

FREEDOM
IN THE
WORLD
2011

THE ANNUAL SURVEY OF
POLITICAL RIGHTS AND
CIVIL LIBERTIES

F R E E D O M H O U S E

Freedom in the World

2011

The findings of *Freedom in the World 2011* include events from January 1, 2010, through December 31, 2010.

Freedom in the World 2011
The Annual Survey of
Political Rights & Civil Liberties

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Conténts

Acknowledgments	1
Freedom in the World 2011: The Authoritarian Challenge to Democracy Arch Puddington	3
Introduction	16
Country Reports	17
Related and Disputed Territory Reports	757
Survey Methodology	813
Tables and Ratings	
Table of Independent Countries	831
Table of Disputed Territories	833
Table of Related Territories	833
Combined Average Ratings: Independent Countries	834
Combined Average Ratings: Related and Disputed Territories	835
Table of Electoral Democracies	836
The Survey Team	838
Selected Sources	848
Freedom House Board of Trustees	855
About Freedom House	856

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Freedom in the World 2011

The Authoritarian Challenge to Democracy

Arch Puddington

As the year 2010 drew to a close, a series of disturbing events brought into sharp relief the challenges confronting the partisans of global freedom. In the most notorious case, the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party created an unprecedented international confrontation over the awarding of the Nobel Peace Prize to dissident intellectual Liu Xiaobo. Having failed to intimidate the Nobel committee into rejecting Liu, the authorities in Beijing threatened economic retaliation against Norway, hinted at reprisals against other governments that sent representatives to the award ceremony, and cast a dragnet for Liu's relatives and fellow dissidents, dozens of whom were arrested or confined to their homes by police.

Meanwhile, parliamentary elections in Egypt resulted in a 95 percent vote for longtime president Hosni Mubarak's National Democratic Party. Elections in Belarus had a similarly implausible outcome, as President Alyaksandr Lukashenka, who has held power for 16 years, won a new term with an astonishing 80 percent of the vote. When protesters filled the streets of Minsk to object to polling practices that were strongly criticized by outside monitors, Lukashenka ordered a massive police crackdown, sneering that "there will be no more mindless democracy in this country."

In Russia, an especially discouraging year was punctuated by the conviction and sentencing of regime critic and former oil magnate Mikhail Khodorkovsky on his second round of charges, which will force him to remain behind bars despite legal proceedings that were widely dismissed as fraudulent. In Venezuela, parliamentary supporters of President Hugo Chávez pushed through legislation that allowed him to rule by decree on a broad range of topics, a bill that will further constrain non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and a measure that extends media restrictions to the internet. Finally, in Iran, hundreds of political activists arrested in the wake of the stolen 2009 elections were placed on trial, and prosecutors declared their intention to take aim at the principal leaders of the opposition.

To be sure, rigged elections, persecution of dissidents, and rule by executive fiat are not novel developments in these countries. But the violations were carried out with a striking degree of aggressiveness, self-assurance, and disregard for outside opinion. No government—not even the Soviet Union or Nazi Germany—has ever treated the Nobel Peace Prize with anything like the disdain exhibited by Beijing. Egypt, a country favored by the United States, responded to gentle encouragement toward democratic change by orchestrating election results comparable to those in such obvious dictatorships as Syria and Tunisia. Belarus, recently courted by the European Union (EU), blithely ignored its own promises to hold clean elections. In Russia, Prime Minister Vladimir Putin publicly declared that Khodorkovsky belonged

in jail even as the court was nearing a verdict. Venezuela's Chávez seized his decree powers immediately before the inauguration of a new parliament with substantial opposition representation, effectively sidestepping the results of the recent elections. And Iran pushed controversial cases through its deeply flawed judicial system despite the misgivings of even its allies in parts of the developing world.

The increasing truculence of the world's most powerful authoritarian regimes has coincided with a growing inability or unwillingness on the part of the world's democracies to meet the authoritarian challenge, with important consequences for the state of global freedom. According to *Freedom in the World 2011*, the latest edition of Freedom House's annual survey of global political rights and civil liberties, conditions worsened for the fifth consecutive year in 2010. While the decline for the year was less extensive than in some years past, the multiyear spate of backsliding is the longest of its kind since *Freedom in the World* was first published in 1972, and threatens gains dating to the post-Cold War era in Africa, Latin America, Asia, and the former Soviet bloc.

The number of countries exhibiting declines for the past year, 25, was substantially higher than the number showing gains, 11. The most notable changes occurred in Mexico and Ukraine, both of which declined from Free to Partly Free, and Ethiopia, which dropped from Partly Free to Not Free. Among other countries showing declines were Côte d'Ivoire, Egypt, Kuwait, Rwanda, and Sri Lanka. There were some countries with important gains, such as Colombia, Guinea, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Nigeria, the Philippines, and Tanzania.

The number of countries designated as Free dropped from 89 to 87, but more disturbing was the further decline in the number of electoral democracies, from 116 to 115, putting the figure well below its 2005 level of 123. The electoral democracy roster has not been so short since 1995.

Another source of concern was the continued poor performance of the countries of the Middle East and North Africa. The region, which had been the focus of policies to encourage democratic reforms under former U.S. president George W. Bush's Freedom Agenda, deepened its multiyear decline from an already-low democratic baseline.

For the first time in a number of years, the former Soviet Union saw modest gains, with improvement noted in Moldova, Georgia, and Kyrgyzstan. At the same time, the region's democracy indicators continued to rank near the global bottom, only slightly above those for the Middle East.

AMONG OTHER TRENDS:

- **Violence and Organized Crime as Enemies of Democracy:** Mexico's decline from Free to Partly Free was a result of the uncontrolled wave of organized criminal activity that has afflicted several states. The problem, of course, is regionwide; at year's end, Guatemala declared a state of siege in a part of the country where criminal violence has grown unchecked, and there is strong evidence that similar problems could be migrating from the Americas to Africa.

- **Freedom Gap Persists in Muslim-Majority Countries:** Despite a few noteworthy gains, primarily Indonesia's embrace of democracy and civil rights, Muslim-majority countries have failed to make significant progress over the past decade. Only two are ranked as Free, with 19 Partly Free and 26 Not Free. While practically

no improvements were registered in the Middle East and North Africa, some gains were recorded in Muslim-majority countries outside the region.

- **Economic Crisis Challenges Central Europe's Progress:** Among the countries most severely affected by the global economic downturn are a number of formerly communist states in Central Europe and the Baltic region. While the consolidation of democratic institutions and the influence of the EU have prevented major regression, some of these societies are already showing evidence of backsliding, most notably Latvia and Hungary.

- **China's Latest Pretext for Repression:** In 2008, Beijing cited the need for security during the Olympic Games as the reason for its crackdown on dissident intellectuals, journalists, and others. In 2009, the rationale for repression was the need for order surrounding the celebration of the 60th anniversary of the Communist Party's seizure of power. In 2010, the authorities' mobilization was presented as a response to the supposed hostility behind the awarding of the Nobel Peace Prize to Liu Xiaobo.

- **Immigration Woes:** France's civil liberties score slipped due to the country's inability to cope with immigrants from the Middle East and Africa, as well as Roma from Eastern Europe. But the failure to deal humanely with mass immigration was a common theme that affected Europe, the United States, and other societies ranging from Argentina to South Africa and the monarchies of the Persian Gulf.

Freedom in the World-2011 Survey

The population of the world as estimated in mid-2010 was 6,873.3 million persons, who reside in 194 sovereign states. The level of political rights and civil liberties as shown comparatively by the *Freedom House* survey is:

Free: 2,952.0 million (43 percent of the world's population) live in 87 of the states,

Partly Free: 1,487.0 million (22 percent of the world's population) live in 60 of the states.

Not Free: 2,434.3 million (35 percent of the world's population) live in 47 of the states.

A Record of the Survey (population in millions)

Year under Review	FREE	PARTLY FREE	NOT FREE	WORLD POPULATION
Mid-1992	1,352.2 (24.83%)	2,403.3 (44.11%)	1,690.4 (31.06%)	5,446.0
Mid-1993	1,046.2 (19.00%)	2,224.4 (40.41%)	2,234.6 (40.59%)	5,505.2
Mid-1994	1,119.7 (19.97%)	2,243.4 (40.01%)	2,243.9 (40.02%)	5,607.0
Mid-1995	1,114.5 (19.55%)	2,365.8 (41.49%)	2,221.2 (38.96%)	5,701.5
Mid-1996	1,250.3 (21.67%)	2,260.1 (39.16%)	2,260.6 (39.17%)	5,771.0
Mid-1997	1,266.0 (21.71%)	2,281.9 (39.12%)	2,284.6 (39.17%)	5,832.5
Mid-1998	2,354.0 (39.84%)	1,570.6 (26.59%)	1,984.1 (33.58%)	5,908.7
Mid-1999	2,324.9 (38.90%)	1,529.0 (25.58%)	2,122.4 (35.51%)	5,976.3
Mid-2000	2,465.2 (40.69%)	1,435.8 (23.70%)	2,157.5 (35.61%)	6,058.5
Mid-2001	2,500.7 (40.79%)	1,462.9 (23.86%)	2,167.1 (35.35%)	6,130.7
Mid-2002	2,717.6 (43.85%)	1,293.1 (20.87%)	2,186.3 (35.28%)	6,197.0
Mid-2003	2,780.1 (44.03%)	1,324.0 (20.97%)	2,209.9 (35.00%)	6,314.0
Mid-2004	2,819.1 (44.08%)	1,189.0 (18.59%)	2,387.3 (37.33%)	6,395.4
Mid-2005	2,968.8 (45.97%)	1,157.7 (17.93%)	2,331.2 (36.10%)	6,457.7
Mid-2006	3,005.0 (46.00%)	1,083.2 (17.00%)	2,448.6 (37.00%)	6,536.8
Mid-2007	3,028.2 (45.85%)	1,185.3 (17.94%)	2,391.4 (36.21%)	6,604.9
Mid-2008	3,055.9 (45.73%)	1,351.0 (20.21%)	2,276.3 (34.06%)	6,683.2
Mid-2009	3,088.7 (45.49%)	1,367.4 (20.14%)	2,333.9 (34.37%)	6,790.0
Mid-2010	2,952.0 (42.95%)	1,487.0 (21.63%)	2,434.3 (35.42%)	6,873.3

* The large shift in the population figure between 1997 and 1998 is due to India's change in status from Partly Free to Free.

RESULTS FOR 2010

The number of countries designated by *Freedom in the World* as Free in 2010 stood at 87, representing 45 percent of the world's 194 polities and 2,951,950,000 people—43 percent of the global population. The number of Free countries declined by two from the previous year's survey.

The number of countries qualifying as Partly Free stood at 60, or 31 percent of all countries assessed by the survey, and they were home to 1,487,000,000 people, or 22 percent of the world's total. The number of Partly Free countries increased by two from the previous year.

A total of 47 countries were deemed Not Free, representing 24 percent of the world's polities. The number of people living under Not Free conditions stood at 2,434,250,000, 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 remained unchanged from 2009.

The number of electoral democracies dropped by 1, and stands at 115. Three countries achieved electoral democracy status due to elections that were widely regarded as improvements over previous polls: the Philippines, Tanzania, and Tonga. Four countries were dropped from the electoral democracy roster: Burundi, Guinea-Bissau, Haiti, and Sri Lanka.

Two countries moved from Not Free to Partly Free: Guinea and Kyrgyzstan. In both cases, authoritarian regimes gave way to civilian rule determined through competitive elections. Two countries, Mexico and Ukraine, dropped from Free to Partly Free, and two countries, Ethiopia and Djibouti, declined from Partly Free to Not Free. One territory, Nagorno-Karabakh, dropped from Partly Free to Not Free.

SIGNS OF DECLINE

Since they were first issued in 1972, the findings of *Freedom in the World* have conveyed a story of broad advances for freedom that enriched every part of the world, save the Middle East and North Africa. Thus, the share of countries designated as Free increased from 31 percent in 1980 to 45 percent in 2000, and the proportion of countries designated as Not Free declined from 37 percent in 1980 to 25 percent in 2000. Throughout this period, honest elections proliferated as freedom of expression, freedom of belief, and pluralistic civil societies flourished in many former dictatorships, even in countries with little history of democratic institutions. There were certainly some unresolved problems. In a number of new democracies, corrupt practices remained rampant, gnawing away at the public's faith in multiparty politics and market economies. And adherence to the rule of law was often poor, giving rise to blights ranging from politicized judiciaries to uncontrolled street crime and drug-related violence.

Freedom's forward march peaked around the beginning of the last decade. The percentages of countries designated as Free, Partly Free, and Not Free are nearly the same for the year 2010 as they were for the year 2000. Behind that overall appearance of stasis, however, the *Freedom in the World* data show two distinct periods of change.

In the five-year stretch from 2002 through 2006, there were far more gains for freedom than declines. For example, a total of 77 countries (40 percent) registered improvements in their political rights scores, as opposed to 59 (30 percent) that showed declines. Similarly, there were 109 countries (56 percent) with gains in the

civil liberties categories, as opposed to just 62 (32 percent) with declines. This trajectory is almost reversed during the next five-year period, from 2006 through 2010. On the checklist of political rights indicators, there have been just 47 countries (24 percent) with gains as opposed to 70 (36 percent) with declines. The record for civil liberties categories is even more worrying. Over the same period, improvements were recorded for 36 countries (19 percent), and declines for 77 (40 percent).

While all *Freedom in the World* indicators have shown some degree of deterioration in the past five years, the trend has not affected all democratic institutions equally. Elections and the core components of political pluralism, including party competition and participation by minority groups, have suffered the least. In Asia, electoral institutions have actually improved over the past five years.

The indicators that have suffered the most significant setbacks include a broad category called functioning of government. This measures effective, honest, and transparent governance, and includes the corruption indicators on which many countries fare poorly. Another area of special concern is freedom of expression, a category that includes freedom of the press, freedom of belief, and academic freedom. The rule of law category has also suffered considerable decline, reflecting a global erosion of judicial independence, unequal application of the law, arbitrary detention, and various other human rights violations by both state and nonstate forces. These findings suggest that while elections remain critical, an effective strategy for the advancement of freedom should pay special attention to freedom of the press (especially freedom for bloggers and new media), building the foundations of a genuine rule-of-law society, effective crime-fighting tactics that protect civil liberties, and measures to increase government transparency and curtail corruption.

**ANALYSIS OF REGIONAL TRENDS
MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA:
ELECTION RIGGING, REPRESSION,
AND VIOLENCE**

In 2005, Egypt conducted what many assessed as the most open parliamentary elections in the country's modern history. While the balloting was far from free and competitive—the number of opposition candidates was limited, some voters in opposition strongholds were kept from the polls, opposition leaders were persecuted—the result was a major breakthrough for the forces arrayed against the entrenched ruling group around President Hosni Mubarak. Furthermore, developments in Egypt were hailed as a sign of broad change coming to the Middle East's long-stagnant political environment. Progress was seen in several other societies, including the Persian Gulf monarchies.

However, instead of additional gains,

Year Under Review	Free	Partly Free	Not Free
1980	51	51	60
1990	65	50	50
2000	86	58	48
2010	87	60	47

Tracking Electoral Democracy

Year Under Review	Number of Electoral Democracies
2000	120
2005	123
2010	115

8 *Freedom in the World—2011*

the period since those promising elections has brought steady decline for the region, including further backsliding in 2010. In Egypt, the rationed pluralism that marked the 2005 vote gave way to the sort of near-unanimous results found in communist regimes or ossified dictatorships like Syria and Tunisia. The 2010 balloting was accompanied by credible allegations of fraud, widespread repression, and severe restrictions on opposition candidates. The deterioration extended to the media environment. After several years of modest openings for the press, the past year featured the closure of publications as well as arrests and physical attacks aimed at independent journalists and bloggers.

The crackdown triggered by Iran's stolen June 2009 elections extended into 2010, with President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad and his supporters in the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps moving to consolidate control over a growing list of Iranian institutions. Security forces continued to arrest and imprison members of the opposition and civil society activists, and launched a new round of persecution against the Baha'i religious minority.

There were also negative developments in the Gulf states. Bahrain's scores declined due to a campaign of repression directed at the country's Shiite Muslims, who form a majority of the population. Meanwhile, Kuwait suffered a decline in its civil liberties rating due to restrictions on freedom of expression and freedom of assembly.

Threatened or actual violence remained an important factor in Middle Eastern politics. Attacks by Islamist extremists and sectarian militias escalated somewhat in Iraq, as the national leadership struggled for nine months to form a government after parliamentary elections. Yemen was also afflicted by violent uprisings, fomented both by Islamist militants and by regional factions opposed to the deeply flawed central government. While Lebanon experienced a year of relative political peace, the Hezbollah movement threatened a violent response should the UN tribunal investigating the 2005 murder of former prime minister Rafik Hariri indict any of its members.

Israel remains the only country in the region to rank as Free and qualify as an electoral democracy. While there was relatively little violence between Israel and the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza during the year, there were a series of conflicts over security, land, and human rights. Some Israelis have become concerned about the role of NGOs that criticize of Israeli policies in the Palestinian territories and often receive funding from foreign donors. Legislation to compel NGOs to publicize details of any foreign funding has been presented in the Knesset, drawing considerable opposition from democracy and human rights advocates. A proposed law requiring new citizens, including non-Jews, to recognize Israel as a Jewish state has also stirred controversy, and Israeli Jews and Arabs have been locked in a series of disputes over property in predominantly Arab neighborhoods of East Jerusalem.

CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE/FORMER SOVIET UNION: "COLOR REVOLUTION" GAINS AND LOSSES

The so-called color revolutions that swept parts of the former Soviet Union between 2003 and 2005 set off a variety of aftershocks in the subsequent years. Initially, these movements of reform-minded activists, which swept away corrupt and repressive leaders in Georgia, Ukraine, and Kyrgyzstan, were regarded as potential models for democratic change both in neighboring countries and elsewhere in the

world. A few years later, the color revolutions were seen as major disappointments due to the display of authoritarian tendencies by the new presidents in Georgia and especially Kyrgyzstan, and the infighting and incompetence of the new leadership in Ukraine.

However, the most recent developments suggest something more complex. On the positive side, all three color revolution countries, plus Moldova, have thus far escaped the authoritarian fate of practically all other non-Baltic former Soviet republics. While the functioning of political institutions in color revolution countries generally falls short of strict democratic standards, these societies have avoided the transparently rigged elections, widespread censorship, leader-for-life arrangements, and thuggish security forces that define the political landscape of so many of their neighbors.

For example, although the president of Kyrgyzstan, Kurmanbek Bakiyev, had grown increasingly autocratic after taking power in a 2005 popular uprising, he was forced into exile in 2010. The politicians who replaced him presided over the adoption of a revised constitution and national elections that were regarded as credible and competitive. Among other improvements, the new charter moves away from the kind of superpresidential system that has undergirded autocratic rule in other Central Asian countries. As a consequence of these developments—and despite a wave of persecution against the ethnic Uzbek minority, in which hundreds are believed to have been killed—Kyrgyzstan's *Freedom in the World* status improved from Not Free to Partly Free. Likewise, Georgia, which has experienced both reform and regression since its color revolution in 2003, saw an improvement in its civil liberties rating for 2010 due to a more relaxed security environment and increased media diversity.

On a less positive note, events in Ukraine in 2010 caused it to fall from Free to Partly Free. Viktor Yanukovich, whose fraudulent electoral victory in 2004 had been overturned by the Orange Revolution, won the presidency on his second attempt in early 2010. He then oversaw a deterioration in press freedom, state efforts to curb student activism, intimidation of NGOs, local elections that were almost universally derided as neither free nor fair, and indications of increased executive influence over the judiciary. Ukraine had previously been the only country in the non-Baltic former Soviet Union to earn a Free designation, and its decline represents a major setback for democracy in the region.

Meanwhile, the news from Russia, the leading power in the region, remained relentlessly grim in 2010. President Dmitry Medvedev's highly publicized pledges to combat corruption, arrest those responsible for a series of high-profile murders of journalists and activists, and strengthen the rule of law have not been fulfilled. Instead, bribery and embezzlement remain the norm, politically motivated violence goes unpunished, and the law is enforced at the caprice of the leadership. Conditions seemed to worsen toward the end of the year, a period marked by guilty verdicts in politicized trials, the sham prosecution of human rights activist Oleg Orlov on trumped-up defamation charges, the savage beating of journalists, violent dispersal of sanctioned demonstrations in Moscow and St. Petersburg, and a campaign against migrants from southern Russia and Central Asia by ultranationalist soccer hooligans who enjoy a measure of support from elements of the political leadership.

For the countries of Central Europe and the Baltic states, the principal challenge remains the growing pressure on living standards and economic stability stemming from the global economic downturn. In general, this newly democratic region weath-

ered the economic storm successfully, and the protection of civil liberties remained strong. Hungary, however, experienced a score decline due to policies adopted by newly elected prime minister Viktor Orbán, leader of the right-leaning Fidesz party. He was widely criticized for pushing through legislation that will enhance state control of the press and threaten journalistic freedoms. Latvia, another country that was hit hard by the economic downturn, saw its civil liberties rating drop due to the impact on press freedom from the recent sale under less-than-transparent circumstances of one of the country's most influential newspapers.

AMERICAS: VIOLENCE IN MEXICO, AUTOCRACY IN VENEZUELA

Two of the most worrying recent challenges to freedom in Latin America—uncontrolled crime and authoritarian populism—led to declines in two of the region's leading states: Mexico and Venezuela.

Mexico suffered a decrease in its political rights rating and a drop from Free to Partly Free status due to the government's inability to stem the wave of violence by drug-trafficking groups in several states. While the country benefited from an important consolidation of democracy during the past decade, government institutions have failed to protect ordinary citizens, journalists, and elected officials from organized crime. Extortion and other racketeering activities have spread, and conditions for the media have deteriorated to the point where editors have significantly altered coverage to avoid repercussions from drug gangs.

In Venezuela, the policies of President Hugo Chávez continued to erode the space for independent political activity and civil society. The country's civil liberties rating declined even though the political opposition scored impressive gains in parliamentary elections held in September. Opposition parties, which had boycotted the previous parliamentary polls in 2005, organized a unified coalition; this bloc and a formerly pro-Chávez party that has drifted into opposition won a combined 52 percent of the vote. However, due to changes in the electoral system, opposition representation in the new parliament will be just over 40 percent.

In response to the opposition gains, Chávez pushed through a series of laws in the final days of the old parliament that will extend his influence over the press and civil society, and limit the rights of incoming legislators. The outgoing parliament also approved a measure giving Chávez the power to bypass the opposition bloc in the new parliament and rule by decree on a range of issues for 18 months.

Other developments in the region were more positive. Brazil further solidified its democracy by holding a presidential election that was deemed fair and competitive, resulting in victory for Dilma Rousseff, an ally of outgoing president Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva. A new president, Juan Manuel Santos, was also elected in Colombia, which enjoyed a decline in political polarization after outgoing president Álvaro Uribe accepted a Constitutional Court decision that ended his effort to pursue a third term.

ASIA-PACIFIC:

PRESSURE ON FREE ASSEMBLY AND EXPRESSION, PROGRESS IN PHILIPPINES

Conforming to the trends in other regions and in contrast to modest improvements in 2009, the number of countries with declines in aggregate score in the Asia-Pacific region outnumbered those with gains by a ratio of 2 to 1.

The most positive development was a major improvement in the Philippines due

to elections that were deemed relatively free and fair, and that were conducted in notably less violent circumstances than in the recent past. The Philippines had its designation as an electoral democracy restored as a result. Tonga held its first free and fair legislative elections, with prodemocracy candidates winning the majority of seats. Moreover, the prime minister was named by an elected parliament for the first time; previously, the king had chosen the head of government. The military regime in Burma oversaw that country's first elections since 1990. The electoral process was tightly controlled to ensure the government-backed party's sweeping victory, and the popular opposition National League for Democracy was formally dissolved during the year. Nevertheless, aspects of the new electoral laws enabled the registration and participation of a range of political parties, and some opposition and independent ethnic minority members won election to the new assembly.

The most prominent decline in the region was in Sri Lanka, which suffered from the misuse of state resources prior to national elections, the persecution of opposition presidential candidate Sarath Fonseka, and the increasing concentration of power in the hands of President Mahinda Rajapaksa and his family. Declines in the areas of freedom of assembly and freedom of expression were apparent in several other countries and territories. In Cambodia, Thailand, Hong Kong, and Indian-administered Kashmir, the space for peaceful protests on politically sensitive matters was curtailed, with security forces in some cases using deadly violence and arrests to disperse demonstrators. In Vietnam, a crackdown on activists in advance of a Communist Party Congress created a climate of self-censorship on political topics.

While China's activist community was encouraged by the decision to grant the 2010 Nobel Peace Prize to jailed democracy advocate Liu Xiaobo, the Chinese Communist Party's response highlighted the depth of its anxiety over any public debate on the need for a more open and responsive political system. The repression surrounding the award also reflected a broader trend of Communist Party efforts to tighten control over the media, the judiciary, and civil society, and to strengthen its repressive apparatus in the face of growing rights-consciousness among the public. In 2010, internet censorship and violent forced evictions increased; highly questionable judicial procedures in commercial cases pointed to political intervention; leading human rights lawyers were harassed, disbarred, and "disappeared"; and new regulations made it more difficult for civil society groups to obtain funding from overseas donors. Meanwhile, conditions for ethnic and religious minorities remained harsh, and in some cases worsened. Uighur webmasters and journalists were sentenced to long prison terms after unfair trials, including two sentences of life imprisonment; the persecution of house church Christians intensified toward year's end; and Falun Gong practitioners were a key target of crackdowns ahead of the Shanghai World Expo as well as a reinvigorated three-year forced conversion program. It is noteworthy that despite such pressures and often at great personal risk, many of China's bloggers, journalists, legal professionals, workers, petitioners, and members of minority groups continued to push the limits of permissible activity in increasingly sophisticated ways.

SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA: PAST GAINS IN JEOPARDY

The year 2010 featured a continued pattern of volatility and decline for sub-Saharan Africa. There was more backsliding than improvement, though gains were noted in several of the region's more important countries.

12 *Freedom in the World—2011*

During the 1990s, the state of African democracy improved dramatically, with major increases in the number of Free and Partly Free countries and a substantial decrease in the roster of countries designated as Not Free. Over the past decade, however, conditions have stagnated; the number of countries ranked as Not Free actually showed a slight increase, and the region as a whole registered declines in both political rights and civil liberties indicators.

The most notable improvement in 2010 took place in Guinea, which emerged from a murderous military dictatorship and held successful elections amid enhanced observance of freedom of speech and other civil liberties. Also making gains during the year were Kenya, Nigeria, Tanzania, and the territory of Somaliland.

The most significant setback occurred in Ethiopia, which declined from Partly Free to Not Free. Ethiopia has experienced steady, incremental declines in recent years, and in 2010, the pace of erosion accelerated due to massive repression that accompanied national elections. Another major decline occurred in Côte d'Ivoire, where, at year's end, President Laurent Gbagbo refused to give up power despite having lost the long-delayed presidential election by what neutral observers described as a decisive margin. Gbagbo's supporters in the military were allegedly responsible for a number of postelection killings, and reportedly menaced leaders of the political opposition and a UN peacekeeping force.

Other declines were recorded in Djibouti (which dropped from Partly Free to Not Free), Burundi, Guinea-Bissau, Madagascar, Rwanda, Swaziland, and Zambia. Of particular concern were the setbacks in Rwanda, due to heightened repression in the run-up to national elections, and Burundi, also stemming from ruling party intimidation of the opposition during an election campaign.

WESTERN EUROPE AND NORTH AMERICA: IMMIGRATION, FREE SPEECH, AND SECURITY

The countries of Western Europe and North America continued to register the highest scores on the *Freedom in the World* scale despite their ongoing inability to devise rational and humane policies toward immigrants from the developing world. A backlash against immigration—especially from Muslim countries—has spread throughout Europe and triggered controversies over the construction of mosques, the wearing of veils and headscarves, and changes to citizenship laws. The political and societal frictions have been exacerbated by a series of cases in which Muslims professing extremist ideologies have allegedly plotted to commit terrorist acts in major European cities. Indeed, at year's end, arrests of terrorism suspects with North African or South Asian backgrounds were made in Belgium, Britain, Denmark, and Sweden.

Many European countries have opted for policies that restrict future immigration and, in some cases, asylum applications. A growing number have taken steps to curtail customs identified with Islam that much of the population finds offensive. France is one of several countries to have adopted limits on the wearing of veils in public places. In another move against migrants, France systematically deported several thousand Roma to Romania, drawing harsh criticism from EU officials.

Tensions with Muslim minorities have also led to problems concerning freedom of expression. Threats of violence have repeatedly been made against *Jyllands-Posten*, the Danish newspaper that first published contentious cartoons of the prophet

Muhammad, and other media outlets that were involved in the controversy. At the same time, the Netherlands and several other countries have threatened to prosecute journalists and bloggers who caricatured Muslims in their writings or drawings.

Britain's new Conservative Party government has not yet acted on its pledges to reform laws that contribute to the phenomenon of "libel tourism," in which foreign individuals use the plaintiff-friendly English courts to press libel suits against critical journalists and scholars. Press freedom advocates have described libel tourism as a serious menace to intellectual inquiry and the robust exchange of ideas. While the most highly publicized cases have involved writings on terrorism-related subjects, more recent suits have been brought against scientists and medical researchers who put forward controversial opinions. The United States took a major step against libel tourism in 2010 by enacting a law that makes it practically impossible to enforce foreign libel rulings in U.S. courts.

While the United States has a generally more successful record of absorbing large numbers of immigrants than does Europe, the country has recently experienced a heated and sometimes ugly debate over policies toward undocumented workers, especially from Latin America. In a testament to federal legislative paralysis on the issue, Congress in late 2010 rejected a bill that would have offered a path to citizenship to young illegal immigrants who had been raised in the United States and enrolled in college or the U.S. military.

President Barack Obama has not attempted major rollbacks of his predecessor's antiterrorism policies. While the Obama administration has put an end to practices that were widely regarded as torture and taken other steps applauded by civil libertarians, it has also aggressively pursued terrorists abroad—including through targeted killings by unmanned aircraft—and declined to investigate, much less prosecute, officials from the Bush administration responsible for extreme antiterrorism measures. Moreover, Obama has so far failed in his efforts to close the detention center at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, where over 100 terrorism suspects are still held.

CONCLUSION: DEMOCRATIC RESISTANCE

In addition to its overall finding of a fifth year of "freedom recession," *Freedom in the World 2011* reflects a number of developments that may be cause for optimism. The global economic downturn has not triggered a major reversal for democratic institutions in the countries where the impact has been greatest. And in Latin America, the examples of democratic governance set by Chile and Brazil have proven more attractive than Hugo Chávez's "21st century socialism." While South Asia remains a source of political volatility, the region has experienced more gains than setbacks for democracy in recent years.

Nor have years of repression succeeded in destroying the spirit of democratic resistance in authoritarian settings. In Belarus, the example set by thousands of demonstrators who flooded the streets to express their fury at yet another bogus election was just as important as the ruthless reaction by President Lukashenka's security forces. The steady erosion of democratic space in Venezuela did not discourage opposition supporters, who exhibited sufficient tenacity and unity to win a majority of votes in parliamentary elections. Independent-minded journalists and

intellectuals refused to be silenced in China, Iran, and Egypt. And the release from house arrest of Burmese opposition leader Daw Aung San Suu Kyi was a welcome reminder that there are limits to the power of even the most relentless dictatorships.

There were also signs—modest, to be sure—that the democratic world was more attuned to the challenges posed by an increasingly assertive band of autocracies. In their public statements, especially at multilateral venues, President Obama and other senior U.S. officials showed a greater inclination to talk about the importance of democracy and identify threats to freedom. Perhaps more tellingly, documents released by WikiLeaks indicated that U.S. diplomats in authoritarian countries were realistic, astute, concerned about growing repression, and often sympathetic toward the political opposition.

Thus, even as U.S. officials spoke favorably in public about Russia under the president's "reset" policy, American diplomats were writing messages about a "mafia state," in which corrupt security forces held sway.

More often, however, the world's most powerful authoritarians have acted with aggression and self-assurance, and democratic leaders have responded with equivocation or silence. Few heads of state joined President Obama in congratulating Liu Xiaobo on his Nobel award, even fewer called for his release from prison, and none called Beijing to account for its malicious campaign against the prize, or its efforts to dissuade foreign governments from sending representatives to the award ceremony. Among lesser powers, those with energy riches or geostrategic significance demonstrated that acts of antidemocratic contempt will draw no serious rebuke from the democratic world. Thus the dearth of comment on the patently fraudulent elections in Ethiopia and Egypt, both beneficiaries of close ties to the United States, or in Azerbaijan, a crucial exporter of oil and gas.

The failure of the major democracies of the developing world to speak out against authoritarian abuses is another source of disappointment. The image of Brazil's Lula embracing Iran's Ahmadinejad is especially unsettling given that Lula himself was once the political prisoner of a military dictatorship. India's reluctance to exert pressure on Burma's ruling junta remains an impediment to political change in one of the world's most repressive environments. And the consistent refusal of South Africa to join in solidarity with the forces of democracy in Zimbabwe and elsewhere in the world stands in stark contrast to the international cooperation that helped to bring down apartheid.

It is often observed that a government that mistreats its people also fears its people. Certainly it is not merely self-confidence that is leading Iran's rulers to conduct wave after wave of political arrests, or Hugo Chávez to attempt to smother civil society, or China's Communist leadership to devote billions of dollars to the control of information. But authoritarian regimes will have a much freer hand to silence their domestic critics if there is no resistance from the outside world. Indeed, if the world's democracies fail to unite and speak out in defense of their own values, despots will continue to gain from divide-and-conquer strategies, as Russia's leaders are now doing in their approach to Europe and the United States.

This is not the first time that the adversaries of freedom seemed to have the wind at their backs and democracy appeared to be in retreat. In the past, the forces of democracy invariably recovered and prevailed. Democracy still boasts its most potent weapon: the attractive example of free institutions, free minds, civil lib-

erties, and law-based societies. Despite talk about the China model, no society has indicated a desire to emulate the political system that rules over the Chinese people, with its elaborate censorship apparatus, remote leadership, suppression of religion, and contempt for minority cultures. Only despots seeking more efficient and comprehensive methods of control see in China—or Russia—a template worth copying. Nor is today's challenge as intimidating as many seem to believe. Nearly 40 years ago, more than half of the world was ruled by one form of autocracy or another; many millions lived under outright totalitarianism. The majority now live in democratic states.

The past decade began at a high point for freedom and concluded with freedom under duress. The next decade could witness a new wave of democratic development if democracy's champions remember that freedom is more powerful—both as an idea and as the basis for practical governance—than anything its adversaries have to offer.

Eliza B. Young assisted in the preparation of this report.

Introduction

The *Freedom in the World 2011* survey contains reports on 194 countries and 14 related and disputed territories. Each country report begins with a section containing the following information: **population**, **capital**, **political rights** (numerical rating), **civil liberties** (numerical rating), **status** (Free, Partly Free, or Not Free), and a **10-year ratings timeline**. Each territory report begins with a section containing the same information, except for capital. The population figures are drawn primarily from the *2010 World Population Data Sheet* of the Population Reference Bureau.

The **political rights** and **civil liberties** categories contain numerical ratings between 1 and 7 for each country or territory, with 1 representing the most free and 7 the least free. The **status** designation of Free, Partly Free, or Not Free, which is determined by the combination of the political rights and civil liberties ratings, indicates the general state of freedom in a country or territory. The ratings of countries or territories that have improved or declined since the previous survey are indicated by notations next to the ratings. Positive or negative trends that do not warrant a ratings change since the previous year may be indicated by upward or downward trend arrows, which are located next to the name of the country or territory. A brief explanation of ratings changes or trend arrows is provided for each country or territory as required. For a full description of the methods used to determine the survey's ratings, please see the chapter on the survey's methodology.

The **10-year ratings timeline** lists the political rights and civil liberties ratings and status for each of the last 10 years. Each year that is included in the timeline refers to the year under review, *not* the edition of the survey. Thus, the ratings and status from the *Freedom in the World 2011* edition are listed under "2010" (the year that was under review for the 2011 survey edition).

Following the section described above, each country and territory report is divided into two parts: an **overview** and an analysis of **political rights and civil liberties**. The overview provides a brief historical background and a description of major recent events. The political rights and civil liberties section summarizes each country or territory's degree of respect for the rights and liberties that Freedom House uses to evaluate freedom in the world.

Afghanistan

Political Rights: 6
Civil Liberties: 6
Status: Not Free

Population: 29,100,000
Capital: Kabul

Trend Arrow: Afghanistan received a downward trend arrow due to fraudulent parliamentary elections in September 2010.

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline For Year Under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
7,7NF	6,6NF	6,6NF	5,6NF	5,5PF	5,5PF	5,5PF	5,6NF	6,6NF	6,6NF

Overview: The September 2010 parliamentary elections, which were characterized by widespread fraud, did little to repair the credibility of Afghan political institutions following the flawed 2009 presidential poll. U.S.-led military forces attempted to implement their new strategy to stabilize the country, but its effects on the resilient Taliban insurgency remained uncertain. Meanwhile, Afghan civilians suffered high casualty rates during the year, while government corruption, restrictions on press freedom, and violence against women remained serious problems.

After decades of intermittent attempts to assert control and ward off Russian influence in the country, Britain recognized Afghanistan as a fully independent monarchy in 1921. Muhammad Zahir Shah ruled from 1933 until he was deposed in a 1973 coup and a republic was declared. Afghanistan entered a period of continuous civil conflict in 1978, when a Marxist faction staged a coup and set out to transform the country's highly traditional society. The Soviet Union invaded to support its allies in 1979, but was defeated by U.S.-backed guerrillas and forced to withdraw in 1989.

The mujahideen guerrilla factions finally overthrew the Marxist government in 1992 and then battled one another for control of Kabul, killing more than 25,000 civilians in the capital by 1995. The Islamist Taliban movement entered the fray, seizing Kabul in 1996 and quickly establishing control over most of the country, the rest of which remained in the hands of other factions. In response to the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, the United States launched a military campaign to topple the Taliban regime and eliminate Saudi militant Osama bin Laden's terrorist network, Al-Qaeda.

As a result of the December 2001 Bonn Agreement, an interim administration took office to replace the ousted Taliban. In June 2002, the United Nations oversaw an emergency *loya jirga* (gathering of representatives) that appointed a Transitional Administration (TA) to rule Afghanistan for another two years. Interim leader Hamid Karzai won the votes of more than 80 percent of the delegates to become president and head of the TA.

In 2004, Karzai won a presidential election under the country's new constitution, taking 55 percent of the vote and forming a cabinet that was a mix of technocrats

and regional power brokers. Relatively peaceful elections for a National Assembly and 34 provincial councils were held in September 2005. However, a large number of warlords and others involved in organized crime and human rights abuses were elected.

The new parliament made little progress over the next several years on addressing political and economic reforms or passing key legislation. While some analysts had expressed concern that the legislative branch would be largely subservient to the executive, it was often at odds with the president, making it difficult for him to advance the government's agenda.

The UN-mandated International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), which had been managed by NATO since August 2003, completed the expansion of its security and reconstruction mission from Kabul to the rest of the country in 2006. Despite tens of thousands of additional U.S. and allied troops, and the ongoing development of the Afghan army, Afghanistan largely remained under the sway of local military commanders, tribal leaders, warlords, drug traffickers, and petty bandits. Meanwhile, the resurgent Taliban increased their attacks on the government and international forces, and steadily extended their influence over vast swaths of territory, particularly in the southern provinces of Kandahar and Helmand, but also in previously quiet areas of the north and west.

The constitution called for the 2009 presidential election to be held by April, with incumbent president Hamid Karzai's term due to expire in May, but delays in passing the electoral law and slow international coordination resulted in the election being postponed until August. Fraud and manipulation during the voter registration process, low voter turnout, a compromised electoral management body, and insecurity in most of the country undermined the balloting. Karzai initially emerged as the outright winner with more than 50 percent of the vote, but the confirmation of large-scale fraud significantly reduced his total, necessitating a November runoff against his main opponent, former foreign minister Abdullah Abdullah. However, Abdullah withdrew before the vote could be held, arguing that the flaws in the electoral system had not been adequately addressed, and Karzai was declared the winner.

Lingering doubts about the Karzai administration's legitimacy, combined with the continued deterioration in security, posed a major challenge to the central and provincial governments as they struggled to control areas under their jurisdiction, deliver basic services, and engage in vital reconstruction efforts.

The country's institutional integrity was dealt another blow when the September 2010 parliamentary elections proved to be deeply flawed. Voter turnout remained low, largely because of intimidation and violence by insurgents, who killed over 30 people on election day; women were particular targets of threats and violence. At least 1,000 electoral workers were accused of perpetrating fraud, and the electoral commission declared that it had discovered misplaced ballots from over 500 polling stations. In December, President Karzai established a Special Election Court (SEC) to adjudicate fraud complaints. Most candidates ran as independents, as few political parties were accredited in time for the election. Fewer members of the Pashtun ethnic group—the dominant ethnic group in Afghanistan—were elected in 2010 than in 2005.

Also in 2010, the United States and its NATO allies struggled to implement effective counterinsurgency practices and accelerate the training of Afghan soldiers and police. The Afghan Army surpassed growth targets, training showed some im-

provement, and Kabul and its environs were moderately secure in the hands of the Afghan Army and police at year's end. Although allied forces sought to protect the civilian population and limit destructive tactics such as air strikes, civilian casualties mounted swiftly as the fighting escalated. Following allegations of U.S. Army soldiers randomly firing at Afghan citizens, Staff Sergeant Robert Stevens pleaded guilty to aggravated assault, among other charges, and was sentenced in December to nine months in confinement and a reduction in rank.

The Karzai government's efforts to win over Taliban fighters and negotiate with elements of the Taliban leadership yielded few tangible results during the year. One supposed Taliban envoy was revealed in November to have been an imposter, and another Taliban leader, Mullah Omar, ruled out the possibility of peace talks with the Afghan government. Approximately 900 Taliban operatives were killed in allied military operations in 2010.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Afghanistan is not an electoral democracy. The overall results of the 2004 presidential election and delayed 2005 parliamentary elections were broadly accepted by Afghans and the international community, despite allegations of intimidation by militias and insurgent groups, partisanship within the electoral administration, and other irregularities. However, the 2009 presidential and 2010 parliamentary elections were critically undermined by fraud and other problems, and state institutions have failed to provide effective governance or transparency. Afghanistan's district council elections, which were scheduled to take place in 2010, were canceled.

The directly elected president serves five-year terms and has the power to appoint ministers, subject to parliamentary approval. In the directly elected lower house of the National Assembly, the 249-seat Wolesi Jirga (House of the People), members stand for five-year terms. In the 102-seat Meshrano Jirga (House of Elders), the upper house, two-thirds of members are indirectly elected by the provinces, while one-third are appointed by the president. At least 68 of the Wolesi Jirga seats are reserved for women, while 10 are reserved for the nomadic Kuchi community. Provisions for women's representation have also been implemented for the Meshrano Jirga and provincial councils.

