political rights scores are lower than those of any other region. Russia's authoritarian regime committed fresh outrages during 2013, persecuting political dissidents and vulnerable minorities alike. It also employed bullying tactics to discourage neighboring countries from initialing agreements with the European Union. The Ukrainian president's decision to abandon an EU pact triggered mammoth street protests by citizens demanding a European and democratic orientation for their country.

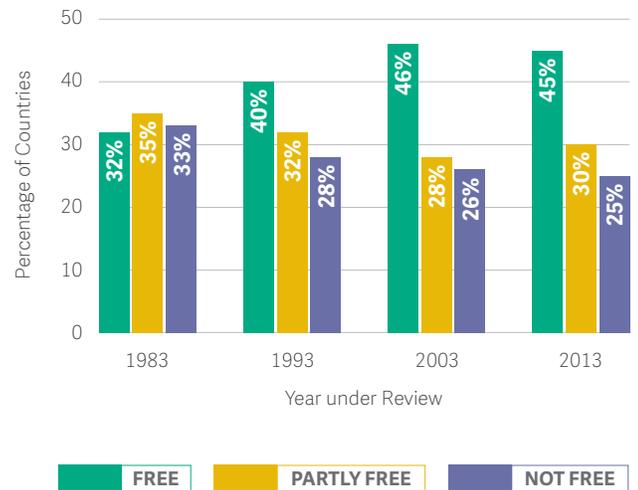
The **Middle East** seemed especially impervious to liberalization until the Arab Spring of 2011, yet the uprisings were greeted with apprehension by foreign democracies, while the region's surviving dictatorships and monarchies have worked to bolster the forces of repression, counter-revolution, or extremism.

Egypt's status declined from Partly Free to Not Free due to the overthrow of elected president Mohamed Morsi in July and subsequent crackdowns. In just six months, Egypt's post-coup leadership has systematically undone almost all of the gains ushered in by the 2011 protests.

Syria continued its descent into multilateral civil war and humanitarian crisis, neither of which were mitigated by the regime's agreement to surrender its chemical arms. And the Gulf monarchies have persisted in their harsh repression of dissent, particularly in Bahrain.

The only bright spot in the region was Tunisia, where the ruling Islamist party ended months of deadlock by agreeing to step down in favor of a neutral caretaker

GLOBAL TRENDS IN FREEDOM



government that will rule until elections are held in 2014. The compromise deal was a significant breakthrough for the country, which remains the best hope for genuine, stable democracy in the Arab world.

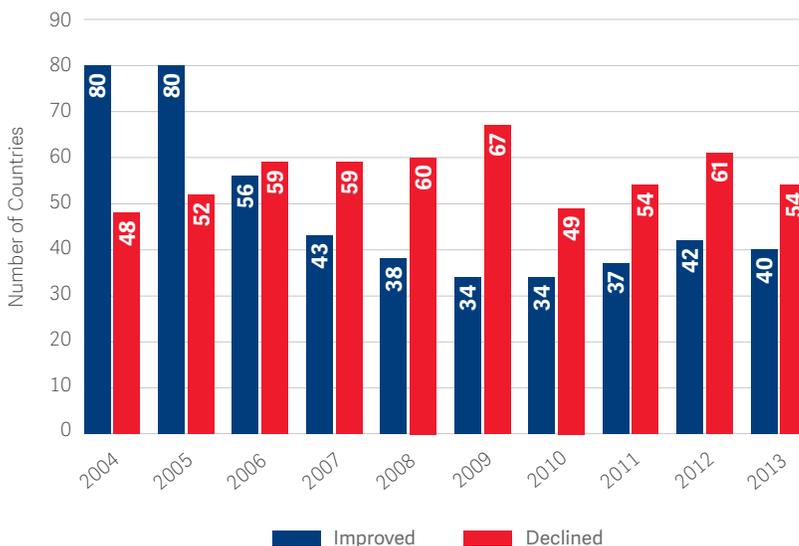
The Democracies' Crisis of Confidence

In an earlier period, the United States and its allies were the guarantors of political change in the world, providing material resources and diplomatic muscle that tipped the balance in favor of freedom movements and struggling new democracies.

Today the animating cause is—or should be—the Middle East. Unfortunately, the American government has failed to recognize the historic moment that presents itself in the region. 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.

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 an era of democratization in parts of the world where self-government was almost unknown. A similar period of change could be in the offing, but the evidence and experience suggest that it will require a reassertion of American leadership.

IMPROVEMENTS OR DECLINES IN AGGREGATE SCORES



Freedom House is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization that supports democratic change, monitors freedom, and advocates for democracy and human rights.

1301 Connecticut Ave. NW, Floor 6
Washington D.C. 20036

120 Wall Street, 26th floor
New York, NY 10005

www.freedomhouse.org

202.296.5101
info@freedomhouse.org