

Sub-Saharan Africa

In 2013, the world’s reflection on the accomplishments of Nelson Mandela highlighted the failings of current African leaders. Most telling in the findings of *Freedom in the World 2014* was the fact that for sub-Saharan Africa as a whole, all seven categories of political rights and civil liberties have declined over the past five years, with the largest decreases in freedoms of expression and association.

Volatility in West Africa

Sub-Saharan Africa, long prone to jarring gains and declines in any given year, was again the world’s most volatile region during 2013, with 11 status and ratings changes. A number of the ups and downs occurred in West Africa.

Sierra Leone, which improved to Free in 2012, reverted to Partly Free due to persistent problems with corruption and transparency. Benin, rated Free and long one of the region’s best performers, received a downward trend arrow to reflect increasing efforts by the executive to consolidate power.

Côte d’Ivoire, a state recovering from internal conflict, saw its civil liberties rating rise from 5 to 4 due to progress in the environment for freedoms of expression, assembly, and association, as well as for minority groups. Senegal, which moved from Partly Free to Free last year after a peaceful rotation of power, continued to gain ground in 2013, with a better climate for the media and free assembly boosting the civil liberties rating from 3 to 2.

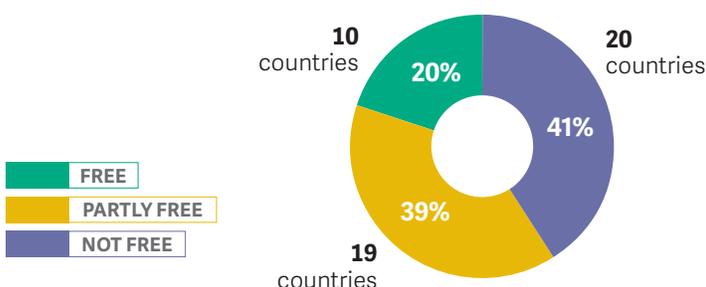
Mixed Success for Elections

Positive changes in several countries—Kenya, Madagascar, Mali, Togo, and Zimbabwe—came as a result of elections, though they were often flawed or overshadowed by erosion on other issues.

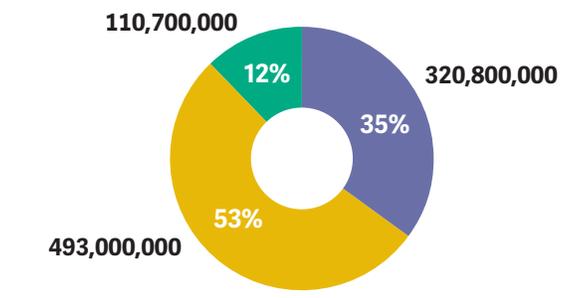
In Kenya, the March presidential and parliamentary elections were generally deemed more credible than the previous votes in 2007, despite serious tabulation problems and many disputed ballots. A formal challenge to the presidential victory of Uhuru Kenyatta by runner-up Raila Odinga was addressed in the courts, rather than through ethnic clashes as in 2007–08. Nevertheless, pressure on freedoms of expression and association during the year led to a net decline in Kenya’s scores.

President Robert Mugabe and his party secured victory in Zimbabwe’s July national elections. After using brutal violence to retain the presidency in the 2008 vote, Mugabe and his allies took a more subtle approach in 2013, deftly

STATUS BY COUNTRY



STATUS BY POPULATION



Total population: 924,500,000

shaping an uneven playing field well before election day. The more peaceful if still highly problematic results led to an improvement in Zimbabwe's political rights rating, from 6 to 5.

Free and fair elections in Mali, which had plummeted from Free to Not Free the previous year due to a military coup and a rebellion in the north, helped the country along the path to recovery. Combined with security improvements in the northern region, the elections lifted Mali's status to Partly Free.

Political Instability Leads to Ethnic Bloodshed

In a pattern that is sadly familiar in much of the world, failures of political leadership and poor governance produced conflicts along ethnic lines in South Sudan and the Central African Republic in 2013.

The fragile new nation of South Sudan was on the verge of crumbling in December due to a rift between President Salva Kiir and his former vice president, Riek Machar. The political schism sparked ethnic warfare between Kiir's Dinka group and the smaller Nuer group of Machar, leading to a decline in South Sudan's civil liberties rating, from 5 to 6.

In the year's most dramatic free fall, the Central African Republic moved into the Worst of the Worst cohort, as its political rights and civil liberties ratings both declined from 5 to 7, and its status sunk from Partly Free to Not Free. In March, the Muslim-led Séléka rebel group seized the capital, ousted President François Bozizé and the parliament, and suspended the constitution. With various armed groups roaming the country unchecked, communal violence between Muslims and the Christian majority ensued, resulting in atrocities and widespread displacement.

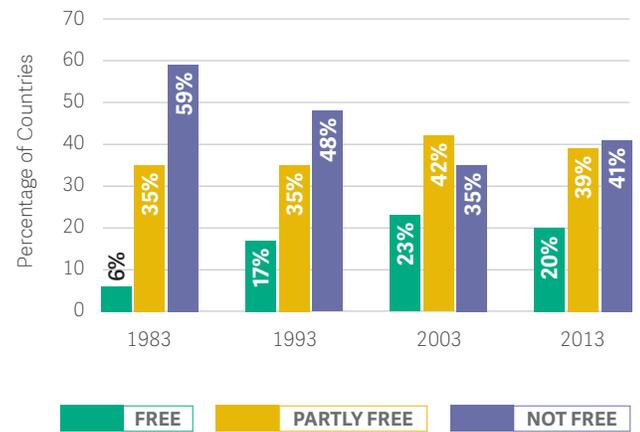
Increased Repression of Dissenting Voices, Minority Groups

Several African countries received downgrades for 2013 due to organized hostility against vulnerable minorities and crackdowns on political dissent and civic activism.

Uganda's political rights rating declined from 5 to 6 due to arrests of opposition leaders and a new law aimed at restricting free assembly by the opposition and civil society. The government also stepped up its harassment of critical media, with a 10-day shutdown of a leading newspaper in May, and of the LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender) community, with the parliament's passage of a harshly punitive Anti-Homosexuality Bill in December.

Zambia received a downward trend arrow due to the ruling party's ongoing repression and harassment of the opposition, including through the increased use of the

TRENDS IN FREEDOM



Public Order Act, which hindered its ability to operate and campaign.

In Kenya, the government continued to intimidate civil society groups that spoke out in favor of the prosecution of Kenyatta and other top officials at the International Criminal Court. In December, the parliament passed a repressive law empowering a government tribunal to regulate all forms of media.

Tanzania received a downward trend arrow due to an increase in extrajudicial violence by the security forces, mob and vigilante violence, and rising discrimination and abuse directed at women, albinos, and members of the LGBT community.

IMPROVEMENTS OR DECLINES IN AGGREGATE SCORES