Violence, insecurity, and repression continue to restrict political activity nationwide, particularly outside urban areas. Critics have warned that vague language in the 2003 Political Parties Law could be exploited to deny registration to parties on flimsy grounds. In addition, analysts viewed the adoption of the single-non-transferable-vote system for the 2005 legislative elections as a disadvantage for new political parties. Parties lack a formal role within the legislature, which further weakens their ability to contribute to stable political, policymaking, and legislative processes. There have been regular violent attacks against government officials at all levels, including assassination attempts aimed at the president.

The international community, concerned that government corruption is crippling the counterinsurgency campaign, has called on the Karzai administration to make the issue its top priority. However, a number of high-profile incidents in 2010 illustrated a lack of political will to address the problem. Karzai intervened to thwart a graft case against a top aide in July, and subsequently sought to curb the independence of foreign-funded anticorruption bodies. In September, a public scandal in-

volving the collapse of one of Afghanistan's largest banks revealed how government officials, their family members, and well-connected businessmen colluded to enrich themselves at the expense of ordinary depositors and citizens. And in October, the president admitted that his administration routinely received large amounts of cash from the Iranian and other foreign governments. The Afghan government's failings with respect to transparency and accountability are often exacerbated by disjointed international involvement. Corruption, nepotism, and cronyism are rampant at all levels, and woefully inadequate salaries encourage corrupt behavior by public employees. In what appeared to be a demonstration that it was taking action against corruption, the Afghan government in November 2010 banned 150 nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), mostly local groups, for defying financial reporting procedures. Afghanistan was ranked 176 out of 178 countries surveyed in Transparency International's 2010 Corruption Perceptions Index.

Afghan media continue to grow and diversify but face major challenges, including physical attacks and intimidation. Though a 2007 media law was intended to clarify press freedoms and limit government interference, a growing number of journalists have been arrested, threatened, or harassed by politicians, security services, and others in positions of power as a result of their coverage. The most prominent case of state intimidation has been that of Parwez Kambakhsh, a journalist with the daily newspaper *Janan-e-Naw*, who was sentenced to death for blasphemy in January 2008 before being pardoned in 2009. Media diversity and freedom are markedly higher in Kabul than elsewhere in the country, but some local warlords display limited tolerance for independent media in their areas. Dozens of private radio stations and several private television channels currently operate. Some independent outlets and publications have been criticized by conservative clerics for airing programs that "oppose Islam and national values," or fined by the authorities for similar reasons. The use of the internet and mobile telephones continues to grow rapidly and has broadened the flow of news and other information, particularly for urban residents.

Religious freedom has improved since the fall of the Taliban government in late 2001, but it is still hampered by violence and harassment aimed at religious minorities and reformist Muslims. The constitution establishes Islam as the official religion. Blasphemy and apostasy by Muslims are considered capital crimes. While faiths other than Islam are permitted, non-Muslim proselytizing is strongly discouraged, and there are restrictions on religious conversion from Islam. A 2007 court ruling found the minority Baha'i faith to be a form of blasphemy, jeopardizing the legal status of that community. Hindus, Sikhs, and Shiite Muslims—particularly those from the Hazara ethnic group—have also faced official obstacles and discrimination by the Sunni Muslim majority. Militant groups have targeted mosques and clerics as part of the larger civil conflict.

Aside from constitutional provisions regarding the role of Islam in education, academic freedom is not officially restricted, but insurgents have attacked or destroyed schools associated with the government or foreign donors, particularly girls' schools. The quality of school instruction and resources remains poor, and higher education is subject to bribery and prohibitively expensive for most Afghans.

The constitution guarantees the rights to assembly and association, subject to some restrictions, but they are upheld erratically from region to region. Police and

other security personnel have occasionally used excessive force when confronted with demonstrations or protests.

The work of hundreds of international and Afghan NGOs is not formally constrained by the authorities, but their ability to operate freely and effectively is impeded by the worsening security situation and increasingly restrictive bureaucratic rules. Both foreign and Afghan NGO staff members have been targeted in a growing number of kidnappings and violent attacks by criminals and insurgents. Civil society activists, particularly those who focus on human rights or accountability issues, continue to face some threats and harassment. Despite broad constitutional protections for workers, labor rights are not well defined, and there are currently no enforcement or dispute-resolution mechanisms. Child labor is reportedly common.

The judicial system operates haphazardly, and justice in many places is administered on the basis of a mixture of legal codes by inadequately trained judges. Corruption in the judiciary is extensive, and judges and lawyers are often subject to threats from local leaders or armed groups. Traditional justice remains the main recourse for the population, particularly in rural areas. The Supreme Court, composed of religious scholars who have little knowledge of civil jurisprudence, is particularly in need of reform. Prison conditions are extremely poor, with many detainees held illegally. The national intelligence agency as well as some warlords and political leaders maintain their own prisons and do not allow access to detainees.

In a prevailing climate of impunity, government ministers as well as warlords in some provinces sanction widespread abuses by the police, military, local defense militias, and intelligence forces under their command, including arbitrary arrest and detention, torture, extortion, and extrajudicial killings. The Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission (AIHRC) receives hundreds of complaints of rights violations each year. In addition to the abuses by security forces, reported violations have involved land theft, displacement, kidnapping, child trafficking, domestic violence, and forced marriage.

A facet of the new counterinsurgency doctrine adopted by international forces involves reforming detention policies at facilities like the U.S.-controlled Bagram air base. Human Rights Watch has documented numerous cases of abuse of Afghan detainees by U.S. forces over the past several years, and eight detainees are confirmed to have died in U.S. custody. Other reports in 2010 suggested the continuing use of a detainee screening facility at Bagram that, despite other reforms at the prison, remains opaque, and there are consistent reports of detainee mistreatment. Human Rights First has found that Afghan detainees who are handed over by the U.S. government continue to suffer abuses at the hands of Afghan officials. U.S.-led forces have also bred popular resentment through the growing use of nighttime raids on households that are aimed at killing or capturing suspected Taliban commanders.

The Afghan security forces continued to grow in 2010, but the army and especially the police have been plagued by inadequate training, illiteracy, corruption, involvement in drug trafficking, and high levels of desertion. The intelligence service, the National Directorate of Security, lacks transparency and stands accused of serious human rights violations.

Voluntary disarmament programs carried out beginning in 2003 succeeded in demobilizing over 60,000 militiamen and collected a considerable amount of weaponry. However, the disarmament process never moved to the enforcement stage as

planned, and foreign military programs to rearm informal militias as a counterinsurgency force are actively undermining efforts to curtail and regulate the use of illegal arms. Afghan law demands that illegal armed groups be excluded from elections, but Afghan institutions lack the will and capacity to enforce this ban meaningfully, as was manifest during the 2010 parliamentary elections. Ongoing programs aimed at reintegrating former insurgents have failed to ensure that they disarm.

As of December 2010, approximately 351,907 civilians were displaced within the country, according to the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees. Humanitarian agencies and Afghan authorities are ill-equipped to deal with the displaced. Factors like the poor security situation and widespread land-grabbing have prevented refugees from returning to their homes, and many congregate instead around major urban centers. In the absence of a properly functioning legal system, the state remains unable to protect property rights.

Women's formal rights to education and employment have been restored, and in some areas, women are once again participating in public life. They accounted for about 16 percent of the candidates in the 2010 parliamentary elections, and roughly 41 percent of registered voters were women; 69 female parliamentarians were elected. There were two women among the 41 candidates for the 2009 presidential election, but on the whole, female participation was limited by threats, harassment, and social restrictions on traveling alone and appearing in public. Another major setback to women's rights came with the passage in 2009 of legislation that derogated many constitutional rights for women belonging to the Shiite Muslim minority, leaving questions of inheritance, marriage, and personal freedoms to be determined by conservative Shiite religious authorities. Social discrimination and domestic violence remain pervasive, with domestic violence often going unreported because of social acceptance of the practice. According to the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission, there were 111 documented cases during the first nine months of 2010 of women engaging in self-immolation, a practice some women resort to when they believe there is no other means of escaping their situation. Women's choices regarding marriage and divorce remain circumscribed by custom and discriminatory laws, and the forced marriage of young girls to older men or widows to their husbands' male relations is a problem. Nearly 60 percent of Afghan girls are married before the legal age of 16, according to UNICEF, and in 2009, UNICEF ranked Afghanistan as the world's worst country in which to be born.

Albania

Political Rights: 3

Population: 3,200,000

Civil Liberties: 3

Capital: Tirana

Status: Partly Free

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline For Year Under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
3,4PF	3,3PF								

Overview: The opposition Socialist Party continued its boycott of the parliament through the first five months of 2010 and attempted to obstruct legislative activity thereafter as it pursued its demand for a recount of ballots from the June 2009 parliamentary elections. The standoff threatened to stall Albania's progress toward European Union membership, though a visa-liberalization agreement with the bloc took effect in December. In a positive step, the parliament in February passed an antidiscrimination law that included protections for sexual minorities.

Ruling from World War II until his death in 1985, communist dictator Enver Hoxha turned Albania into the most isolated country in Europe. The regime began to adopt more liberal policies in the late 1980s, and multiparty elections in 1992 brought the Democratic Party (PD), led by Sali Berisha, to power. Continuing poverty and corruption, along with unrest after the collapse of several vast investment scams, resulted in the election of a new government led by the Socialist Party (PS) in 1997.

Former president Berisha returned to government as prime minister after the PD won the 2005 parliamentary elections. While the poll was not free from fraud, it was praised for bringing Albania's first postcommunist rotation of power without significant violence. In 2007, the parliament elected PD candidate Bamir Topi as the country's new president.

Berisha's government was plagued by allegations of corruption and abuse of office in 2008, including a case stemming from a weapons depot explosion that killed 26 people and destroyed hundreds of homes that March. Nevertheless, the PD secured a narrow victory in the June 2009 parliamentary elections. The ruling party took 68 seats in the 140-seat parliament and eventually formed a coalition government with four smaller parties that collectively held 7 seats. The PS, in opposition with 65 seats, boycotted the new parliament when it convened in September, and mounted a series of street protests to demand a fraud investigation and a partial ballot recount. Berisha countered that the courts had approved the results and the PS had exhausted its legal appeals.

The standoff continued throughout 2010, despite a series of mediation efforts by the president and European representatives. The PS finally named a deputy parliament speaker and committee members in June, but it continued to mount protests and block legislative votes that required a three-fifths majority. The deadlock threatened various reform efforts linked to Albania's application for European Union

(EU) candidacy, and EU officials warned that further progress was needed before candidate status could be granted. Nevertheless, a visa-free travel agreement with the bloc took effect in December.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Albania is an electoral democracy. International observers Of the 2009 parliamentary elections hailed improvements in a number of areas but also cited problems, including media bias, abuse of state resources, political pressure on public employees, and flaws in the tabulation process. Under a new electoral code passed in late 2008, the unicameral, 140-member Kuvendi Assembly) was elected through proportional representation in 12 regional districts of varying size. All members serve four-year terms. The prime minister is designated by the majority party or coalition, and the president—who does not hold executive powers but heads the military and plays an important role in selecting senior judges—is chosen by the parliament for a five-year term.

Despite their sharp, personality-driven rivalry, the two major political parties, the PD and the PS, ran on nearly identical platforms and pledges of EU integration in 2009. They also cooperated in 2008 to pass the new electoral rules, which strongly disadvantaged smaller parties. Minor parties held some 40 seats after the 2005 elections, but fell to just 7 seats—split among four parties—in 2009. The Constitutional Court struck down elements of the electoral code in June 2010, making it somewhat easier for nonparliamentary parties to obtain a place on the ballot.

Corruption is pervasive, and the EU has repeatedly called for rigorous implementation of antigraft measures. Prosecutor General Ina Rama continues to pursue high-level cases with support from U.S. and EU officials, but Prime Minister Sali Berisha has refused to dismiss cabinet ministers tainted by indictments, and prosecutions are regularly thwarted by parliamentary immunity and unfavorable court rulings. Economy Minister Dritan Prifti was replaced in September 2010, but the government denied that his removal was related to the opposition's corruption claims against him. Albania was ranked 87 out of 178 countries surveyed in Transparency International's 2010 Corruption Perceptions Index.

While the constitution guarantees freedom of expression, the intermingling of powerful business, political, and media interests inhibits the development of independent outlets. During the 2009 campaign period, most outlets were seen as biased toward either the PS or PD. Reporters have little job security and remain subject to lawsuits, intimidation, and in some cases, physical attacks by those facing media scrutiny. Television and newspaper reporter Piro Nase was assaulted in November 2010 by two men who made threats related to his work. In December, a court acquitted oil magnate and Berisha ally Rezart Taci of beating media owner Mero Baze in late 2009, though two of Taci's bodyguards were found guilty and fined. Berisha routinely denigrates the media, and his government has placed financial pressure on critical outlets. In June 2010, a court ordered the television station Top Channel to pay roughly \$500,000 for airing a video and audio recording in March 2009 that showed then culture minister Ylli Pango engaging in apparent sexual harassment of a female job applicant. The court found that the station had obtained the recording illegally. The government does not limit internet access.

The constitution provides for freedom of religion, and it is usually upheld in

practice. The government generally does not limit academic freedom, although both students and teachers were reportedly pressured to support the PD ahead of the 2009 elections.

Freedoms of association and assembly are generally respected. As part of its political standoff with the government, the PS mounted a number of large demonstrations in the capital during 2010, and they met with little interference. Smaller protests related to unresolved property claims from the communist era have led to confrontations with police. Independent nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) function without restrictions but have limited funding and policy influence. The constitution guarantees workers the rights to organize and bargain collectively, and most have the right to strike. However, effective collective bargaining remains limited, and illegal antiunion activity by employers has been reported. Child labor is a problem, particularly in the garment industry.

The constitution provides for an independent judiciary, but the courts are subject to political pressure. Several vacancies on the Constitutional Court and Supreme Court went unfilled in 2010 due to disagreements between the president, who nominates the judges for confirmation by the parliament, and the PD majority, which demanded more influence over the appointments. The Constitutional Court had ruled against the PD government in a number of recent cases, rejecting a maritime border treaty with Greece as well as a controversial lustration law in early 2010. Meanwhile, the Supreme Court reportedly struggled with a backlog of some 7,000 cases as well as budget and staffing cuts. The judiciary and law enforcement agencies in general are inefficient and prone to corruption, and the implementation of court decisions is weak, especially when they go against government interests.

Police reportedly engage in abuse of suspects during arrest and interrogation, and such ill-treatment is lightly if ever punished despite vigorous criticism from the country's human rights ombudsman. Ermir Dobjani, the ombudsman since 2000, stepped down in February 2010, when his second term expired; he had not been formally replaced by year's end, though the institution continued to function under an acting leader. Prison inmates continue to suffer from overcrowding and lack of adequate medical treatment.

Weak state institutions have augmented the power of crime syndicates. Albania is known as a transshipment point for heroin smugglers and a key site for cannabis production. Traditional tribal law and revenge killings are practiced in parts of the north.

Roma face significant social and economic marginalization, but other minorities are generally well integrated. In June 2010, an appellate court overturned a six-month jail sentence against an ethnic Greek mayor who had removed local road signs on the grounds that they did not include Greek translations. However, tensions flared in August over the death of an ethnic Greek man who was run down by a car after an argument with Albanian youths; several suspects were quickly arrested.

Homosexuality was decriminalized in 1995, but discrimination in society and by law enforcement officials remains strong. In a positive sign, the parliament in February 2010 passed a law barring discrimination based on several categories, including sexual orientation and gender identity.

Women are underrepresented in most governmental institutions. A new 30 percent quota for party candidate lists helped to raise women's presence in the parlia-

26 Freedom in the World—2011

ment to 23 seats in 2009, from 10 in 2005, though the quota rules contained a number of loopholes. Domestic violence, which is believed to be widespread, is rarely punished by the authorities. Albania is a source country for trafficking in women and children, with the latter typically exploited as beggars in European countries. The EU reported in 2010 that the government has made an effort to combat the practice, but that more effective prosecutions were needed.

Algeria

Political Rights: 6

Population: 36,000,000

Civil Liberties: 5

Capital: Algiers

Status: Not Free

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline For Year Under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
6,5NF									

Overview: President Abdelaziz Bouteflika reshuffled his cabinet in May 2010, as his poor health fueled rumors about the possible succession of his brother and the government struggled with corruption allegations against the state-owned oil company. Also during the year, the government continued to tamper with internet access, explicitly blocking a political website for the first time in January.

Algeria secured independence from France after a guerrilla war that lasted from 1954 to 1962. The military overthrew the country's first president in 1965 and dominated Algerian politics for the next four decades, backing the National Liberation Front (FLN) to the exclusion of all other parties for most of that time. President Chadli Benjedid permitted the establishment of legal opposition parties in 1989, and an Islamist movement quickly gained popularity in the face of the government's failures; the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) became the main opposition faction. With the FIS poised to win parliamentary elections in 1992, the army canceled the elections, forced Benjedid from office, and summarily imprisoned thousands of FIS supporters under a declared state of emergency that remains in effect to date.

Over the next decade, the military government and various Islamist groups engaged in a bloody civil conflict. All sides targeted civilians and perpetrated large-scale human rights abuses, causing well over 200,000 deaths and the disappearance of at least 7,000 people.

A military-backed candidate, former foreign minister Abdelaziz Bouteflika, easily won the 1999 presidential election after his opponents withdrew to protest alleged fraud. Bouteflika's first attempt at resolving the civil war was the promulgation of a Civil Concord Law, which granted partial amnesty to combatants who renounced violence. A few thousand militants surrendered, but the more uncompromising groups—including one that later renamed itself Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb

(AQIM)—continued to kill government personnel and civilians. The next several years saw occasional outbursts of violence, and the government continued to commit human rights abuses.

The FLN gained ground against the military-backed National Democratic Rally (RND) in the 2002 and 2003 elections to the lower and upper houses of Parliament, respectively, while Bouteflika, who began to distance himself from the military, won a second term in 2004. In 2005, referendum voters approved the Charter for Peace and National Reconciliation, which offered amnesty to most militants and government agents for crimes committed during the civil war. It also called for victim compensation, but victims' groups and human rights organizations criticized the charter for not addressing the issue of the disappeared and allowing perpetrators to escape justice.

Many opposition groups called for a boycott of the 2007 lower house elections, arguing that the results would be rigged, and turnout was a record-low 35 percent. The FLN lost 63 seats, though it remained the largest party with 136, followed by the RND with 61, the Movement for a Peaceful Society (MSP) with 52, the Workers' Party with 26, and the Rally for Culture and Democracy with 19. More than a dozen smaller parties also won seats, as did 33 independents. The FLN and RND similarly led indirect elections for the upper house in December 2009.

Bouteflika won a third term in an April 2009 presidential election, taking about 90 percent of the vote amid accusations of fraud from the other five candidates. An informal Associated Press poll found that turnout was about half the official figure of 74 percent. In the aftermath of the election, reports that the ailing Bouteflika would be succeeded by his younger brother were met with opposition from the intelligence services, particularly General Mohamed "Toufik" Mediene, the powerful head of the Department of Intelligence and Security (DRS). In January 2010, Mediene launched a corruption investigation into the state-owned oil and gas company Sonatrach, which was responsible for 98 percent of Algeria's foreign exchange and 40 percent of its gross domestic product. A cabinet reshuffle in May 2010 resulted in the loss of two of Bouteflika's key supporters, while other allies at Sonatrach were indicted for corruption and jailed. The February murder of the head of Algeria's national police, Ali Tounsi, by a disgruntled subordinate was also interpreted by some observers as part of the ongoing power struggle.

Algeria and its neighbors to the south formed regional coordinating bodies in 2010 to help guard against terrorist attacks. Meanwhile, AQIM continued its efforts to attack government and business interests as well as kidnap European contractors and tourists in the region.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Algeria is not an electoral democracy. However, parliamentary elections are more democratic than those in many other states in the region. The military and intelligence services still play an important role in politics, despite fluctuations in their prominence in recent years.

The People's National Assembly (APN), the lower house of the bicameral Parliament, has 389 members directly elected for five-year terms. The upper house, the National Council (CN), has 144 members serving six-year terms; 96 members are chosen by local assemblies, and the president appoints the remaining 48. The

president is directly elected for five-year terms, and constitutional amendments passed in 2008 allowed President Abdelaziz Bouteflika to run for a third term in 2009. The amendments also increased the president's powers relative to the premiership and other entities, drawing criticism from segments of the press and opposition parties.

The Ministry of the Interior must approve political parties before they can operate legally. While there are dozens of active political parties, movements that are deemed too radically Islamist are outlawed, and many of the Islamist groups that were banned in the 1990s remain illegal. A coalition of the FLN, RND, and MSP forms the current government. The MSP is Islamist in its orientation.

High levels of corruption still plague Algeria's business and public sectors. The energy sector is viewed as especially graft prone. The Sonatrach scandal in the early part of 2010 continued to reverberate throughout the year. In May, Nourredine Cherouati became CEO of the company, with the publicly stated goal of cleaning up the firm; he replaced Mohamed Meziane, who had been arrested with his two sons and several associates. Algeria was ranked 105 out of 178 countries surveyed in Transparency International's 2010 Corruption Perceptions Index. In September 2010, Amnesty International reported that the head of the nongovernmental Algerian Association to Combat Corruption, Djilali Hadjadj, was arrested in connection with a May conviction for forgery. The verdict was apparently handed down without his presence or knowledge.

There is an array of restrictions on press freedom, but the situation has improved since the peak of the civil war in the mid-1990s. Privately owned newspapers have been published for nearly two decades, and journalists have been aggressive in their coverage of government affairs, though readership is limited by an illiteracy rate of about 30 percent. Arabic- and French-language satellite channels are popular, but the government keeps tight control over national news broadcasts. In July 2009, the government passed a cybercrime law giving authorities the right to block websites "contrary to the public order or decency." In late 2009, the information minister announced a centralized system for monitoring internet traffic. The purported aim was to inhibit hacking, online piracy, and access to pornography. In January 2010, the Islamist political website Rachad was blocked, the first time the law was enforced. In March 2010, the online radio station Kalima-Algérie was also blocked.

International press freedom groups continued to document numerous cases of harassment of critical journalists, and foreign journalists often face obstacles while covering the news. In September 2010, the International Federation of Journalists condemned the arrest of two Moroccan reporters who were covering a visit to Sahrawi refugee camps in Tindouf by a Polisario Front dissenter. Both government officials and private entities use criminal defamation laws to pressure independent newspapers.

Algeria's population is overwhelmingly Sunni Muslim, and the small non-Muslim communities are able to practice their faiths without systematic harassment. However, non-Muslims may only gather to worship at state-approved locations, proselytizing by non-Muslims is illegal, and the government in 2008 began enforcing an ordinance that tightened restrictions on minority faiths. Security services monitor mosques for radical Islamist activity, but Muslims are also sometimes harassed for a perceived lack of piety. In October 2010, Amnesty International con-

demned the arrest of two men in Tizi Ouzou for not observing Ramadan. Academic freedom is largely respected, though debate is somewhat circumscribed.

The police disperse peaceful assemblies, and the government generally discourages demonstrations featuring clear or implicit criticism of the authorities. As terrorist attacks continued in 2010, the government remained wary of large public gatherings and restricted freedom of assembly. However, public celebrations of the Algerian national soccer team's performance in the World Cup were allowed during the summer.

Permits are required to establish nongovernmental organizations, and those with Islamist leanings are regarded with suspicion by the government. Workers can establish independent trade unions, but the main labor federation, the General Union of Algerian Workers, has been criticized for being too close to the government and failing to advance workers' interests aggressively.

The judiciary is susceptible to government pressure. International human rights activists have accused the security forces of practicing torture. In June 2010, Abdul Aziz Naji was sent home from the U.S. military detention center in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. Naji had fought the repatriation, saying he feared for his life if he returned. Prison conditions in Algeria generally do not meet international standards due to overcrowding and poor nutrition and hygiene.

Algeria's ethnic composition is a mixture of Arabs and Berbers. Those who identify themselves as Arabs have traditionally formed the country's elite. In the last few years, following outbreaks of antigovernment violence in the Berber community, officials have made more of an effort to recognize Berber cultural demands. Tamazight, the Berber language, is now a national language.

While most citizens are free to move throughout the country and abroad with little government interference, the authorities closely monitor and limit the movement of suspected terrorists. Access to visas for non-Algerians is carefully controlled. The long-standing state of emergency permits the government to restrict where certain people live and work. Men of military draft age are not allowed to leave the country without government consent.

Women continue to face discrimination at both the legal and societal levels. Under the family code, which is based on Islamic law, women do not enjoy equal rights in marriage, divorce, and inheritance. They are poorly represented in Parliament, holding only 5.2 percent of the upper house and 7.2 percent of the lower house. In 2009, presidential candidate Louisa Hanoun came in a distant second place with about 4 percent of the vote. Algeria is one of the few countries in the region to allow women to transfer their nationality to their children, regardless of the father's nationality. A law adopted in January 2009 criminalized all forms of trafficking in persons.

Andorra

Political Rights: 1

Population: 80,000

Civil Liberties: 1

Capital: Andorra la Vella

Status: Free

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline For Year Under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
1,1F									

Overview: Andorra worked to clear its name as a tax haven in 2010 by cooperating in financial fraud investigations with a number of other European countries. In order to comply with European Union tax requirements, the government in December adopted legislation imposing direct taxes for the first time and also introduced new business transparency procedures.

As a co-principality, Andorra was ruled for centuries by the French head of state and the bishop of Seu d'Urgel, Spain. The 1993 constitution retained the titular co-princes but transformed the government into a parliamentary democracy. Andorra joined the United Nations that year and the Council of Europe in 1994. While Andorra is not a member of the European Union (EU), the country adopted the euro currency in 2002.

The April 2009 national elections brought the Social Democratic Party to power with 14 out of the 28 seats in the Consell General, or parliament. The Reformist Coalition—which included the incumbent Liberal Party of Andorra—won 11 seats and the remaining 3 seats were taken by Andorra for Change. Jaume Bartumeu of the Social Democratic Party replaced Albert Pintat Santolaria as the Cap de Govern (Head of Government) in June.

The Pintat government's implementation of banking reforms as required by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) led to Andorra's removal from the OECD "gray list" in April 2009. Following cooperation agreements signed in September 2009 with neighboring France and Spain on international fraud investigations, Andorra signed additional agreements with 17 countries in February 2010 to provide greater banking transparency. Despite these improvements, requirements for banking details remain quite strict.

In 2010, Andorran companies were required to publish their accounts, allowing Andorra to assess its actual gross domestic product (GDP) for the first time. The government also adopted three laws on direct taxes for the first time in December 2010, including a tax on corporate profits and a 4.5 percent sales tax. These changes meet the EU's minimum tax requirements.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Andorra is an electoral democracy. Popular elections are held every four years to the 28-member Consell General, which selects the executive council president, or head of government. Half of the members are chosen in two-seat constituencies known as

parishes, and the other half are chosen through a national system of proportional representation.

The people have the right to establish and join different political parties. However, more than 60 percent of the population consists of noncitizens, who do not have the right to vote.

Freedom of speech is respected across the country. There are two independent daily newspapers (*Diari d'Andorra* and *El Periòdic d'Andorra*), and residents have access to broadcasts from neighboring France and Spain. Internet access is unrestricted.

Although the constitution recognizes the state's special relationship with the Roman Catholic Church, the government no longer subsidizes the Church. Religious minorities like Mormons and Jehovah's Witnesses are free to seek converts. Despite years of negotiations between the Muslim community and the government, a proper mosque for the country's roughly 2,000 Muslims has still not been built. While requests to convert public buildings or former churches for this purpose have been denied, the government does provide the Muslim community with public facilities for various religious functions. Academic freedom is respected.

Freedoms of assembly and association are generally respected, and domestic and international human rights organizations operate freely. While the government recognizes that both workers and employers have the right to defend their interests, the right to strike is not legally guaranteed. There are also no laws in place to penalize antiunion discrimination or regulate collective bargaining. Few advances have been made in labor rights since the creation of a registry for associations in 2001, which enabled trade unions to gain legal recognition. In 2009, the government passed a law that guarantees unions the right to operate.

The judicial system, which is based on Spanish and French civil codes, does not include the power of judicial review of legislative acts. Police can detain suspects for up to 48 hours without charging them. Prison conditions meet international standards.

Under Andorra's restrictive naturalization criteria, one must marry a resident Andorran or live in the country for more than 20 years to qualify for citizenship. Prospective citizens are also required to learn Catalan, the national language. Although they do not have the right to vote, noncitizen residents receive most of the social and economic benefits of citizenship.

Immigrant workers, primarily from North Africa, complain that they lack the rights of citizens. Nearly 7,000 such immigrants have legal status, but many hold only "temporary work authorizations." Temporary workers are in a precarious position, as they must leave the country when their job contract expires.

Citizens have the right to own property. Legislation passed in 2008 fully opened up 200 key economic sectors to foreign investment. This law also gives noncitizens the right to hold up to 49 percent capital in other established sectors.

Women enjoy the same legal rights as men. In the 2009 parliamentary elections, women took 10 out of 28 seats. There are no specific laws addressing violence against women, which remains a problem. There are no government departments for women's issues or government-run shelters for battered women. Abortion is illegal, except to save the life of the mother.

Angola

Political Rights: 6

Population: 19,000,000

Civil Liberties: 5

Capital: Luanda

Status: Not Free

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline For Year Under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
6,6NF	6,5NF								

Overview: A new constitution approved by the parliament in January 2010 abolished direct presidential elections and the role of prime minister, stipulating that the leader of the largest party in the legislature will automatically become president. Also in January, an attack on the Togolese soccer team in Cabinda prompted the arrest of four prominent Cabindan human rights activists. A journalist was killed in September, marking the first such murder in Angola since 2001.

Angola was racked by civil war for nearly three decades following independence from Portugal in 1975. Peace accords in 1991 and 1994 failed to end fighting between the rebel National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) and the government, controlled by the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA), but the death of UNITA leader Jonas Savimbi in 2002 helped to spur a successful ceasefire deal later that year. UNITA subsequently transformed itself into Angola's largest opposition party.

The conflict claimed an estimated one million lives, displaced more than four million people, and forced over half a million to flee to neighboring countries. Many resettled people have remained without land, basic resources, or even identification documents. The resettlement process was slowed by the presence of an estimated 500,000 landmines and a war-ruined infrastructure. The United Nations concluded its voluntary refugee repatriation program in 2007, but Angola and the neighboring Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) each subsequently engaged in forced expulsions of the other's citizens, affecting tens of thousands of people.

Legislative elections, delayed repeatedly since 1997, were finally held in September 2008. The ruling MPLA took 191 of 220 seats, and UNITA won 16 seats, placing second among 14 parties. While both domestic and international observers found that the results reflected the people's will, the campaign was marred by political violence, pro-MPLA bias in the state media, and other problems, and many polling places in the capital failed to open on election day. UNITA accepted the outcome after an initial challenge of the Luanda results was rejected by the electoral commission.

In January 2010, the MPLA-dominated parliament approved a new constitution that abolished direct presidential elections, stipulating instead that the leader of the largest party in the parliament would become the president. The last presidential election had been held in 1992, and a vote due in 1997 had been repeatedly postponed. The new constitution also eliminated the post of prime minister, allowing the

president to select a vice president as his deputy, and permitted a maximum of two five-year presidential terms, starting with the next parliamentary elections in 2012.

Also in January, a faction of the separatist Front for the Liberation of Cabinda (FLEC) attacked the Togolese soccer team during the Africa Cup of Nations tournament, resulting in three deaths. Angolan security forces subsequently arrested a number of prominent Cabindan activists, charging four with crimes against state security. In August, the four men—human rights lawyer Francisco Luemba, Roman Catholic priest Raúl Tati, professor and activist Belchior Lanso Tati, and former policeman José Benjamin Fuca—were convicted by a Cabinda court and sentenced to between three and six years in jail. Luemba and Raúl Tati were prominent members of the banned Cabindan rights organization Mpalabanda. In December, all four were released from prison after the Cabindan attorney general declared that their convictions had been based on outdated legislation. The trials of two other men accused of complicity in the FLEC attack were concluded in December: João Antonio Puati was sentenced to 24 years in prison for "armed rebellion," while another, Daniel Simbai, was acquitted of the same charge.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Angola is not an electoral democracy. Long-delayed legislative elections held in September 2008, while largely reflective of the people's will, were not free and fair; presidential elections have not been held since 1992. The 220-seat National Assembly, whose members serve four-year terms, has little power, and 90 percent of legislation originates in the executive branch. Under the new constitution adopted in January 2010, the largest party in the National Assembly selects the head of state. The president is to serve a maximum of two five-year terms beginning in 2012, and directly appoints the vice president, cabinet, and provincial governors.

The 2008 legislative elections were contested by 14 parties, but aside from UNITA, the main opposition party, just three smaller parties won seats. The National Electoral Commission (CNE), which was dominated by the ruling MPLA, denied opposition access to the voter registry and obstructed the accreditation of domestic monitors who were not aligned with the government. In addition, the government delayed releasing state funding for opposition parties, and the MPLA abused state resources. Voting in Luanda—home to between one-quarter and one-third of registered voters—was marred by serious irregularities, including late delivery of ballot papers, 320 polling stations that failed to open, and a breakdown in the use of voter rolls to check identities. While political violence rose in the run-up to the elections, it has decreased significantly since 2002, and the government provided security for opposition rallies around the country.

Corruption and patronage are endemic in the government, and bribery often underpins business activity. In 2009, President José Eduardo dos Santos called for a crackdown on corruption, declaring that MPLA members had squandered large portions of the country's oil revenues; the president himself is alleged to be one of the country's richest men. In April 2010, Human Rights Watch reported that while the government had improved standards for the publication of oil revenues, the industry was still extremely opaque and corrupt. Angola was ranked 168 out of 178 countries surveyed in Transparency International's 2010 Corruption Perceptions Index.

Despite constitutional guarantees of freedom of expression, journalists are driven

to self-censorship by the threat of dismissal, detention, and prosecution. Defamation and libel are punishable by imprisonment or fines. The state owns the only daily newspaper and national radio station, as well as the main television stations. The country's first private television station, TV Zimbo, launched in 2008, and in May 2010, a new Brazilian Portuguese-language station was cleared to begin broadcasting. State outlets favored the ruling party ahead of the 2008 elections, and private media are often denied access to official information and events. Several independent weeklies and radio stations in Luanda criticize the government, but they have reported funding problems. Authorities have prevented the outspoken Roman Catholic radio station Radio Ecclesia from broadcasting outside the capital. In May 2010, police threatened the station with legal action after it reported on the case of a senior police officer arrested for rape. Internet access is limited to a small elite, as most citizens lack computers or even electricity.

Journalists suffered a number of violent attacks in 2010. In January, a Togolese journalist was killed during the terrorist attack on the Togolese soccer team in Cabinda. In September, Alberto Graves Chakussanga—the presenter of a call-in program on the UNITA-affiliated Radio Despertar—was shot in Luanda. Colleagues alleged that the killing was tied to his and the station's critical reporting on the government. The following month, Radio Despertar presenter and satirist Antonio Manuel Manuel da Silva, or Jójó, was stabbed after receiving death threats for his critical commentary.

Religious freedom is widely respected, despite colonial-era statutes that ban non-Christian religious groups. The educational system barely functions, suffering from underpaid and often corrupt teachers and severely damaged infrastructure.

The constitution guarantees freedom of assembly and association. Increasingly, authorities are allowing opposition groups to hold demonstrations in Luanda, though crackdowns are common in the interior. The right to strike and form unions is provided by the constitution, but the MPLA dominates the labor movement and only a few independent unions exist. Some 85 percent of the population engages in subsistence agriculture. Hundreds of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) operate in Angola, many of them demanding political reform, government accountability, and human rights protections. Churches in particular have grown more outspoken. However, the government has occasionally threatened organizations with closure. In 2008, the authorities ordered the local representatives of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights to cease activities and leave the country. Ahead of that year's elections, the government threatened to shutter the local Association for Justice, Peace, and Democracy (AJPD). The Constitutional Court heard the case in late 2009, and a decision was pending at year's end.

The judiciary is subject to extensive executive influence, though courts occasionally rule against the government. The president appoints Supreme Court judges to life terms without legislative input. The courts in general are hampered by a lack of training and infrastructure, a large backlog of cases, and corruption. While the government has sought to train more municipal magistrates, municipal courts are rarely operational, leading to the use of traditional or informal courts. Human rights groups reported that the arrests of four men in connection with the January 2010 attack on the Togolese soccer team in Cabinda were politically motivated, and that their trial was deeply flawed.

Lengthy pretrial detention is common, and prisoners are subject to torture, severe overcrowding, sexual abuse, extortion, and a lack of basic services, including food and water. In October 2010, Amnesty International reported on the death of political prisoner Muatxihina Chamumbala in Conduege Prison; he had allegedly received inadequate medical treatment. Despite increased resources and human rights training, security forces continue to commit abuses with impunity. However, in March 2010, seven police officers were each sentenced to 24 years in prison for killing eight suspects in Luanda's Sambizanga township, marking the first time a police officer had been convicted of an extrajudicial killing. An estimated four million weapons in civilian hands threaten to contribute to lawlessness, and both government and private security personnel have committed murders and other abuses in connection with the diamond-mining industry.

In 2006, the government signed a peace agreement with secessionists in the oil-rich northern exclave of Cabinda, hoping to end a conflict that had continued intermittently since 1975. While between 80 and 90 percent of the rebel fighters have reportedly joined the army or demobilized, some violence has continued. The military continues to arrest Cabindans for alleged state security crimes. Most of these detainees are allegedly denied basic due process rights and subjected to inhumane treatment.

China has invested heavily in Angola in recent years, but there are signs that the large Chinese presence has bred resentment and opportunistic criminality. The British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) reported in 2009 that Chinese workers in Luanda were being targeted in a wave of violent robberies. In November 2010, a FLEC faction attacked a convoy of Chinese oil workers in Cabinda.

Minewards from the civil war continue to restrict freedom of movement, as does the country's rigid system of entry and exit visas. Tension involving refugees along the Angolan-Congolese border led to a series of tit-for-tat expulsions in 2009, affecting about 39,000 Angolans in the DRC and about 18,000 Congolese in Angola. In October 2010, about 200 DRC nationals were violently expelled from Angola; the victims were allegedly subjected to rape and torture, and three people were killed.

Since 2001, security forces have evicted thousands of people from informal settlements in and around Luanda without adequate notice, compensation, or resettlement provisions, ostensibly for development purposes. The 2010 constitution holds that all land belongs to the state, and that land rights can only be allocated to Angolan nationals or companies registered in Angola.

Women enjoy legal protections and occupy cabinet positions and National Assembly seats, but de facto discrimination and violence against women remain common, particularly in rural areas. Child labor is a major problem, and there have been reports of trafficking in women and children for prostitution or forced labor. A recent study by Angola's National Children's Institute and UNICEF found "a significant and growing" trend of abuse and abandonment of children who are accused of witchcraft after the death of a family member, usually from AIDS.

Antigua and Barbuda

Political Rights: 3
Civil Liberties: 2
Status: Free

Population: 90,000
Capital: St. John's

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline For Year Under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
4,2PF	4,2PF	4,2PF	2,2PF	2,2F	2,2F	2,2F	2,2F	3,2F	3,2F

Overview: The United Progressive Party government of Prime Minister Baldwin Spencer was rocked by controversy in 2010 surrounding electoral irregularities in the 2009 legislative polls. In March, a High Court ruling invalidated the election of Spencer and other members of Parliament, though the Eastern Caribbean Court of Appeals overturned the verdict in October. Meanwhile, Antigua and Barbuda continued to face economic difficulties and political tensions stemming from the 2009 Stanford Financial Group scandal.

Antigua and Barbuda, a member of the Commonwealth, gained independence from Britain in 1981. In the 2004 elections, the opposition United Progressive Party (UPP), led by Baldwin Spencer, defeated Prime Minister Lester Bird and the ruling Antigua Labour Party (ALP). The transfer of power ended the rule of the Bird political dynasty, which had governed the country continuously since 1976.

The 2009 parliamentary elections returned Spencer and the UPP to power with 9 seats in the 17-seat lower house; the ALP took 7 seats, while the Barbuda People's Movement (BPM) retained the single seat representing Barbuda. While elections were deemed fair and competitive by the Organization of American States, the voting was preceded by instances of violence, including attacks on ALP offices, and there were accusations of voter registration irregularities.

The collapse in 2009 of the \$8 billion Stanford Financial Group, run by U.S. financier R. Allen Stanford, exposed deep ties between Stanford and the government of Antigua and Barbuda. A consortium of defrauded investors sued the government, claiming that top officials had been aware of and benefitted from a Ponzi scheme run by the company. Antiguan authorities seized Stanford's Bank of Antigua in July 2009. A new financial entity, the Eastern Caribbean Amalgamated Bank—co-owned by the Government of Antigua and five other Eastern Caribbean private financial institutions—took over the Bank of Antigua in October 2010. No Antiguan officials connected to the Stanford fraud scheme had been brought to trial in Antigua and Barbuda, nor formally extradited to the United States, as of year's end.

Political tensions remained high in 2010. In March, a High Court ruling invalidated the reelection of Spencer and two other members of Parliament due to irregularities in the 2009 polls. However, in October, the Eastern Caribbean Court of Appeals ruled in favor of Spencer's UPP, validating his position as prime minister. Earlier in July, the governor-general suspended three members of the Antigua and Barbuda Electoral Commission (ABEC) after the prime minister accused the com-

mission of breaching electoral law. The ALP sharply criticized both the suspensions and the governor-general's subsequent call for a tribunal from the Eastern Caribbean Court to investigate alleged offenses. In December 2010, the tribunal exonerated the chairman of the commission, though not the two other members also under investigation.

The collapse of Stanford's Bank of Antigua in 2009 crippled the country's finances. Public debt, at 100 percent of GDP, is one of the highest in the Caribbean. Economic performance in 2010 remained sluggish, especially in the country's largest sector, tourism.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Antigua and Barbuda is an electoral democracy. The 1981 constitution establishes a parliamentary system, with a governor-general representing the British monarch as ceremonial head of state. The bicameral Parliament is composed of the 17-seat House of Representatives (16 seats for Antigua, 1 for Barbuda), to which members are elected for five-year terms, and an appointed Senate. Of the senators, 11 are appointed by the governor-general on the advice of the prime minister, 4 on the advice of the parliamentary opposition leader, 1 on the advice of the Barbuda Council (an 11-member local government body that runs Barbuda's internal affairs), and 1 at the governor-general's discretion. Antigua and Barbuda's prime minister is typically the leader of the majority party or coalition that emerges from the legislative elections. The ABEC was established in 2008 to reform the country's electoral system, including the introduction of voter identification cards. Political parties can organize freely.

The government has overseen the enactment of anticorruption and transparency legislation in recent years, but implementation has been slow. In the wake of the Stanford financial scandal, Baldwin Spencer's government has sought to improve its image by addressing irregularities at the ABEC, including alleged violations of electoral law by its chairman. However, complaints remain that Antigua and Barbuda has not moved quickly to cooperate with U.S. authorities to investigate and extradite officials that have committed criminal activities in connection with bank fraud.

Antigua and Barbuda generally respects freedom of the press, but in practice, media outlets are concentrated among a small number of firms affiliated with either the current government or its predecessor. The Bird family continues to control television, cable, and radio outlets. The government owns one of three radio stations and the public television station.

The government generally respects religious and academic freedoms.

Nongovernmental organizations are active, but they lack adequate funding and are often strongly influenced by the government. Labor unions can organize freely. The Industrial Court mediates labor disputes, but public sector unions tend to be under the sway of the ruling party. Demonstrators are occasionally subject to police harassment.

The country's legal system is based on English common law. During the Bird years, the ALP government manipulated the nominally independent judicial system, which was powerless to address corruption in the executive branch. However, in recent years, the courts have increasingly asserted independence through controversial decisions against the government.

38 Freedom in the World—2011

The police generally respect human rights, though basic police statistics remain confidential. The country's prison is in primitive condition, and the abuse of inmates has been reported, though visits by independent human rights groups are permitted. The government has responded to higher levels of crime with increased patrols, the reintroduction of roadblocks, and stiffer fines for firearms violations. The authorities attribute the high crime rate to a new trend of gun possession among youth, as well as an influx of criminal deportees—with connections to the drug trade—from the United States and Europe.

The 2005 Equal Opportunity Act bars discrimination on the basis of race, gender, class, political affinity, or place of origin. However, societal discrimination and violence against women remain problems.

Argentina

Political Rights: 2

Population: 40,500,000

Civil Liberties: 2

Capital: Buenos Aires

Status: Free

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline For Year Under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
3,3PF	3,3PF	2,2F							

Overview: High government spending, a manufacturing rebound, and booming trade with Argentina's main partner, Brazil, contributed to Argentina's economic rebound in 2010. The recovery helped bolster the falling approval ratings of President Cristina Fernández de Kirchner. However, the sudden death of her husband and political partner, Néstor Kirchner, in October 2010 left her and the Peronist Party in a state of political uncertainty. Separately, relations between the leftist administration of President Kirchner and an opposition-led Congress deteriorated in 2010. Corruption and government crackdowns on press freedoms continued throughout the year.

Argentina gained independence from Spain in 1816. Democratic rule was often interrupted by war and military coups over the following century. The end of Juan Peron's populist and authoritarian regime in 1955 led to a series of right-wing military dictatorships that lasted until 1983. The beginning of civilian rule brought an end to Argentina's dirty war, waged against real or suspected dissidents by the far-right military regime.

Carlos Menem, a populist of the Justicialist Party (PJ, commonly known as the Peronist Party) who ran on a platform of nationalism and state intervention in the economy, was elected president in 1989 amid hyperinflation and food riots. As president, however, he implemented an economic liberalization program and unconditionally allied the country with the United States. His convertibility plan, which pegged the peso to the U.S. dollar through a currency board, ended the country's chronic bouts of hyperinflation.

Buenos Aires mayor Fernando de la Rúa, of the center-left Alianza coalition, was elected president in October 1999. Record unemployment and reduced government wages, effects of the highly overvalued and inflexible currency, spurred demonstrations and unprecedented economic insecurity. Government efforts to stop a run on Argentina's banking system sparked violent protests in December 2001, forcing de la Rúa to resign. He was replaced by an interim president, who was himself forced to quit less than a week later. On December 31, Congress selected Menem's former vice president, Eduardo Duhalde, as Argentina's new president. A steep devaluation of the peso and a debilitating default on its foreign debt left Argentina teetering on the brink of political and economic collapse throughout 2002. Unemployment soared and violent crime spiraled out of control.

Néstor Kirchner was elected president in 2003 on a Peronist ticket. While working to stabilize the economy, Kirchner moved to purge the country's military and police leadership of authoritarian elements. He took steps to remove justices from the highly politicized Supreme Court—considered the country's most corrupt institution—and signed a decree that permitted the extradition of former military officials accused of human rights abuses. Kirchner also presided over a long-hoped-for economic recovery bolstered by high international soya prices and an increased demand for Argentina's principal exports.

In 2006, Kirchner implemented a series of measures to centralize power in the executive branch. Congress granted the president the authority to reallocate government spending, as long as the overall appropriation remained the same. Kirchner also changed the tax system to limit the influence of historically powerful provincial governors and created new state-owned enterprises while nationalizing privatized ones.

Kirchner successfully passed his concentrated power on to his wife, Senator Cristina Fernández de Kirchner, after she was elected president in October 2007. In practice, she began to govern in tandem with her husband, and the Argentine media commonly referred to their rule as a dual presidency, or "Los K."

Fernández's once-strong political alliance and majority in Congress fractured following a standoff with Argentina's agricultural sector in 2008 over her administration's failed attempt to increase export taxes on certain farm products. Mid-term elections held in June 2009 brought significant losses to the Kirchners. The Union-PRO coalition fared especially well, capturing 47 seats in the Senate, while Kirchner's Front for Victory (FV) Peronist party took 36 seats—one less than needed for a majority. In the lower house, progovernment party representation fell from 141 to 112. Néstor Kirchner subsequently resigned from his post as leader of the Peronist Party.

The government's defeat in 2009 was influenced by growing unemployment and poverty amid an economic recession. However, beginning in mid-2010, the economy began to recover, fueled by a more benign international economic environment and increased soya prices. The administration also increased spending on public works and the unemployed, including extending an annual \$2.6 billion child-support system for poor families, distributing 250,000 laptops to secondary-school students, and subsidizing 15,000-20,000 mortgages for principally first-time buyers. Separately, the president's relations with the opposition-led Congress deteriorated, revealed by bitter and ultimately failed budget negotiations in November 2010.

To finance increased spending, President Fernández pushed a law through Congress in February 2010, allowing the government to use \$6.5 billion of Argentina's foreign currency reserves. Central Bank president Martín Redrado was fired by decree after refusing to support the plan, further eroding nominal Central Bank independence. The nationalization of \$30 billion in private pension funds in December 2008 provided additional financial support. This move not only made the pension system one of the government's main creditors, but also gave the Kirchner administration increased control over those companies owned in part by these pension funds. Néstor Kirchner's sudden death in October 2010 left the policy direction of the executive branch unclear, and also left the 2011 presidential race wide open. Without the unifying enemy of Mr. Kirchner, the opposition became increasingly fragmented.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Argentina is an electoral democracy. As amended in 1994, the constitution provides for a president elected for four years, with the option of reelection for one additional term. Presidential candidates must win 45 percent of the vote to avoid a runoff. The National Congress consists of the 257-member Chamber of Deputies, directly elected for four years, with half of the seats up for election every two years; and the 72-member Senate, directly elected for six-year terms, with one-third of the seats up for election every two years. The midterm legislative elections in June 2009 were considered free and fair.

The right to organize political parties is generally respected. Major parties include the Peronist Party; the FV; the centrist Radical Civic Union (UCR), factions of which support the Peronists; the center-left Support for a Republic of Equals (ARI); and the center-right Union-PRO. The Peronists have been a dominant force in politics since 1946.

Former president Néstor Kirchner's government initially made anticorruption efforts a central theme, establishing the public's right to information and other transparency guarantees. However, subsequent corruption scandals revealed the degree to which entrenched corruption plagues Argentine society, tainting his and his wife's administrations. In December 2009, Argentine courts upheld the indictments of former presidents Carlos Menem and Fernando de la Rúa on separate corruption charges, though neither case had gone to trial by the end of 2010. Allegations of vote-buying on the part of the government arose in 2010 due to various opposition congressmen voting against opposition-led reforms. One opposition senator also alleged that he was offered a large sum of money to vote in favor of the contentious 2008 agricultural export tax proposal. Argentina was ranked 105 out of 178 countries surveyed in Transparency International's 2010 Corruption Perceptions Index.

Freedom of expression is guaranteed by law. In November 2009, Congress decriminalized libel and slander, and a February 2009 court ruling ordered the government to place state advertising in critical publications. Despite these encouraging rulings, Cristina Fernández de Kirchner's government has consistently limited press freedom in practice. A media reform bill passed in 2009 was designed to help break up Argentina's largest media conglomerate, Grupo Clarín, and limit monopoly abuses by large media corporations. However, the bill also contained provisions limiting freedom of expression, including the creation of a politically appointed media

regulatory body with control over interpreting and implementing the law. This commission was not yet created by the end of 2010. Additionally, President Fernández increased the government's advertising budget from \$16 million in 2003 to \$223 million in 2009, enabling it to purchase friendly coverage from media that rely heavily on advertising revenues. In August 2010, the government canceled the operating license of Fibertel, a broadband internet service provider (ISP) owned by Grupo Clarin, claiming the ISP's license had expired. In August 2010, the government also moved to take over Argentina's only newsprint company, Papel Prensa, and filed criminal charges against its owners for allegedly conspiring with the dictatorship to buy the company in 1976. On a positive note, on September 29, the Senate passed a right to information bill that would apply to all branches of the government; the Chamber of Deputies was reviewing the bill at year's end.

The constitution guarantees freedom of religion, and anti-Semitism is reportedly on the decline. In June 2010, Fernández appointed a Jewish foreign minister, the first person of the Jewish faith to become foreign minister in Argentina. Nevertheless, Argentina's Jewish community, the largest in Latin America, remains a target of discrimination and vandalism. The 1994 bombing of a Jewish cultural center continues to play a role in Argentine politics, as no convictions have been made. Academic freedom is a cherished Argentine tradition and is largely observed in practice.

The rights to freedom of assembly and association are generally respected. Civic organizations are robust and play a major role in society, although some fall victim to Argentina's pervasive corruption. Labor is dominated by Peronist unions, though union influence has diminished dramatically in recent years due to internal divisions.

While Néstor Kirchner appointed magistrates of professional quality, the tenure of scores of incompetent and corrupt judges remains a serious problem. Police misconduct, including torture and brutality of suspects in police custody, is endemic. The Buenos Aires provincial police have been involved in drug trafficking, extortion, and other crimes. Arbitrary arrests and abuse by police are rarely punished in the courts owing to intimidation of witnesses and judges, particularly in Buenos Aires province. Prison conditions remain substandard throughout the country.

In 2005, the Supreme Court ruled that laws passed in the 1980s to protect the military from prosecution were unconstitutional. The decision laid the foundation for the prosecution of past military crimes, leading Néstor Kirchner to initiate prosecution proceedings against former officials involved in Argentina's dirty war. Former navy commander, Ricardo Cavallo, faced prosecution in 2008 for 431 cases of kidnapping, abuse, and disappearance. Cavallo was extradited to Argentina from Spain in 2008, but was still awaiting trial at the end of 2010. On December 23, 2010, former military dictator and principal architect of the dirty war, Jorge Videla, was found guilty of crimes against humanity. The 85-year-old was sentenced to 25 years in prison; more than 20 other former military and police officials were also convicted.

Argentina's indigenous peoples, who represent between 3 and 5 percent of the total population, are largely neglected by the government. Approximately 70 percent of the country's rural indigenous communities lack title to their lands. While the Néstor Kirchner administration returned lands to several communities, most disputes remain unresolved. In 2002, Buenos Aires became the first South Ameri-

42 Freedom in the World—2011

can city to pass a domestic partnership law, and Argentina became the second country in the Americas—after Canada—to legalize same-sex marriage nationwide in July 2010.

Women actively participate in politics in Argentina, as reflected by the 2007 election of Cristina Fernández de Kirchner. Decrees also mandate that one-third of Congress members be women. However, domestic abuse remains a serious problem.

Armenia

Political Rights: 6

Population: 3,100,000

Civil Liberties: 4

Capital: Yerevan

Status: Partly Free

Note: The numerical ratings and status listed above do not reflect conditions in Nagorno-Karabakh, which is examined in a separate report.

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline For Year Under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
4,4PF	4,4PF	4,4PF	5,4PF	5,4PF	5,4PF	5,4PF	6,4PF	6,4PF	6,4PF

Overview: Despite a 2009 amnesty that freed many opposition supporters who had been arrested in a crackdown following the deeply flawed 2008 presidential election, about a dozen of the original detainees remained behind bars at the end of 2010. Also during the year, Armenia signed a protocol with Russia that extended the two countries' 1995 bilateral defense treaty until the year 2044.

Following a short period of independence amid the turmoil at the end of World War I, Armenia was divided between Turkey and the Soviet Union by 1922. Most of the Armenian population in the Turkish portion was killed or driven abroad during the war and its aftermath, but those in the east survived Soviet rule. The Soviet republic of Armenia declared its independence in 1991, propelled by a nationalist movement that had initially focused on demands to transfer the substantially ethnic Armenian region of Nagorno-Karabakh from Azerbaijan to Armenia. Nagorno-Karabakh was recognized internationally as part of Azerbaijan, but by the late 1990s, it was held by ethnic Armenian forces who claimed independence. Prime Minister Robert Kocharian, a former president of Nagorno-Karabakh, was elected president of Armenia in March 1998.

The country was thrust into a political crisis on October 27, 1999, when five gunmen stormed into the National Assembly and assassinated Prime Minister Vazgen Sarkisian, assembly speaker Karen Demirchian, and several other senior officials. Allegations that Kocharian or members of his inner circle had orchestrated the shootings prompted opposition calls for the president to resign. Citing a lack of evidence, however, prosecutors did not press charges against Kocharian, who gradually consolidated his power during the following year.

In 2003, Kocharian was reelected in a presidential vote that was widely regarded as flawed, with the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) alleging widespread ballot-box stuffing. During the runoff, authorities placed more than 200 opposition supporters in administrative detention for over 15 days; they were sentenced on charges of hooliganism and participation in unsanctioned demonstrations. The Constitutional Court upheld the election results, but it proposed holding a "referendum of confidence" on Kocharian within the next year; Kocharian rejected the proposal. Opposition parties boycotted subsequent sessions of the National Assembly, and police violently dispersed protests mounted in the spring of 2004 over the government's failure to redress the problems of the 2003 vote.

The Republican Party of Armenia (HHK)—the party of Prime Minister Serzh Sarkisian, a close Kocharian ally—won 65 of 131 seats in the May 2007 National Assembly elections. Two other major propresidential parties took a total of 41 seats, giving the government a clear majority. Opposition parties suffered from disadvantages regarding media coverage and the abuse of state resources ahead of the vote.

The 2008 presidential election was held on February 19. Five days after the balloting, the Central Election Commission announced that Sarkisian had won with 52.8 percent, and the main opposition candidate, former president Levon Ter-Petrosian, had taken 21.5 percent. The results, which the opposition disputed, allowed Sarkisian to avoid a runoff vote. Peaceful opposition demonstrations that began on February 21 turned violent a week later, when the police engaged the protesters. According to the OSCE, 10 people were killed and more than 200 were injured during the clashes. Outgoing president Kocharian declared a 20-day state of emergency, and more than 100 people were arrested in the wake of the upheaval.

The authorities' inadequate steps to investigate police abuses during the 2008 violence were criticized by the Council of Europe, and although a June 2009 amnesty freed 30 protesters, about a dozen remained behind bars at the end of 2010. Meanwhile, the HHK secured a majority in May 2009 municipal elections in Yerevan, but opposition parties rejected the results as fraudulent.

In August 2010, Sarkisian and Russian president Dmitry Medvedev signed a protocol that extended the two countries' 1995 bilateral defense treaty until 2044. Also during the year, the National Assembly postponed a vote on legislation that would require Yerevan to recognize formally the independence of Nagorno-Karabakh.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Armenia is not an electoral democracy. The unicameral National Assembly is elected for four-year terms, with 90 seats chosen by proportional representation and 41 through races in single-member districts. The president is elected by popular vote for up to two five-year terms. However, elections since the 1990s have been marred by major irregularities. The May 2007 parliamentary vote was described by the OSCE as an improvement, albeit flawed, over previous polls, but the 2008 presidential election was seriously undermined by problems with the vote count, a biased and restricted media environment, and the abuse of administrative resources in favor of ruling party candidate Serzh Sarkisian. The Yerevan municipal elections held in May 2009 were the first in which the capital's mayor was elected by the city council rather than appointed by the president. They also suffered from significant violations, though

international observers claimed that the fraud did not jeopardize the overall legitimacy of the results.

Bribery and nepotism are reportedly common among government officials, who are rarely prosecuted or removed for abuse of office. Corruption is also believed to be a serious problem in law enforcement. A five-year initiative to combat graft, announced in 2008, has not made meaningful headway against the country's entrenched culture of corruption.

There are limits on press freedom in Armenia. The authorities use informal pressure to maintain control over broadcast outlets, the chief source of news for most Armenians. State-run Armenian Public Television is the only station with nationwide coverage, and the owners of most private channels have close government ties. In June 2010, the National Assembly enacted legislation that fixed the maximum number of television stations at 18—down from at least 22 that are currently operating—and obliges a number of the new total to focus on content other than domestic news and political affairs. The changes were seen as an effort to retain government dominance of the broadcast media, partly by continuing to deny a broadcast license to the independent television company A1+ despite a 2008 ruling in its favor by the European Court of Human Rights. A1+, which had been forced off the air by a government licensing decision in 2002, made a fresh bid for a license in October 2010. The new legislation's caps on the number of regional outlets were also expected to affect GALA TV, the one remaining station that regularly criticizes the government. In December, the A1+ bid was again rejected by the National Commission on Television and Radio, which claimed that A1+ had submitted fraudulent documents in the bidding process; A+ disputed this assertion.

The criminal code still includes libel as a criminal offense, and violence against journalists is a problem. In December, Nikol Pashinian, editor-in-chief of the independent daily *Haykakan Zhamanak*, was beaten in prison custody. Pashinian, an opposition activist, was serving a four-year sentence in Kosh prison, outside of Yerevan, for allegedly organizing mass riots spurred by flawed February 2008 presidential elections in Armenia. He was moved to Artik prison, a harsher detention environment, where according to the Committee to Protect Journalists, he reportedly was beaten and transferred to solitary confinement. The authorities do not interfere with internet access.

Freedom of religion is generally respected, though the dominant Armenian Apostolic Church enjoys certain exclusive privileges, and members of minority faiths sometimes face societal discrimination. In 2010, there were 35 Jehovah's Witnesses serving prison terms for refusing to participate in either military service or the military-administered alternative service for conscientious objectors.

The government generally does not restrict academic freedom. Public schools are required to display portraits of the president and the head of the Armenian Apostolic Church, and to teach the Church's history.

In the aftermath of the 2008 postelection violence, the government imposed restrictions on freedom of assembly. At the end of 2010, about a dozen of the opposition protesters arrested in the 2008 crackdown remained in jail. The Yerevan city administration in 2010 barred the opposition Armenian National Congress (HAK) from holding a September rally in the city's Liberty Square, saying it would interfere with preparations for an annual festival set for October. The authorities offered an alternative location that was farther away from the city center.

Registration requirements for nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) are cumbersome and time-consuming. Some 3,000 NGOs are registered with the Ministry of Justice, though many are not active in a meaningful way. While the constitution provides for the right to form and join trade unions, labor organizations are weak and relatively inactive in practice.

The judiciary is subject to political pressure from the executive branch and suffers from considerable corruption. Police make arbitrary arrests without warrants, beat detainees during arrest and interrogation, and use torture to extract confessions. Prison conditions in Armenia are poor, and threats to prisoner health are significant.

Although members of the country's tiny ethnic minority population rarely report cases of overt discrimination, they have complained about difficulties in receiving education in their native languages. Members of the Yezidi community have sometimes reported discrimination by police and local authorities.

Citizens have the right to own private property and establish businesses, but an inefficient and often corrupt court system and unfair business competition hinder such activities. Key industries remain in the hands of so-called oligarchs and influential cliques who received preferential treatment in the early stages of privatization.

According to the current election code, women must comprise 15 percent of a party's candidate list for the parliament's proportional-representation seats and occupy every 10th position on the list. Women currently hold 12 of the 131 National Assembly seats. Domestic violence and trafficking in women and girls for the purpose of prostitution are believed to be serious problems. Though homosexuality was decriminalized in 2003, homosexual individuals still face violence and persecution.

Australia

Political Rights: 1

Civil Liberties: 1

Status: Free

Population: 22,400,000

Capital: Canberra

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline For Year Under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
1/1F									

Overview: Prime Minister Kevin Rudd resigned as leader of the Labor Party and relinquished the premiership in June 2010. Deputy Prime Minister Julia Gillard was chosen to replace him, and she secured a narrow Labor victory in August parliamentary elections. Meanwhile, the continued influx of asylum seekers remained a contentious political issue, along with concerns about the economy.

The British colonies in Australia, first settled in 1788, were organized as a federative commonwealth in 1901, and gradually gained full independence from Britain. Since World War II, political power has alternated between the center-left Labor

Party and a conservative coalition of the Liberal Party and the smaller National Party. Labor emerged from the 2007 elections with 83 seats in the 150-seat House of Representatives and 32 in the 76-seat Senate, allowing party leader Kevin Rudd to replace John Howard of the Liberal Party as prime minister.

The Rudd government reversed a number of its predecessor's positions, including ending Australia's combat role in Iraq, issuing a formal apology for past laws and policies that had "inflicted profound grief, suffering, and loss" on the country's Aborigines, and announcing the creation of a reparations fund for health and education programs benefitting all Aborigines. It also closed detention centers in Nauru and Papua New Guinea that the Howard government had created in response to an influx of asylum seekers from South Asia. The new government pledged to resolve asylum claims within a year, barred detention for women and children, and implemented a system of three-year temporary visas.

However, by the end of 2008, the government was forced to open a new detention center on Christmas Island to receive the increasing number of migrants. Rudd appealed to Indonesia to stop boats carrying asylum seekers from entering Australian waters, though the problem grew worse in 2010. By the first week of December 2010, 82 boats with nearly 4,000 asylum seekers were stopped, or 1,000 more than the total for 2009. Public sentiment on both sides of the issue intensified as asylum seekers set fire to their boats, went on hunger strikes, committed suicide, or took other extreme actions to demand entry into Australia. In April, the government temporarily suspended processing asylum claims by Sri Lankans and Afghans, who made up 85 percent of the boat people, to discourage them from attempting the journey. Meanwhile, overcrowding at the Christmas Island detention site and a refusal by East Timor and other neighboring countries to host alternate detention centers compelled the government to announce plans in October 2010 to construct two new detention centers in Perth and Adelaide. These new centers are expected to hold up to 2,000 asylum seekers, while 3,000 were awaiting review in a detention center in Sydney at year's end.

Rudd resigned as party leader and prime minister in June 2010, having been buffeted by the asylum crisis, a national home-insulation scheme that was linked to four deaths and many fires, a controversial proposal for a "super tax" on the booming coal and iron-ore industries, and a failed effort to adopt carbon-emissions trading. Deputy Prime Minister Julia Gillard was chosen to replace Rudd, making her the country's first female prime minister. She called snap elections for August, and the campaign centered on issues including the economy, health care, the national debt, and immigration. The number of Labor Party seats fell to 72 in the House, compared with a total of 73 seats for the conservative parties. The Greens took one seat, and four seats went to independents. After two weeks of intense negotiations, Labor secured support from the Greens' member and three independents, and Gillard announced a new cabinet in September.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Australia is an electoral democracy. A governor general, who is appointed on the recommendation of the prime minister, represents the British monarch as head of state. The prime minister is the leader of the majority party or coalition in Parliament.

Voting is compulsory, and citizens participate in free and fair multiparty elec-

tions to choose representatives for the bicameral Parliament. The Senate, the upper house, has 76 seats, with 12 senators from each of the six states and two from each of the two mainland territories. Half of the state members, who serve six-year terms, are up for election every three years; all territory members are elected every three years. The House of Representatives, the lower house, has 150 seats. All members are elected by popular preferential voting to serve three-year terms, and no state can have fewer than five representatives.

The Labor and Liberal parties are the two major parties. Also winning representation in the 2010 elections were the left-leaning Greens and three right-leaning factions: the Liberal National Party of Queensland, the National Party, and the Country Liberal Party.

Australia is regarded as one of the least corrupt societies in the world, ranking 8 out of 178 countries surveyed in Transparency International's 2010 Corruption Perceptions Index.

There are no constitutional protections for freedom of speech and the press, but citizens and the media freely criticize the government without reprisal. Some laws restrict publication and dissemination of material that promotes or incites terrorist acts. There are numerous public and private television and radio broadcasters, but ownership of private print media is highly concentrated. In July 2010, the government said it would review the country's system for rating and filtering obscene or violent internet content, which internet freedom advocates had criticized as improper censorship. Under current law, internet-service providers' participation in the scheme is voluntary. By year's end, considerable political and public opposition to mandatory filtering of websites deterred any effort to pass new legislation.

Freedom of religion is respected, as is academic freedom. Under antiterrorism laws, mosques and Islamic schools are barred from disseminating anti-Australian messages.

Freedoms of assembly and association are not codified in law, but the government respects these rights in practice. Workers can organize and bargain collectively.

The judiciary is independent, and prison conditions generally meet international standards. Antiterrorism legislation enacted in 2005, with a 10-year sunset clause, includes police powers to detain suspects without charge, "shoot to kill" provisions, the criminalization of violence against the public and Australian troops overseas, and authorization for the limited use of soldiers to meet terrorist threats on domestic soil.

Some 40 people have been arrested on terrorism charges since 2000. Five men of Libyan, Bangladeshi, and Lebanese origin arrested in 2005 were sentenced in February 2010 to prison terms ranging from 23 to 28 years for conspiracy to commit acts of terrorism. Also that month, the government announced plans to fingerprint and scan the faces of visitors from 10 high-risk countries, and warned of an increased threat from Islamic extremists raised in Australia.

Racial tensions involving South Asian and other immigrant groups continued to worsen in 2010, especially in Melbourne, where the bulk of interracial violence has occurred in recent years. In an apparent effect of the strife, the number of Indian students at the start of the academic year in January reportedly showed a 50 percent decline from the previous year.

Aborigines, comprising about 12 percent of the population, are underrepresented

at all levels of political leadership and lag far behind other groups in key social and economic indicators. For Aborigines, life expectancy is 20 years shorter than for other Australians, the rate of unemployment is 3 times higher, the homicide rate is 7 times higher, incidence of child abuse is 6 times higher, and the rate of imprisonment is 13 times higher. There are also claims of routine mistreatment by police and prison officials. According to an October 2010 study, a disproportionately high number of cases of mentally ill persons were "tased" or subdued with high-voltage electroshock devices.

Although women enjoy equal rights and have attained greater parity in pay and promotion in both public- and private-sector jobs, violence against women remains a serious problem, particularly within the Aboriginal population. Homosexuals can serve in the military, and federal law grants legal residence to foreign same-sex partners of Australian citizens. However, there is no federal ban on discrimination based on sexual orientation, and a 2004 amendment to the Federal Marriage Act defines marriage as a union between a man and a woman. In response to criticism that Australians are active in sex tourism abroad, Parliament passed a new law in July 2010 that allows prosecution of Australians for sex crimes committed overseas and imposes prison terms of up to 25 years for sex crimes against children.

Austria

Political Rights: 1

Population: 8,400,000

Civil Liberties: 1

Capital: Vienna

Status: Free

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline For Year Under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
1;1F									

Overview: Incumbent president Heinz Fischer of the Social Democratic Party of Austria won a second term in the April 2010 presidential election, but the far-right Austrian Freedom Party's candidate received a sizeable percentage of the vote. The Freedom Party also picked up a substantial number of legislative seats in Vienna's state elections in October. The balance between freedom of speech and Austrian hate-speech laws drew increased attention during the year as objectionable statements, mainly against Islam, came under scrutiny.

Modern Austria, which emerged from the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Empire in World War I, was annexed to Nazi Germany in 1938 before being restored to independence after World War II. The country remained neutral during the Cold War and joined the European Union, in 1995.

From 1986 until 2000, the two largest political parties—the center-left Social Democratic Party of Austria (SPÖ) and the center-right People's Party of Austria (ÖVP)—governed together in a grand coalition. The 1999 elections produced the

first government since 1970 that did not include the SPÖ. Instead, the ÖVP formed a coalition with the Freedom Party of Austria (FPÖ), a far-right nationalist party that won 27 percent of the popular vote. Its support had risen steadily as voters became disaffected with the large parties' power-sharing arrangement and its barriers to major political change. In 2000, the EU briefly suspended ties with Austria in response to the FPÖ's inclusion in government, though perceived EU interference only bolstered the party's support.

Due to the sanctions, the controversial Jorg Haider stepped down as FPÖ leader, and Austrian politics returned to near normality as the party was moderated by the day-to-day realities of governing. After an internal leadership struggle, the FPÖ withdrew from the coalition in September 2002. Parliamentary elections that November saw the FPÖ's share of the vote fall to 10 percent. It rejoined the coalition with the ÖVP, but as a decidedly junior partner. Subsequent poor election performances, including in European Parliament elections, widened rifts within the party. Most of its members of parliament, as well as Haider, left in 2005 to form the Alliance for the Future of Austria (BZÖ), which later became the ÖVP's junior coalition partner.

In October 2006, parliamentary elections confirmed an ÖVP decline, with the SPÖ winning by a small margin and the two parties forming another grand coalition. The SPÖ secured the chancellorship, but other top positions went to the ÖVP. In the summer of 2008, the ÖVP announced its exit from the coalition amid political battles over health, tax, and pension reforms, as well as policy toward the EU.

In September 2008 elections, the SPÖ and ÖVP lost ground to the BZÖ and FPÖ, which were buoyed by xenophobic sentiment, skepticism toward the EU, and frustration with the squabbling grand coalition. However, both the SPÖ and the ÖVP refused to form a coalition with the far right, and in late 2008, they agreed to revive their alliance.

The February 2009 state elections suggested a continued movement toward the right, with the SPÖ suffering dramatic losses. The ÖVP retained power in Upper Austria and Vorarlberg, but the FPÖ nearly doubled its presence in both regions as it absorbed support from the much-diminished BZÖ. However, the ÖVP again ruled out a coalition with the FPÖ.

Incumbent Heinz Fischer of the SPÖ won a second term as president in an April 2010 election. He took around 80 percent of the vote, defeating FPÖ candidate Barbara Rosenkranz and Christian Party of Austria (CPÖ) candidate Rudolf Gehring, with some 16 percent and 5.5 percent, respectively. Voter turnout was a historic low of about 54 percent.

In October 2010 state elections in Vienna, the SPÖ lost its absolute majority in the legislature for only the second time since World War II, though it still led with 44.2 percent of the vote (down from 49.0 percent in 2005). The FPÖ placed second with 27 percent (up from 14.9 percent in 2005), while the ÖVP faced its worst-ever result in Vienna, with only 13.2 percent (down from 18.8 percent in 2005).

Members of the Habsburg family, which ruled the Austro-Hungarian Empire until 1918, applied to the country's Constitutional Court in 2009 for an end to a ban prohibiting them from running for Austria's largely ceremonial presidency. In December 2009, the Constitutional Court ruled that the Habsburgs could proceed with an appeal only after a family member had applied as a candidate and been

formally rejected. In October 2010, it was announced that Ulrich Habsburg-Lothringen would take the dispute to the European Court of Human Rights.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Austria is an electoral democracy. The lower house of the Federal Assembly, the Nationalrat (National Council), has 183 members chosen through proportional representation at the district, state, and federal levels. Members serve five-year terms, extended from four in 2008. The chancellor, appointed by the president, needs the support of the legislature to govern. The 62 members of the upper house, the Bundesrat (Federal Council), are chosen by state legislatures.

Though Austria has competitive political parties and free and fair elections, the traditional practice of grand coalitions has fostered disillusionment with the political process. Minority participation in government remains frustrated despite the large number of foreigners in Austria.

Tightened campaign donation laws have reduced political corruption in recent decades. However, the 2006 collapse of Bawag, a union-owned bank with strong ties to the SPÖ, led to a flurry of media stories about bad loans, concealed losses, and lavish lifestyles among executives. Austria was ranked 15 out of 178 countries surveyed in Transparency International's 2010 Corruption Perceptions Index.

The media are free, though not highly pluralistic. The end of a monopoly by the state broadcaster, ÖRF, has not brought significant competition, and print media are concentrated in the hands of a few owners. Harassment and libel lawsuits by politicians—notably from the FPÖ—against critical journalists have hampered the work of reporters. There are no restrictions on internet access.

Pro-Nazi and anti-Semitic speech and writing are banned. In 2005, a British historian was arrested on charges of Holocaust denial and later sentenced to three years in prison. During 2008, the FPÖ campaigned in favor of relaxing some bans on Nazi symbols. A number of recent high-profile court cases have centered on the balance between freedom of speech and hate-speech.

Religious freedom is respected and constitutionally guaranteed. Thirteen officially recognized religions can draw on state funds for religious education. Obtaining this status requires a membership equaling at least 0.05 percent of Austria's population and a period of 10 years as a "confessional community" with fewer privileges. Academic freedom is respected.

Freedoms of assembly and association are protected in the constitution and in practice. Civic and nongovernmental organizations operate without restrictions. Trade unions are free to organize and strike, and are considered an essential partner in national policymaking.

The judiciary is independent, and the Constitutional Court examines the compatibility of legislation with the constitution. Austria is a member of the Council of Europe, and its citizens have recourse to the European Court of Human Rights. The quality of prisons generally meets high European standards.

Residents are usually afforded equal protection under the law. However, immigration has fueled some resentment toward minorities and foreigners; Austria has one of the world's highest numbers of asylum seekers per capita. The Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has criticized Austria's asylum law, which is among the strictest in the developed world. Some asylum seekers can

be deported while appeals are pending, and new arrivals are asked for full statements within 72 hours.

A 1979 law guarantees women's freedom from discrimination in various areas, including the workplace. A 1993 law sought to increase women's employment in government agencies, where they were underrepresented. The June 2009 Second Protection Against Violence Act increased penalties for domestic violence and authorized further measures against chronic offenders.

In December 2009, the parliament adopted legislation permitting civil partnerships for same-sex couples. The new law provides them with equal rights to pensions and alimony and allows them to take each other's names, but does not provide them with the same adoption rights as married couples.

Azerbaijan

Political Rights: 6

Population: 9,000,000

Civil Liberties: 5

Capital: Baku

Status: Not Free

Note: The numerical ratings and status listed above do not reflect conditions in Nagorno-Karabakh, which is examined in a separate report.

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline For Year Under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
6,5PF	6,5PF	6,5NF							

Overview: The ruling Yeni Azerbaijan Party dominated deeply flawed parliamentary elections held in November 2010, demonstrating President Ilham Aliyev's increased authoritarian control over the country's institutions and political life. Although two jailed bloggers were released later that month under strong international pressure, the government maintained its harsh suppression of media freedom during the year.

After a short period of independence from 1918 to 1920, Azerbaijan was occupied by Soviet forces and formally entered the Soviet Union in 1922 as part of the Transcaucasian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic. It became a separate Soviet republic in 1936. Following a referendum in 1991, Azerbaijan declared independence from the disintegrating Soviet Union.

In 1992, Abulfaz Elchibey, leader of the nationalist opposition Azerbaijan Popular Front, was elected president in a generally free and fair vote. A military coup one year later ousted him from power and installed the former first secretary of the Azerbaijan Communist Party, Heydar Aliyev, in his place. In the October 1993 presidential election, Aliyev was credited with receiving nearly 99 percent of the vote. Five leading opposition parties and some 600 independent candidates were barred from the first post-Soviet parliamentary elections in 1995, allowing Aliyev's Yeni Azerbaijan Party (YAP) to win the most seats. In 1998, Aliyev was reelected

with more than 70 percent of the vote in balloting that was marred by irregularities, and the YAP won fraudulent parliamentary polls in 2000.

A 2002 referendum approved a series of constitutional amendments, some of which critics said would strengthen the ruling party's grip on power. One amendment stipulated that the prime minister would become president if the head of state resigned or was incapacitated. The change was seen as a possible means for the ailing Aliyev to transfer power to his son, Ilham Aliyev. Opposition groups and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) charged that the referendum was marred by fraud, including ballot box stuffing, intimidation of election monitors and officials, and an inflated voter turnout figure of nearly 90 percent.

Heydar Aliyev collapsed during a live television broadcast in April 2003 and left Azerbaijan that summer to receive medical treatment abroad. In June, Prime Minister Ilham Aliyev was officially nominated as a candidate for the October presidential election, and the elder Aliyev withdrew his candidacy just two weeks before the vote.

Final election results showed Ilham Aliyev defeating seven challengers with nearly 77 percent of the ballots. His closest rival, opposition Musavat Party leader Isa Gambar, received only 14 percent, while six other candidates received less than 4 percent each. According to OSCE observers, the vote was again tainted by widespread fraud. During violent clashes between security forces and demonstrators in Baku in October, at least one person was reportedly killed, and several hundred were injured. The authorities then unleashed a crackdown against the opposition in which more than 600 people were detained. Among those arrested were election officials who refused to certify fraudulent results. Heydar Aliyev died in December 2003.

Less than half of all registered voters cast ballots in the 2005 parliamentary elections, the lowest voter turnout in a decade. The opposition captured just 10 of 125 seats in the Milli Majlis (National Assembly), with a substantial majority going to the ruling YAP and its allies. The results were contested by the opposition, which organized a number of rallies in the capital.

Aliyev easily won a second term in the October 2008 presidential election, taking 89 percent of the vote amid 75 percent turnout, according to official results. Most of the political opposition chose to boycott the poll, citing barriers to meaningful media access and the overwhelming influence of administrative resources deployed by the YAP. In March 2009, a constitutional amendment that removed presidential term limits reportedly passed a referendum with more than 90 percent of the vote, allowing Aliyev to run again in 2013.

The November 2010 parliamentary elections followed the established trend of increasing manipulation, and the YAP emerged with 71 seats, up from 61 in the 2005 polls. The remainder went to 41 independents and 10 minor parties, none of which garnered more than three seats.

International mediators have failed to make progress on negotiations for a final settlement on the disputed territory of Nagorno-Karabakh, a region of Azerbaijan that has been ruled by ethnic Armenian separatists since the early 1990s. No country or international organization recognizes Nagorno-Karabakh's self-proclaimed independence.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Azerbaijan is not an electoral democracy. The country's constitution provides for a strong presidency, and the parliament, the 125-member Milli Majlis, exercises little or no independence from the executive branch. The president and members of parliament serve five-year terms, and a 2009 referendum eliminated presidential term limits.

Elections since the early 1990s have been considered neither free nor fair by international observers. As with previous votes, the 2010 parliamentary balloting featured the abuse of state administrative resources, including news media, to ensure the dominance of the YAP. The OSCE also cited voter intimidation and the improper disqualification of some opposition candidates.

Corruption is widespread, and wealth from the country's massive oil exports creates ever greater opportunities for graft. Because critical institutions, including the news media and judiciary, are largely subservient to the president and ruling party, government officials are rarely held accountable for what are considered to be widespread corrupt practices among the country's ruling elite. A freedom of information law was enacted in 2005, but the government has taken little action to implement its provisions and increase transparency at public institutions.

While Azerbaijan's constitution guarantees freedom of speech and the press, the authorities severely limit press freedom in practice. Broadcast media are the main source of information for the vast majority of the population, and privately owned television stations with national reach generally reflect progovernment views. While there is some pluralism in the print media, newspapers have relatively small print runs, are not distributed regularly in rural areas, and are frequently too expensive for many people to purchase. Independent and opposition newspapers struggle financially in the face of limited advertising revenues and heavy fines or imprisonment of their staff. State-owned companies rarely if ever advertise in opposition newspapers. In 2009, authorities in the Naxcivan autonomous republic banned the leaking of information to the media, leading to house arrests and threats aimed at those who had supplied opposition newspapers with information. Also that year, Azerbaijani authorities banned local radio broadcasts of key international news services, including the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL), and Voice of America.

Journalists are threatened and assaulted with impunity, and several high-profile reporters and editors remained behind bars for defamation and other offenses in 2010. Among them was newspaper editor Eynulla Fatullayev, who was jailed on a variety of dubious charges in 2007 and began a hunger strike in October 2010. In November 2010, bloggers Emin Milli and Adnan Hajizade were released by a Baku appeals court after more than a year in prison and an international campaign on their behalf. They had been sentenced for "hooliganism" over an incident in which two men attacked them in a restaurant as part of an apparent frame-up; the bloggers had recently participated in online criticism of the government, including a satirical video in which a donkey holds a news conference. The government does not typically restrict internet access, but it has repeatedly blocked some websites featuring opposition views and intimidated the online community through its harsh treatment of Milli and Hajizade.

The government restricts the activities of "nontraditional" minority religious

groups—those other than Islam, Orthodox Christianity, and Judaism—through burdensome registration requirements and interference in the importation and distribution of printed religious materials. A 2009 law required religious groups to reregister with the authorities and religious figures to be recertified. It also barred foreign citizens from leading prayers.

The authorities generally do not restrict academic freedom. However, some students and faculty have experienced political pressure, including reported threats to lower the grades of students who participate in opposition political activity. Some professors and teachers have said they were dismissed because of their membership in opposition parties or for political activity during campaign periods.

The government restricts freedom of assembly, especially for opposition parties. Legal amendments enacted in 2009 require nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) to register their grants with the authorities and foreign NGOs to reach agreements with the government before opening offices in the country. NGOs must register with the Ministry of Justice to function as legal entities, and the process has been described as cumbersome and nontransparent. Although the law permits the formation of trade unions and the right to strike, the majority of trade unions remain closely affiliated with the government, and most major industries are state owned.

The judiciary is corrupt, inefficient, and subservient to the executive branch. Arbitrary arrest and detention are common, particularly for members of the political opposition. Detainees are often held for long periods before trial, and their access to lawyers is restricted. Police abuse of suspects during arrest and interrogation reportedly remains common; torture is sometimes used to extract confessions. Prison conditions are severe, with many inmates suffering from overcrowding and inadequate medical care. In August 2009, the former editor of an ethnic minority newspaper died in prison after allegedly receiving poor medical treatment.

In November 2010, the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) rebuked the Azerbaijani government for the arrests of former economic development minister Farhad Aliyev and former National Academy of Sciences president Eldar Salayev in connection with a suspected coup plot in 2005. The ECHR found that the authorities had violated their rights to liberty and security and the presumption of innocence, and ordered the government to pay compensation.

Some members of ethnic minority groups, including the small ethnic Armenian population, have complained of discrimination in areas including education, employment, and housing. Hundreds of thousands of ethnic Azeris, who were displaced by the war in Nagorno-Karabakh in the early 1990s, remain subject to restrictions on their place of residence and often live in dreadful conditions.

Significant parts of the economy are controlled by a corrupt elite, which severely limits equality of opportunity. Supporters of the political opposition face job discrimination, demotion, and dismissal.

Traditional societal norms and poor economic conditions restrict women's professional roles, and they remain underrepresented in government. Women hold 20 seats in the newly elected parliament. Domestic violence is a problem, and there are no laws regarding spousal abuse. The country is believed to be a source, transit point, and destination for the trafficking of women for prostitution. A 2005 law criminalized human trafficking, but the U.S. State Department's 2010 Trafficking in Persons Report placed Azerbaijan on its Tier 2 Watch List for the third consecutive year.

Bahamas

Political Rights: 1

Population: 340,000

Civil Liberties: 1

Capital: Nassau

Status: Free

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline For Year Under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
1,1F									

Overview: Following a February 2010 by-election for the Elizabeth constituency seat, an election court in March overturned the ruling Free National Movement party's narrow victory over the opposition Progressive Liberal Party.

The Bahamas, a former British colony, became an independent state within the Commonwealth in 1973. Lynden Pindling served as the country's first prime minister and head of the Progressive Liberal Party (PLP) for a quarter-century. After years of allegations of corruption and involvement by high-ranking officials in narcotics trafficking, Pindling and the PLP were defeated by the Free National Movement (FNM) party in the 1992 elections.

The FNM ruled the Bahamas for 10 years under Prime Minister Hubert Ingraham, until the 2002 elections brought the PLP, led by Perry Christie, back to power. In May 2007, the FNM triumphed at the polls, winning 23 parliamentary seats to the PLP's 18, thereby restoring Ingraham to the premiership. Christie retained his position as leader of the opposition by winning an overwhelming majority of votes at the PLP leadership conference in October 2009.

Following the surprise resignation in January 2010 of PLP representative Malcolm Adderley, a by-election was called for February to fill the Elizabeth constituency seat. The governing FNM, the PLP, the newly formed National Development Party, the Workers' Party, and the Bahamas Democratic Movement (BDM) all fielded candidates. The FNM was declared the winner by just two votes, a close result that was challenged by the PLP and triggered a mandatory recount. In March, an election court ruled in favor of the PLP, thus overturning the election day results.

As the Caribbean's only upper-income country, the Bahamas has established a model service economy based on an impressive tourism sector—which accounts for a large share of national income—and offshore financial services. However, the Bahamian tourism industry continues to suffer from the global economic crisis that struck in late 2008, posing new challenges for the Ingraham government. Marijuana cultivation and trafficking by foreign nationals residing in the country has led the United States to keep the Bahamas on the list of major drug-producing or drug-transit countries. In October 2010, the U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) reportedly landed on the island of Exuma to investigate Bahamian customs officials' complicity in car theft and smuggling operations from the United States.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: The Bahamas is an electoral democracy. The lower house of the bicameral Parliament, the 41 -member House of Assembly, is directly elected for five-year terms. The 16 members of the upper house, the Senate, are appointed for five-year terms by the governor-general, who represents the British monarch as head of state. Nine of the senators are appointed on the recommendation of the prime minister, four on the recommendation of the opposition leader, and three on the recommendation of the prime minister after consulting with the opposition leader. The head of the majority party or coalition in Parliament typically serves as prime minister. Political parties can organize freely.

Corruption remains a problem at all levels of government. Top officials frequently face allegations of administrative graft, domestically and from abroad.

The Bahamas has a well-developed tradition of respecting press freedom. The privately owned daily and weekly newspapers express a variety of views, as do the government-run radio station and four privately owned radio broadcasters. Strict and antiquated libel laws dating to British legal codes are seldom invoked. Access to the internet is unrestricted.

Religious and academic freedoms are respected.

Freedoms of association and assembly are protected. Constitutional guarantees of the right to form nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) are generally respected, and human rights organizations have broad access to institutions and individuals. Labor, business, and professional organizations are also generally free from government interference. Unions have the right to strike, and collective bargaining is prevalent.

The judicial system is headed by the Supreme Court and a court of appeals, with the additional right of appeal to the Privy Council in London under certain circumstances. Some progress has been reported in reducing both the duration of court cases and the backlog of criminal appeals, though complaints of excessive pretrial detentions continue. In 2006, the Privy Council ruled that mandatory death sentences for individuals convicted of murder in the Bahamas are unconstitutional. In practice, the death penalty was last carried out in 2000.

NGOs have occasionally documented cases of prisoner abuse and arbitrary arrest. Overcrowding in the country's prison remains a major problem, and juveniles are often housed with adults, increasing the risk of sexual abuse. The correctional training institute established in 2005 has worked to segregate violent and nonviolent offenders. However, the institute continues to face problems of limited capacity, including inadequate space to segregate offenders and insufficient numbers of trained personnel.

The Bahamas remains a major transit point for migrants coming from elsewhere in the Caribbean, especially Cuba and Haiti, in the hope of reaching the United States. Discrimination against Haitian immigrants persists, and between 30,000 and 40,000 recent Haitian immigrants reside illegally in the Bahamas. Strict citizenship requirements and a stringent work-permit system leave Haitians with few rights. The government halted the deportation of Haitians immediately following the earthquake in Haiti in January 2010. However, as the financial crisis continued to weaken the country's tourism sector—which is a main employer of undocumented workers—the government resumed its repatriation of undocumented immigrants in September, deporting approximately 900 Haitians by November.

The government is strongly opposed to homosexuality. However, the Bahamas

spends more than US\$ 1 million annually on antiretroviral drugs for HIV-infected patients. Gender equality has not been achieved, and only 12 percent of the seats in the Parliament are held by women. Domestic violence remains a problem.

Bahrain

Political Rights: 6

Civil Liberties: 5

Status: Not Free

Population: 1,300,000

Capital: Manama

Trend Arrow: Bahrain received a downward trend arrow due to an intensified crack-down on members of the Shiite Muslim majority in 2010, including assaults and arrests of dozens of activists and journalists, as well as reports of widespread torture of political prisoners.

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline For Year Under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
6,SNF	5,SPF	6,SNF	6,SNF						

Overview: Relations between the country's Shiite Muslim majority and the ruling Sunni Muslim minority continued to deteriorate in 2010, particularly during the run-up to October parliamentary elections, in which government supporters retained control. Authorities arrested dozens of Shiite activists in August and September, including the spokesperson of the opposition political society Haq. Many of those detained alleged that they were tortured in custody. The government also blocked dozens of Shiite websites and arrested one of the community's most prominent bloggers.

The al-Khalifa family, which belongs to Bahrain's Sunni Muslim minority, has ruled the Shiite-majority country for more than two centuries. Bahrain gained independence in 1971 after more than a hundred years as a British protectorate. The first constitution provided for a legislative assembly with both elected and appointed members, but the monarch dissolved the body in 1975 for attempting to end al-Khalifa rule.

In 1994, prominent individuals who had petitioned for the reestablishment of democratic institutions were detained, sparking unrest that left more than 40 people dead, thousands arrested, and hundreds either imprisoned or exiled.

After Sheikh Hamad bin Isa al-Khalifa ascended to the throne in 1999, he released political prisoners, permitted the return of exiles, and eliminated emergency laws and courts. He also introduced the National Charter, which aimed to create a constitutional monarchy with an elected parliament, an independent judicial branch, and rights guaranteeing women's political participation.

Voters approved the National Charter in 2001, and the country was proclaimed a constitutional kingdom the following year. However, leading Shiite groups and leftists boycotted local and parliamentary elections in 2002 to protest campaigning

restrictions and electoral gerrymandering aimed at diminishing the power of the Shiite majority. The government barred international organizations from monitoring the elections, and Sunni groups won most of the seats in the new National Assembly.

Shiite groups that boycotted the 2002 voting took part in the next elections in 2006. Al-Wefaq, a Shiite political society, won 42 percent of the vote and 17 of the 40 seats in the Council of Representatives, the lower house of the bicameral National Assembly.

Security forces cracked down on the government's most outspoken critics in 2007, and the campaign continued the following year, with dozens of Shiite activists claiming that they were tortured in custody. Violence escalated after the January 2009 arrest of Hassan Mushaima, Abduljalil al-Singace, and Mohammed Habib al-Muqdad, three leaders of the opposition political association Haq. Protests and clashes between mostly young Shiites and security forces broke out regularly between January and April, with police using live ammunition to disperse demonstrators.

Relations between the government and the Shiite community deteriorated further in 2010. In August, authorities again arrested al-Singace and al-Muqdad, along with over 20 others. The government claimed that they represented a security threat to the country and filed terrorism charges against 25 detainees in October. Human rights organizations in Bahrain documented the use of torture against the suspects, whose access to family members and lawyers was restricted.

Despite fears that the crackdown on Shiite leaders would lead al-Wefaq to boycott the Council of Representatives elections in October, the group won 18 seats. A combination of 17 independents and 5 Islamists, all Sunnis and supporters of the ruling family, captured the remaining 22 seats. As in 2002 and 2006, critics accused the government of accelerating the naturalization of foreign workers and non-Bahraini Arabs in advance of the elections to boost the number of Sunni voters.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Bahrain is not an electoral democracy. The 2002 constitution gives the king power over the executive, legislative, and judicial authorities. He appoints cabinet ministers and members of the 40-seat Consultative Council, the upper house of the National Assembly. The lower house, or Council of Representatives, consists of 40 elected members serving four-year terms. The National Assembly may propose legislation, but the cabinet must draft the laws.

While formal political parties are illegal, the government allows political societies or groupings to operate. A 2005 law makes it illegal to form political associations based on class, profession, or religion, and requires all political associations to register with the Ministry of Justice.

Bahrain has some anticorruption laws, but enforcement is weak, and high-ranking officials suspected of corruption are rarely punished. Bahrain was ranked 48 out of 178 countries surveyed in Transparency International's 2010 Corruption Perceptions Index.

Freedom of expression is restricted, and the authorities routinely harass activists who criticize them publicly. The government owns all broadcast media outlets, and the private owners of the three main newspapers have close ties to the government. Self-censorship is encouraged by the vaguely worded 2002 Press Law, which allows the state to imprison journalists for criticizing the king or Islam, or for threatening

"national security." In September 2010, authorities arrested the prominent blogger Ali Abdulemam, a regular contributor to the popular opposition web forum Bahrain Online. He was subsequently charged with threatening national security and brought to trial on terrorism charges with 24 other activists. Also that month, the government shut down over a dozen news and other websites associated with the Shiite community. The government and its supporters have used the press to criticize and smear human rights and opposition activists. For example, a photograph of human rights activist Nabeel Rajab was published in several newspapers as part of a list of suspected terrorists. Despite these restrictions, print outlets feature some debate regarding reform, the parliament's effectiveness, and sectarianism.

Islam is the state religion. However, non-Muslim minorities are generally free to practice their faiths. All religious groups must obtain a permit from the Ministry of Justice and Islamic Affairs to operate legally, though the government has not punished groups that operate without a permit. In 2010, amid the crackdown on Shiite activists, the government stripped Ayatollah Hussein Mirza Najati, one of the country's top Shiite clerics, of his Bahraini nationality.

Academic freedom is not formally restricted, but teachers and professors tend to avoid politically sensitive issues, and scholars who criticize the government are subject to dismissal. While there are some limits to public speech, Bahrainis engage in robust private discussion in their homes, cafes, and political salons.

Citizens must obtain a license to hold demonstrations, which are banned from sunrise to sunset in any public arena. Police regularly use violence to break up political protests, most of which occur in Shiite villages. The 1989 Societies Law prohibits any nongovernmental organization (NGO) from operating without a permit. The Bahrain Center for Human Rights was closed by the government in 2004, though its members continue to operate. In September 2010, the government dissolved the board of directors of the Bahrain Human Rights Society, an independent NGO, for mostly alleged administrative and legal "irregularities," and assigned a government-appointed director to run the organization.

Bahrainis have the right to establish independent labor unions, but workers must give two weeks' notice before a strike, and strikes are banned in vital sectors such as security, civil defense, transportation, health care, communications, and basic infrastructure. Private sector employees cannot be dismissed for union activities, but harassment of unionist workers continues. Foreign workers are not protected by the labor law and lack the right to organize and seek help from Bahraini unions. In August 2009, the labor minister announced that the Labor Market Regulatory Authority would take over responsibility for sponsoring foreign workers, removing the power of sponsorship from employers. While the change was expected to protect foreign workers from some abuses, it did not apply to household servants, who are particularly vulnerable to exploitation.

The king appoints all judges, and courts have been subject to government pressure. Members of the royal family hold all security-related offices. Bahrain's antiterrorism law prescribes the death penalty for members of terrorist groups and prison terms for those who use religion to spread extremism. Critics have argued that the law's definition of terrorist crimes is too broad and that it has encouraged the use of torture and arbitrary detention.

Shiites are underrepresented in government and face various forms of discrimina-

60 Freedom in the World—2011

tion. Fears of Shiite power and suspicions about their loyalties have limited employment opportunities for young Shiite men and fueled government attempts to erode the Shiite majority, mostly by granting citizenship to foreign-born Sunnis. Bahrainis have the right to travel freely inside and outside the country.

Although women have the right to vote and participate in elections, they are underrepresented politically. One-quarter of Consultative Council members are women, and the first woman in the Council of Representatives won her seat in 2006 after running unopposed. In May 2008, Bahrain named Hoda Nono as its first female (and Jewish) ambassador to the United States. In 2010, Fatima Salman became the first woman elected to a municipal council in a Gulf country. While they are often partners in family decision making, women are generally not afforded equal protection under the law. The government drafted a personal status law in 2008 but withdrew it in February 2009 under pressure from the country's Shiite clergy; the Sunni portion was resubmitted and passed by the parliament. Personal status and family law issues for Shiite Bahrainis are consequently still governed by Sharia (Islamic law) court rulings based on the interpretations of predominantly male religious scholars rather than by any formal statute.

Bangladesh

Political Rights: 3

Population: 164,400,000

Civil Liberties: 4

Capital: Dhaka

Status: Partly Free

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline For Year Under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
3,4PF	4,4PF	4,4PF	4,4PF	4,4PF	4,4PF	5,4PF	4,4PF	3,4PF	3,4PF

Overview: The government pursued its ambitious reform agenda throughout 2010, working to restore the secularist 1972 constitution, establishing a tribunal to try those suspected of committing war crimes during the 1971 war of independence, cracking down on Islamist groups, and improving relations with neighboring India. Extrajudicial executions and other human rights abuses remained a problem during the year, as did concerns that the government was insufficiently committed to combating official corruption.

Bangladesh gained independence from Britain in 1947 as part of the newly formed state of Pakistan, and successfully split from Pakistan in December 1971, after a nine-month war. The 1975 assassination of independence leader and prime minister Sheikh Mujibur Rahman by soldiers precipitated 15 years of military rule and continues to polarize Bangladeshi politics. The last military ruler resigned in 1990 after weeks of prodemocracy demonstrations. Elections in 1991 brought the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) to power under Prime Minister Khaleda Zia.

A long political deadlock began in 1994, when Sheikh Hasina Wajed's center-

left Awami League (AL) party began boycotting Parliament to protest alleged corruption in Zia's government. The disputes between the AL and the BNP often reflected the personal animosity between Hasina, the daughter of Rahman, and Zia, the widow of a military ruler who was allegedly complicit in his assassination. The AL boycotted the February 1996 elections and then forced Zia's resignation in March and triumphed in elections held in June. The BNP also marked its time in opposition by boycotting Parliament and organizing periodic nationwide strikes, or hartals.

In 2001, the AL was voted out of office in elections marred by political violence and intimidation, and a new BNP-led coalition that included two Islamist parties took power. The AL again turned to parliamentary boycotts, strikes, and other forms of protest. Political violence and general lawlessness mounted, partly due to bombings and other attacks by Islamist extremist groups. However, two of the largest were banned in 2005, and a government crackdown in 2006 effectively crippled the organizations.

As planned 2007 general elections approached, the AL demanded reform of Bangladesh's caretaker government (CG) system, in which a theoretically nonpartisan government takes power temporarily to oversee parliamentary elections. The AL also questioned the conduct and impartiality of the Election Commission (EC) and its preparation of a new voter list. Faced with the possibility of an election that lacked credibility, in January 2007, the army pressured the president to declare a state of emergency and cancel the elections. A new, military-backed CG, headed by technocrat Fakhruddin Ahmed, announced plans to tackle endemic corruption and prepare for new elections. Under emergency regulations, freedoms of assembly and association were suspended, controls were placed on the media, and all political activity was banned. However, the "soft coup" was carried out partly within the constitutional framework, stopping short of martial law and leaving a civilian CG in nominal control.

A new Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) investigated high-level politicians and their business allies, including Hasina, Zia, and their families. Dozens were arrested, and several were subsequently convicted by a special court. However, after both main parties decided to boycott preelection talks with the EC unless their leaders were released, the CG was forced to capitulate, weakening its anticorruption campaign. The new EC also failed to address the issue of suspected war criminals' continued involvement in politics. Of particular concern was the Jamaat-e-Islami (Islamic Party, or JI), whose leaders and student wing played a role in atrocities against civilians during the 1971 war of independence.

The emergency regulations were fully lifted in mid-December 2008, and the elections followed on December 29. Although the longtime party leaders remained in place, there was a considerable infusion of new blood into the parties' candidate lists. Turnout was extremely high, at 87 percent, and included a large proportion of first-time, women, and minority voters. An electoral alliance led by the AL won an overwhelming 263 seats (230 for the AL), while the BNP-led coalition took 32 seats (29 for the BNP and just 2 for the JI). After initial protests, Zia accepted the results, and with Hasina taking office as prime minister, Bangladesh returned to elected civilian rule after a two-year hiatus. AL-backed candidates also won a majority of leadership positions in the January 2009 upazila parishad (subdistrict) elections, the first local government polls to be held for 19 years. In contrast to the national elec-

tions, the January balloting was marred by more extensive violence and intimidation, as well as suspected rigging.

The new government moved forcefully to implement its campaign promises and ratify most of the ordinances passed by the CG. Several suspected war criminals were arrested in 2009, and in March 2010, the government established a tribunal to prosecute them. However, experts remained concerned that the trials may not adhere to international standards. In late July and August, the tribunal indicted and issued arrest warrants for five JI leaders.

Another important part of the AL's agenda was the restoration of the 1972 constitution, which would reestablish Bangladesh's character as a secular republic. In a key step toward that end, a February 2010 Supreme Court decision nullified elements of the fifth amendment to the constitution, providing for the reinstatement of the principle of secularism and the reintroduction of a ban on religiously based political parties. Following the ruling, the EC requested that the JI amend its charter accordingly. Meanwhile, the government took a harder line on Islamist militants, arresting dozens of activists and those suspected of links to terrorist groups. Other official attempts to tackle extremism included an August 2010 high court decision—in response to a public interest petition filed by two lawyers—ordering the government to prohibit educational institutions from coercing female employees into wearing headscarves, veils, or burqas. The ruling was extended in October to ban such coercion in any context, and to apply to any religious clothing, including skullcaps for men. In July, a government order barred libraries and mosques from keeping books by a controversial Pakistani Islamist scholar, Syed Abul Ala Maududi.

The BNP-led opposition continued to boycott Parliament intermittently and assailed most of the AL government's initiatives, including the constitutional restoration, proposed revisions to education policy, and a shift toward amicable dispute resolution with neighboring India. In 2010, the BNP began resorting to the use of hartals, and led relatively peaceful mass protests in late June. However, the party remained weak and suffered from serious internal divisions, particularly over succession issues.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Bangladesh is an electoral democracy. The December 2008 parliamentary elections were deemed free and fair by European Union observers and other monitoring groups. Terms for both the unicameral National Parliament and the largely ceremonial presidency are five years. Parliament is composed of 345 members, of which 300 are directly elected, and 45 are women nominated by political parties—based on their share of the elected seats—and then voted on by their fellow lawmakers. The president is elected by Parliament. The 1996 polls were the first held under a constitutional amendment requiring a CG to oversee the election process.

A series of 2008 electoral reforms mandated that parties disband their student, labor, and overseas units; obliged parties to reserve a third of all positions for women; reduced the number of seats a parliamentary candidate could simultaneously contest from five to three; tripled campaign spending limits to 1.5 million taka (\$22,000) per candidate; and gave voters in each constituency the option of rejecting all candidates. The new regulations were designed to curtail the widespread bribery, rigging, and violence that had characterized past elections, as was a new voter registry that

was considerably smaller and more accurate than its predecessor. The EC's reputation as an impartial arbiter was strengthened in June 2010, when the AL suffered a surprise defeat in the Chittagong mayoral election but accepted the results. The level of political violence remained relatively high in 2010; local rights group Odhikar registered 220 deaths and more than 13,000 people injured as a result of inter- or intraparty clashes during the year.

Endemic corruption and criminality, weak rule of law, limited bureaucratic transparency, and political polarization have long undermined government accountability. Moreover, boycotts by both major parties while in opposition have regularly nullified Parliament's role as a check on the government. The BNP intermittently boycotted Parliament in 2009 and 2010, leaving the AL, with its massive majority, to dominate legislative proceedings. In a step toward greater transparency, lawmakers in 2009 passed the Right to Information Act, which mandates public access to all information held by public bodies and overrides existing secrecy legislation.

Bangladesh was ranked 134 out of 178 countries surveyed by Transparency International (TI) in its 2010 Corruption Perceptions Index. The local branch of TI noted in 2008 that although the CG's efforts had effectively reduced large-scale corruption, graft and bribery on a smaller scale remained rampant. The two main parties have also retained links to criminal networks. In 2009, the ACC continued to investigate and prosecute high-level cases, but local watchdog groups and aid donors expressed concern that political interference was increasingly undermining its work and independence. Starting in 2009, dozens of cases, most against leading AL politicians, were withdrawn. In May 2010, the last of 15 cases against Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina Wajed was dropped. Meanwhile, many cases against BNP politicians, including party leader Khaleda Zia and her family, have remained open. In March, a cabinet committee proposed amendments that would require the ACC to receive government approval before initiating new cases against officials and members of Parliament; the proposal was still pending at year's end.

Bangladesh's media environment opened up considerably in 2009, and news outlets remained relatively unfettered in 2010, despite some signs of intolerance by the government. Print media are generally given more leeway when covering sensitive topics than broadcasters, particularly private television channels that provide 24-hour news coverage. Authorities approved the country's first community radio licenses in April 2010, but later that month ordered the closure of the private Channel 1 television station, citing violations of broadcasting regulations. In June, authorities in Dhaka forcibly closed the oppositionist daily *Amar Desh* and arrested its acting editor, Mahmudur Rahman, who is a close adviser to Zia. Rahman was initially charged with fraud and publishing without a valid license, but then was also charged with sedition. The sedition charge allowed authorities to hold him indefinitely, and he was reportedly tortured in custody. In August, Rahman and several colleagues were sentenced for contempt of court in a separate case initiated in May, and Rahman received the maximum six-month jail sentence. Over the past two years, various employees at the paper have been charged with defamation for articles written about the ruling party. However, after a Supreme Court order expired, the paper resumed publication in July, pending a resolution of its licensing application, which remained ongoing at year's end. Separately, a journalist and writer who was first arrested in 2003, Salah Uddin Shoaib Choudhury, still faced sedition, treason, and

blasphemy charges; his trial began in 2008 and was ongoing during 2010, but he was allowed to travel abroad while the proceedings continued.

Journalists continue to be threatened and attacked with impunity by organized crime groups, party activists, and Islamist groups, although the level of harassment has declined and no journalists have been killed for the past four years, according to the Committee to Protect Journalists. No other cases of arrest, detention, or custodial torture of journalists were reported during 2010. However, some journalists continued to report receiving threatening telephone calls from intelligence agencies seeking to prevent negative coverage, and many practice self-censorship when reporting on sensitive topics.

In March 2010, police in Dhaka closed down a photography exhibition containing images of alleged extrajudicial executions by security forces. The decision was rescinded a week later, after the gallery owner filed a legal appeal against the closure, but he also received death threats connected to the incident. In June, citing material that was deemed insulting both to Islam and to the country's leaders, authorities temporarily blocked access to the social-networking website Facebook and arrested the user who had posted the images.

Islam is the official religion, but about 10 percent of the population is Hindu, and there are smaller numbers of Buddhists and Christians. Although religious minorities have the right to worship freely, they face societal discrimination and remain underrepresented in politics and state employment. A trend of increased intolerance and attacks on minorities was reversed in 2009, after the new government made explicit commitments to defend minority rights and deployed police to protect vulnerable groups, like the 100,000-strong Ahmadiyya sect. Ahmadis are considered heretical by some mainstream Muslims, and they have faced physical attacks, boycotts, and demands by extremist groups that they be declared non-Muslims by the state. Nevertheless, societal discrimination and occasional attacks and harassment against religious minorities continue to take place. Other positive steps taken by the secularist AL government included the appointment of several members of religious minority groups to leadership positions and the initiation of curriculum reform in Islamic schools. In 2010, the Supreme Court reestablished secularism as a constitutional principle and took steps to ban coercive enforcement of religiously inspired dress codes.

While authorities largely respect academic freedom, research on sensitive political and religious topics is discouraged, according to the U.S. State Department's human rights report. Political polarization at many universities inhibits education and access to services, and occasionally leads to clashes between students and security forces or among the armed student wings of the three main political factions (AL, BNP, and JI). In February 2010, violent clashes on a number of campuses led to the deaths of at least five students. Amnesty International criticized the government's failure to investigate the incidents, as well as the fact that only opposition supporters were detained.

The rights of assembly and association were restored in late 2008 with the lifting of emergency regulations. Occasional demonstrations continue to take place, and protesters are sometimes killed or injured during clashes with police. Numerous world-class nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) operate in Bangladesh and meet basic needs in fields such as education, health care, and microcredit. While

most NGOs are generally able to operate without onerous restrictions, those perceived to be overly critical of the government, particularly on human rights issues, have on occasion been subject to harassment or denial of permission for proposed projects.

Labor rights were simplified and codified in the Bangladesh Labour Act of 2006, though the new law carried over many of the restrictions contained in previous legislation. For example, labor union formation is hampered by a 30 percent employee-approval requirement, restrictions on organizing by unregistered unions, and rules against union formation by certain categories of civil servants. Labor activists occasionally face harassment, and worker grievances sometimes fuel unrest at factories. In June 2010, protests by garment workers demanding a higher minimum wage sparked violence in which dozens were injured and a factory was burned down, while many others were forced to close temporarily. In similar protests at the end of July, more than 100 people were injured during clashes between workers and police. Members of the Bangladesh Center for Workers' Solidarity were arrested and harassed by authorities during the year, and the NGO was stripped of its legal status in June after authorities accused it of operating outside its mandate. Child labor is widespread.

Politicization of the judiciary remains a concern. The military-backed CG, unlike previous governments, worked to implement a 1999 Supreme Court directive ordering the separation of the judiciary from the executive. In 2007, the power to appoint judges and magistrates was transferred from the executive branch to the Supreme Court. However, political authorities have continued to make appointments to the higher judiciary, including the addition of 17 judges to the High Court and a new head of the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court in 2010. Some have argued that the allegedly politically motivated appointments will enable the ruling party to exercise influence over politically sensitive cases, particularly those involving charges against members of the opposition BNP.

The court system is prone to corruption and severely backlogged; pretrial detention is lengthy, and many defendants lack counsel. The indigent have little access to justice through the courts. In 2009, the government launched an initiative to form small courts in 500 rural administrative councils that could settle local disputes and reduce pressure on the legal system. Prison conditions are extremely poor, and severe overcrowding is common, to the extent that prisoners have to sleep in shifts. In August 2010, more than 1,000 prisoners serving lengthy sentences were released in an effort to ease overcrowding. According to the New Delhi-based Asian Centre for Human Rights, hundreds of juveniles are illegally held in prisons in contravention of the 1974 Children's Act. Suspects are routinely subjected to arrest and detention with warrants, demands for bribes, and physical abuse at the hands of law enforcement officials. Torture is routinely used to extract confessions and intimidate political detainees.

Security forces—including the Rapid Action Battalion (RAB), a paramilitary unit composed of some 4,500 military and police personnel—have been criticized for excesses like extrajudicial executions. According to local rights watchdog Odhikar, there were 127 extrajudicial killings by law enforcement agencies in 2010, a similar number to the previous year. The Directorate General-Forces Intelligence (DGFI), a military intelligence unit, has also been responsible for a number of cases

of abuse during interrogations. Although the AL government initially promised a "zero-tolerance" approach to issues of torture and extrajudicial executions, it has not followed through on these commitments, and the rate of custodial deaths remains high.

In March 2010, Human Rights Watch reported that at least 60 suspected participants in a February 2009 mutiny by the paramilitary Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) force—in which some 70 officers and family members were killed—had died in custody under suspicious circumstances, with some bodies bearing marks of torture and other abuse. At least 3,500 BDR members had been arrested by August 2009. The first trials started in late November, and in April 2010, a special tribunal handed down dozens of prison sentences ranging from several months to seven years; hundreds of suspects were still being held without charge. Observers have raised concerns that the trials did not meet minimum standards and that torture had been used to extract confessions.

Law enforcement abuses are facilitated by legislation such as the 1974 Special Powers Act, which permits arbitrary detention without charge, as well as Section 54 of the Criminal Procedure Code, which allows detention without a warrant. A June 2008 counterterrorism ordinance included an overly broad definition of terrorism and generally did not meet international standards; in 2009, the new government adopted this as the Anti-Terrorism Act without modifying its problematic provisions. On a positive note, the International War Crimes Tribunal Act of 1973 was revised in 2009 to meet international standards concerning the right to a fair trial. In 2010, a tribunal was constituted and handed down indictments against five senior JI leaders, but trials had not commenced by year's end.

In 2009, Parliament passed legislation to reestablish the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), which is empowered to investigate and rule on complaints of abuse against the armed forces and security services; the NHRC can request reports from the government at its own discretion. Despite the appointment of some commissioners, the NHRC was not fully functional by the end of 2010.

Islamist militant groups continue to operate and maintain contact with regional allies, but Islamist violence has been negligible since the 2006 crackdown. The AL government has taken a hard-line approach to both local and international militant groups, arresting cadres and closely monitoring their activities. Casualties from clashes involving Maoist militants have declined somewhat in the past several years; according to the South Asia Terrorism Portal, 56 people, the vast majority of them militants, were killed in 2010.

Land rights for the Hindu minority remain tenuous. Tribal minorities have little control over land decisions affecting them, and Bengali-speaking settlers continue to encroach illegally on tribal lands in the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT), with the reported connivance of government officials and the army. A 1997 accord ended a 24-year insurgency by indigenous groups in the CHT, but implementation of the accord has been lacking. Security forces in the area are occasionally implicated in the suppression of protests, the arrest of political activists, and extrajudicial killings. Moreover, indigenous people remain subject to physical attacks and property destruction by Bengali settlers. In July 2009, the AL government said it would immediately withdraw more than 2,000 troops from the CHT and dismantle several dozen military camps. It also announced plans to set up a commission that would allocate land to indigenous tribes. However, in February 2010, the worst clashes since the

1997 peace accord erupted in the CHT; hundreds of houses belonging to indigenous people were burned down, and a number of civilians were killed.

Roughly 260,000 ethnic Rohingyas fleeing forced labor, discrimination, and other abuses in Burma entered Bangladesh in the early 1990s; some 28,000 registered refugees and at least 200,000 other Rohingyas who are not formally documented as refugees remain in the country and are subject to some harassment. Bangladesh also hosts camp-like settlements of some 300,000 non-Bengali Muslims, often called Biharis, who had emigrated from India in 1947 and were rendered stateless at independence in 1971, as many had sided with and initially sought repatriation to Pakistan. A landmark 2008 court ruling granted citizenship rights to this group, enabling their access to social services and the right to vote.

Rape, dowry-related assaults, acid throwing, and other forms of violence against women occur regularly. A law requiring rape victims to file police reports and obtain medical certificates within 24 hours of the crime in order to press charges prevents most rape cases from reaching the courts. Police also accept bribes to quash rape cases and rarely enforce existing laws protecting women. The Acid Survivors Foundation (ASF), a local NGO, recorded 153 acid attacks during 2010; they affected 145 victims, most of them women. While attacks have declined since the passage of the Acid Crime Prevention Act in 2002, investigation of acid-related crimes remains inadequate, with only seven convictions for perpetrators of such attacks in 2010. In October 2010, Parliament ratified a bill offering greater protection to women and children from domestic violence, including both physical and mental abuse.

Under the legal codes pertaining to Muslims, women have fewer divorce and inheritance rights than men. In rural areas, religious leaders sometimes impose flogging and other punishments on women accused of violating strict moral codes. Women also face some discrimination in health care, education, and employment. They remain underrepresented in government, although a 2004 constitutional amendment reserves 45 parliamentary seats for women, and a large number of women participated in the December 2008 elections. Human trafficking remains a serious problem. Women and children are trafficked both overseas and within the country for the purposes of domestic servitude or sexual exploitation, while men are trafficked primarily for the purposes of labor abroad. The government has taken steps to raise awareness and prosecute sex traffickers somewhat more vigorously. Over the past several years, dozens have been convicted each year, some of whom received life sentences. While homosexual acts are criminalized, this provision is rarely enforced in practice, and societal discrimination based on sexual orientation remains the norm.

Barbados

Political Rights: 1
Civil Liberties: 1
Status: Free

Population: 270,000
Capital: Bridgetown

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline For Year Under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
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Overview: As Barbados continued to grapple with the impact of the global recession, widespread concern emerged in September over Prime Minister David Thompson's health and ability to remain in office. Thompson died of pancreatic cancer in October, and the new prime minister, Freundel Stuart, faced a sluggish economy and rising crime rate.

Barbados gained its independence from Britain in 1966 but remained a member of the Commonwealth. The Barbados Labour Party (BLP) under Prime Minister Owen Arthur governed from 1994 to January 2008, when the opposition Democratic Labour Party (DLP) won a clear majority of 20 seats in the lower house of Parliament. The BLP was left with the remaining 10 seats. Despite this stunning upset, the new government led by David Thompson of the DLP did not break markedly from the policies pursued by the Arthur government.

During much of the summer of 2010, Thompson remained out of office due to an undisclosed ailment, and DLP member Freundel Stuart took over as acting prime minister. While Thompson returned to office in late August, many important economic decisions, including the new budget and several proposed judicial and other reforms, were delayed. In September, the government officially acknowledged that he had pancreatic cancer. Thompson died on October 23 and was replaced by Stuart.

As Barbados struggled to emerge from the economic recession, the government was forced to cut expenditures, freeze public wages, and shore up the country's foreign reserves. Efforts to reduce the debt burden also remained a top priority. Barbados experienced its third straight year of recession in 2010, as private consumption remained low and the tourism sector performed below expectations.

Barbados has been more successful than other Caribbean countries in combating violent crime, though the crime rate in 2010 rose to its highest level since 2006. The drug trade remains an important problem for Barbados, as the island becomes a transshipment point for cocaine originating from Venezuela, while radar monitoring cannot cover the entire island.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Barbados is an electoral democracy. Members of the 30-member House of Assembly, the lower house of the bicameral Parliament, are directly elected for five-year terms. The governor-general, who represents the British monarch as head of state, appoints the 21 members of the Senate: 12 on the advice of the prime minister, 2 on the advice of

the leader of the opposition, and the remaining 7 at his own discretion. The prime minister is the leader of the political party with a majority in the House.

Political parties are free to organize. Historically, power has alternated between two centrist parties—the DLP and the BLP. Other political organizations without representation in Parliament include the small, left-wing Workers Party of Barbados and the People's Empowerment Party (PEP), an opposition force favoring trade union rights and greater state intervention in the economy.

Barbados was ranked 17 out of 178 countries surveyed in Transparency International's 2010 Corruption Perceptions Index, the best ranking in the Americas after Canada.

Freedom of expression is respected. Public opinion expressed through the news media, which are free of censorship and government control, has a powerful influence on policy. Newspapers, including the two major dailies, are privately owned. Four private and two government-run radio stations operate. The single television station, operated by the government-owned Caribbean Broadcasting Corporation, presents a wide range of political viewpoints. Access to the internet is not restricted.

The constitution guarantees freedom of religion, which is widely respected for mainstream religious groups. However, members of Barbados's small Rastafarian community have protested prison regulations that require inmates to have their long dreadlocks cut off while in detention. Academic freedom is fully respected.

Barbados's legal framework provides important guarantees for freedom of assembly, which are upheld in practice. The right to form civic organizations and labor unions is respected. Two major labor unions, as well as various smaller ones, are active.

The judicial system is independent, and the Supreme Court includes a high court and a court of appeals. Lower-court officials are appointed on the advice of the Judicial and Legal Service Commission. Barbados has ratified the Caribbean Court of Justice (CCJ) as its highest appellate court. There are occasional reports and complaints of the use of excessive force by the Royal Barbados Police Force to extract confessions, along with reports that police do not always seek warrants before searching homes.

The government has taken some positive steps to address overcrowding in the prison system. In 2006, Barbados began an important and complex judicial reform process that would allow courts to remain open longer and hear more cases each year. However, reforms were delayed again in 2010, during Thompson's illness and following his death. Authorities have made significant efforts to discharge prison personnel accused of beating inmates, but there has not been substantial progress in their prosecution. The death penalty remains a mandatory punishment for certain capital crimes, although it has not been implemented since 1984.

Barbadian authorities have been criticized for excessively restrictive migration policies, including the treatment of foreign nationals at airports. In response, Prime Minister Freundel Stuart's government has agreed to a series of talks with its Caribbean Community (CARICOM) neighbors to address their concerns.

Women comprise roughly half of the country's workforce, though violence against women and children continue to be serious social concerns.

Belarus

Political Rights: 7

Population: 9,500,000

Civil Liberties: 6

Capital: Minsk

Status: Not Free

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline For Year Under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
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Overview: Aiyaksandr Lukashenka won a fourth term as president in a December 2010 election that was neither free nor fair. Although the nine opposition candidates enjoyed some media access during the campaign, the government stacked local electoral commissions to manipulate the ballot count. In a postelection crackdown, Lukashenka arrested seven of the former candidates and launched a series of repressions that lasted through the end of the year. In September, the controversial death of internet news portal founder Aleh Byabenin added to existing intimidation of independent journalists, though his site, Charter97.org, continued to post reports that were critical of the regime.

Belarus declared independence in 1991, ending centuries of rule by Poland, Russia, and the Soviet Union. In 1994, voters made Aiyaksandr Lukashenka, a member of parliament with close links to the security services, Belarus's first post-Soviet president. He pursued reunification with Russia and subordinated the government, legislature, and courts to his political whims while denying citizens basic rights and liberties. A widely criticized 1996 referendum approved constitutional amendments that extended Lukashenka's term through 2001, broadened presidential powers, and created a new bicameral parliament (the National Assembly). In October 2000, Belarus held deeply flawed lower-house elections in which only three opposition candidates won seats.

Lukashenka won a second term through disputed elections in September 2001, amid accusations by former security officials that the president was directing a death squad aimed at silencing his opponents. Four politicians and journalists who had been critical of the regime disappeared during 1999 and 2000.

Not a single opposition candidate won a seat in 2004 parliamentary elections, and voters ostensibly endorsed a parallel referendum proposal to allow Lukashenka to run again in 2006. As with previous votes, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) declared that the parliamentary elections fell "significantly short" of Belarus's commitments.

The March 2006 presidential election, in which Lukashenka won a third term, did not meet democratic standards, according to the OSCE. The poll brought 10,000 to 15,000 activists to Minsk's October Square on election day. However, the government detained and beat many activists, and opposition activity dwindled after the protests, as the government typically jailed opposition leaders and intimidated their rank-and-file supporters with fees and warnings. Aiyaksandr Kazulin, one of three opposition candidates, was sentenced to five and a half years in prison for protesting the flawed election and the subsequent crackdown.

To bolster his international standing, Lukashenka released all political prisoners identified by the European Union (EU) and the United States by August 2008, including Kazulin. However, no opposition candidates won seats in the September 2008 parliamentary elections, and the authorities reportedly arrested a new batch of political prisoners in a February 2009 crackdown.

On September 3, 2010, Aleh Byabenin, founder of the opposition news website Charter97.org, was found hanged in his country house. Investigators initially claimed the death was a suicide, but subsequently admitted that Byabenin could have been murdered. Although an OSCE report supported the suicide hypothesis, opposition figures continued to suspect foul play.

Later in September, the parliament moved up Belarus's presidential election, which had been expected in early 2011, to December 19, just before Russia's anticipated hike in energy prices at year's end. The opposition failed to unite behind a single candidate after leading opposition figure Alyaksandr Milinkevich decided not to renew his 2006 candidacy, arguing that the polling would not be fair. Ultimately, nine opposition figures ran; while they were given some media access during the campaign, 90 percent of television news coverage was devoted to Lukashenka.

On the eve of the election, police dispersed a crowd of more than 10,000 people who had gathered in downtown Minsk to protest the vote. More than 600 demonstrators were arrested, including seven opposition candidates who faced serious charges for organizing mass disorder: Ales Mikhalevich, Uladzimer Nyaklyaeu, Andrey Sannikau, Mikalay Statkevich, Vital Rymasheuski, Ryhor Kastusyou, and Dzmitry Vus. Mikhalevich, Nyaklyaeu, Sannikau, and Statkevich remained in custody at year's end, as did at least 20 journalists. Nyaklyaeu, sponsor of the Tell the Truth campaign, which encouraged Belarusian citizens to speak out about social problems and document false statements by government officials, and Sannikau, a co-founder of Charter97.org, were beaten before their arrests. According to Amnesty International, Sannikau was tortured while in detention.

The Central Election Commission, which was led by a Lukashenka ally, declared Lukashenka the winner with more than 79 percent of the vote. Local electoral commissions were also heavily skewed in favor of the incumbent, with only 0.7 percent of the members—a total of 14 individuals—representing opposition candidates. Official turnout was over 90 percent. The opposition charged that the vote totals were falsified, and the OSCE declared that the elections did not meet Belarus' international commitments. Shortly thereafter, Belarus refused to extend the OSCE mandate in the country, closing the office that had opened in 1998.

Relations with Russia suffered in 2010 over ongoing energy-price disputes, Lukashenka's failure to recognize the independence of two Russian-backed territories in Georgia, and his decision to provide asylum to ousted Kyrgyzstan president Kurmanbek Bakiyev in April. By year's end, Russia had resumed some economic support to Belarus and backed Lukashenka's crackdown on the opposition.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Belarus is not an electoral democracy. Serious and widespread irregularities have marred all recent elections, including the December 2010 presidential poll. The 110 members of the Chamber of Representatives, the lower house of the rubber-stamp National Assembly, are popularly elected for four years from single-mandate con-

stituencies. The upper house, the Council of the Republic, consists of 64 members serving four-year terms; 56 are elected by regional councils and 8 are appointed by the president. The constitution vests most power in the president, giving him control over the government, courts, and even the legislative process by stating that presidential decrees have a higher legal force than ordinary legislation. The president is elected for five-year terms, and there are no term limits.

Opposition parties have no representation in the National Assembly, while pro-presidential parties serve only superficial functions. Young members of opposition parties report being deliberately drafted into the military; soldiers are banned from party membership. Amendments to the electoral law adopted in 2009 give the parties more opportunities to campaign but do not provide for a transparent vote count. Local elections in April 2010 produced unusually large returns for proregime candidates. Approximately 360 opposition candidates competed for the 21,000 seats, but many withdrew, claiming that the authorities obstructed their campaigns.

Corruption is fed by the state's dominance of the economy and the overall lack of transparency and accountability in government. Belarus was ranked 127 out of 178 countries surveyed in Transparency International's 2010 Corruption Perceptions Index. Svyatlana Baykova, a senior prosecutor, was arrested in March 2010 while investigating corruption among high-level KGB officials.

President Alyaksandr Lukashenka systematically curtails press freedom. Libel is both a civil and a criminal offense, and a 2008 media law gives the state a monopoly over information about political, social, and economic affairs. Belarusian national television is completely under the control of the state and does not present alternative and opposition views. The state-run press distribution monopoly limits the availability of private newspapers. The authorities routinely harass and censor the remaining independent media outlets, including through physical force and revocation of journalists' credentials. The government is exerting greater control over the internet. According to the 2008 media law, internet outlets are now subject to the same restrictions as traditional media. The government owns the country's sole internet service provider. A presidential decree that took effect in June 2010 requires internet cafe owners to identify users and track their activities. Despite the disputed death of founder Aleh Byabenin in September, the Charter97.org news site continued to publish independent analyses. As Lukashenka's relations with Russia deteriorated during the year, the government banned critical Russian-produced documentaries, such as NTV's *Belarusian Godfather*, and even took Russian television networks off the air—ostensibly for technical reasons—in October.

Despite constitutional guarantees of religious equality, government decrees and registration requirements have increasingly restricted religious activity. Legal amendments in 2002 provided for government censorship of religious publications and barred foreigners from leading religious groups. The amendments also placed strict limitations on religious groups that have been active in Belarus for fewer than 20 years. The government in 2003 signed a concordat with the Belarusian Orthodox Church, which enjoys a privileged position. The authorities have discriminated against Protestant clergy and ignored anti-Semitic attacks, according to the U.S. State Department. The Minsk-based New Life Evangelical Christian Church has faced official efforts to seize its land since 2005.

Academic freedom is subject to intense state ideological pressures, and institu-

tions that use a liberal curriculum, promote national consciousness, or are suspected of disloyalty face harassment and liquidation. Regulations stipulate immediate dismissal and revocation of degrees for students and professors who join opposition protests. Wiretapping by state security agencies limits the right to privacy.

The government restricts freedom of assembly for critical independent groups. Protests and rallies require authorization from local authorities, who can arbitrarily deny permission. When public demonstrations do occur, police frequently break them up and arrest participants.

Freedom of association is severely restricted. More than a hundred of the most active nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) were forced to close down between 2003 and 2005, and participation in an unregistered or liquidated political party or organization was criminalized in December 2005. As a result, most human rights activists operating in the country face potential jail terms ranging from six months to two years. Regulations introduced in 2005 ban foreign assistance to NGOs, parties, and individuals deemed to have promoted "meddling in the internal affairs" of Belarus from abroad. In December 2008 the government registered the Movement for Freedom, an NGO led by former presidential candidate Alyaksandr Milinkevich, but registration remains selective, with other groups, including the Young Front and the Christian Democratic Party, remaining unregistered. Independent trade unions face harassment, and their leaders are frequently fired and prosecuted for peaceful protests. Over 90 percent of workers have fixed-term contracts, meaning they can be arbitrarily dismissed when the contract expires. Although the constitution calls for judicial independence, courts are subject to significant executive influence. The right to a fair trial is often not respected in cases with political overtones. Human rights groups continue to document instances of beatings, torture, and inadequate protection during detention in cases involving leaders of the democratic opposition, and their trials are frequently held in secret.

An internal passport system limits freedom of movement and choice of residence. Citizens no longer need a travel permit before going abroad, but the government has created a database that will include nearly 100,000 people who cannot leave the country. The country's command economy severely limits economic freedom.

A family in Hrodna faced police questioning after protesting the local school system's refusal to provide kindergarten instruction in Belarusian instead of Russian in September 2010. Both are official state languages, but Russian is dominant. Ethnic Poles and Roma often face discrimination. In February, the police seized the property of the unofficial Union of Poles in Belarus and arrested activists.

Women are not specifically targeted for discrimination, but there are significant discrepancies in income between men and women, and women are poorly represented in leading government positions. As a result of extreme poverty, many women have become victims of the international sex trade.

Belgium

Political Rights: 1

Population: 10,800,000

Civil Liberties: 1

Capital: Brussels

Status: Free

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline For Year Under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
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Overview: The governing coalition collapsed in April 2010 after its component parties disagreed on proposed electoral changes in the bilingual Brussels region. Parliamentary elections were held in June, but the parties were unable to form a new majority coalition, and a caretaker government remained in place at year's end.

Modern Belgium dates to 1830, when the largely Roman Catholic territory broke away from the mostly Protestant Netherlands and formed an independent constitutional monarchy. In the 20th century, Belgium became one of the founding members of the European Union (EU) and hosts the organization's central administration in Brussels.

Ethnic and linguistic conflicts prompted a series of constitutional amendments in 1970, 1971, and 1993 that devolved considerable power from the central government to the three regions in the federation: French-speaking Wallonia in the south, Flemish-speaking Flanders in the north, and Brussels, the capital, where French and Flemish share the same official status. Cultural and economic differences between the regions have contributed to political rifts between Flemish and Francophone parties across the ideological spectrum, with the wealthier Flemish north seeking increased self-rule and reduced taxpayer support for the less prosperous Wallonia. Voting takes place along strict linguistic lines; except in the bilingual district encompassing Brussels, parties are only permitted to run in their respective linguistic regions.

In June 2007 parliamentary elections, Flanders premier Yves Leterme's centrist Christian Democratic and Flemish (CDV) party—in an electoral bloc with the New Flemish Alliance (N-VA)—won 30 of 150 seats in the lower house. The remaining seats were divided among 10 other factions. Flemish and Walloon parties were unable to agree on coalition terms after an extraordinary 196 days of negotiations, and in December, the king asked outgoing prime minister Guy Verhofstadt to form an interim government with the authority to act on pressing economic and other concerns.

In February 2008, a majority of political parties agreed on an outline for limited constitutional reform, which cleared the way for Leterme to become prime minister the following month. He was unable to consolidate support after taking office, however, and lawmakers began to leave the ruling coalition during the fall. Leterme's government was ultimately brought down at the end of the year after being accused of interfering in a court case concerning the failed bank Fortis. The prime minister offered his resignation, and on December 30, the king swore in Herman Van Rompuy, also of the CDV, to replace him.

Van Rompuy was credited with calming the recent political instability, but partly as a result of this success, he was appointed as the first permanent president of the European Council, the EU's intergovernmental decision-making body, in November 2009. Leterme returned as prime minister, and in April 2010, his government fell when his coalition partner, the Flemish Liberals and Democrats (VLD), pulled out. The coalition had disagreed on proposed changes to voting rules in the district encompassing Brussels.

In national elections held in June, the N-VA led with 27 seats in the Chamber of Deputies, and the Francophone Socialist Party (PS) placed second with 26 seats. Coalition negotiations again stalled, and the Leterme government remained in place in a caretaker capacity at year's end.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Belgium is an electoral democracy. Parliament consists of two houses: the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate. The 150 members of the Chamber of Deputies are elected directly by proportional representation. There are 71 seats in the Senate, with 40 filled by direct popular vote and 31 by indirect vote. Members serve four-year terms in both houses. The prime minister, who is the leader of the majority party or coalition, is appointed by the monarch and approved by Parliament. The party system is highly fragmented, with separate Flemish and Walloon parties representing all traditional parties of the left and right.

The xenophobic Vlaams Blok party was banned in 2004 for violating the country's antiracism laws. It changed its name to Vlaams Belang (Flemish Interest) and removed some of the more overtly racist elements from its platform. However, the party maintains its opposition to immigration and its commitment to an independent Flanders. In the 2010 elections, Vlaams Belang's support dropped to 7.8 percent of the vote and 12 seats in the Chamber of Deputies, from 12 percent and 17 seats in 2007.

Corruption is relatively rare in Belgium, which was ranked 22 out of 178 countries surveyed in Transparency International's 2010 Corruption Perceptions Index.

Freedoms of speech and the press are guaranteed by the constitution and generally respected by the government. Belgians have access to numerous private media outlets. However, concentration of newspaper ownership has progressed in recent decades, leaving most of the country's papers in the hands of a few corporations. A law on the protection of journalists' sources was enacted in 2005. In early 2009, Belgian prosecutors dismissed a bribery complaint brought by the EU Anti-Fraud Office against Hans-Martin Tillack, a Brussels-based German journalist for *Stern* magazine. Tillack had been investigating EU-related fraud and corruption. The government does not limit access to the internet.

Freedom of religion is protected. About half of the country's population identifies itself as Roman Catholic. Members of a number of minority religions have complained of discrimination by the government, which has been criticized for its characterization of some non-Catholic groups as "sects." A 2008 report by the government-sponsored Centre for Equal Opportunities and Opposition to Racism found that skin color and clothing associated with Islam were the primary factors leading to societal discrimination in the country. In April 2010, the Chamber of Deputies approved a ban on the partial or total covering of the face in public locations; although

it did not specifically mention the veils worn by some Muslim women, these were widely seen as the target. However, the Senate's vote on the measure was delayed by the calling of new elections, and the issue remained unresolved at year's end. The wearing of the niqab (facial veil) and burqa (head-to-toe covering) is already prohibited in several municipalities in Flanders. The government does not restrict academic freedom.

Freedom of association is guaranteed by law, except for groups that practice discrimination "overtly and repeatedly." Freedom of assembly is also respected. About 58 percent of the workforce is unionized. Employers found guilty of firing workers because of union activities are required to reinstate the workers or pay an indemnity.

The judiciary is independent, and the rule of law generally prevails in civil and criminal matters. Although conditions in prisons and detention centers meet most international standards, many continue to suffer from overcrowding.

Specific antiracism laws penalize the incitement of discrimination, acts of hatred, and violence based on race, ethnicity, or nationality. However, there have been complaints about the treatment of rejected asylum seekers and illegal immigrants awaiting deportation, who have been held in unsanitary conditions in the Brussels national airport, sometimes for several months. The European Court of Human Rights in 2008 ordered Belgium to pay two Palestinian asylum seekers 15,000 euros (\$22,000) each in damages for their detention in the airport in 2002. A 2009 government decision regularized 25,000 illegal immigrants.

The law provides for the free movement of citizens at home and abroad, and the government does not interfere with these rights. However, individual communities may expel Roma from city limits at the discretion of the local government, and in July 2010, it was reported that up to 700 Roma were forced to move from Flanders to Wallonia. In September, the International Federation of Human Rights submitted a complaint to the Council of Europe over the treatment of Roma in Belgium, especially concerning their housing conditions and social exclusion.

The government actively promotes equality for women. In 2003, it created the Institute for the Equality of Men and Women, which is empowered to initiate sex discrimination lawsuits. In the 2010 elections, women won about 40 percent of the seats in the Chamber of Deputies, and 43 percent of the seats in the Senate. Belgium is a destination and transit point for trafficked persons. However, according to the U.S. State Department's 2010 Trafficking in Persons Report, the country complies fully with the minimum standards for eliminating trafficking, including financing nongovernmental organizations that assist victims.

Belize

Political Rights: 1

Population: 350,000

Civil Liberties: 2

Capital: Belmopan

Status: Free

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline For Year Under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
1,2F									

Overview: The government took steps in 2010 to confront Belize's increasing violent crime, including the creation of a new Ministry of Police and Public Security. High-profile corruption cases continued to dominate the political scene during the year, particularly those involving Belize City officials. Also in 2010, the Supreme Court ruled in favor of indigenous Mayan communities' constitutionally protected property and cultural rights, including the right to block development and mining activities on communal land.

Belize achieved independence from Britain in 1981 but remained a member of the Commonwealth. The government has since changed hands a number of times, alternating between the center-right United Democratic Party (UDP) and the center-left People's United Party (PUP).

Said Wilbert Musa of the PUP was elected as prime minister in 1998, and he became the country's first prime minister to secure a second consecutive term after the PUP won again in 2003. However, the opposition UDP swept the 2006 local elections amid public dissatisfaction with corruption scandals, increased taxation, and rising crime rates. In 2007, public protests broke out, focusing on issues including education and financial mismanagement. The Musa government's plan to take over the debt of Universal Health Services (UHS), a private company, was particularly controversial. Belize received a US\$10 million grant from the Venezuelan government that year for the construction and repair of housing, but the funds were diverted to Belize Bank to assist in the repayment of a government-guaranteed loan to UHS.

The UDP, led by Dean Barrow, ousted Musa and the PUP in February 2008 parliamentary elections, taking 25 out of 31 seats in the lower house of the National Assembly and leaving the PUP with just 6 seats. Voter turnout was lower than in the last elections, but the balloting was determined to be free and fair.

In April 2008, the Barrow government proposed amendments to the constitution that would allow for wiretapping and preventative detention. The package also provided the government with the right to seize land where mineral resources are discovered. Opponents argued that this power could easily be abused and did not respect the land rights of Mayan minority groups. The amendments were passed by the National Assembly in August, but the Court of Appeal ruled in March 2009 that a referendum was required as well. The proposed changes remained stalled at the end of 2010. However, a separate ruling by the Supreme Court in June 2010 recognized

the right of 38 Mayan communities to block extractive activities on their lands and potentially shielded them from the pending constitutional amendments.

The Barrow government had also been criticized for its August 2009 takeover of Belize Telemedia, the country's largest telecommunications company. In reaction to a conflict with the company, lawmakers had quickly amended the Belize Telecommunications Act to allow for the takeover. In July 2010, the Supreme Court upheld the nationalization but ordered the government to compensate shareholders immediately. This decision was under appeal at year's end.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Belize is an electoral democracy. The head of state is the British monarch, represented by a governor general. The 31-seat House of Representatives, the lower house of the bicameral National Assembly, is elected for five-year terms. The 12 members of the Senate are appointed to five-year terms, with 6 appointed by the governor general on the advice of the prime minister, 3 on the advice of the opposition leader, and 3 on the advice of major civil society groups. There are no restrictions on the right to organize political parties, and the interests of Mestizo, Creole, Mayan, and Garifuna ethnic groups are represented in the National Assembly. The country's major parties are the center-right UDP and the center-left PUP.

Government corruption is a serious problem, but public intolerance for graft continued to grow in 2010. Belize City mayor Zenaida Moya, who was charged in 2009 with the alleged misappropriation of some US\$140,000 in public funds, was expelled in May 2010 from the UDP's Ethics and Integrity Committee. Later that month, three high-ranking Belize City Council members resigned due to allegations of misconduct. A January report by the auditor general had claimed that the council had misused or failed to account for millions of dollars in municipal funds since 2006. Separately, at least six immigration officers were arrested in October for alleged complicity in human trafficking that involved a group of 32 Japanese passport holders entering Belize en route to the United States. Belize was not included in Transparency International's 2010 Corruption Perceptions Index.

Belize has a generally open media environment. Journalists or others who criticize the financial disclosures of government officials may face up to three years in prison or up to US\$2,500 in fines, but this law has not been applied in recent years. The Belize Broadcasting Authority has the right to prior restraint of all broadcasts for national security or emergency reasons, though this, too, is rarely invoked. Belize has one daily newspaper and 10 weeklies, including 2 that are supported directly by political parties. There are 10 radio stations and two television networks, along with a variety of cable outlets. The internet penetration rate is one of the highest in Central America.

Residents of Belize enjoy full freedom of religion, and academic freedom is respected.

Freedoms of assembly and association are generally upheld, and demonstrations are usually peaceful, though protests by sugarcane workers in 2009 resulted in one death and injuries to at least 10 people after police attempted to break up a roadblock. A large number of nongovernmental organizations are active, and labor unions remain politically influential despite their shrinking ranks. Official boards of inquiry adjudicate labor disputes, and businesses are penalized for labor code viola-

tions. However, the government has done little to combat antiunion discrimination, and workers who are fired for organizing rarely receive compensation. In a positive development, the Supreme Court in July 2009 ruled in favor of six banana workers who were fired for attempting to join a union.

The judiciary is independent, and the rule of law is generally respected. Defendants can remain free on bail or in pretrial detention for years amid a heavy case backlog. Police misconduct is investigated by the department's internal affairs office or an ombudsman's office. Extrajudicial killing and use of excessive force are among the country's primary human rights concerns. In 2010, the government announced that Belize would join the Trinidad-based Caribbean Court of Justice, leaving behind the colonial-era Privy Council in London. The Caribbean Court accepted its first Belizean case in October.

According to the International Center for Prison Studies, Belize has the world's 12th-highest prisoner-to-public ratio, with about 476 inmates per 100,000 inhabitants. Prisons do not meet minimum international standards, although the Hattieville Prison is now run by a nonprofit foundation that has improved conditions somewhat, and a number of prison officers have been dismissed for alleged brutality and bribery. The prison occupancy level is at 96.5 percent; about a quarter of detainees are awaiting trial.

As part of a broader anticrime strategy unveiled in June 2010, Prime Minister Dean Barrow created a new Ministry of Police and Public Security; previously, the police had fallen under the Ministry of National Security. Meanwhile, problems with violent crime, money laundering, and drug trafficking continued. Belize registered 140 homicides in 2010, compared to 97 in 2009 and 103 in 2008. Officials estimate that perpetrators are convicted in only about 7 percent of homicides.

The government actively discourages ethnic discrimination. Most of the indigenous Mayan population lives in the south, the poorest part of the country. The government has designated only 77,000 acres as Mayan preserves, and there has been little action on the 500,000 acres of disputed land following a 2004 Inter-American Court on Human Rights ruling in favor of Mayan property rights. However, the June 2010 Supreme Court ruling recognizing the land-use rights of 38 Mayan communities could allow them to block development on communal property.

Most Spanish-speaking immigrants in the country lack legal status and face exploitation. A number of cases involving the trafficking of workers from South Asia and China for forced labor have also been uncovered in recent years.

Belize is a source, transit, and destination country for women and children trafficked for prostitution and forced labor, and the majority of women working in the country's brothels are from Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador. The U.S. State Department's 2010 Trafficking in Persons Report placed Belize on its Tier 2 Watch List for the second year in a row, citing the government's failure to make progress in trying and convicting offenders.

Violence against women and children remains a serious concern, as does the prevalence of child labor in agriculture. According to UNAIDS, as of September 2009, the adult HIV prevalence rate had remained relatively unchanged at about 2.6 percent. There have been reports of discrimination against people living with HIV/AIDS, despite the government's efforts to educate the public about the illness.

Benin

Political Rights: 2

Population: 9,800,000

Civil Liberties: 2

Capital: Porto-Novo

Status: Free

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline For Year Under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

2001 3,2F	2002 3,2F	2003 2,2F	2004 2,2F	2005 2,2F	2006 2,2F	2007 2,2F	2008 2,2F	2009 2,2F	2010 2,2F
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Overview: President Boni Yayi faced serious challenges in 2010 ahead of the 2011 presidential election, with a newly unified opposition blocking attempted electoral reforms. Yayi also suffered a high-profile corruption scandal that tainted his administration and nearly resulted in his impeachment. Meanwhile, Benin saw the worst flooding in 50 years that displaced some 100,000 people.

Six decades of French rule in Benin lasted until 1960. Twelve years later, Mathieu Kérékou took power, ending a series of coups and counter-coups and imposing a one-party Marxist-Leninist government that lasted nearly 20 years. However, by 1990, economic hardship and rising internal unrest forced Kérékou to hold a national conference that eventually ushered in a peaceful democratic transition. Following his defeat by Nicephore Soglo in the 1991 presidential election, the country's human rights record improved. Kérékou returned to power in 1996 through a democratic election, and he secured another term in 2001 after his two main opponents boycotted a runoff due to administrative problems and alleged fraud.

The 2003 legislative elections, which were generally considered free and fair, gave the ruling coalition a majority in the National Assembly. Pro-Kérékou candidates also performed well in local elections, which were held for the first time that year in a move toward decentralization.

The 2006 presidential election featured unprecedented competition, since both Kérékou and Soglo were ineligible due to their ages, and Kérékou had refused to name a successor. Boni Yayi, an independent candidate and former president of the regional development bank, emerged as the victor promising transparency, a hard line on corruption, decentralization of government, and the privatization of state companies.

A coalition of parties supporting Yayi, including the Cowrie Forces for an Emerging Benin (FCBE), won a majority of seats in the 2007 legislative elections. All but three seats changed hands in generally free and fair voting.

While the country's poverty and limited infrastructure often lead to technical and logistical problems during elections, particularly serious irregularities caused the 2008 local elections to be postponed by two months and resulted in the eventual annulment and rerun of contests in 24 districts. In the run-up to the elections, the Supreme Court reprimanded the Autonomous National Electoral Commission (CENA) three separate times for instances of politicization. Since then, Yayi has tried unsuccessfully to pass electoral reforms, including the implementation of electronic voting and a new voter roll.

By 2009, the optimism that followed Yayi's 2006 election had waned, as the FCBE—already a loose alliance of diverse political parties—broke apart, hampering Yayi's efforts to enact promised electoral and economic reforms. By 2010, Yayi lost his parliamentary majority after a number of FCBE members defected to the opposition. In August, more than half of the National Assembly's members called for Yayi's impeachment, accusing him of involvement in a high-profile Ponzi scheme in which a large investment firm was found to have stolen \$130 million in savings from more than 100,000 people. Although parliament was unable to secure the necessary two-thirds majority to impeach Yayi, the president's reputation suffered greatly as a result of the scandal, and he was forced to fire his interior minister for involvement.

The political opposition became more unified in 2010 in advance of the March 2011 presidential election, with the five major political parties of the south uniting for the first time since independence into the Union for the Nation (UFN). Despite a history of infighting among its members, the UFN put forward a single candidate—Adrien Houngbédji, who had lost to Yayi in the second round of elections in 2006—for the 2011 presidential poll.

In October, Benin experienced its most serious natural disaster since independence, as heavy rains caused flooding that killed 43 people, displaced approximately 100,000, and had a serious economic impact on nearly 700,000. The government and international aid organizations responded by mobilizing temporary shelters and emergency food supplies.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Benin is an electoral democracy. Despite delays and disorganization, the 25-member CENA effectively oversaw the 2007 legislative polls, which were considered free and fair. However, the commission's performance noticeably deteriorated during the 2008 local elections, and concerns persist about how it will perform in the 2011 presidential election.

The president is elected by popular vote for up to two five-year terms and serves as both the chief of state and head of government. Delegates to the 83-member, unicameral National Assembly serve four-year terms.

Historically, Benin has been divided between northern and southern ethnic groups. President Boni Yayi's support comes primarily from the north, while the main opposition parties hail primarily from the south. All political parties, regardless of ethnic or regional affiliation, operate freely throughout the country. In 2010, the influence of diverse opposition parties and political perspectives increased when they united against the president in advance of the 2011 presidential election.

President Yayi came to power in 2006 on an anticorruption platform and subsequently enacted a number of measures to combat corruption, including an official government code of conduct, full disclosure of assets by high-ranking officials, and a formal audit of 60 state-run companies, for which he received international praise. However, in 2009, he was rumored to have offered lucrative ministerial positions to opposition members in order to obtain their support. In August 2010, he was implicated in a high-profile Ponzi scheme for which he was nearly impeached and which led to the dismissal of his interior minister for involvement in the scandal.

Constitutional guarantees of freedom of expression are largely respected in practice. A pluralistic and frequently politicized press publishes articles that are highly

critical of government and opposition party leaders. However, in August 2010, the government threatened to close media outlets that did not cover the unfolding Ponzi scheme scandal fairly and halted Radio France International's transmission for 14 hours to prevent it from broadcasting a program on the subject. The government also indicated that it intends to censor media coverage in the run-up to the 2011 election. The government does not restrict access to the internet.

The government actively seeks to ensure religious and academic freedom. While the majority of Beninese identify themselves as either Muslim or Christian, most practice some form of voodoo as well. Confrontations between religious groups are rare. Primary education is mandatory under the constitution, and the state plans to provide free universal primary education by 2015.

Freedom of assembly is respected, and requirements for permits and registration are often ignored. In 2010, demonstrations were held on a variety of issues, including frequent power outages, government corruption, and a proposed new electronic voter list, and many of these were led by opposition politicians. While the government generally respected the right to assemble, a number of protests erupted into riots, particularly those concerning the Ponzi scheme scandal. Nongovernmental organizations and human rights groups operate freely.

The right to organize and join labor unions is constitutionally guaranteed. Unions played a central role in the country's democratization and remain powerful today. In 2010, the government banned a number of planned strikes, because the unions did not announce the strike the required two days in advance.

The judiciary's independence is generally respected by the executive branch, but the courts are considered to be highly inefficient and susceptible to corruption. Nevertheless, the country's most high-profile court, the constitutional court, demonstrated remarkable independence in 2010, particularly in its rulings on a number of complex issues regarding electoral reform. Prisons are harsh and overcrowded. In 2009, five people were reportedly sentenced to death, the first time capital punishment had been imposed since 1987; however, the sentences have not yet been carried out.

Benin has earned a reputation as one of the most peaceful and stable countries in the region. While there were reports of an increase in armed robberies and violent crime linked to small-arms trafficking and drug smuggling in 2008 and 2009, there were no such reports in 2010.

Relations among Benin's ethnic groups are generally amicable, although regional divisions occasionally flare up, particularly between the north, where President Yayi is from, and the south, where most opposition leaders are from. Minority ethnic groups are well represented in government agencies, the civil service, and the armed forces. Societal prejudices against women in the workplace and open homosexuality are evident, though not ubiquitous.

Although the constitution provides for gender equality, women enjoy fewer educational and employment opportunities than men, particularly in rural areas. A family code promulgated in 2004 improved women's inheritance, property, and marriage rights, and prohibited forced marriage and female genital mutilation. However, these laws are not well known outside of urban areas and are not adequately enforced. In April 2009, to address the country's high maternal mortality rate, the government began helping women pay for caesarean births.

Human trafficking is widespread in Benin; most victims are girls trafficked inside the country from rural to urban areas. A law formally outlawing human trafficking was passed in 2006, but there were no reported arrests under this law in 2010.

Bhutan

Political Rights: 4

Population: 700,000

Civil Liberties: 5

Capital: Thimphu

Status: Partly Free

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline For Year Under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
7,6NF	6,5NF	6,5NF	6,5NF	6,5NF	6,5NF	6,5NF	4,5PF	4,5PF	4,5PF

Overview: Though local elections were delayed again in 2010, the government and election commission agreed that they would be held in 2011. Several of the country's political parties faced financial turmoil over unpaid debts during the year. While tens of thousands of Nepali-speaking Bhutanese refugees who were displaced in the 1990s have been resettled in other countries in recent years, more than 77,000 remained in camps in Nepal.

Britain helped to install the Wangchuck dynasty as Bhutan's ruling family in 1907, and a 1949 treaty allowed newly independent India to assume Britain's role in conducting the kingdom's foreign and defense policies. In 1971, Jigme Singye Wangchuck succeeded his father as king.

The government in the 1980s imposed restrictions on Nepali speakers, also known as Southern Bhutanese, to protect the culture of the ruling Ngalong Drukpa ethnic group. The newly formed Bhutanese People's Party (BPP) responded in 1990 with violent demonstrations, prompting a government crackdown. Tens of thousands of Southern Bhutanese fled or were expelled to Nepal in the early 1990s, and soldiers raped and beat many villagers and detained thousands as "antinationalists."

The king launched a gradual transition to democracy in 1998. Political parties were legalized in June 2007, and elections for an upper house of Parliament were held in two rounds in December 2007 and January 2008. Elections for the lower house, the National Assembly, took place in March 2008. The Bhutan Peace and Prosperity Party (DPT) won 45 of the 47 seats, while the People's Democratic Party (PDP) took the remainder; voter turnout was nearly 80 percent. A new constitution promulgated in July provided for some fundamental rights, but it upheld the primacy of the monarchy, and did not adequately protect the rights of Nepali speakers.

Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck succeeded his father as king in November 2008, though he had been in power since the outgoing king's abdication in 2006. The monarchy remained highly popular with the public, and many Bhutanese expressed reservations about the shift toward democracy.

In April 2010, it was revealed that many of Bhutan's political parties had not

settled debts from the previous round of elections and would not be eligible to participate in the 2013 elections if they failed to resolve their financial problems. Meanwhile, local elections that were supposed to have taken place in late 2008 continued to be postponed in 2010. However, in November, the government and Bhutan's election commission agreed that elections for select administrative districts would be held in 2011.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Bhutan is not an electoral democracy, though the 2008 elections represented a significant step toward that status.

A European Union (EU) monitoring team reported that the National Assembly elections "generally met international standards," though it found problems with freedom of expression and association during the campaign. Nine ethnic Nepalese candidates were elected to office, but the EU monitors noted that a rule requiring candidates to obtain a security clearance certificate may have been an obstacle for some Nepalese. According to Human Rights Watch, many ethnic Nepalese residents were barred from voting because they were among the 13 percent of the population counted as non-nationals in the 2005 census.

The constitution provides for a bicameral Parliament, with a 25-seat upper house, the nonpartisan National Council, and a 47-seat lower house, the National Assembly, both serving five-year terms. The king appoints 5 members of the National Council, and the remaining 20 are elected; the lower house is entirely elected, and the head of the majority party is nominated by the king to serve as prime minister. The cabinet is nominated by the king and approved by the National Assembly. The king remains the head of state and appoints members of the Supreme Court, the attorney general, and the heads of national commissions. He can return legislation with objections or amendments, but once it has been reconsidered and resubmitted, the king must sign it into law.

Political parties, previously illegal, were allowed to begin registering in 2007, though the Bhutan People's United Party was denied registration. Only two parties—the DPT and PDP, both of which have ties to the royal family and do not differ significantly in policy goals—participated in the 2008 National Assembly elections. The Association of Press Freedom Activists (APFA), a Bhutanese refugee organization based in Nepal, reported in 2008 that the National Assembly had approved a government proposal to restrict any form of campaigning for local elections, in which candidates were required to be nonpartisan.

The government operates with limited transparency and accountability, but steps have been taken in recent years to improve both. The 2006 Anti-Corruption Act established whistle-blower protections, and the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) is tasked with investigating and preventing graft. In 2010, the National Assembly passed an anticorruption law. Bhutan was ranked 36 of 178 countries surveyed in Transparency International's 2010 Corruption Perceptions Index.

The authorities restrict freedom of expression, and a 1992 law prohibits criticism of the king and the political system. A 2006 media law led to the establishment of two independent radio stations, but it did not provide specific protections for journalists or guarantee freedom of information. The state-owned Kuensel and two independent weeklies, the *Bhutan Times* and the *Daily Observer*, generally publish progovernment articles but occasionally cover criticism of the government. Another

paper, the *Bhutan Daily*, opened in 2008. *Druk Neytshuel*, the first private newspaper in Dzongkha, Bhutan's national language, and a private radio station in Thimpu were established in 2010. Shanti Ram Acharya, a journalist working for the APFA's monthly *Bhutan Reporter*, was sentenced to seven and half years in prison in January 2009; he had been arrested for alleged "subversive activities" while visiting Bhutan in 2007. The internet is accessed by less than 10 percent of Bhutan's population. The government monitors online content and blocks material that is seen as pornographic.

The constitution protects freedom of religion, and a 2007 election law bars any ordained religious figure or "religious personality" from voting or running for office. In 2010, the election commission maintained that even lay members of religious organizations would be prevented from voting in upcoming local elections, drawing objections from rights advocates. While Bhutanese of all faiths can worship relatively freely, the Drukpa Kagyupa school of Mahayana Buddhism is the official religion and reportedly receives various subsidies. The Christian minority is allegedly subject to harassment by the authorities, and permits for the construction of Hindu temples are apparently difficult to obtain. Few restrictions on academic freedom have been reported, though nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) claim that the teaching of Nepali and Sanskrit is banned.

The constitution guarantees freedom of assembly, but the government must approve the purpose of any protests. In recent years, security forces have arrested Southern Bhutanese refugees based in Nepal who entered Bhutan to demonstrate for the right to return home.

The constitution guarantees freedom of association, but only for groups "not harmful to the peace and unity of the country." NGOs that work on human rights, the refugee issue, or other sensitive matters are not legally allowed to operate. The 2007 Civil Society Organization Act requires all new NGOs to register with the government. The government prohibits independent trade unions and strikes, though some 85 percent of the workforce is engaged in subsistence agriculture. A 2007 employment law prohibited forced labor, child labor, discrimination, and sexual harassment.

An independent Judicial Service Council created in 2007 controls judicial appointments and promotions. However, critics have alleged that the judiciary is not fully independent. Until a new Supreme Court was finally seated in early 2010, the king served as the final arbiter of appeals. The APFA reported in January 2010 that the High Court, the second-highest judicial tier, was understaffed and facing a backlog. Arbitrary arrest, detention, and torture remain areas of concern, and dozens of political prisoners continue to serve lengthy sentences.

Prior to the mass expulsions of Nepali speakers in the early 1990s, the government had stripped thousands of their citizenship under a 1985 law that required both parents to be Bhutanese citizens. While the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) asserts that the overwhelming majority of refugees have proof of Bhutanese nationality, the government maintains that many left voluntarily or had been illegal immigrants. More than 77,000 refugees live in extremely poor conditions in Nepal and have been denied reentry to Bhutan. A resettlement effort aimed at transferring the refugees to third countries began in 2007. The UNHCR reported that as of August 2010, 34,500 refugees had been resettled in seven countries, with the majority going to the United States.

Women participate freely in social and economic life but continue to be underrep-

86 Freedom in the World—2011

resented in government and politics, holding 14 percent of the seats in Parliament. The application of religious or ethnically based customary laws regarding inheritance, marriage, and divorce sometimes results in discrimination against women.

Bolivia

Political Rights: 3

Population: 10,400,000

Civil Liberties: 3

Capital: La Paz (administrative), Sucre (judicial)

Status: Partly Free

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline For Year Under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
1,3F	2,3F	3,3PF							

Overview: Tension within the base of the ruling Movement toward Socialism (MAS) party increased during the year, with several local episodes of social conflict and a national mobilization in December against a decree that would have sharply increased gasoline prices. However, local and regional elections were effectively carried out in April 2010. The postconstitutional reform process continued with the passage of dozens of new laws, including major new anticorruption and antiracism bills.

After achieving independence from Spain in 1825, the Republic of Bolivia endured recurrent instability and military rule. However, the armed forces, responsible for more than 180 coups in 157 years, refrained from political intervention after 1982, allowing a regular succession of civilian presidents over the next two decades.

No candidate in the 2002 presidential election won a majority of the popular vote, and under Bolivia's constitution, members of the National Congress were tasked with deciding the outcome. They selected Gonzalo Sánchez de Lozada, a wealthy businessman and former president associated with economic privatization and forced coca-eradication programs, who had received a small plurality of votes. The runner-up, confrontational indigenous leader Evo Morales, had gained prominence by capitalizing on the unpopularity of U.S.-sponsored antidrug efforts among the Bolivian population, including the majority indigenous population, many of whom use the coca leaf for traditional cultural and medical purposes.

In 2003, indigenous groups, workers, students, and coca growers mounted mass protests against government plans for a \$5 billion pipeline to export Bolivian natural gas via longtime rival Chile to the United States and Mexico. The movement was also fueled by resentment over the failure of nearly two decades of democratic reform and economic restructuring aimed at improving the lot of the indigenous majority in a country with a poverty rate of 60 percent. The president ordered harsh repression of the protests, resulting in at least 120 deaths over a period of several months and the resignation in October of Sánchez de Lozada.

The nonpartisan vice president, Carlos Mesa, assumed the presidency. Despite successfully increasing state control over natural resources, he failed to quell mounting protests over gas revenues, regional autonomy, and other issues, and he ultimately resigned in June 2005. The chief justice of the Supreme Court temporarily assumed the presidency to oversee new elections. Morales won the December presidential poll, while his Movement toward Socialism (MAS) emerged as the largest party in Congress.

In July 2006, voters handed the MAS a majority in the Constituent Assembly, and in a concurrent vote on the question of regional autonomy, four departments supported greater autonomy, while five rejected the idea. By early 2007, serious disputes had emerged regarding the procedural rules governing the assembly, regional autonomy, indigenous rights, and state structure. The resulting polarization increased regional and ethnic friction, and violent confrontations throughout the year left several people dead and scores wounded.

Finally, in November, a group of delegates composed largely of MAS members met outside Sucre and approved a draft constitution. Protesters in Sucre responded with two days of demonstrations that were violently suppressed, leaving three people dead and several hundred injured. In December, a similar MAS-dominated group of delegates met in Oruro to approve the final draft.

Controversy over the constitution and general polarization raged throughout 2008. The National Electoral Court (CNE) blocked two government attempts to call a national vote on the draft during the year. Referendums proposed by the opposition confirming local control in four departments were also ruled illegal by the CNE. A recall referendum in August proved a significant victory for the government; over 67 percent of voters affirmed Morales's mandate, while two opposition prefects were bounced from office.

After the recall referendum, conflict increased significantly, peaking with a September confrontation between peasant supporters of Morales and followers of opposition prefect Leopoldo Fernández in Pando that resulted in at least 14 deaths. The central government declared a state of emergency in the department and arrested a number of suspects, including Fernández. Judicial processes related to the Pando massacre advanced, albeit slowly, causing concern among the opposition and some human rights observers. In October 2009, more than 25 people, including former prefect Fernández, were charged with serious crimes in the case.

Following the Pando incident, the government and congressional opposition resumed dialogue on the constitution. In October 2008, the two sides announced a compromise draft that retained most articles, though notable changes included an easing of potentially restrictive media language, a higher bar for future constitutional amendments, expansion of the electoral commission, and the limitation of consecutive presidential terms to two. After a brief but intense campaign, over 61 percent of voters approved the new constitution in January 2009, with a turnout of over 90 percent.

Polarization remained acute throughout 2009, but the overall level of violence decreased. In the year's most serious incident, police in April killed three men and detained two others at a Santa Cruz hotel who had stockpiled weapons and were allegedly conspiring to assassinate Morales and other leaders. All elements of the episode were highly disputed, including the nature of the plot, the circumstances

of the deaths, the government's adherence to due process rights, and the extent of lowland elites' involvement in the alleged conspiracy. Following incriminating testimony by supposed plot participants, several prominent Santa Cruz business and political leaders, among others, were placed under investigation or charged. During the rest of 2009 and throughout 2010, judicial investigations and preliminary hearings failed to provide much additional clarity, while calls from European governments for an independent investigation were rejected by the Bolivian government.

A transitional electoral law was passed in April 2009, and the CNE was tasked with producing a new, biometrically based electoral roll in time for the December election; the ensuing process vastly exceeded expectations in both efficiency and comprehensiveness. The main opposition party, the Progressive Plan for Bolivia (PPB), selected former Cochabamba city mayor and department prefect Manfred Reyes Villa as its presidential candidate. He ran on an anti-MAS platform, signified by his choice of Fernández, the jailed former prefect of Pando, as his running mate. Reyes Villa was also hampered by a history of serious corruption allegations, while Morales's popularity was bolstered by continuing economic growth. Morales was reelected with 64 percent of the vote amid a record 95 percent turnout. Opposition leaders complained about the abuse of state resources and the number of criminal charges brought against opposition politicians, including Reyes Villa. Monitors from the European Union characterized the elections as generally free and fair, but confirmed the misuse of state resources.

Reyes Villa fled to the United States after the elections, and additional opposition members followed in 2010. Tarija governor (the title changed from prefect under the new constitution), Mario Cossio, sought asylum in Paraguay following indictment on charges related to misuse of state funds, while several former government ministers departed for Peru. Former president Jorge Quiroga was convicted and sentenced to jail for defamation in July, though he remained free pending appeal.

The MAS also dominated the 2009 congressional elections, capturing 26 of 36 Senate seats and 90 of 130 seats in the Chamber of Deputies. Five departments approved autonomy statutes, joining the four that had already done so in 2006. Regional elections in April 2010 marked a coda to the five-year electoral wave that reconfigured Bolivia's political landscape. MAS candidates won the governorship in 6 of the 9 departments, but opposition candidates from the left and right took hold of the mayoralties in 7 of the 10 principal cities. MAS used its significant majority within Congress to pass new laws in 2010, including a long-debated anticorruption law and an ambitious—though controversial—antiracism law, as well as legislation to implement the new constitution's articles regarding electoral processes, the judiciary, and decentralization.

With the frenzy of electoral mobilization winding down, the form of Bolivian tensions changed somewhat in 2010. The social bases united in support of MAS became more vocal in asserting their demands, as local and sectoral interest groups established blockades to pressure the government on a series of issues. Police efforts to clear a blockade near Caranavi in May left two dead, while a series of protests shut down Potosi city in July and August. In late December, Vice President

Álvaro García Linera unexpectedly announced that gasoline subsidies would end. The administration highlighted the drain on state coffers created by the smuggling

of subsidized fuel to neighboring countries, and paired the move with a rise in the minimum wage and salary increases. However, the government had failed to consult with outside groups—including some of its key constituencies—who often work in the informal sector and would face financial strain from the increase without benefitting from the offsetting wage jump. The move sparked immediate protests throughout the country, some of them violent. President Morales announced on New Year's Eve that that the decree would be rescinded.

Bolivia's relations with the United States have remained poor since 2008. That year, the two countries expelled each other's ambassadors and markedly reduced cooperation on aid, trade, and counternarcotics due to disagreements over issues including coca eradication and alleged U.S. meddling. Talks over a new bilateral accord were held throughout 2009 and 2010, but no agreement was finalized. Playing to their political supporters, President Morales and other MAS members occasionally lobbed charges of U.S.-backed conspiracies targeting the government and spoke of expelling the United States Agency for International Development, whose assistance on governance-related programs has declined in recent years.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Bolivia is an electoral democracy. Elections and referendums since 2005 have been deemed free and fair by international observers. Under the new constitution, presidential and congressional terms are both five years, permitting up to two consecutive terms. The Plurinational Legislative Assembly consists of a 130-member Chamber of Deputies and a 36-member Senate, in which all senators and 53 deputies are elected by proportional representation, and 70 deputies are elected in individual districts. Seven Chamber of Deputies seats are reserved for indigenous representatives. The new constitution includes a presidential runoff provision to replace the previous system in which Congress had decided elections when no candidate won an outright majority.

Bolivians have the right to organize political parties. The current dominant electoral vehicle is the MAS, an alliance of social movements and other civil society actors whose disputes President Evo Morales must mediate. The right-wing opposition had been led by the center-right Social Democratic Power (PODEMOS) party, but in 2008, it split over the negotiations on the draft constitution, and most prominent opposition members ran under the PPB banner in 2009. Following the 2010 local and regional elections, the Movement Without Fear (MSM) party, a moderate left-wing group previously allied with the MAS, emerged as the most important alternative to the MAS in several regions and cities, including La Paz.

Corruption and nepotism remain common vices in Bolivia. In March 2010, major new anticorruption legislation passed into law, promising a more rigorous institutional framework to combat graft. However, observers noted that the bill's provision permitting retroactive enforcement contradicts international legal standards. The new law also allows for former heads of state to be tried in absentia, contravening international due process norms. Some MAS figures have been prosecuted for corruption, including Santos Ramirez, the former head of the national oil and gas company. Many opposition figures have also been charged, including several mayors and governors elected in 2010. Bolivia was ranked 110 out of 178 countries surveyed in Transparency International's 2010 Corruption Perceptions Index.

Although the constitution guarantees freedom of expression, the media are subject to some limitations in practice. Most outlets are privately owned, and radio is the leading source of information. Many newspapers and television stations tend to feature opposition rather than progovernment opinion pieces; the opposite holds true in state media. Incidents of physical aggression against journalists decreased in 2010, but as in previous years, Morales sparred bitterly with the press. Watchdog groups criticized some provisions of the generally lauded antiracism law passed in October, specifically the vagueness of language regarding fines and the possible closure of outlets deemed to have violated the law. The government promised consultation with civil society, and details on implementation remained under debate at year's end. The government does not restrict access to the internet.

Freedom of religion is guaranteed by the constitution. Tensions between the Roman Catholic Church and the government continued in 2010, as the new constitution ended the Church's official status and created a secular state. The government does not restrict academic freedom.

Bolivian law provides for the rights of peaceful assembly and freedom of association, although social protests sometimes turn violent. Unlike previous years, in which both government and opposition politicians harnessed protests for political purposes, the most aggressive protests in 2010 came from local and sectoral groups making specific demands on the government. Nongovernmental organizations, including independent human rights groups, operate freely. However, human rights groups criticized the ongoing harassment of lawyers Jorge Quiroz and Claudia Lecona, who had represented the families of the dead protesters in Caranavi. The right to form labor unions is guaranteed by the constitution. Unions are an active force in society and have significant political influence.

Despite some government efforts to hasten reform, the judiciary remains corrupt, inefficient, and inaccessible to many Bolivians. The informal political quota system for selecting Supreme Court and Constitutional Tribunal (TC) justices broke down under the weight of polarization starting in 2007, leading to a crisis that included a wave of resignations, legal charges against several justices for dereliction of duty, paralysis of the courts, and an increase in the backlog of cases. In February 2010, the government passed the "Short-Term Law," permitting the temporary appointment of judicial authorities by the president until elections could be held. Although the 18 full and provisional appointees selected by Morales comprised well-regarded jurists, their limited authority continued to constrain checks on executive power. Elections to the high courts originally planned for fall 2010 were pushed into 2011. Prosecutorial independence is viewed as weak, and enforcement at times appeared to focus more on opposition members and sympathizers, with multiple former presidents and many of the country's most prominent opposition politicians facing charges ranging from graft to treason.

Prison conditions are harsh, and over 70 percent of detainees are in pretrial detention. Increased overcrowding in 2010 led to protests in several facilities. While the criminal procedure code recognizes indigenous conflict-resolution traditions, jurisdictional reform efforts to date have yet to resolve fully questions pertaining to indigenous customary law. This lack of clarity has led some perpetrators of vigilante crimes, including lynching, to excuse indefensibly their actions as a form of indigenous justice. In the most prominent incident in 2010, four police officers

were killed in rural Potosi in May following extortion allegations by locals. Two weeks of negotiations with the government were required before local leaders agreed to hand over the bodies for burial.

Both the human rights ombudsman and independent human rights organizations are able to report on violations committed by the security forces, although impunity remains the norm. The new human rights ombudsman named in May 2010 has shown more independence and effectiveness than his predecessor in speaking out about and investigating human rights violations. One example was the demand for a full investigation into the highly publicized death in custody of robbery suspect David Olorio in July, who was allegedly tortured to death by police seeking information on the location of a cache of stolen funds; the investigation remained ongoing at year's end. Attempts to seek justice for human rights abuses under past dictatorships stalled in 2010, as the military refused to comply with an April Supreme Court order to declassify and grant access to files related to forced disappearances in the early 1980s.

Coca cultivation remains a sensitive issue. The Morales government's cooperation with growers has resulted in a significant decline in rights violations. However, cocaine production appears to be on the rise, as does the transit of Peruvian cocaine through Bolivia to Brazil and Argentina. While crime rates in La Paz and other major cities appear to be increasing, crime in Bolivia remains at a lower level than in many other South American countries.

The new constitution recognizes 36 indigenous nationalities, declares Bolivia a "plurinational" state, and formalizes local political and judicial control within indigenous territories. However, some groups remained dissatisfied with receiving just seven reserved legislative seats. In general, racism is rife in the country, especially by mestizos and whites against indigenous groups. The new antiracism law codifies a series of positive steps to combat discrimination and impose criminal penalties for acts of discrimination. Some rural employers keep indigenous workers in debt peonage, particularly in the Chaco region.

While the law protects and the government generally respects freedom of movement, protesters often block highways and city streets, causing serious economic losses. There have been clashes between landowners in the lowlands and migrants from the highlands, and sporadic land invasions by landless peasants continue to occur. A 2006 law allowed for the redistribution of land deemed idle or with unclear ownership, and the government has since reallocated millions of hectares. Meanwhile, foreign investors have been discouraged by the government's aggressive renegotiation of contract terms in the energy, mining, and telecommunications industries.

Women's political representation has increased notably in recent years. Ballot-alternation requirements resulted in women winning 44 percent of the seats in the current Senate, though only 28 percent of the seats in the Chamber of Deputies. Violence against women is pervasive, and the justice system is ineffective at safeguarding women's broader legal rights. Child prostitution and child labor are problems.

Bosnia and Herzegovina

Political Rights: 4

Population: 3,800,000

Civil Liberties: 3

Capital: Sarajevo

Status: Partly Free

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline For Year Under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
5,4PF	4,4PF	4,4PF	4,3PF	4,3PF	3,3PF	4,3PF	4,3PF	4,3PF	4,3PF

Overview: The reform process in Bosnia and Herzegovina stalled and nationalist rhetoric continued to rise in 2010, as the country prepared for the October parliamentary and presidential elections. The elections were peaceful and met basic international standards, although political pressure on the media increased.

Formerly a constituent republic within socialist Yugoslavia, Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) is among the most ethnically diverse countries in the region. The bulk of the population consists of three ethnic groups: Bosniaks, who are mainly Muslim; Serbs, who are Orthodox Christian; and Croats, who identify with the Roman Catholic Church. As Yugoslavia began to disintegrate in the early 1990s, BiH was recognized as an independent state in April 1992. A 43-month-long civil war ensued, resulting in the deaths of tens of thousands of people and the forced resettlement of approximately half of BiH's population.

The 1995 Dayton Peace Accords brought an end to the war by creating a loosely knit state composed of the Bosniak-Croat "Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina" (the Federation) and the largely Serb "Republika Srpska." The final status of the Brcko district was decided in 1999 by a special arbitration council, which defined it as a self-governing administrative unit that is formally part of both the Federation and Republika Srpska. The Dayton Accords gave significant authority to international civilian agencies such as the Office of the High Representative (OHR). However, despite years of considerable efforts by the international community to aid the country's integration, most aspects of political, social, and economic life remained divided along ethnic lines.

A coalition government formed in early 2007, following October 2006 elections, proved to be highly unstable, particularly due to a thorny working relationship between Serb leader Milorad Dodik of the Alliance of Independent Social Democrats (SNSD), who was determined to maintain Republika Srpska's autonomy, and Bosniak leader Haris Silajdzic of the Party for BiH (SzBiH), who sought to create a unitary BiH. Meanwhile, most Croat officials advocated further decentralization and the creation of a third constituent entity for Croat-majority areas. Despite these tensions, in June 2008, the European Union (EU) and BiH signed a Stabilization and Association Agreement, a key step toward EU membership.

In March 2009, Austrian diplomat Valentin Inzko was appointed as the new high representative. Long-standing tensions between the OHR and the Bosnian Serb leadership continued in 2010, with the latter challenging several of Inzko's decisions.

In a step condemned by the OHR, in February 2010, the parliament of Republika Srpska adopted a law that would make it easier for the authorities to hold referendums on national issues, raising the possibility of a popular vote on secession. Later in February, the Peace Implementation Council, the international body charged with overseeing the postwar development of BiH, postponed the closure of the OHR due to the country's failure to meet the required conditions, such as agreement on the distribution of state property between the central authorities and the two entities, the census law, and other items. The census law was particularly contentious, as the main parties have been unable to agree on whether census forms should include questions about ethnic affiliation. While the Serb authorities generally favored collecting such data, most Bosniaks opposed it because the Bosniak population in Republika Srpska decreased during the civil conflict, in large part due to the policies of "ethnic cleansing."

Parliamentary and presidential elections took place in October 2010, bringing a power shift to several government bodies. The SNSD remained the dominant party in Republika Srpska, with Dodik stepping up his nationalist rhetoric ahead of the vote and continuing to raise the threat of Republika Srpska's secession. Dodik himself was elected president of the Serb entity, having served as its prime minister since 2006. The more moderate and largely Bosniak Social Democratic Party (SDP) secured the plurality of seats in the Federation at the expense of the Party of Democratic Action (SDA) and the SzBiH, the latter of which experienced major defeats. The Croat Democratic Union of BiH (HDZ BiH) remained the most popular party among Bosnian Croats.

In the tripartite presidential election, incumbent Zeljko Komsic of the SDP was reelected as the Croat member of presidency. In a surprise victory, Bakir Izetbegovic of the SDA, the son of the late president Alija Izetbegovic, defeated the incumbent Silajdzic in the race for the Bosniak seat. SNSD incumbent Nebojsa Radmanovic narrowly defeated Mladen Ivanic of the Party of Democratic Progress (PDP) to become the Bosnian Serb member of presidency.

According to the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the elections were generally held in line with international standards, though irregularities were observed at some polling stations, including instances of family and group voting, overcrowding, and procedural infractions. Most parties and political leaders focused on policies that would appeal to the nationalist sentiments of their respective ethnic groups. Political pressure on the media and threats against journalists increased in the run-up to the elections, with reports of government interference, intimidation, and surveillance.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: The Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) is an electoral democracy. In general, voters can freely elect their representatives, although the OHR has the authority to remove elected officials if they are deemed to be obstructing the peace process. The government is led by a prime minister, and the role of head of state is performed by a three-member presidency composed of one Bosniak, one Serb, and one Croat. The Parliamentary Assembly is a bicameral body. The 15-seat upper house, the House of Peoples, consists of five members from each of the three main ethnic groups, elected by the Federation and Republika Srpska legislatures for four-year terms. The

lower house, the House of Representatives, has 42 popularly elected members serving four-year terms, with 28 seats assigned to the Federation and 14 to Republika Srpska.

Corruption remains a serious problem, and enforcement of legislation designed to combat it has been weak, due in part to the lack of strong and independent anticorruption agencies. In 2010, several high-profile corruption cases, including those involving HDZ leader Dragan Covic and former Federation prime minister Edhem Bicakcic, resulted in acquittals. Although anticorruption issues are being increasingly tackled by the media and the NGO sector, some politicians actively undermine such efforts. In a May television appearance, SNSD leader Milorad Dodik called representatives of the Bosnian chapter of Transparency International (TI) "criminals" and "thieves." TI has been the subject of smear campaigns on several occasions in recent years, after it started pointing to irregularities and possible acts of corruption in the Republika Srpska government. BiH was ranked 91 among 178 countries surveyed in TI's 2010 Corruption Perceptions Index.

The constitution and the human rights annex to the Dayton Peace Accords provide for freedom of the press, but this right is not always respected in practice. While a large number of independent broadcast and print outlets operate, they are plagued by a relatively low level of professionalism and a tendency to appeal to narrow ethnic audiences. According to a 2010 study by Bosnia's largest journalist association, BH Novinari, most broadcast, print, and online media outlets consult only one source when producing programs and writing news reports, often relying on press releases. Political pressure on journalists intensified ahead of the 2010 elections, and preselection coverage largely favored incumbent parties and politicians. In March, Dodik instructed all government officials and state-owned companies in Republika Srpska to ignore requests from and suspend advertising with FTV, the Federation's state-owned station. And during the elections, the SNSD prohibited the station ATV from reporting at the party's election headquarters. Internet access in the country is unrestricted, and approximately 38 percent of BiH residents have access.

Citizens enjoy full freedom of religion, but only in areas where their particular group represents a majority. Acts of vandalism against holy sites of all three major faiths continue to occur. A 2010 proposal by the SNSD to ban clothing that could prevent identification was rejected in July by the country's Parliamentary Committee on Human Rights, but was revisited in the parliament later in the year. The bill was seen by some as an ethnic provocation and a violation of religious freedom, though few Bosniak women wear the facial veil it would likely outlaw, as the garment is not considered part of the local Muslim tradition.

While the authorities do not restrict academic freedom at institutions of higher education, academic appointments are subject to ethnic favoritism and politicization. Primary- and secondary-school curriculums are heavily politicized. Depending on their ethnicity, children use textbooks printed in Croatia, Serbia, or Sarajevo. In parts of the region of Herzegovina, students are divided by ethnicity, with separate classrooms, entrances, textbooks, and class times. The educational sector is among the most corrupt in BiH, with studies showing that bribery and inappropriate expenditures are pervasive.

The constitution provides for freedoms of assembly and association, and the various levels of government generally respect these rights in practice. Several large

protests took place in 2010, most notably April demonstrations in Sarajevo against measures that would reduce benefits for war veterans as part of budget-cutting efforts. After the Federation authorities refused to address them, the protesters turned violent and attacked police guarding the government building. Nearly 70 people were injured in the clashes, making the event one of the most violent protests in BiH since the war. Although there are no legal restrictions on the right of workers to form and join labor unions, discrimination against union members persists.

Despite evidence of growing independence, the judiciary remains influenced by nationalist political parties and faces pressure from the executive branch. BiH does not have a unified body, akin to a supreme court, that has the authority to apply uniformly the law across the country. Instead, the existence of four separate judicial systems—for the central state, Republika Srpska, the Federation, and the Brcko district—contributes to overall inefficiency. The country has made some efforts to reduce its case backlog, but the total number of pending court cases continues to be high. The state court—established in 2002 to handle organized crime, war crimes, corruption, and terrorism cases—made some progress in 2010 on adjudicating cases of organized crime and war crimes, and it expanded its witness protection program.

Individuals face discrimination in employment, housing, and social services in regions that are not dominated by their own ethnic group. Under the constitution, only Bosniaks, Croats, and Serbs are able to run for the presidency or serve in the upper house of parliament. In December 2009, the European Court of Human Rights ruled that the constitution was discriminatory for excluding candidates from the Jewish, Romany, and other smaller minorities. However, no remedies were implemented in advance of the October 2010 elections.

The vast majority of property-restitution cases stemming from the war have been resolved. However, many people returned to their prewar homes only to sell their property and move back to areas where their ethnicity forms a majority. The Brcko district is an exceptional case, having achieved a relatively high level of ethnic integration.

Women are legally entitled to full equality with men. However, they are underrepresented in politics and government and face discrimination in the workplace. The issue of sexual harassment is poorly understood, and improper behavior frequently goes unpunished. The police are still largely unresponsive to violent domestic disputes, particularly in rural areas. Women are trafficked internally for the purpose of prostitution, and BiH is to a lesser extent a transit country for trafficking to other parts of Europe.

Botswana

Political Rights: 3

Population: 1,800,000

Civil Liberties: 2

Capital: Gaborone

Status: Free

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline For Year Under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
2,2F	3,2F	3,2F							

Overview: In March 2010, the long-ruling Botswana Democratic Party split for the first time in its history, with a splinter faction, the Botswana Movement for Democracy, officially registering as a separate party in June. Controversy surrounding the right of the indigenous San people to live in the Central Kalahari Game Reserve was ongoing during the year, with most San continuing to live outside of the area. In March, the government introduced new immigration legislation intended to halt the flow of undocumented immigrants from Zimbabwe.

Elected governments, all led by the Botswana Democratic Party (BDP), have ruled the country since it gained independence from Britain in 1966. Vice President Festus Mogae rose to the presidency when longtime president Ketumile Masire retired in 1998, and he was confirmed as the country's leader after the BDP easily won legislative elections in 1999. The BDP took 44 of the 57 contested seats in the 2004 elections, securing a second presidential term for Mogae. International observers declared the polling free and fair but recommended giving the opposition equal access to state-run media and setting the date for elections further in advance.

In 2008, Mogae—like Masire before him—retired before the end of his term, leaving Vice President Seretse Khama Ian Khama to assume the presidency. Khama, the son of independence leader and first president Seretse Khama, had been appointed vice president by Mogae in 1998 and was elected chairman of the BDP in 2003. He quickly shuffled the cabinet and appointed former foreign minister Mompoti Merafhe as vice president. Critics have accused the BDP of subverting democratic institutions through this "automatic succession" process.

Significant rifts within the ruling party emerged before legislative elections in October 2009. Most notably, Khama suspended his rival, BDP secretary general Gomolemo Motswaledi, preventing him from competing in parliamentary elections. In September, the High Court rejected Motswaledi's related lawsuit against Khama, citing the head of state's constitutional immunity from civil suits.

In the elections, the BDP won 45 of 57 seats with 53.3 percent of the vote. The Botswana National Front (BNF) won 6 seats, while the Botswana Congress Party (BCP) took 4. Two other parties each captured one seat. Parliament confirmed Khama for a full presidential term later that month, and observer reports declared the elections free and fair.

In March 2010, leaders of the so-called Barata-Pathi faction of the BDP—including including Motswaledi and fellow suspended BDP MP Botsalo Ntuane—of-

ficially withdrew from the BDP and declared their intention to form a new opposition party, the Botswana Movement for Democracy. Accusing Khama of violating the party's constitution by concentrating power in the presidency and among his so-called "A-Team" faction, the rebels officially registered the BMD in June, led by Ntuane and including some 20 former BDP MPs.

According to UNAIDS, almost 24 percent of Botswana's adult population was infected with HIV in 2010, although prevalence has declined in recent years. Government HIV/AIDS programs include free antiretroviral drugs and routine HIV testing in all public health facilities, though recent revenue shortfalls have led to cuts in these programs.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Botswana is an electoral democracy. The 63-seat National Assembly, elected for five years, chooses the president to serve a concurrent five-year term. Of the Assembly's 63 members, 57 are directly elected, 4 are nominated by the president and approved by the Assembly, and 2—the president and the attorney general—are ex-officio members. Despite being elected indirectly, the president holds significant power. While the president can prolong or dismiss the legislature, the legislature is not empowered to impeach the president. Democracy advocates have alleged that power has become increasingly centralized around President Seretse Khama Ian Khama, with many top jobs going to military officers and family members.

The 15-member House of Chiefs, which serves primarily as an advisory body, represents the country's eight major Setswana-speaking tribes and some smaller ones. Groups other than the eight major tribes tend to be left out of the political process; under the Territories Act, land in ethnic territory is distributed under the jurisdiction of majority groups. Due in part to their lack of representation in the House of Chiefs, minority groups are subject to patriarchal Tswana customary law despite having their own traditional rules for inheritance, marriage, and succession. The BDP's control of the National Assembly and the presidency has never faced a serious challenge, and opposition parties, namely the BCP and the BNF, have accused the government of effectively institutionalizing the BDP's dominant status. Nevertheless, the Independent Election Commission, created in 1996, has helped consolidate Botswana's reputation for fairness in voting.

Botswana's anticorruption body has special powers of investigation, arrest, and search and seizure, and the body generally boasts a high conviction rate. Nevertheless, there are almost no restrictions on the private business activities of public servants, and 2010 saw a number of high-profile corruption scandals. Most notably, in January, Defense Minister (and cousin of President Khama) Ramadeluka Sereste was accused of corruption for failing to disclose his position as a shareholder in company—owned by his wife—that won a massive defense contract in 2009. Sereste resigned in August and was charged in September. Botswana was ranked 33 out of 178 countries surveyed in Transparency International's 2010 Corruption Perceptions Index, and has held the best rank among African countries for several years running.

A free and vigorous press thrives in cities and towns, with several independent newspapers and magazines published in the capital. The private Gaborone Broadcasting Corporation television system and two private radio stations have limited

reach, though Botswana easily receives broadcasts from neighboring South Africa. State-owned outlets dominate the local broadcast media, which reach far more residents than the print media, and provide inadequate access to the opposition and government critics. In addition, the government sometimes censors or otherwise restricts news sources or stories that it finds undesirable. In 2010, coverage of the split in the BDP and of the newly formed BMD party were conspicuously absent from state-run radio and television broadcasts. In May, the independent *Mmegi* newspaper reported that Radio Botswana journalists who interviewed the press secretary of the BMD were subsequently called into the Office of the Presidency to explain their actions. The 2008 Media Practitioners Act established a media regulatory body and mandates the registration of all media workers. In October 2010, police detained a photojournalist who was covering the court case of Kgafela Kgafela II—chief of the Bakgatla tribe—and 13 tribe members accused of unlawfully flogging residents. Earlier in the year, Kgafela II had also sued four newspapers for covering the trial, though these lawsuits were withdrawn in September after reaching out-of-court settlements with the papers. The government does not restrict internet access, though such access is rare outside cities.

Botswana does not have a freedom of information law, and critics accuse the government of excessive secrecy. President Khama had yet to hold a domestic press conference as of the end of 2010.

Freedom of religion is guaranteed, but all religious organizations must register with the government. There are over 1,000 church groups in Botswana.

Academic freedom is generally respected. While free and private discussion is largely protected, all prepaid mobile-telephone SIM cards must be registered, at risk of disconnection. However, only 15 percent of such cards were registered by the December 2009 deadline; the government announced its intention to disconnect unregistered numbers throughout 2010.

The government generally respects the constitutional rights of assembly and association. Nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), including human rights groups, operate openly without harassment. However, the government has barred San rights organizations from entering the Central Kgalagadi Game Reserve (CKGR), the subject of a long-running land dispute, and demonstrations at the reserve have been forcibly dispersed. While independent labor unions are permitted, workers' rights to strike and bargain collectively are restricted.

The courts are generally considered to be fair and free of direct political interference, although the legal system is affected by staffing shortages and a large backlog of cases. Trials are usually public, and those accused of the most serious violent crimes are provided with attorneys. Civil cases, however, are sometimes tried in customary courts, where defendants have no legal counsel.

Occasional police abuse to obtain evidence or confessions has been reported, and Botswana has been criticized by rights groups for continuing to use corporal and capital punishment. Prisons are overcrowded and suffer from poor health conditions, though the government has responded by building new facilities and providing HIV testing to inmates.

The 2007 Intelligence and Security Services Act created a Directorate of Intelligence and Security (DIS) in the office of the president. Critics said it vested too much power in the agency's director—allowing him to authorize arrests without

warrants, for instance—and lacked parliamentary oversight mechanisms. According to government statistics and media reports, there were between 10 and 12 extrajudicial killings by police and other security forces (including the DIS) from April 2008 to the end of 2009. The murder of alleged criminal John Kalafatis in May 2009 sparked a major controversy after press reports claimed that security forces were involved and that President Khama had ordered Kalafatis's death; the government vociferously denied the charge. After the Law Society of Botswana (LSB) threatened to take Khama to the International Criminal Court over the spate of killings, the government initiated talks with the LSB to address the scope of the DIS's authority. However, these talks broke down in April 2010 without any significant changes to government policy.

Since 1985, authorities have relocated about 5,000 San, who tend to be marginalized in education and employment opportunities, to settlements outside the CKGR. Almost all of the 530 people remaining fled in 2002, when the government cut off water, food, health, and social services in the area. In 2006, a three-judge panel of the Lobatse High Court ordered the government to allow the San to return to the CKGR. Several hundred San have since gone back, although disagreement remains as to how many will be allowed to live in the reserve. By court order, the issue is being mediated by the Botswana Centre for Human Rights, but talks were ongoing at the end of 2010. In July, those San who had returned to CKGR lost a court battle with the government to reopen a water hole in reserve.

The government insists that the San have been relocated to give them access to modern education and health facilities and have been adequately compensated, and it rejects claims that it simply wanted unrestricted access to diamond reserves in the region. A 2009 report by the Bench Marks Foundation alleged that mining operations in the CKGR had been excluded from environmental impact assessments and were making it difficult for San to access local water sources.

Illegal immigrants from Zimbabwe face increasing xenophobia and are accused, sometimes legitimately, of criminal activity. These immigrants are subject to exploitation in the labor market. Botswana is building an electric fence along its border with Zimbabwe, ostensibly to control foot-and-mouth disease among livestock, but the barrier is popularly supported as a means of halting illegal immigration; thousands of Zimbabweans have been deported in recent years. In March 2010, the government announced a set of new immigration policies to halt the flow of undocumented immigrants into the country, mostly from Zimbabwe. The new policies introduced an online passport system, mandated electronic permits for visitors and immigrants, and increased the number of official workplace inspections.

Botswana features a vibrant market economy and was ranked highest among African countries in the Heritage Foundation's 2010 Index of Economic Freedom. In September 2010, the government passed an amendment to its Employment Act that outlaws workplace dismissal based on an individual's sexual orientation or HIV status. Rights groups, however, urged that more robust enforcement mechanisms were needed.

Women enjoy the same rights as men under the constitution, though customary laws limit their property rights, and women married under traditional laws have the same legal status as minors. The 2004 Abolition of Marital Powers Act established equal control of marriage estates and equal custody of children, removed restrictive

100 Freedom in the World—2011

domicile rules, and set the minimum marriage age at 18. However, enforcement of the act is not uniform and generally requires the cooperation of traditional authorities, which is not always forthcoming. In 2010, the Grant Thornton International Business Report reported that 32 percent of high management positions were held by women, a 7 percent increase from 2009. Domestic violence is rampant, and trafficking in women and children for the purposes of prostitution and labor remains a problem. The law prohibits homosexuality.

Brazil

Political Rights: 2
Civil Liberties: 2
Status: Free

Population: 193,300,000
Capital: Brasilia

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline For Year Under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
3,3PF	2,3F	2,3F	2,3F	2,2F	2,2F	2,2F	2,2F	2,2F	2,2F

Overview: Dilma Rousseff of the Workers' Party (PT) was elected as Brazil's first female president in runoff elections held on October 31, 2010. The PT did well in concurrent congressional elections, giving president-elect Rousseff an even larger majority in Congress than her predecessor. Despite some improvements, criminal violence remained a problem in Brazil's major cities during the year, and official corruption continued to stoke political debate.

After gaining independence from Portugal in 1822, Brazil retained a monarchical system until a republic was established in 1889. Democratic governance was interrupted by long periods of authoritarian rule, and the last military regime gave way to an elected civilian government in 1985. However, Brazil's democracy has been marred by frequent corruption scandals. One scandal eventually led Congress to impeach President Fernando Collor de Mello in 1992.

Brazilian Social Democracy Party (PSDB) leader Fernando Henrique Cardoso—a market-oriented, centrist finance minister—was elected president in 1994, and he subsequently oversaw a highly successful currency-stabilization program that included fiscal reform, privatization of state enterprises, and a new currency pegged to the U.S. dollar. He also ushered in a new era of dialogue with international human rights and good-governance groups. In 1998, Cardoso handily won a second term in a rematch against his 1994 opponent, former labor leader and political prisoner Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva of the left-leaning Workers' Party (PT).

Lula finally won the presidency in 2002, promising to maintain orthodox economic policies while initiating meaningful social-welfare programs. These included "Bolsa Familia," a cash-transfer program that benefited approximately one-fourth of the population, and "ProUni," a fund providing low-income students with scholarships to private colleges.

Lula was reelected by a comfortable margin in the October 2006 presidential runoff, drawing on his popularity among working-class voters. Despite the fact that the legislature was widely seen as the most corrupt in the country's history, the PT did not suffer losses in the concurrent congressional elections.

In August 2007, the government released a report outlining the fate of political dissidents who were "disappeared" by the military between 1961 and 1988. Unlike in other Latin American countries with recent histories of military rule, former officials in Brazil remained protected by a 1979 amnesty law, and none had faced charges for human rights violations. In May 2010, the Supreme Court blocked a reinterpretation of the amnesty law that would have allowed for members of the military to go to trial for extrajudicial killings and torture.

A number of major government corruption scandals that began in 2004 continued into 2010. The earlier affairs involved vote-buying, kickbacks for public-works contracts, and the abuse of congressional power in awarding jobs and salary increases to favored recipients. After being accused of accepting bribes in 2009, the governor of the Federal District—the quasi-state that includes the capital Brasília—resigned and was jailed in February 2010. In September 2010, Dilma Rousseff's presidential campaign was complicated by a corruption scandal involving Lula's chief of staff, Erenice Guerra. Having succeeded Rousseff as chief of staff in April, Guerra resigned in September, following allegations that she had received kickbacks from public contracts. While Rousseff was never directly involved, the affair revealed the degree of entrenched corruption in Brazil's political institutions. During Lula's two terms, two of his three chiefs of staff were forced to resign amid corruption scandals.

Rousseff, Lula's chosen successor, was elected president on October 31, 2010, with 56 percent of the vote, defeating rival PSDB candidate José Serra's 44 percent. The PT and its coalition partners also did well in congressional elections held in early October, strengthening their majorities in both the Senate and Chamber of Deputies. The governing center-left coalition increased its representation in the 81-seat Senate from 43 to 59, and its share of seats in the 513-seat lower house rose from 357 to 372.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Brazil is an electoral democracy. The 2010 national elections were free and fair. The constitution provides for a president, to be elected for up to two four-year terms, and a bicameral National Congress. The Senate's 81 members serve eight-year terms, with a portion coming up for election every four years, and the 513-member Chamber of Deputies is elected for four-year terms.

The four largest political parties, accounting for more than half of the seats in the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate, are the centrist Brazilian Democratic Movement Party, the leftist PT, the conservative Democratic Party, and the center-left PSDB. Seventeen other parties are also represented in Congress. The electoral system encourages the proliferation of parties, a number of which are based in a single state. A 2007 Supreme Court decision outlawed party switching after elections, though lawmakers have continued to switch parties on occasion for financial and other inducements.

Corruption is an endemic problem in Brazil, ranking 69 out of 178 countries

surveyed in Transparency International's 2010 Corruption Perceptions Index. Despite a constitutional right of access to public information, the country does not have specific laws to regulate and guarantee transparency.

The constitution guarantees freedom of expression, and both libel and slander were decriminalized in 2009. The press is privately owned, and while foreigners can acquire a 30 percent stake in a media company, they are restricted in their ability to influence editorial decisions and management selection. There are dozens of daily newspapers and a variety of television and radio stations across the country. The print media have played a central role in exposing official corruption. However, journalists—especially those who focus on organized crime, corruption, or military-era human rights violations—are frequently the targets of violence. Among other attacks in 2010, a journalist who had repeatedly received death threats for his coverage of drug trafficking and other crimes was shot and killed outside his home in northeastern Brazil in October. The government does not impose restrictions on access to the internet.

The constitution guarantees freedom of religion, and the government generally respects this right in practice. The government does not restrict academic freedom. Freedoms of association and assembly are generally respected, as is the right to strike. Industrial labor unions are well organized. Although they are politically connected, Brazilian unions tend to be freer from political party control than their counterparts in most other Latin American countries. Labor issues are adjudicated in a system of special labor courts. Intimidation of rural union leaders continued to be a problem in 2010.

The country's largely independent judiciary is overburdened, plagued by corruption, and virtually powerless in the face of organized crime. The judiciary is often subject to intimidation and other external influences, especially in rural areas, and public complaints over its inefficiency are frequent.

Brazil has one of the highest homicide rates in the world. Most violent crime in the country is related to the illegal drug trade. Highly organized and well-armed drug gangs frequently fight against the military police as well as private militias comprising off-duty police officers, prison guards, and firefighters. These militias have intimidated human rights activists and residents by instituting their own form of extortion, sometimes charging citizens a mandatory tax for ousting drug traffickers from their areas or actually selling weapons to drug dealers. Severe criminal violence continued in Rio de Janeiro in 2010, as gang members took 35 people hostage at a luxury hotel in August after an intense 40-minute gun battle with police in the streets. Following a three-hour standoff with police, the hostages were released unharmed. In October, Rio was rocked by a number of mass robberies by armed drug gang members who arranged road blocks, robbed drivers, and held residents hostage while battling local police. In an effort to bolster Rio's security ahead of the 2016 Summer Olympic Games, President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva committed federal police and \$60 million in federal aid to the city starting in 2009. This has contributed to some improvements in Rio's violence, including the successful pacification of several of the city's dangerous favelas, or slums, by offering social work programs and a longer-term presence of "peace police" forces.

Brazil's police are among the world's most violent and corrupt, and public security remains a serious problem. Nearly 50,000 homicides occur each year, making

Brazil's murder rate approximately five times higher than that of the United States. Torture is used systematically to extract confessions from suspects, and extrajudicial killings are portrayed as shootouts with dangerous criminals. Police officers are rarely prosecuted for abuses, and those charged are almost never convicted; typically, the cases are dismissed for "lack of evidence."

The prison system is anarchic, overcrowded, and largely unfit for human habitation. According to official estimates, Brazil's prisons hold over 460,000 inmates, 50 percent over the system's intended capacity. Overcrowding sometimes results in men and women being held in the same facilities, and human rights groups claim that the torture and other abuses common to most of the country's detention centers have the effect of turning petty thieves into hardened criminals.

Racial discrimination, long officially denied as a problem in Brazil, began to receive both recognition and remediation from Lula during his first term. Afro-Brazilians earn less than 50 percent of the average earnings of other citizens, and they suffer from the highest homicide, poverty, and illiteracy rates. When he assumed office, Lula took the unprecedented step of naming four Afro-Brazilians to his cabinet, and appointed the country's first Afro-Brazilian Supreme Court justice. While Congress has yet to pass federal legislation for university-based affirmative action, 70 percent of Brazil's public universities have adopted some form of affirmative action.

The owners of large estates control nearly 60 percent of the country's arable land, while the poorest 30 percent of the population hold less than 2 percent. Land invasions are organized by the grassroots Landless Workers' Movement (MST), which claims that the seized land is unused or illegally held. Progress on land reform has been slow due in part to a strong farm caucus and the economic importance of large-scale agriculture.

Although Brazil abolished slavery in 1888 and has benefited in recent years from a relatively successful antislavery taskforce, between 6,000 and 8,000 rural laborers still work under slavery-like conditions. Landowners who enslave workers face two to eight years in prison, in addition to fines. However, the fines are minimal, and no one has ever been imprisoned for using slave labor.

Brazil's indigenous population numbers around 460,000. The government promised in 2003 to demarcate large swaths of ancestral lands as the first step in creating indigenous reserves. A 2009 Supreme Court ruling defended the creation of one of the largest protected indigenous areas in the world, and the non-indigenous farmers living there peacefully left the 1.7 million-hectare reservation that year. Violence and discrimination against indigenous people continues; half of the indigenous population lives in poverty, and most indigenous communities lack adequate sanitation and education services.

A 2001 decree granted same-sex partners the same rights as married couples with respect to pensions, social security benefits, and taxation. While discrimination based on sexual orientation is prohibited by law, violence against homosexuals remains a problem.

In 2003, a new legal code made women equal to men under the law for the first time in the country's history. However, violence against women and children is commonplace, and protective laws are rarely enforced. Forced prostitution of children is widespread. While the number of child workers has fallen over the past 15 years, 4.5 million children between the ages of 5 and 17 still work in Brazil, par-

ticularly in the informal sector. The government has sought to address the problem by cooperating with various nongovernmental organizations, increasing inspections, and offering cash incentives to keep children in school. Human trafficking continues from and within Brazil for the purpose of forced labor and commercial sexual exploitation. However, the Lula administration rescued several thousand slave labor victims through mobile labor inspection operations in 2010.

Brunei

Political Rights: 6

Population: 380,000

Civil Liberties: 5

Capital: Bandar Seri Begawan

Status: Not Free

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline For Year Under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
7,5NF	6,5NF								

Overview: The sultanate experienced little political change in 2010, with the Legislative Council continuing to perform an active oversight role within its significantly limited purview. Continuing a positive trend for women's rights from 2009, Brunei's first female cabinet minister was appointed to a five-year term.

The oil-rich sultanate of Brunei became a British protectorate in 1888. The 1959 constitution vested full executive powers in the sultan while providing for five advisory councils, including a Legislative Council. In 1962, Sultan Omar Ali Saifuddien annulled legislative election results after the leftist and antimonarchist Brunei People's Party (BPP) won all 10 elected seats in the 21-member council. British troops put down an insurrection mounted by the BPP, and Omar declared a state of emergency, which has remained in force ever since. Continuing his father's absolute rule, Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah became Brunei's 29th sultan in 1967. The British granted Brunei full independence in 1984.

In 2004, Hassanal reconvened the Legislative Council, which had been suspended since 1984. The body passed a constitutional amendment to expand its size to 45 seats, with 15 elected positions. However, Hassanal in September 2005 convened a new, 29-member Legislative Council, including 5 indirectly elected members representing village councils. Plans for the 45-person legislature with 15 directly elected slots remained on the table, but no elections were scheduled.

The existing Legislative Council began conducting budget review activity as a regular function, and the government pursued parallel efforts to promote the private sector while curbing corruption and radical Islam. These tentative reforms were considered preparations for an eventual succession and the expected depletion of the country's oil and gas reserves, which accounted for 90 percent of state revenues and were expected to run out in two to three decades. Energy wealth had long allowed the government to stave off demands for political reform by employing much of the

population, providing citizens with extensive benefits, and sparing them an income tax. However, a French energy company discovered some new oil and gas deposits in late 2008, and there was little additional political change in 2009. In December 2009, at the Bali Democracy Forum, the sultan argued that his continued grip on power was necessary to prevent globalization from negatively affecting social cohesion. In May 2010, the sultan instituted a significant cabinet reshuffle, and while many of the same individuals remained, the change signified a small step toward improving governance. The appointments, which notably included the first female minister, will last five years.

Also in May, Brunei and neighboring Malaysia moved forward with a 2009 agreement to explore jointly offshore oil reserves near their border.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Brunei is not an electoral democracy. The sultan wields broad powers under a long-standing state of emergency, and no direct legislative elections have been held since 1962. Citizens convey concerns to their leaders through government-vetted councils of elected village chiefs.

The reform efforts of Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah have been largely superficial and are designed to attract foreign investment. The unicameral Legislative Council has no political standing independent of the sultan. However, the council's mounting oversight activity and queries aimed at the government reflect a growing demand for accountability and responsible spending. In a sign of the body's assertiveness, one ethnic Chinese legislator at a March 2010 council session proposed the establishment of a zone for foreign tourists to drink alcohol, challenging the country's strict ban on alcohol sales. The religious affairs minister rejected the proposal on the grounds that it would lead to further weakening of morality laws.

Genuine political activity remains extremely limited. In 2007, the Registrar of Societies disbanded the People's Awareness Party (PAKAR) and forced the president of the Brunei National Solidarity Party (PPKB) to resign. The PPKB was then deregistered without explanation in 2008, leaving the National Development Party (NDP) as Brunei's sole remaining political party.

The government claims to have a zero-tolerance policy on corruption, and its Anti-Corruption Bureau has made efforts to cooperate with regional partners and the Ministry of Education in recent years. In June 2008, an arrest warrant was issued for the sultan's brother and former finance minister, Prince Jefri Bolkiah, who had skipped a court appearance concerning his failure to compensate the sultanate for billions of dollars in misappropriated oil revenues. The compensation had been ordered in 2006 by a Brunei court, and the prince has reportedly exhausted his opportunities to appeal. Having lived abroad for many years, the prince returned to officially reside in Brunei in November 2010, after the two brothers finally reconciled. Brunei was ranked 38 out of 178 countries surveyed in Transparency International's 2010 Corruption Perceptions Index.

Journalists in Brunei face considerable restrictions. Legislation enacted in 2001 allows officials to close newspapers without cause and to fine and jail journalists for articles deemed "false and malicious." The national sedition law was amended in 2005 to strengthen prohibitions on criticizing the sultan and the national "Malay

Muslim Monarchy" ideology. The largest daily, the *Borneo Bulletin*, practices self-censorship, though it does publish letters to the editor that criticize government policies. A second English-language daily, the *Brunei Times*, was launched by prominent businessmen in 2006 to attract foreign investors. A smaller, Malay-language newspaper and several Chinese-language papers are also published. Brunei's only television station is state run, but residents can receive Malaysian broadcasts and satellite channels. The country's internet practice code stipulates that content must not be subversive or encourage illegitimate reform efforts. Access to the internet is reportedly unrestricted.

The constitution allows for the practice of religions other than the official Shafeite school of Sunni Islam, but proselytizing by non-Muslims is prohibited. Christianity is the most common target of censorship, and the Baha'i faith is banned. Nevertheless, the country's various religious groups coexist peacefully. All residents must carry identity cards stating their religion, and marriage between Muslims and non-Muslims is not allowed. Muslims require permission from the Ministry of Religious Affairs to convert to other faiths, though official and societal pressure make conversion nearly impossible. Non-Shafeite forms of Islam are actively discouraged, in part due to concerns about security and foreign investment.

The study of Islam, Malay Muslim Monarchy ideology, and the Jawi (Arabic script used for writing the Malay language) is mandatory in all public schools. The teaching of all other religions is prohibited. Under a January 2010 order, Muslim students in private schools must also receive religious instruction.

Emergency laws continue to restrict freedom of assembly. Most nongovernmental organizations are professional or business groups, and under the 2005 Societies Order, all must register and name their members. No more than 10 people can associate for a purpose without registering, and all meeting minutes must be submitted to the Registrar of Societies. Registration can be refused for any reason. In late 2008, the government disbanded 55 associations for not complying with regulations. Brunei's three, largely inactive, trade unions, which must also register, are all in the oil sector and represent only about 15,000 workers. Strikes are illegal, and collective bargaining is not recognized.

The constitution does not provide for an independent judiciary. Although the courts generally appear to act independently, they have yet to be tested in political cases. Final recourse for civil cases is managed by the Privy Council in the United Kingdom. Sharia (Islamic law) takes precedence in areas including divorce, inheritance, and some sex crimes, though it does not apply to non-Muslims. A backlog of capital cases results in lengthy pretrial detention for those accused of serious crimes. According to the U.S. State Department's human rights report, caning is mandatory for 42 criminal offenses, including immigration violations, and is commonly carried out, though an attending doctor can interrupt the punishment for medical reasons.

Religious enforcement officers raid homes to punish the mingling of unrelated Muslim men and women. According to the U.S. State Department's 2010 International Religious Freedom Report, Bruneian religious authorities reported 51 of these *khalwat* cases between July 2009 and June 2010. However, some of the charges were dropped due to lack of evidence. The authorities also detain suspected antigovernment activists under the Internal Security Act, which permits detention without

trial for renewable two-year periods. Prison conditions generally meet international standards.

Brunei's many "stateless" people, mostly longtime ethnic Chinese residents, are denied the full rights and benefits of citizens, while migrant workers, who comprise 30 to 40 percent of the workforce, are largely unprotected by the labor laws. Authorities are very strict on illegal entry, and workers who overstay visas are regularly imprisoned and, in some cases, caned or whipped.

Islamic law generally places women at a disadvantage in areas such as divorce, but an increasing number of women have entered the workforce in recent years. In April 2009, the government abolished a policy whereby female civil servants' employment contracts were terminated on marriage, which had meant that they could only be reemployed on a month-to-month basis. In August of that year, Brunei appointed its first female attorney general, Hayati Salleh, who had formerly been the country's first female High Court judge. In a rare cabinet reshuffle, in May 2010, the sultan appointed Adina Othman as deputy minister for culture, youth, and sports, making her the first woman to serve as a cabinet minister. Women in government-run institutions and non-Muslim female students are required or pressured to wear traditional Muslim head coverings.

Bulgaria

Political Rights: 2

Population: 7,500,000

Civil Liberties: 2

Capital: Sofia

Status: Free

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline For Year Under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
1,3F	1,2F	1,2F	1,2F	1,2F	1,2F	1,2F	2,2F	2,2F	2,2F

Overview: The right-wing government of Prime Minister Boyko Borisov, elected in July 2009, sought to fulfill its campaign pledges to combat organized crime and corruption in 2010. It presided over a series of police operations, indictments of leading opposition politicians, and institutional reform efforts, but the European Union warned in July that additional and sustained improvements—particularly in the judicial branch—would be needed.

Bulgaria gained autonomy within the Ottoman Empire in 1878 and full independence in 1908. Its monarchy was replaced by communist rule after Soviet forces occupied the country during World War II. Communist leader Todor Zhivkov governed Bulgaria from 1954 until 1989, when the broader political changes sweeping the region inspired a massive prodemocracy rally in Sofia.

Over the next 12 years, power alternated between the Bulgarian Socialist Party (BSP)—successor to the Communist Party—and the center-right Union of Democratic Forces (UDF). In 2001, the National Movement for Simeon II, led by the

former monarch, won national elections and formed a governing coalition with the Movement for Rights and Freedoms (DPS), a party representing the ethnic Turkish minority. However, both parties became junior partners in a BSP-led coalition government after the 2005 elections.

Bulgaria formally joined the European Union (EU) in January 2007, and its first elections for the European Parliament in May featured the emergence of a new right-leaning opposition party, Citizens for the European Development of Bulgaria (GERB), led by Sofia mayor Boyko Borisov. The party gained popularity, as the BSP and its allies were blamed for unchecked corruption, particularly after the EU suspended hundreds of millions of dollars in aid funds over the issue in July 2008.

GERB captured 117 of 240 seats in the July 2009 parliamentary elections. Borisov took office as prime minister with the support of the ultranationalist Ataka party (21 seats), the center-right Blue Coalition (15 seats), and the new Order, Law, and Justice party (10 seats). The BSP-led Coalition for Bulgaria was left in opposition with 40 seats, as was the DPS, with 37. Voter turnout was 60 percent.

The new GERB government pledged to tackle corruption and organized crime, including misdeeds by the previous government, and oversaw a series of high-profile reforms, police raids, and prosecutions that extended through 2010. Several former cabinet ministers were indicted for alleged financial misconduct in office, and former prime minister Sergei Stanishev was charged in July 2010 with mishandling classified documents during his tenure, though he claimed the case was politically motivated. In another sign of partisan friction, GERB in March launched an unsuccessful bid to impeach President Georgi Parvanov of the BSP, after he secretly recorded and then publicized a conversation with Finance Minister Simeon Djankov, who had accused him of amassing illicit wealth. A member of the new government, Health Minister Bozhidar Nanev, resigned that month after being charged with breach of duty for approving unfavorable drug contracts.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Bulgaria is an electoral democracy. The unicameral National Assembly, composed of 240 members, is elected every four years. Georgi Parvanov of the BSP is currently serving his second five-year term as president, having won reelection in 2006. The president is the head of state, but his powers are very limited. The legislature chooses the prime minister, who serves as head of government.

The 2009 parliamentary elections were held under new rules enacted less than three months before the voting. The changes created 31 single-member constituencies that varied widely by population, leaving the other 209 seats under the existing system of regional proportional representation. Vote-buying remained a problem, although open discussion of the practice reportedly helped to alleviate its effects. Prior to the elections, authorities had increased penalties for vote-buying, and nearly a dozen convictions were reported the following year. A recount of votes cast at polling sites in neighboring Turkey resulted in the invalidation of some 18,000 ballots and the reassignment of one parliament seat from the DPS to GERB in early 2010.

Bulgaria's multiparty system includes a variety of left- and right-leaning factions, and the ethnic Turkish minority is represented by the DPS. Roma are not as well represented, with just one Romany candidate winning a National Assembly seat in 2009. Roma are also seen as vulnerable to vote-buying and intimidation efforts.

Corruption is a serious concern in Bulgaria. The European Commission's July 2010 progress report hailed the GERB government's "strong reform momentum," but warned that major substantive improvements were still necessary. It called for changes including greater institutional capacity for procurement-contract auditing, effective whistle-blower protections, and a new emphasis on asset seizures. In late November, the parliament created a new commission to handle conflict-of-interest cases involving senior officials, though it had not begun operating by year's end. Among other corruption cases during the year, businessman Mario Nikolov received a 12-year prison sentence in May for fraud and embezzlement of some 7.5 million euros (US\$9.2 million) in EU funds, though he remained at liberty pending the outcome of appeals. Separately, longtime DPS leader Ahmed Dogan was acquitted in October of conflict of interest, having accepted private consulting payments on a publicly funded hydroelectric project while his party was in government in 2008. Bulgaria was ranked 73 out of 178 countries surveyed in Transparency International's 2010 Corruption Perceptions Index, making it second only to Greece among the worst performers in the EU.

Bulgarian media have benefited from significant foreign investment, but political and economic pressures sometimes lead to self-censorship. Although the state-owned media have at times been critical of the government, ineffective legislation leaves them vulnerable to political influence. A member of the ruling GERB party was forced to resign as deputy speaker of parliament in July 2010 after being accused of trying to quash a report by the privately owned Nova TV on possible corruption among customs officials. Journalists continued to face the threat of violence during the year. Crime writer and radio host Bobi Tsankov was murdered by two gunmen in January, and in February, journalist Dimitar Varbanov of the private station bTV was allegedly struck in the head with a hammer by a fraud suspect he was attempting to interview. The government does not place restrictions on internet access.

Members of minority faiths report occasional instances of harassment and discrimination despite constitutional guarantees of religious freedom. The authorities in some areas have blocked the construction of new mosques. The government does not restrict academic freedom.

The authorities generally respect the constitutional freedoms of assembly and association. Workers have the right to join trade unions, but public employees cannot strike or bargain collectively, and private employers often discriminate against union members. A number of peaceful protests took place during 2010, including a September demonstration organized by the Orthodox Church to call for mandatory religious education and an October march to protest proposed pension reforms.

Bulgaria's judiciary has benefited from a series of structural reforms associated with EU accession. However, the July 2010 European Commission report urged the government to push forward with a judicial reform strategy unveiled in June, noting that increased police and prosecutorial efforts to combat corruption and organized crime had often foundered in the courts, with cases subject to indefinite procedural delays and dismissal on technicalities. While some organized crime figures have been convicted, their cases were resolved through plea bargaining and inordinately lenient sentences rather than successful trials. Amendments to the penal procedure code that took effect in May were designed to streamline criminal trials, provide for

110 Freedom in the World—2011

witness protection, and ease cumbersome evidence rules; minor improvements in efficiency were reported by year's end.

Organized crime remains a serious problem, and scores of suspected contract killings over the past decade have gone unsolved. The GERB government oversaw multiple police operations targeting criminal syndicates in 2010, and several reputed mob bosses—including suspects in Tsankov's murder in January—were arrested and charged. However, most defendants were released pending trial, and there were no major convictions by year's end. Incidents of mistreatment by police have been reported, and prison conditions remain inadequate in many places.

Ethnic minorities, particularly Roma, continue to face discrimination in employment, health care, education, and housing. Sexual minorities also face discrimination.

Women remain underrepresented in political life, accounting for 21 percent of the National Assembly seats after the 2009 elections. However, the new chamber elected the first female Speaker, and Sofia elected its first female mayor that year. Domestic violence is an ongoing concern. The country is a source of human-trafficking victims, of whom Roma make up a disproportionately large share.

Burkina Faso

Political Rights: 5

Population: 16,200,000

Civil Liberties: 3

Capital: Ouagadougou

Status: Partly Free

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline For Year Under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
4,4PF	4,4PF	4,4PF	5,4PF	5,3PF	5,3PF	5,3PF	5,3PF	5,3PF	5,3PF

Overview: President Blaise Compaoré was elected to his fourth term in the November 2010 elections with 80 percent of the vote. Although members of opposition parties challenged the results, citing irregularities at the polls, the country's Constitutional Council ruled in favor of Compaoré. Meanwhile, in April, Burkina Faso's government adopted a new law on the protection and promotion of the rights of the disabled.

Burkina Faso experienced a series of military coups after gaining independence from France in 1960. In 1987, Thomas Sankara, a populist president who had risen to power through a coup in 1983, was ousted by army captain Blaise Compaoré; Sankara and several of his supporters were killed during the takeover. In 1991, a democratic constitution was approved in a referendum, and Compaoré easily won that year's presidential election due to an opposition boycott. Compaoré secured another seven-year term in the 1998 election.

The government undertook a series of political reforms after 1998, including the introduction of an independent electoral commission, a single-ballot voting system, public campaign financing, and a third vice presidential position in the legislature for the opposition leader.

The 2002 National Assembly elections were the first conducted without a significant opposition boycott. Compaoré's Congress for Democracy and Progress (CDP) party won only 57 of 111 seats, compared with 101 in 1997.

Two-term presidential limits were reintroduced in 2000. However, prior to the 2005 elections, the Constitutional Council had ruled that the law was not retroactive, leading to Compaoré's reelection to a third term in 2005. The 2010 election was the last in which he was eligible to run.

The country's first municipal elections were held in 2006, with the CDP capturing nearly two-thirds of the local council seats. The CDP won 73 seats in the 2007 National Assembly elections, while the largest opposition party, the Alliance for Democracy and Federation-African Democratic Rally (ADF-RDA), captured only 14.

In July 2010, the CDP announced the nomination of Compaoré as its candidate for the November presidential elections. Six opposition candidates ran against Compaoré, who won with just over 80 percent of the vote. His closest challenger, Hama Arba Diallo, captured less than 10 percent of the vote. Only 55 percent of 3,234,555 registered voters came out to the polls; the Burkina-based think tank, Center for Democratic Governance, estimates that an additional 3,700,000 eligible voters remain unregistered. Although four opposition candidates challenged Compaoré's victory and called for a new election, the Constitutional Council upheld the election results. Meanwhile, the CDP stated its intention to revise Article 37 of the constitution, which would allow Compaoré to run for reelection in 2015, though the revision did not occur by year's end.

An increase in direct foreign investment and revenue from the cotton, mining, and agricultural sectors fueled growth in real gross domestic product (GDP) between 2009 and 2010.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Burkina Faso is not an electoral democracy. International monitors have judged the most recent presidential, municipal, and legislative elections to be generally free but not entirely fair, due to the ruling CDP's privileged access to state resources and the media. Monitors from civil society groups observed problems with the 2010 presidential elections, including traditional leaders mobilizing voters for the incumbent, inadequate numbers of voting cards and ballots at the polls, incorrect electoral lists, and the utilization of state resources for President Blaise Compaoré's campaign. The 111-seat National Assembly is unicameral, and members serve five-year terms. The legislature is independent, but subject to executive influence.

The constitution guarantees the right to form political parties, and 13 parties are currently represented in the legislature. Opposition members have argued that the 2004 revisions to the electoral code, which tripled the number of electoral districts, gave an undue advantage to larger parties, particularly the CDP. Electoral reforms in 2009 extended the right to vote in presidential elections and referendums to Burkinabe living abroad, but not until the 2015 presidential election. Reforms also included an injunction against the practice of switching parties after elections. In January 2010, the National Assembly passed a law requiring that all voters show picture identification when arriving to the polls, though there were problems with delayed distribution of the cards. Opposition parties remain weak; in the 2007 leg-

islative elections, only two parties, the CDP and ADF-RDA, reached the 5 percent voting threshold.

Corruption remains widespread, despite a number of public and private anticorruption initiatives. The courts have been unwilling or unable to prosecute adequately many senior officials charged with corruption. Burkina Faso was ranked 98 out of 178 countries surveyed in Transparency International's 2010 Corruption Perceptions Index.

Although freedom of expression is constitutionally guaranteed and generally respected, many media outlets practice self-censorship. Journalists occasionally face criminal libel prosecutions, death threats, and other forms of harassment and intimidation. There are over 50 private radio stations, a private television station, and several independent newspapers. The government does not restrict internet access.

Burkina Faso is a secular state, and freedom of religion is respected. Academic freedom is also unrestricted.

The constitution provides for the right to assemble, though demonstrations are sometimes suppressed or banned. While many nongovernmental organizations operate openly and freely, human rights groups have reported abuses by security forces. The constitution guarantees the right to strike, and unions are able to engage freely in strikes and collective bargaining, although only a minority of the workforce is unionized.

The judicial system is formally independent, but it is subject to executive influence and corruption. The courts are further weakened by a lack of resources and citizens' poor knowledge of their rights.

Human rights advocates in Burkina Faso have repeatedly criticized the military and police for committing abuses with impunity. Police often use excessive force and disregard pretrial detention limits.

Discrimination against various ethnic minorities occurs but is not widespread. However, the homosexuals and those infected with HIV routinely experience discrimination. In an effort to address discrimination against the disabled, Burkina Faso ratified the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in 2009 and adopted a new law on the protection and promotion of the rights of the disabled in April 2010. Civil society actors also noted increased government efforts in 2010 to provide access to health care and a decrease in costs for maternal health services.

The constitution provides for freedom of movement within the country, although security checks on travelers are common. Equality of opportunity is hampered in part by the advantages conferred on CDP members, who receive preferential treatment in securing public contracts. Although the right to own property is legally guaranteed, the inadequate judicial system and the frequent recourse to traditional courts in rural areas limit this right in practice.

While illegal, gender discrimination remains common in employment, education, property, and family rights, particularly in rural areas. Reforms in 2009 established a 20 percent quota for women on all party candidate lists in municipal and legislative elections, but implementation has been slow. An October 2010 report on Burkina Faso by the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) revealed that women make up only 6 percent of all mayors, 36 percent of locally elected officials, and 15 percent of the National Assembly. In the north, early marriage contributes to lower female school enrollment and a height-

ened incidence of obstetric fistula. Human rights groups have recorded a significant drop in the prevalence of female genital mutilation since its criminalization in 1996.

Unpaid child labor is illegal but common. Burkina Faso is a source, transit, and destination country for trafficking in women and children, who are subject to forced labor and sexual exploitation. According to the U.S. State Department's 2010 Trafficking in Persons Report, Burkina Faso does not comply with the minimum standards for eliminating human trafficking. However, the report also noted the government's efforts to reform, including 2008 legislation that criminalizes all forms of human trafficking and assigns more stringent penalties to those convicted. In 2009, Burkinabe authorities intercepted 788 children from traffickers intending to send them as laborers to neighboring countries.

Burma (Myanmar)

Political Rights: 7

Population: 53,400,000

Civil Liberties: 7

Capital: Rangoon

Status: Not Free

[Note: Nay Pyi Taw serves as the administrative capital.]

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline For Year Under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
7,7NF									

Overview: In November 2010, the military junta oversaw Burma's first parliamentary elections since 1990, thoroughly rigging the process to ensure a sweeping victory for the pro-military Union Solidarity and Development Party. The country's main opposition party, the National League for Democracy, refused to contest elections it deemed undemocratic and was formally dissolved by the government in September. However, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, the party's longtime leader, was released in mid-November after years under house arrest. The authorities cancelled voting in several border areas populated by ethnic minorities, where the government has limited control and low-intensity civil conflict continued.

Burma gained independence from Britain in 1948. The military has ruled the country since 1962, when General Ne Win led a coup that toppled an elected civilian government. The ruling Revolutionary Council consolidated all legislative, executive, and judicial power and pursued radical socialist and isolationist policies. Burma, once one of the wealthiest countries in Southeast Asia, eventually became one of the most impoverished in the region.

The present junta, led by General Than Shwe, dramatically asserted its power in 1988, when the army opened fire on peaceful, student-led, prodemocracy protesters, killing an estimated 3,000 people. In the aftermath, a younger generation of army commanders created the State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC) to rule the country. The SLORC refused to cede power in 1990, after the National League

for Democracy (NLD) won 392 of the 485 parliamentary seats in Burma's first free elections in three decades. Instead the junta nullified the results and jailed dozens of NLD members, including party leader Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, who spent most of the next two decades in detention. Aung San Suu Kyi was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1991 for her nonviolent struggle for democracy and human rights.

The SLORC refashioned itself into the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC) in 1997. In late 2000, the government began holding talks with Aung San Suu Kyi, leading to an easing of restrictions on the NLD by mid-2002. However, the party's revitalization apparently rattled hard-liners within the regime during the first half of 2003. On May 30 of that year, scores of NLD leaders and supporters were killed when SPDC thugs ambushed an NLD motorcade. Arrests and detentions of political activists, journalists, and students followed the attack.

The largest demonstrations in nearly 20 years broke out in cities across the country in August and September 2007, triggered by a 500 percent fuel-price increase. The 88 Generation Students, a group composed of dissidents active in the 1988 protests, were at the forefront of many of the demonstrations. The protest movement expanded to include thousands of Buddhist monks and nuns, who were encouraged by the general populace. Soldiers, riot police, and members of the paramilitary Union Solidarity and Development Association (USDA) and the Swan Arr Shin militia group responded brutally, killing at least 31 people. The crackdown targeted important religious sites and included the public beating, shooting, and arrest of monks, further delegitimizing the regime in the eyes of many Burmese.

Cyclone Nargis struck the Irrawaddy Delta on May 2, 2008, causing over 150,000 deaths and severely affecting another 2.4 million people. The SPDC initially attempted to control all foreign and domestic relief efforts, effectively blocking much of the desperately needed aid. In the absence of a government response, local Burmese civil society actors stepped in, and monasteries became distribution points and shelters for survivors. Many Burmese volunteers were detained for trying to deliver aid to cyclone victims, including the popular comedian Zarganar, who was sentenced to 59 years in prison in November 2008.

Despite the severity of the cyclone, the SPDC pushed through a constitutional referendum on May 10, 2008. Burmese political opposition and international human rights groups denounced the new charter, which was approved by an implausibly high margin and would ensure military control of the political system even after elections scheduled for 2010.

In an apparent bid to remove potential obstacles prior to the voting, the authorities continued to arrest and imprison dissidents throughout 2009. More than 300 activists, ranging from political and labor figures to artists and bloggers, received harsh sentences after closed trials, with some prison terms exceeding 100 years.

In March 2010, the SPDC established a hand picked election commission and announced a series of electoral laws. The USDA, which was ostensibly the regime's mass-based social welfare organization but regularly served as its thuggish political enforcement arm, transformed itself into the Union Solidarity and Development Party (USDP) to contest the elections. In April, Prime Minister Thein Sein and over 20 other top military officials shed their uniforms and registered as civilian candidates with the new party. The USDP ultimately fielded over 1,000 candidates, more than double the candidates of any other party, and ran unopposed in several constitu-

encies. Another progovernment party, the National Unity Party (NUP), fielded 488 candidates for the national legislature alone.

Meanwhile, opposition parties struggled to coordinate their activities and meet tight electoral deadlines, registration fees for candidates, and membership minimums. In a controversial decision, the NLD chose not to reregister to contest the elections, citing the unjust electoral laws. Though the government formally dissolved the party in September, it remained politically active, educating citizens about their right not to vote. A breakaway faction led by Than Nyein, the National Democratic Force (NDF), opted to participate in the balloting but managed to run only 142 candidates. The Shan National Democratic Party, one of the largest of several ethnic-based political parties, contested about 60 seats.

During the campaign, a number of prodemocracy parties complained of intimidation by security forces. The authorities also banned foreign media coverage and independent monitoring of the November 7 elections, and reports of vote-buying and voter intimidation were widespread.

There were serious allegations of voting irregularities on election day, including complaints of military commanders casting ballots on behalf of their subordinates and the appropriation of "advance voting" ballots by the USDP; though parties may contest the results, the fees for lodging a complaint with the election commission are exorbitant. The USDP enjoyed an overwhelming victory, with 76.8 percent of the vote, capturing 129 of the 168 elected seats in the Nationalities Assembly and 259 of the 330 elected seats in the People's Assembly. The USDP also secured 75 percent of the seats in the 14 state and regional assemblies. The NUP won only 3 percent of the seats, and prodemocracy parties captured just a handful of seats, including the NDF's four seats in the Nationalities Assembly and eight in the People's Assembly. The Rakhine Nationalities Development Party and the Shan National Democracy Party earned the second highest percentage of seats in the Nationalities Assembly and People's Assembly, respectively. However, the vote for ethnic minority parties would likely have been higher had voting not been cancelled in several ethnic minority-dominated areas. Reports of voter turnout varied from 35 to 60 percent, though the official count was 70 percent. The SPDC was scheduled to remain in power until the new parliament convened within 90 days of the elections.

Just six days after the elections, Aung San Suu Kyi was released from house arrest. Her first public appearance, where she stressed national reconciliation and promised to work with all prodemocracy parties, drew thousands of supporters.

Also in 2010, the government continued a parallel effort to consolidate its control over the country by incorporating armed ethnic minority groups—with which it had established ceasefire agreements—into a government-led Border Guard Force. Ethnic armies attacked Burmese forces along the Thai border late in the year, forcing over 20,000 Burmese to flee over the border for safety.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Burma is not an electoral democracy. The military junta has long ruled by decree and controlled all executive, legislative, and judicial powers; suppressed nearly all basic rights; and committed human rights abuses with impunity. The junta carefully rigged the electoral framework surrounding the 2010 national elections, which were neither free nor fair. The process of drafting the 2008 constitution, which the elections put

into effect, had proceeded intermittently for 15 years, was closely controlled by the military, and excluded key stakeholders. Although the charter establishes a parliament and a civilian president, it also entrenches military dominance, and allows the military to dissolve the civilian government if it determines that the, "disintegration of the Union or national solidarity," is at stake.

The bicameral legislature consists of the 440-seat People's Assembly, or lower house, and the 224-seat Nationalities Assembly, or upper house. A quarter of the seats in both houses are reserved for the military and filled through appointment by the commander in chief, an officer who has broad powers and is selected by the military-dominated National Defense and Security Council. The legislature elects the president, though the military members have the right to nominate one of the three candidates, with the other two nominated by the elected members of each chamber. The constitution also establishes state legislatures, but they are based in the capital. The charter's rights guarantees are limited by existing laws and may be suspended in a state of emergency. Criticism of the constitution is banned by a 1996 order that carries a penalty of 20 years in prison. The military retains the right to administer its own affairs, and members of the outgoing military government receive blanket immunity for all official acts.

The Political Party Registration Law, announced in March 2010, gave new political parties only 60 days to register, mandated that existing parties reregister, and required parties to expel members currently serving prison terms. The country's more than 2,100 political prisoners included about 429 members of the NLD, the victors in the 1990 elections. Some 40 new political parties registered, most with the backing of the SPDC. A handful of independent ethnic parties and opposition parties fielded candidates. Six prodemocracy parties formed a multiethnic "Democratic Friendship Group," but the opposition remained fractious, weak, and subject to scrutiny and harassment by the authorities. Parties were allowed to campaign within strict limits. They were able to travel, make radio and television appearances, and distribute publications. However, some campaign materials and speeches were censored; chanting, flag-waving, and marching during rallies were forbidden; and any party planning to hold a gathering outside of its own headquarters was required to seek permission from the government a week in advance, though gatherings occurred.

In a system that lacks transparency and accountability, corruption and economic mismanagement are rampant at both the national and local levels. The country was ranked 176 out of 178 countries surveyed in Transparency International's 2010 Corruption Perceptions Index. The SPDC's arbitrary economic policies, such as an official fixed exchange rate that grossly overvalues the kyat, facilitate corruption through erroneous bookkeeping.

The junta drastically restricts press freedom and owns or controls all newspapers and broadcast media. While the market for private publications and blogs is growing, the military censors private periodicals before publication and impedes the importation of foreign news sources. Media crackdowns continued in 2010, with at least 10 journalists detained during the year and 2 video journalists receiving multidecade prison sentences under the repressive Electronic Act of 1996. The authorities surveil internet cafes, slow or shut down internet connections during periods of internal strife, maintain a rigid firewall, and regularly jail bloggers. Possession

or use of a modem without official permission can draw a 15-year prison sentence. Websites run by Burmese exiles are frequently the targets of cyberattacks.

The 2008 constitution provides for freedom of religion. It distinguishes Buddhism as the majority religion but also recognizes Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, and animism, though the government shows a preference for Theravada Buddhism. At times, the government interferes with religious assemblies and discriminates against minority religious groups, attempting to control the Buddhist clergy; refusing to grant permission to religious minorities to celebrate holidays and hold gatherings; and restricting educational activities, proselytizing, and construction of houses of worship. Buddhist temples and monasteries have been kept under close surveillance since the 2007 protests and crackdown.

Academic freedom is severely limited. Teachers are subject to restrictions on freedom of expression and are held accountable for the political activities of their students. Since the 1988 student prodemocracy demonstrations, the junta has sporadically closed universities and relocated many campuses to relatively isolated areas to disperse the student population.

Freedoms of association and assembly are restricted. Unauthorized outdoor gatherings of more than five people are banned. Authorities regularly use force to break up or prevent demonstrations and meetings, most notably during the 2007 protests.

The junta violates workers' rights and represses union activity. Some public sector employees and ordinary citizens were compelled to join the USDA. Independent trade unions, collective bargaining, and strikes are illegal, and several labor activists are serving long prison terms. The regime continues to use forced labor despite formally banning the practice in 2000. Nongovernmental organizations providing social services in remote areas regularly face threats to their activities. International humanitarian organizations have expanded their work in the country but continue to face severe restrictions and monitoring, and this year they experienced difficulties obtaining visas.

The judiciary is not independent. Judges are appointed or approved by the junta and adjudicate cases according to its decrees. Administrative detention laws allow people to be held without charge, trial, or access to legal counsel for up to five years if the SPDC concludes that they have threatened the state's security or sovereignty. The frequently used Decree 5/96 authorizes prison terms of up to 20 years for aiding activities, "which adversely affect the national interest." Political prisoners are often held incommunicado in pretrial detention, facilitating torture. About 43 prisons hold political prisoners, and there are over 50 hard-labor camps in the country. The number of political prisoners has more than doubled since the 2007 protests. Prison conditions are abysmal; by recent estimates, the government spends only 40 cents per prisoner per year and provides only one doctor for every 8,000 prisoners. Impunity for crimes and human rights violations committed by state security forces is deeply entrenched.

Some of the worst human rights abuses take place in border regions populated by ethnic minorities, who comprise roughly 35 percent of Burma's population. In these areas, the military kills, beats, rapes, and arbitrarily detains civilians, according to human rights groups. The Chin, Karen, and Rohingya minorities are frequent victims. Tens of thousands of ethnic minorities in Shan, Karenni, Karen, and Mon states live in squalid relocation centers set up by the military. According to Refu-

118 Freedom in the World—2011

gee International, 3.5 million Burmese have crossed into neighboring countries as refugees over the past 50 years. Some ethnic rebel armies maintain low-grade insurgencies, and have reportedly displaced villagers and used forced labor. Both the Burmese armed forces and rebel armies allegedly recruit child soldiers.

Burmese women have traditionally enjoyed high social and economic status, but domestic violence and trafficking are growing concerns, and women remain underrepresented in the government and civil service. In the 2010 elections, only 114 out of 3,000 candidates were women. The Women's League of Burma has accused the military of systematically using rape and forced marriage as a weapon against ethnic minorities.

Burundi

Political Rights: 5 *

Population: 8,500,000

Civil Liberties: 5

Capital: Bujumbura

Status: Partly Free

Ratings Change: Burundi's political rights rating declined from 4 to 5 due to arrests and intimidation by the government and ruling party during local, parliamentary, and presidential election campaigns.

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline For Year Under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
6,6NF	6,5NF	5,5PF	5,5PF	3,5PF	4,5PF	4,5PF	4,5PF	4,5PF	5,5PF

Overview: Local, presidential, and parliamentary elections were held in May, June, and July 2010, respectively. Irregularities in local elections and efforts by President Pierre Nkurunziza's National Council for the Defense of Democracy (CNDD) to close political space led opposition candidates to boycott the subsequent presidential and parliamentary elections. Sporadic political violence occurred throughout the electoral period, with the CNDD and opposition parties accusing one another of complicity in the attacks.

The minority Tutsi ethnic group governed Burundi for most of the period since independence from Belgium in 1962. The military, judiciary, education system, business sector, and news media have also traditionally been dominated by the Tutsi. Violence between them and the majority Hutu has broken out repeatedly since independence. A 1992 constitution introduced multiparty politics, but the 1993 assassination of the newly elected Hutu president, Melchior Ndadaye of the Front for Democracy in Burundi (FRODEBU) party, resulted in sustained and widespread ethnic violence.

Ndadaye's successor was killed in 1994, along with Rwandan president Juvénal Habyarimana, when their plane was shot down as it approached Kigali airport in Rwanda. This event triggered the Rwandan genocide and intensified the fighting in Burundi.

A 1994 power-sharing arrangement between FRODEBU and the mainly Tutsi-led Unity for National Progress (UPRONA) party installed Hutu politician Sylvestre Ntibantunganya as Burundi's new president, but he was ousted in a 1996 military coup led by former president Pierre Buyoya, a Tutsi whom Ndadaye had defeated in the 1993 election. Peace and political stability remained elusive, as insurgents sporadically staged attacks and government forces pursued a campaign of intimidation.

In 2000, 19 groups from across the political spectrum agreed in principle on a future political solution to the conflict, and in 2001, a transitional government was installed, with Buyoya temporarily remaining chief of state and FRODEBU's Domitien Ndayizeye serving as vice president. Key elements of two Hutu rebel groups, the Forces for the Defense of Democracy (FDD) and the National Liberation Forces (FNL), failed to participate in the transition, resulting in both continued negotiations and additional violence.

By the end of 2002, most factions had agreed to stop the fighting and participate in transitional arrangements leading to national elections. In April 2003, Buyoya stepped down and was replaced as president by Ndayizeye, and the FDD subsequently reached an agreement with the government in October. An August 2004 agreement outlined the shape of new democratic institutions—designed to balance the interests of the Hutu and Tutsi populations—and the holding of elections.

In 2005, Burundi held the first local and national elections since 1993. The largely Hutu National Council for the Defense of Democracy (CNDD), the political wing of the FDD, emerged as the country's largest party, and Parliament chose Pierre Nkurunziza as president. Domestic and international observers generally regarded the voting as legitimate and reflective of the people's will.

A key faction of the sole remaining rebel group, the FNL, agreed to lay down its arms and participate in the political process in 2006. A tentative ceasefire agreement was reached with the last significant FNL faction in 2007, but violence involving the group flared again in 2008. Nonetheless, FNL leader Agathon Rwasa soon returned to participate in negotiations on the demobilization of his guerrillas and the transformation of the FNL into a political party. These discussions were complicated by complaints regarding repressive actions taken by the CNDD and counterclaims that the FNL was continuing to recruit military cadres.

The talks finally led the FNL to lay down its arms in 2009, leading to its recognition as a legal political party. In April of that year, an independent election commission was sworn in to prepare for elections due in 2010, and a new electoral code was adopted. However, political uncertainty and tension remained, as opposition parties accused the government of trying to manipulate the electoral process.

Local elections took place in May 2010, followed by presidential elections in June and parliamentary polls in July. Following widespread fraud in the local elections—which the CNDD won with almost two-thirds of the vote—and increasing efforts by the CNDD to close political space, opposition candidates boycotted both presidential and parliamentary elections. Prior to the presidential poll, the government placed serious restrictions on freedom of movement for opposition leaders, arrested dozens of opposition activists, and banned all opposition party meetings. According to opposition parties and human rights organizations, the ostensibly independent election commission failed to adequately investigate allegations of preelectoral violence and make public some individual polling place results. In the legisla-

tive poll, the CNDD captured 81 percent of the vote, followed by UPRONA with almost 12 percent and FRODEBU with nearly 6 percent, while Nkurunziza was reelected president with some 92 percent of the vote. Observers viewed the elections as a missed opportunity for strengthening Burundi's democratic political culture, as political polarization increased, and several leading opposition leaders fled the country fearing for their safety. Sporadic violence continued throughout much of 2010, with both the CNDD and opposition parties blaming one another for the attacks.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Burundi is not an electoral democracy. The country lacks representative institutions at the national level, in both the legislative and executive branches of government. Despite citizens' ability to change their government democratically in 2005, serious electoral irregularities and repression during the May 2010 local elections led most opposition parties to boycott subsequent presidential and parliamentary polls. The 2010 presidential election was the first by direct vote for a five-year term, but without meaningful competition, the results lacked legitimacy. The president appoints two vice presidents, one Tutsi and one Hutu, and they must be approved separately by a two-thirds majority in both the lower and upper houses.

While the lower house of Parliament—the 100-seat National Assembly—is directly elected for a five-year term, locally elected officials choose members of the Senate, also for five-year terms. Each of Burundi's 17 provinces chooses two senators—one Tutsi and one Hutu. Carefully crafted constitutional arrangements require the National Assembly to be 60 percent Hutu and 40 percent Tutsi, with three additional deputies from the Twa ethnic minority, who are also allocated three senators. In both houses, a minimum of 30 percent of the legislators must be women.

There are more than two dozen active political parties in the country, ranging from those that champion radical Tutsi positions to those that hold extremist Hutu views. Most are small in terms of membership. Many Tutsi have now joined formerly Hutu-dominated parties. The government appointed in September 2010 consists of members from the three political parties represented in the Parliament: the CNDD, UPRONA, and FRODEBU. Many political parties include groups of youths that are used for intimidation and violence against opponents. According to Human Rights Watch, both the ruling and other parties have occasionally employed coercive methods against rival parties and internal dissent.

Corruption remains a significant problem. A July 2010 Transparency International-Kenya report named Burundi as the most corrupt country in East Africa, indentifying the Revenue Authority and the police force as the two most corrupt institutions. The deputy head of Burundi's main anticorruption organization, the Anti-corruption and Economic Malpractice Observatory (OLUCOME), was assassinated in 2009, and the case went to trial at the Bujumbura Court of Appeal in Burundi in July 2010. A dozen suspects, including police, civilians, and demobilized combatants, were subsequently arrested and put on trial, which was ongoing at year's end.

Freedom of speech is legally guaranteed. While journalists continue to engage in self-censorship and are occasionally censored by authorities, they have been increasingly willing to express opinions critical of the government. Radio remains the main source of information for most Burundians. The government runs a television station and a radio station, as well as the only newspaper that publishes regularly.

Several private broadcast media outlets also operate, though most have a limited broadcast range. The British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), Radio France Internationale, and the Voice of America are available on FM radio in the capital. There is an opposition press, though it functions sporadically. Print runs of most newspapers remain small, and readership is limited by low literacy levels. Access to the internet remains largely confined to urban areas.

Despite the recent emergence of a more pluralistic press, journalists have been arbitrarily arrested, harassed, or threatened on numerous occasions. In 2010, several domestic press groups stated that the content of the privately owned Rema FM, a pro-CNDD radio station, repeatedly abused professional norms by disseminating hate messages and identifying opponents by name and address. A journalist for Radio Publique Africaine was hospitalized in June after being beaten with bricks by police for writing an article covering police abuse. In July, an editor for the online newspaper *Net Press* was charged with treason after publishing an article warning that Burundian security forces lacked the capacity to counter external terror threats against the country effectively; he remained in police custody at year's end. In response, the Federation of African Journalists, the International Federation of Journalists, and the Eastern Africa Journalists Association criticized what they deemed a government-sponsored "campaign of intimidation against media."

Freedom of religion is generally observed. For many years, the ongoing civil strife and the Tutsi social and institutional dominance impeded academic freedom by limiting educational opportunities for the Hutu, but this situation has improved in recent years.

The constitution provides for freedoms of assembly and association, although members of human rights groups that criticize the government have been threatened with or subjected to surveillance. There is modest but important civil society activity with a focus on human rights. Constitutional protections for organized labor are in place, and the right to strike is guaranteed by the labor code. The Confederation of Burundi Trade Unions has been independent since its establishment in 1995. Most union members are civil servants and have bargained collectively with the government. Following a two-month strike by public and private secondary school teachers in early 2010, classes slowly resumed in Bujumbura and the provinces in May.

Burundi's judiciary is hindered by corruption, a lack of resources and training, and executive interference in legal matters. Crimes, especially those related to political violence, often go unreported or uninvestigated. The current judicial system struggles to function effectively or independently, and cannot handle the large number of pending cases, many of which are politically sensitive. According to domestic and international human rights group, in the wake of the 2010 elections, Burundi's National Intelligence Service resumed its practice of physically and psychologically torturing members of the opposition who had been arrested on a variety of dubious charges, including "threatening state security" and "participation in armed groups." Prisons remain overcrowded, unhygienic, and at times, life-threatening. A justice and reconciliation commission, designed to provide accountability for past abuses, has been agreed upon in principle, but had not been established by year's end.

The 2009 penal code criminalizes same-sex relationships. Women have limited opportunities for advancement in the economic and political spheres, especially in rural areas. According to a September 2010 report by the Center for Global Devel-

122 Freedom in the World—2011

opment, Burundi has made progress in only one of its 15 Millennium Development Goals: the promotion of gender equality. Albinos face a particular threat from discrimination and violence. Eight murderers of Albinos were convicted and sentenced to prison in 2009; several additional albino murders were reported in 2010.

Cambodia

Political Rights: 6

Civil Liberties: 5

Status: Not Free

Population: 15,100,000

Capital: Phnom Penh

Trend Arrow: Cambodia received a downward trend arrow due to the government's consolidation of control over all aspects of the electoral process, its increased intimidation of civil society, and its apparent influence over the tribunal trying former members of the Khmer Rouge.

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline For Year Under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
6,6NF	6,5NF								

Overview: In July 2010, the international tribunal trying former leaders of the Khmer Rouge announced its first judgment, but also faced criticism over its refusal to expand the number of suspects currently indicted. Critics of the government continued to face legal harassment, while the government used a dispute with Thailand over a border temple to boost nationalism and consolidate the power of Prime Minister Hun Sen and his family. Both the United States and China sought to increase their ties to Cambodia during the year, with the United States holding joint military exercises despite concerns about human rights abuses committed by the Cambodian armed forces.

Cambodia won independence from France in 1953. King Norodom Sihanouk ruled until he was ousted in 1970 by U.S.-backed military commander Lon Nol, and the Khmer Rouge (KR) seized power in 1975. Approximately two million of Cambodia's seven million people died from disease, overwork, starvation, or execution under the KR before Vietnamese forces toppled the regime and installed a new communist government in 1979. Fighting continued in the 1980s between the Hanoi-backed government and the allied armies of Sihanouk, the KR, and other political contenders. The 1991 Paris Peace Accords halted open warfare, but the KR continued to wage a low-grade insurgency until its disintegration in the late 1990s.

Since entering government as part of the Vietnamese-backed regime in 1979, Prime Minister Hun Sen and his Cambodian People's Party (CPP) have dominated politics, controlling the National Assembly, military, courts, and police. Opposition figures, journalists, and democracy advocates have been given criminal sentences or faced violent attacks by unknown assailants in public spaces. Hun Sen's divide-and-rule tactics have succeeded in fracturing and weakening the opposition.

In 1997, Hun Sen used his control of the security forces to coerce the royalist party, known as Funcinpec, to share power, even though Funcinpec won the largest number of seats in the first parliamentary election held in 1993. Hun Sen later ousted the leader of Funcinpec in a bloody coup in 1997.

The 2003 parliamentary elections were deeply flawed and marred by violence and voter intimidation by the CPP. Nevertheless, the CPP failed to obtain the two-thirds majority required to form a government. A coalition government with Funcinpec was negotiated but quickly broke down. Following the formation of a new CPP-Funcinpec coalition in 2004, Hun Sen turned to quieting opposition leader Sam Rainsy's attacks on government corruption and abuse. The National Assembly stripped him and several other Sam Rainsy Party (SRP) legislators of their parliamentary immunity in 2005. After fleeing to Cambodia to escape arrest, Rainsy was found guilty in absentia of defaming Funcinpec leader Prince Norodom Ranariddh and Hun Sen. However, under pressure from international donors, Hun Sen negotiated a settlement: Rainsy would receive a royal pardon in exchange for promising to recant his allegations and issue a public apology to Hun Sen. Rainsy returned to Cambodia in 2006 after fulfilling the terms. The new alliance with Rainsy further strengthened Hun Sen and the CPP's grip on power.

In the 2008 elections, the CPP took 90 of 123 parliamentary seats, and Hun Sen was reelected as prime minister. The SRP took 26 seats, while Funcinpec took only 2. Two new parties, the Human Rights Party and the Norodom Ranariddh Party, won 3 and 2 seats, respectively. Opposition parties rejected the results, citing political intimidation and violence. Among other irregularities, they alleged that the National Election Committee worked with pro-CPP local authorities to delete potential opposition supporters from the voter rolls. With the opposition divided and unproven in the eyes of the voters, and the country enjoying relative political stability and sustained high economic growth, the CPP has started to command a measure of popular credibility despite public frustration with widespread corruption and other problems.

The launch of the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia to try former KR officials for genocide and other crimes against humanity was delayed for years by bureaucratic and funding obstacles following its establishment in 2007. At the end of 2008, five former high-level KR leaders were charged, including the former chief of the Tuol Sleng prison Kang Kek Ieu (also known as Duch). KR mastermind Pol Pot died before he could be brought to trial. In July 2010, Duch was found guilty of war crimes and was sentenced to 35 years in prison, reduced to 19 years given time already served. The judgment angered some KR survivors who argued that the sentence was too lenient. Moreover, while the international judges on the court have pressured the tribunal to try more than the handful of high-ranking suspects currently indicted, they have been rebuffed by the Cambodian judges on the court. Some critics suggest that Hun Sen—a former low-level KR officer before he defected to the Vietnamese side—has pushed the three Cambodians on the five-judge tribunal to refuse. Hun Sen allegedly does want the tribunal to delve too deeply into the past or dent the climate of impunity for the powerful in Cambodia.

Throughout 2010, critics of the government continued to face legal harassment, leaving the country with few alternatives to the rule of Hun Sen. In January, Rainsy was sentenced in absentia for destroying public property and racial incitement in a trial that failed to meet international standards. Rainsy, who was in self-imposed

exile abroad at year's end, faces a 12-year prison sentence for the January sentence as well as a series of other charges if he returns to Cambodia. Separately, in August, an employee from one of Cambodia's leading rights organizations, LICADHO, was sentenced in a flawed legal process to two years in prison on "disinformation" charges. Meanwhile, the government used the increasing controversy over a disputed border temple with Thailand to boost nationalism and place more power in the hands of Hun Sen's son, who personally oversaw Cambodian forces on the border.

China continued to expand its influence in Cambodia in 2010. In January, Beijing gave the country some \$850 million in new aid projects after Cambodian authorities forcibly deported 20 Uighur asylum seekers back to China in December 2009. UN officials and other human rights groups had warned that the Uighurs could face torture or other mistreatment in China for alleged involvement in fomenting unrest; their fate in China remained unknown at the end of 2010. In March, Cambodia passed new laws on asylum seekers, which were criticized by human rights groups for failing to meet the dictates of the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees.

In 2010, the United States also improved its ties to Cambodia, in part to combat China's increasing presence in the country. The United States had withdrawn a token amount of aid to protest the Uighur deportations in 2009, but in July 2010, the Pentagon launched "Angkor Sentinel" multinational peacekeeping exercises in both Phnom Penh and at a Pentagon-funded training center in Kompong Speu province. Human rights groups charged that the Cambodian military units normally housed at these bases and those included in the Angkor Sentinel exercises have been involved in illegal land seizures, political violence, and torture, among other abuses.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Cambodia is not an electoral democracy. The current constitution was promulgated in 1993 by the king, who serves as head of state. The monarchy remains highly revered as a symbol of national unity. Prince Norodom Sihamoni, who has lived abroad for much of his life, succeeded his father, King Norodom Sihanouk, in 2004, after the latter abdicated for health reasons.

The prime minister and cabinet must be approved by a majority vote in the 123-seat National Assembly. Assembly members are elected by popular vote to serve five-year terms. The upper house of the bicameral parliament, the Senate, has 61 members, of whom 2 are appointed by the king, 2 are elected by the National Assembly, and 57 are chosen by parliamentarians and commune councils. Senators serve five-year terms. Voting is tied to a citizen's permanent resident status in a village, township, or urban district, and this status cannot be changed easily. The CPP's strong influence in rural areas, with its presence of party members and control of local and provincial government officials, gives it an advantage over the opposition Sam Rainsy Party, which finds support mainly in urban centers.

Corruption and abuse of power are serious problems that hinder economic development and social stability. Many in the ruling elite abuse their positions for private gain. While economic growth in recent years has been sustained by increased investment in mining, forestry, agriculture, textile manufacturing, tourism, and real estate, these enterprises frequently involve land grabs by powerful politicians, bureaucrats, and military officers. A March 2010 anticorruption law established an

Anti-Corruption Unit (ACU) that will require as many as 100,000 public officials to disclose their assets to investigators. However, many groups maintain that the new ACU lacks independence and have raised concerns about certain provisions of the law, including one that may be used to bring defamation charges against those who register complaints that are found to be erroneous.

The government does not fully respect freedom of speech. Media controls are largely focused on local broadcast outlets. There are many newspapers and private television and radio stations, including several owned and operated by the CPP and opposition parties, though processes for granting and renewing radio and television licenses remain opaque. There are no restrictions on privately owned satellite dishes receiving foreign broadcasts. Print journalists are somewhat freer to criticize the government, but the print media reach only about 10 percent of the population. The government has increasingly used lawsuits and criminal prosecution as means of intimidation, though a judge acquitted a prominent reporter for Radio Free Asia's Khmer-language service of defamation and disinformation charges in February 2010. Imprisonment was eliminated as a penalty for defamation in 2006, but it can be imposed for spreading false information or insulting public officials. Journalists also remain vulnerable to intimidation and violence, which are rarely punished. A new penal code that came into effect in December 2010 drew criticism for several vague provisions relating to freedom of expression, including one that criminalizes any action that "affects the dignity" of a public official. The internet is fairly free of government control, but access is largely limited to urban centers.

The majority of Cambodians are Theravada Buddhists and can generally practice their faith freely, but societal discrimination against ethnic Cham Muslims remains a problem. Terrorist attacks by Islamist militants in the broader region in recent years have raised new suspicions about Muslims. The government generally respects academic freedom, though criticism of the prime minister and his family is often punished.

Freedoms of association and assembly are respected by the government to a certain degree, though the authorities' tolerance for these freedoms has declined over the past two years. Civil society groups work on a broad spectrum of issues and offer social services, frequently with funding from overseas. Those that work on social or health issues generally face less harassment from the state. Public gatherings, protests, and marches occur and are rarely violent. However, the government occasionally uses police and other forces to intimidate participants and break up demonstrations. In June 2010, representatives of communities affected by land disputes marched to Phnom Penh, though military police prevented them from presenting Prime Minister Hun Sen with a petition. In November, Phnom Penh Municipality inaugurated "Freedom Park," in accordance with the 2009 Law on Peaceful Demonstrations, which calls on the capital and each province to establish specific areas for public demonstrations. The government hailed Freedom Park as a mechanism for balancing freedoms of expression and assembly with public order. However, rights groups raised suspicions, due to the park's considerable distance from government buildings, government discretion in granting approvals for park gatherings, and a limit of 200 people per demonstration, among other restrictions. Within weeks after the park's inauguration ceremony, police turned back a group of demonstrators who planned to use the park to screen a documentary about the murder of a prominent labor leader.

Cambodia has a small number of independent unions. Workers have the right to strike, and many have done so to protest low wages and poor or dangerous working conditions. Lack of resources and experience limits union success in collective bargaining, and union leaders report harassment and physical threats. Wages have not kept up with rising costs of living, and the global economic slowdown exacerbated the hardships of low-income workers. However, the garment industry has made several well-known compacts with international companies, ensuring the fair treatment of workers. In September 2010, approximately 200,000 garment and footwear industry workers staged strikes in the capital and elsewhere, demanding significant wage increases. Although the demands were not met, strikes came to an end after several days. Hundreds of workers were either dismissed or temporarily suspended from their jobs following their participation in the strikes, yet legal proceedings regarding the legitimacy of the strikes and the response that followed remained ongoing at year's end.

The judiciary is marred by inefficiency, corruption, and a lack of independence. There is a severe shortage of lawyers, and the system's poorly trained judges are subject to political pressure from the CPP. Abuse by law enforcement officers, including illegal detention and the torture of suspects, is common. Jails are seriously overcrowded, and inmates often lack sufficient food, water, and health care. Police, soldiers, and government officials are widely believed to tolerate, or be involved in, the trafficking of guns, drugs, and people, as well as other crimes.

The constitution guarantees the right to freedom of travel and movement, and the government generally respects this right. However, there have been reports of authorities restricting travel for opposition politicians, particularly during election campaigns. Land and property rights are regularly abused for the sake of private development projects. Over the past several years, tens of thousands of people have been forcibly removed—from both rural and urban areas, and with little or no compensation or relocation assistance—to make room for commercial plantations, mine operations, factories, and high-end office and residential developments. High-ranking officials and their family members are frequently involved in these ventures, alongside international investors.

Women suffer widespread economic and social discrimination, lagging behind men in secondary and higher education, and many die from difficulties related to pregnancy and childbirth. Rape and domestic violence are common and are often tied to alcohol and drug abuse by men. In 2010, several human rights groups, including Amnesty International, highlighted the deteriorating climate for sex workers in Cambodia, who face arrest, abuse, and even rape by police. Women and girls are trafficked inside and outside of Cambodia for prostitution, and the sex trade has fueled the spread of HIV/AIDS.

Cameroon

Political Rights: 6

Population: 20,000,000

Civil Liberties: 6

Capital: Yaounde

Status: Not Free

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline For Year Under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
6,6NF									

Overview: In 2010, President Paul Biya strengthened his political influence through a cabinet reshuffle, and the government took additional steps to assert control over the electoral commission. Opposition parties continued to be marginalized and members of the press were incarcerated, leading to the death of one journalist in prison due to lack of medical care. The government increased its efforts to reduce misuse of public funds through an anticorruption campaign, though arrests under the initiative in 2010 were seen by many as politically motivated. Despite health concerns, Biya was expected to run for reelection in 2011.

Colonized by Germany in the late 19th century, Cameroon was later administered by Britain and France, first through League of Nations mandates and then as a UN trust territory after World War II. Independence for French Cameroon in 1960 was followed a year later by independence for Anglophone Cameroon, part of which opted for union with Nigeria. The rest joined Francophone Cameroon in a federation, which became a unitary state in 1972.

The country's first president, Ahmadou Ahidjo, oversaw a repressive, one-party system until his resignation in 1982. He was succeeded by Paul Biya, whose Cameroon People's Democratic Movement (CPDM) did not face multiparty legislative elections until 1992. It failed to win an absolute majority, despite a boycott by the main opposition party, the Anglophone-led Social Democratic Front (SDF). In 1992, Biya was reelected in a vote that was condemned by international observers.

The CPDM lost control of all of the country's major councils in the 1996 municipal elections. A constitutional revision that year extended the presidential term from five to seven years, and Biya won subsequent presidential elections in 1997 and 2004 amid numerous irregularities. The CPDM's victories in 1997 and 2002 legislative and 2002 municipal elections were similarly tainted. Electoral gerrymandering provided the CPDM with significant inroads into the SDF support base in the 2007 legislative and municipal polls, while SDF parliamentary representation decreased to 16 seats.

In 2008, Biya secured a constitutional amendment to remove the 1996 two-term presidential limit, allowing him to stand for reelection in 2011. Approximately 100 people were killed in clashes with police during subsequent antigovernment riots, as citizens used the opportunity to protest the president's potential reelection as well as the rising cost of living.

In a 2009 cabinet reshuffle, Prime Minister Ephraïm Inoni was replaced by Philé-

mon Yang, another CPDM politician. In September 2010, Biya replaced 22 senior government officials, including 15 permanent secretaries in various ministries. The majority of those appointed were said to have come from Biya's home region. The president's old age and failing health fueled concerns that he would become incapacitated while in office. There are no clear rules for presidential succession, nor any obvious successor.

In recent years, the president has resumed his 2004 anticorruption initiative, Operation Epervier. As of May 2010, over 100 government officials, including former ministers and former heads of state-owned companies, had been arrested on corruption charges since the program's establishment in 2004, with over a third of them arrested in 2010 alone. While the campaign maintained some public support, critics argued that the initiative was being used to eliminate political opponents.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Cameroon is not an electoral democracy. Although the 1996 constitutional revisions created an upper chamber for the legislature, a decentralized system of regional government, and a Constitutional Court, none of these provisions have been implemented. A 2008 constitutional amendment removed the 1996 limit of two seven-year terms for the president, allowing President Paul Biya to run again in 2011. The president is not required to consult the National Assembly, and the Supreme Court may review the constitutionality of a law only at the president's request. Since 1992, the executive has initiated every bill passed by the legislature. The unicameral National Assembly has 180 seats, 153 of which are held by the CPDM. Members are elected by direct popular vote for five-year terms.

The National Elections Observatory (NEO) has little influence. An elections commission, Elections Cameroon (ELECAM), was created in 2006, but commissioners were not named until December 2008. No civil society or opposition members were included, and 11 of the 12 appointees were reputedly CPDM loyalists. In March 2010, an amendment was passed requiring ELECAM to collaborate with the Ministry of Territorial Administration and Decentralization; the move was widely criticized for placing election management into the hands of a ministry loyal to Biya and jeopardizing the commission's transparency. In July, the opposition threatened to boycott the elections until the independence of ELECAM was ensured; however, at year's end, statements from party leaders indicated that they planned to participate.

There are more than 180 recognized political parties, but Biya's CPDM and the Anglophone SDF are dominant. Continued marginalization of the Anglophone community has fueled a campaign for independence by the Southern Cameroons National Council (SCNC). In October 2009, the African Commission on Human and People's Rights officially dismissed the SCNC's secessionist claims, while also condemning discrimination against Anglophones. In 2010, the SCNC continued to release statements advocating for independence.

Corruption remains endemic in Cameroon. Biya's administration has encouraged cronyism, with members of the president's ethnic group dominating key positions. Revenues from the oil, gas, and mining sectors are not openly reported. A constitutional provision requiring top civil servants to declare their assets continued to be ignored in 2010, despite public calls for transparency of government finances. Cameroon was ranked 146 out of 178 countries in Transparency International's 2010

Corruption Perceptions Index and 168 out of 183 countries in the World Bank's 2011 Doing Business Report.

The constitution guarantees free speech, but genuine freedom of expression remains elusive. Although the 1996 constitution ended prepublication censorship, the charter's Article 17 gives officials the power to ban newspapers based on a claimed threat to public order. Libel and defamation remain criminal offenses, and judicial harassment and arrests of journalists have engendered self-censorship. In 2010, journalists were regularly harassed, abused, or imprisoned. In February, three editors of different publications were arrested and charged for possessing a file that purportedly implicated a presidential adviser in undisclosed payouts to the state-run oil company. Several weeks earlier, security agents had tortured another journalist into revealing his sources for the same document. In April, one of the incarcerated journalists, Germain S. Ngota Ngota, died in prison from lack of proper medical care. In November, Biya ordered the release of the two remaining journalists, although criminal charges were still pending at year's end. There is no systematic internet censorship in Cameroon.

Freedom of religion is generally respected. There are no legal restrictions on academic freedom, but state security informants operate on university campuses, many professors exercise self-censorship, and some argue that entrance into university requires bribery or the support of a powerful patron.

The requisite administrative authorization for public meetings is often used to restrict freedoms of assembly and association. Meetings of the banned SCNC are routinely disrupted. In February 2010, members of the SDF were denied authorization to hold a ceremony to memorialize the victims of the deadly 2008 protests. In May, police violently dispersed hundreds of journalists staging a sit-in to protest Ngota's death. Trade union formation is permitted, but subject to numerous restrictions.

The judiciary is subordinate to the Ministry of Justice, and the courts are weakened by political influence and corruption. Military tribunals exercise jurisdiction over civilians in cases involving civil unrest or organized armed violence. Acts of brutality against civilians by Cameroon's elite military unit, Bataillon d'Intervention Rapide (BIR), are increasing, although some troops have been dismissed for unnecessary use of force. Torture and ill-treatment of detainees are routine. In May 2010, a report by the UN Committee Against Torture found that over half of Cameroon's prisoners were in provisional detention, many of whom remained in jail much longer than the maximum time limits for pretrial detention. The absence of habeas corpus provisions in Francophone civil law further undermines due process. In the north, traditional rulers (lamibe) operate private militias, courts, and prisons, which are used against political opponents.

Slavery reportedly persists in parts of the north, and indigenous groups and ethnic minorities, particularly the Baka (Pygmies), face discrimination. Many laws contain gender-biased provisions and penalties, and there is widespread violence and discrimination against women. Female genital mutilation is practiced in the Southwest and Far North Regions, and homosexuality is illegal. Cameroon is a child labor market and a transit center for child trafficking.

Canada

Political Rights: 1

Population: 34,200,000

Civil Liberties: 1

Capital: Ottawa

Status: Free

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline For Year Under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
1,1F									

Overview: In what some observers regarded as a major achievement for freedom of the press, the Supreme Court ruled in 2010 in favor of a journalist's right to protect key sources in stories that touched on politically sensitive corruption.

Colonized by French and British settlers in the 17th and 18th centuries, Canada was secured by the British Crown under the terms of the Treaty of Paris in 1763. After granting home rule in 1867, Britain retained a theoretical right to override the Canadian Parliament until 1982, when Canadians established complete control over their own constitution.

After a dozen years of center-left Liberal Party rule, the Conservative Party emerged from the 2006 parliamentary elections with a plurality and established a fragile minority government. Following setbacks in several of the 2007 provincial elections, the Conservatives expanded their position in the 2008 national elections. While capturing 143 seats in Parliament, the Conservatives failed to attain a majority. The Liberals, the principal opposition party, secured only 77 seats, but subsequently formed an alliance with the social democratic New Democratic Party (NDP) and the Quebec-based Bloc Quebecois, in an attempt to displace the Conservatives with a coalition government. Prime Minister Stephen Harper, the leader of the Conservative Party, suspended Parliament in December 2008 to prevent a confidence vote, which his government was likely to lose. Harper's government remains relatively popular, however, largely due to low levels of unemployment, especially in comparison with the United States.

Since the 2001 terrorist attacks on the United States, Canada has struggled to find a balance between ensuring the country's security and safeguarding civil liberties. A number of laws adopted soon after the 2001 attacks have been modified or struck down by the courts. In May 2008, the Supreme Court determined that the United States violated the rights of Omar Khadr, a Canadian who had been held at the Guantanamo Bay prison facility since the age of 15. The court rebuked the Canadian government for having allowed its intelligence agents to interview Khadr and share information with U.S. officials. The government has also been criticized for its policy of handing over prisoners detained in the conflict in Afghanistan to Afghan authorities. In 2010, the Supreme Court ruled that the country's antiterrorism laws were constitutional in a case involving a Canadian involved in a plot to blow up fertilizer bombs in various parts of London.

Two Supreme Court decisions, both issued in December 2009, significantly

changed the terms under which libel cases could be brought against journalists. The rulings establish a "responsible journalism" defense for reporters whose stories are deemed in the public interest. The decisions also extend protection against libel suits to internet journalists. In 2010, the court, while stopping short of issuing a blanket protection of journalists' sources in a case involving a major political scandal, sent a strong warning that judges should force journalists to identify their confidential sources only as a last resort. The court ruled for the first time that the media has the right to publish confidential information provided by a source—even when the source has no right to divulge the information or has obtained it by illegal means.

An intense debate has raged over Canada's participation in a NATO-led mission to fight the Taliban in Afghanistan. In November 2009, the government announced its intention to withdraw its forces from the military zone by December 2011.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Canada is an electoral democracy. The country is governed by a prime minister, a cabinet, and Parliament, which consists of an elected 308-member House of Commons and an appointed 105-member Senate. Senators may serve until age 75, and elections for the lower house have been held at least every five years. However, a law enacted in 2007 stipulated that lower-house elections would be held every four years, with early elections called only if the government lost a parliamentary no-confidence vote. The British monarch remains head of state, represented by a ceremonial governor-general, who is appointed on the advice of the prime minister. As a result of government canvassing, Canada has nearly 100 percent voter registration. Prisoners have the right to vote in federal elections, as do citizens who have lived abroad for fewer than five years. However, voter turnout in the 2008 election, at 60 percent, was one of the lowest in Canadian history.

Political parties operate freely. The main parties are the Conservative Party, the Liberal Party, the Bloc Quebecois, and the NDP.

Civil liberties have been protected since 1982 by the federal Charter of Rights and Freedoms, but they are limited by the constitutional "notwithstanding" clause, which permits provincial governments to exempt themselves with respect to individual provisions in their jurisdictions. Quebec has used the clause to retain its provincial language law, which restricts the use of languages other than French on signs. The provincial governments exercise significant autonomy.

While Canada has a reputation for vigorous prosecution of corruption involving public officials, the country has endured several high-profile scandals in recent years. Nonetheless, Canada is regarded as a society with a low level of official corruption. In 2004, the Supreme Court upheld legislation that places a limit on the amount lobbying groups can spend on advertisements that support or oppose political candidates, a measure designed to prevent corruption.

The media are generally free, although they exercise self-censorship in areas such as violence on television, and there is concern that this tendency may also apply to coverage of the country's minority groups, especially Muslims. Limitations on freedom of expression range from unevenly enforced "hate laws" and restrictions on pornography to rules on reporting. Some civil libertarians have expressed concern over an amendment to the criminal code that gives judges wide latitude in determining what constitutes hate speech on the internet. However, in 2009, the country's

human rights tribunal found unconstitutional an anti-hate speech law that targeted telephone and internet messages. The decision has had the effect of restricting the Canadian Human Rights Commission's efforts to bring cases against alleged hate speech on the internet. There is a high degree of media concentration. In general, conditions for press freedom have improved in recent years. In 2009, the Supreme Court issued two decisions strengthening protections for journalists by restricting the ground on which libel judgments can be brought against journalists and others.

Religious expression is free and diverse. In 2010, the Court of Appeals for Ontario ruled that women had the constitutional right to wear the niqab (veil) in court.

Academic freedom is respected.

Freedom of assembly is respected, and many political and quasi-political organizations function freely. Trade unions and business associations enjoy high levels of membership and are free and well organized. A 2009 study found over 31 percent of Canadian workers were members of unions.

The judiciary is independent. Canada's criminal law is based on legislation enacted by Parliament; its tort and contract law is based on English common law, with the exception of Quebec, where it is based on the French civil code. While Canada's crime rate is low by regional standards, it has experienced a growing problem from the growth of criminal gangs, often involved in the illegal drug trade.

Canada maintains relatively liberal immigration policies. However, concern has mounted over the possible entry into Canada of immigrants involved in terrorist missions. The 2002 Immigration and Refugee Protection Act seeks to continue the tradition of liberal immigration by providing additional protection for refugees while making it more difficult for potential terrorists, people involved in organized crime, and war criminals to enter the country. Canada has an immigration policy that gives preference to applicants with higher education or certain job skills. Unlike in Europe and the United States, Canada has generally avoided high levels of political polarization over immigration. Some, however, have objected to Canada's policies of multiculturalism in education, law, and social life, and have raised questions about the high percentage of immigrants who hold dual citizenship. There is a growing controversy over the wearing of the niqab or burqa in public. A bill has been proposed in Quebec that would prohibit the wearing of either garment in public sector jobs.

The authorities have taken important steps to protect the rights of native groups, although some contend that indigenous people remain subject to discrimination. Indigenous groups continue to lag badly on practically every social indicator, including those for education, health, and unemployment. There are frequent controversies over control of land in various provinces. At the same time, government proposals to facilitate the assimilation of native groups have met with stiff opposition from the groups' chiefs.

The country boasts a generous welfare system, including national health care, that supplements the largely open, competitive economy.

Women's rights are protected in law and practice. Women hold 22 percent of seats in Parliament, have made major gains in the economy, and are well represented in such professions as medicine and law. However, women's rights advocates report high rates of violence against women in indigenous communities. Canada in 2005 became one of the few countries in the world to legalize same-sex marriage.

Cape Verde

Political Rights: 1

Population: 520,000

Civil Liberties: 1

Capital: Praia

Status: Free

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline For Year Under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
1;2F	1;2F	1;1F							

Overview: Cape Verde continued to serve as a model for political rights and civil liberties in Africa in 2010. The country signed the Dakar Initiative to fight trafficking by strengthening judicial systems, improving security forces, and increasing international cooperation. Also during the year, Cape Verdean authorities took full control of school feeding responsibilities from the World Food Programme.

After achieving independence from Portugal in 1975, Cape Verde was governed for 16 years as a Marxist, one-party state under the African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde, later renamed the African Party for the Independence of Cape Verde (PAICV). In 1991, the country became the first former Portuguese colony in Africa to abandon Marxist political and economic systems, and the Movement for Democracy (MPD) won a landslide victory in the first democratic elections that year. In 1995, the MPD was returned to power with 59 percent of the vote.

President Antonio Mascarenhas Monteiro's mandate ended in 2001, after he had served two terms. That February's presidential election was spectacularly close, with PAICV candidate Pedro Verona Rodrigues Pires defeating Carlos Alberto Wanhon de Carvalho Veiga of the MPD by just 13 votes in the second round. Despite the thin margin, the results were widely accepted. The PAICV had also captured a majority in legislative elections the previous month.

The January 2006 legislative elections had a similar outcome, with the PAICV taking 41 of the 72 seats, the MPD placing second with 29, and the Democratic and Independent Cape Verdean Union (UCID), a smaller opposition party, securing the remaining 2 seats. Pires won a new five-year mandate in the February presidential election, garnering 51.2 percent of the vote. His closest rival, Veiga, claimed that the results were fraudulent, but they were endorsed by international election monitors.

In June 2007, the parliament unanimously passed new electoral code provisions aimed at strengthening the National Electoral Commission's transparency and independence. Voter registration for municipal elections held in May 2008 marked the debut of a biometric registry. The opposition MPD won a marginal victory, capturing 11 out of 22 municipalities, including the capital.

Large numbers of migrants from other African countries continue to stop in Cape Verde while trying to reach Europe. In 2008, Cape Verde and the European Union (EU) signed an agreement under which Cape Verdeans would have easier access to certain EU member states, in particular for seasonal work, while Cape Verde would undertake specific commitments to contain illegal migration to Europe.

In addition to its role in the flow of migrants, Cape Verde is increasingly serving as a transit point for drug trafficking between Latin America and Europe. According to data cited by the Associated Press in 2008, Cape Verdean passport-holders accounted for 25 percent of all West African drug traffickers arrested in Europe. The United Nations, ECOWAS, the EU, and the United States have recognized this increase and have committed funds to aid in Cape Verde's policing activities. In 2010, Cape Verde—along with other West African nations and the EU—signed the Dakar Initiative to fight trafficking by strengthening judicial systems, improving security forces, and increasing international cooperation.

Cape Verde lacks natural resources and has little arable land, unemployment rates remain at roughly 20 percent, and there is growing income inequality. Nevertheless, the economy has benefited from high levels of remittances from citizens working overseas, a boom in service-oriented industries, and increasing tourism; however, the global economic downturn slightly diminished remittances and tourism in 2010. Cape Verde joined the World Trade Organization in 2008, capping nine years of negotiations. And in an indication of the country's good governance, the UN World Food Programme handed over control of its school feeding program to Cape Verdean officials in 2010. Authorities have focused on nutrition as part of their plan to achieve Millennium Development Goals for Cape Verde by 2015.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Cape Verde is an electoral democracy. The president and members of the 72-seat National Assembly are elected by universal suffrage for five-year terms. The prime minister is nominated by the National Assembly and appointed by the president. International observers considered the 2006 presidential and legislative elections to be free and fair.

The left-leaning PAICV has dominated Cape Verdean politics for most of the postindependence period. The main opposition party is the centrist MPD. The only other party holding seats in the National Assembly is the UCID.

Cape Verde received the fourth-highest ranking in the 2010 Ibrahim Index of African Governance, and it placed in the top ten in all of the index's categories, including the top ranking in the participation and human rights category. However, the U.S. State Department reported in 2009 that police corruption was increasing, and the Economist Intelligence Unit noted persistent corruption scandals in 2010. Cape Verde was ranked 45 out of 178 countries surveyed in Transparency International's 2010 Corruption Perceptions Index, making it the third-best performer in sub-Saharan Africa.

While government authorization is needed to publish newspapers and other periodicals, freedom of the press is legally guaranteed and generally respected in practice. The independent press is small but vigorous, and there are several private and community-run radio stations. State-run media include a radio broadcaster and a television station. The government does not impede or monitor internet access.

According to the 2010 U.S. Department of State's International Religious Freedom Report, there were no societal or governmental incidents of religious intolerance, and the constitution requires the separation of church and state. However, the vast majority of Cape Verdeans belong to the Roman Catholic Church, which enjoys a somewhat privileged status. Academic freedom is respected.

Freedoms of assembly and association are legally guaranteed and observed in practice. Nongovernmental organizations operate freely. The constitution also protects the right to unionize, and workers may form and join unions without restriction. Roughly 25 percent of the workforce is unionized, but collective bargaining is reportedly rare.

Cape Verde's judiciary is independent. However, the capacity and efficiency of the courts are limited, and the U.S. State Department has reported that pretrial detentions of a year or more are common. While police beatings of detainees have been reported, increased reform and media coverage have seemingly mitigated such abuses. Juveniles are often incarcerated with adult populations. Prison conditions are poor and characterized by overcrowding.

Ethnic divisions are not a salient problem in Cape Verde, although tensions occasionally flare between the authorities and West African immigrants.

The government is a signatory to the African Protocol on the Rights of Women, which seeks to set international legal standards for women's rights, such as the criminalization of female genital mutilation and the prohibition of abuse of women in advertising and pornography. Cape Verde has also adopted a National Action Plan to fight gender violence through 2011. However, despite legal prohibitions, domestic violence and discrimination against women remain commonplace, and traditional protocols concerning gender roles continue to hinder gender equality. In 2010, the U.S. State Department reported that government responses to sexual violence and discrimination based on gender identity and sexual orientation were inadequate.

Central African Republic

Political Rights: 5

Population: 4,900,000

Civil Liberties: 5

Capital: Bangui

Status: Partly Free

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline For Year Under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
5,5PF	5,5F	7,5NF	6,5NF	5,4PF	5,4PF	5,5PF	5,5PF	5,5PF	5,5PF

Overview: The government postponed presidential and legislative elections originally slated for April 2010 until January 2011, citing inadequate funding. In May, the National Assembly passed a law allowing Francois Bozizé to remain in power until elections are held. Insecurity continued to plague much of the country during the year, as the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) increased its attacks against civilians, and the Convention of Patriots for Justice and Peace (CPJP) rebel group continued its attacks on the town of Birao.

The Central African Republic (CAR) gained independence from France in 1960 after a period of brutal colonial exploitation. Colonel Jean-Bédél Bokassa seized power from President David Dacko in a 1966 coup, but French forces helped

to restore Dacko in 1979. He was then deposed again by General Andre Kolingba in 1981.

Mounting political pressure led Kolingba to introduce a multiparty system in 1991, and Ange-Felix Patassé, leader of the Movement for the Liberation of the Central African People (MLPC), was elected president in 1993. With French assistance, he survived three attempted coups between 1996 and 1997. French forces were replaced by African peacekeepers in 1997, and the United Nations took over peacekeeping duties the following year.

Patasse won a second six-year term in 1999. International observers judged the election to be relatively free, although irregularities were reported. UN peacekeepers withdrew in 2000. While Patasse overcame a coup attempt by Kolingba in 2001, he was ousted by General Francois Bozize in 2003, allegedly with backing from President Idriss Deby of Chad.

Bozize initiated a transition back to civilian rule, and voters approved a new constitution in 2004. With the backing of the National Convergence Kwa Na Kwa (KNK) coalition, Bozize ran for president as an independent, winning 65 percent of the vote in a May 2005 runoff against MLPC candidate Martin Ziguele. The KNK won 42 of 105 seats in the National Assembly, securing a majority with the help of several smaller parties and independents. The MLPC, the second-largest grouping, won just 11 seats.

In early 2005, the rebel Army for the Restoration of the Republic and Democracy (APRD), supported by forces loyal to Patasse, launched an insurgency in the northwest. In the northeast, another conflict erupted between the government and the Union of Democratic Forces for Unity (UFDR), consisting of former Bozize supporters and members of the largely Muslim Gula ethnic group. Destructive rebel assaults on Birao and other towns continued through 2006, and in early 2007, the Central African People's Democratic Front (FDPC) launched yet another insurgency in the northwest.

After a series of failed peace agreements, the National Assembly passed a law in September 2008 providing government and rebel forces with immunity for abuses committed after March 15, 2003. Peace talks between Bozize, the opposition, and rebel groups in December 2008 established an interim government to lead the country until the next elections and outlined a Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (DDR) program. By December 2009, the United Nations reported that the all rebel groups, except the Convention of Patriots for Justice and Peace (CPJP), were participating in the peace process except for the CPJP.

In September 2007, the UN Security Council authorized a new UN Mission in CAR and Chad (MINURCAT) and a related European Union peacekeeping force in northeastern CAR. MINURCAT's mandate ended on December 31, 2010; troops had left Northeast CAR by mid-November. Shortly after their withdrawal, the CPJP took control of Birao. The Chadian army later displaced the rebels, but the fighting forced many civilians to flee Birao.

In January 2010, half of the members of the Independent Electoral Commission quit in protest over the appointment of its president, Joseph Binguimalet, whom they claimed favored Bozize. Presidential and legislative elections had been postponed four times before April 2010, but by August 2010, all political parties and civil society groups signed onto a new election calendar scheduled for January 2011. A

law passed by the National Assembly in May allowed Bozizé and members of the Assembly to remain in power until elections are held. Opposition groups initially blamed Bozizé for delaying elections but did not challenge the legitimacy of his rule. The government has blamed the most recent postponement on inadequate funding, though previous delays stemmed from incomplete voter lists, problems with candidate registration, and insecurity in the north. Voter registration took place in September and October, but the National Democratic Institute reported that the lists had not been shared publicly.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: The CAR is not an electoral democracy. The 2005 presidential and parliamentary elections were marked by some irregularities and criticized by opposition candidates as unfair. The president, who is limited to two five-year terms, appoints the cabinet and dominates the legislative and judicial branches. Members of the unicameral, 105-seat National Assembly are elected by popular vote for five-year terms. Though the KNK coalition is the country's leading political force, other parties operate freely.

Following a number of delays, presidential and legislative elections were rescheduled for January 2011. President Francois Bozizé will run against independent candidate and former president Ange-Félix Patassé, as well as MLPC candidate and former prime minister Martin Ziguélé.

Corruption remains pervasive, despite some steps toward reform in recent years. Diamonds account for about half of the country's export earnings, but a large percentage of the stones are thought to circumvent official channels. CAR was ranked 154 of 178 countries surveyed in Transparency International's 2010 Corruption Perceptions Index 2010.

The government generally respects the right to free speech, but many journalists practice self-censorship. It is illegal to broadcast information that is "false" or that could incite ethnic or religious tension. According to the U.S. State Department, laws providing journalists with access to information do not specifically guarantee access to government information. The state dominates the broadcast media, but some private radio stations exist, including a Roman Catholic station and a UN-supported station. Several private newspapers offer competing views, though they have limited influence due to low literacy levels and high poverty rates. There are no government restrictions on the internet, but the vast majority of the population is unable to access this resource.

The constitution guarantees religious freedom. However, the government prohibits activities that it considers subversive or fundamentalist, and the constitution bans the formation of religious-based parties. Academic freedom is generally respected.

Freedoms of assembly and association are constitutionally protected and generally upheld in practice. However, permission is required to hold public meetings and demonstrations; authorities sometimes deny such requests on the grounds that they could stoke ethnic or religious tensions. The rights to unionize and strike are constitutionally protected and generally respected, though only a small percentage of workers are unionized, primarily those in the public sector.

Corruption, political interference, and lack of training undermine the judiciary. Judges are appointed by the president, and proceedings are prone to executive influence. Limitations on police searches and detention are often ignored. While the pe-

nal code prohibits torture, police brutality remains a serious problem. Prison conditions are poor. The military and members of the presidential guard have committed human rights abuses, including extrajudicial killings, with impunity. According to Amnesty International, 11 people were held without trial between June and October 2010 due to their association with a lawyer and businessman accused of burning a supermarket owned by a prominent Lebanese businessman. The national lawyers' union held a two-month boycott to protest the arrests and government interference in the investigation.

Insecurity restricts the movement of citizens and greatly undermines the protection of private property. Attacks by the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), a Ugandan rebel group, increased in 2010, with rebel activities reported in four regions of CAR. A Human Rights Watch (HRW) mission to CAR in August estimated that the violence has displaced tens of thousands of villagers, and at least 304 civilians had been kidnapped in abductions targeting children. According to a November 2010 HRW report, the LRA has killed some 2,000 civilians and abducted an additional 3,000 since September 2008. The Internal Displacement Monitoring Center estimates the number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) at 192,000, the number of refugees in CAR at 31,500, and the number of Central African refugees abroad at 162,000 as of June 2010; most IDPs remain in the northwest.

The CPJP held the city of Yalinga between September 18 and October 6, 2010, and again in November 2010. Charles Massi, CPJP leader and former minister, was apprehended by Chadian authorities in December 2009, and his supporters claimed that he had been tortured to death while in CAR government custody in January 2010. The government has denied these allegations.

Despite the country's abundant natural resources, some 80 percent of the population relies on subsistence agriculture. Decades of conflict and poor governance have led to economic and social collapse. The CAR was ranked 159 out of 169 countries in the UN Development Programme's 2010 Human Development Index.

Constitutional guarantees for women's rights are not enforced, especially in rural areas. Following a February 2010 visit to CAR, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Navi Pillay, expressed serious concern over the high incidence of sexual violence against women by state and nonstate actors. Abortion is prohibited in all circumstances. An April 2010 UNICEF report revealed widespread allegations of child witchcraft in CAR, which often result in child abuse and abandonment. The U.S. State Department's 2010 Trafficking in Persons Report placed CAR on its Tier 2 Watch List for the fifth consecutive year.

Chad

Political Rights: 7
Civil Liberties: 6
Status: Not Free

Population: 11,500,000
 Capital: N'Djamena

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline For Year Under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
6,5NF	6,5NF	6,5NF	6,5NF	6,5NF	6,6NF	7,6NF	7,6NF	7,6NF	7,6NF

Overview: The Chadian government continued to struggle with rebel groups in 2010, but it significantly improved relations with the Sudanese government, as the two sides worked to suppress cross-border rebel activity. Also during the year, long-delayed legislative and municipal elections scheduled for November and December were postponed again until February and March 2011, respectively.

Since gaining independence from France in 1960, Chad has been beset by civil conflict and rebellions. Hissene Habre seized control in 1982 and led a one-party dictatorship characterized by widespread atrocities against individuals and ethnic groups that were perceived as threats to the regime. In 1989, Idriss Deby, a military commander, launched a rebellion against Habre from Sudan. With support from Libya and no opposition from French troops stationed in Chad, Deby overthrew Habre in 1990.

Deby won a presidential election held under a new constitution in 1996 despite the ongoing threat of rebel violence. In 1997 legislative elections, his Patriotic Salvation Movement (MPS) party won 65 of the 125 seats. International observers charged that both elections were marred by irregularities.

Deby was reelected in 2001, and the six opposition candidates were briefly detained for alleging that the election results were fraudulent. The MPS secured 110 seats in the recently enlarged, 155-seat National Assembly during the 2002 legislative elections, which were boycotted by several opposition parties. Voters approved the elimination of presidential term limits in a 2005 constitutional referendum, though the balloting featured irregularities, and the government cracked down on the media during the campaign.

Security forces, assisted by French intelligence and air support, repelled an April 2006 attack on the capital by the United Front for Change (FUC) rebel group. The May presidential election was then held on schedule despite an opposition boycott, and Deby secured a third term. The military, again with French support, launched a new assault on rebel forces in September, and in November, the government declared a six-month state of emergency for the capital and most of the east, including a ban on media coverage of sensitive issues.

In early February 2008, a formation of some 2,000 rebel fighters attacked the capital. Although the two sides soon agreed on a ceasefire and the rebels withdrew, Deby declared a state of emergency, suspending due process rights and tightening already harsh media restrictions. Human rights groups accused the regime of ex-

trajudicial detention and killing of suspected rebels, their supporters, and members of the Goran ethnic group, some of whom were involved in the rebel assault. The state of emergency was lifted on March 15, but fighting continued in the east during the year.

Deby and Sudanese president Omar al-Bashir traded accusations in 2008 over support for rebels on each other's territory. In May 2009, the Chadian and Sudanese governments signed an accord aimed at normalizing relations. However, shortly thereafter, the Union of Resistance Forces (UFR)—an alliance of eight rebel groups that had formed in January—launched an attack on Chad from its base in Sudan's Darfur region. Violence along the border increased over the subsequent months, and in July, Chadian planes bombed targets in Darfur.

In April 2010, the government fought the rebel Popular Front for National Resistance near Tissi, reportedly killing more than 100 fighters. In May, former defense minister Mahamat Nouri announced the formation of a new rebel group, the National Alliance for Democratic Change. Members included dissidents from three groups that belonged to the UFR.

Relations between Sudan and Chad improved significantly in 2010, starting with a January agreement that led to a series of presidential visits. In February, the governments established a joint patrol of 3,000 troops along the border. Authorities reopened the border to civilian traffic in April, after it had been closed for seven years. In May, Chad prohibited the leader of a leading Darfur rebel group, the Justice and Equality Movement, from returning to Sudan. Meanwhile, the Sudanese authorities pressured Chadian rebel groups to leave Sudanese territory. In October, a reported 171 UFR fighters returned to Chad from Darfur.

After years of regular fighting in the region, Chad is now home to some 180,000 internally displaced persons as well as more than 320,000 refugees from Darfur and the Central African Republic. The UN Mission in the Central African Republic and Chad (MINURCAT) was formed in 2007 to help care for and protect these civilians. Its original mandate was set to expire in May 2010, but was renewed until December 31. In February 2010, Deby had requested that UN troops leave Chad, while humanitarian groups expressed concern about increased insecurity if the force were to withdraw. By December, MINURCAT had withdrawn all of its troops.

The United Nations reported heightened food shortages due to flooding and droughts in 2010; acute malnutrition rates for children under age two are as high as 26 percent in some regions. Lake Chad continues to shrink, posing a grave risk to the millions of people who rely on its water. An estimated 2.8 million people in Chad were receiving humanitarian aid in mid-2010.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Chad is not an electoral democracy. The country has never experienced a free and fair transfer of power through elections. The president is elected for five-year terms, and a 2005 constitutional amendment abolished term limits. The 2006 presidential election was held shortly after a rebel assault on the capital, despite calls for a postponement. Many opposition members boycotted the balloting, which was reportedly marred by irregularities, and voter turnout may have been as low as 10 percent in some areas. The executive branch dominates the judicial and legislative branches,

and the president appoints the prime minister. The unicameral National Assembly consists of 155 members elected for four-year terms. The last legislative elections, in 2002, also featured widespread irregularities.

The legislative elections due in 2006 have been repeatedly postponed; in September 2010, they were pushed back from November of that year to February 2011. Election officials cited insufficient equipment and staffing, and delays in voter registration. Municipal elections were similarly rescheduled from December 2010 to March 2011. A presidential election is now slated for April 2011. Also in 2010, the main opposition coalition, Coordination for the Defense of the Constitution, threatened to boycott the upcoming votes due to the government's media dominance and the use of state resources to benefit the ruling party.

There are over 70 political parties, although a number were created by the government to divide the opposition. Only the ruling MPS has significant influence. Despite rivalries within President Idriss Déby's northeastern Zaghawa ethnic group, members of that and other northern ethnic groups continue to control Chad's political and economic systems, causing resentment among the country's more than 200 other ethnic groups.

Corruption is rampant within Déby's inner circle. Weaknesses in revenue management and oversight facilitate the diversion of oil revenues from national development projects to private interests and growing military expenditures. Chad was ranked 171 out of 178 countries surveyed in Transparency International's 2010 Corruption Perceptions Index.

Freedom of expression is severely restricted, and self-censorship is common. Broadcast media are controlled by the state. The High Council of Communication (HCC) exerts control over most radio content, and while there are roughly a dozen private stations, they face high licensing fees and the threat of closure for critical coverage. A 2008 press law increased the maximum penalty for false news and defamation to three years in prison, and the maximum penalty for insulting the president to five years. Also in 2008, the HCC banned reporting on the activities of rebels or any other information that could harm national unity. A small number of private newspapers have circulated in the capital, and internet access is not restricted, but the reach of both print and online media is limited by poverty, illiteracy, and inadequate infrastructure. A court cleared the newspaper *La Voix* of alleged licensing violations in January 2010; the authorities had seized its press runs and abducted staff members in December 2009. In August 2010, the National Assembly passed a media bill that eliminated imprisonment as a punishment for libel, slander, or insulting the president, but created new imprisonment penalties for, "inciting racial and ethnic hatred and condoning violence."

Although Chad is a secular state, religion is a divisive force. Muslims, who make up slightly more than half of the population, hold a disproportionately large number of senior government posts, and some policies favor Islam in practice, such as government sponsorship of the pilgrimage to Mecca. At the same time, the authorities have banned Muslim groups that are seen as promoting violence, and security forces clashed with supporters of a radical Islamist preacher in 2008. The government does not restrict academic freedom, but funds meant for the education system have reportedly been lost to corruption.

Despite the constitutional guarantee of free assembly, the authorities ban dem-

142 Freedom in the World—2011

onstrations by groups thought to be critical of the government. Insecurity in the east and south has severely hindered the activities of humanitarian organizations in recent years. The constitution guarantees the rights to strike and unionize, but a 2007 law imposed new limits on public sector workers' right to strike.

The rule of law and the judicial system remain weak, with courts heavily influenced by the political leadership. Civilian leaders do not maintain effective control of the security forces, which routinely ignore constitutional protections regarding search, seizure, and detention. Human rights groups credibly accuse the security forces and rebel groups of killing and torturing with impunity. Overcrowding, disease, and malnutrition make prison conditions harsh, and many inmates are held for years without charge.

Clashes are common between Christian farmers of the various southern ethnic groups and Muslim Arab groups living largely in the north. Turmoil linked to ethnic and religious differences is exacerbated by clan rivalries and external interference along the insecure borders. Communal tensions in eastern Chad have worsened due to the proliferation of small arms and ongoing disputes over the use of land and water resources.

The government restricts the movement of citizens within the country, a practice that has increased in tandem with the civil conflicts.

Chadian women face widespread discrimination and violence. Female genital mutilation is illegal but routinely practiced by several ethnic groups. Chad is a source, transit, and destination country for child trafficking, and the government has not made significant efforts to eliminate the problem. The U.S. State Department placed Chad on the Tier 2 Watch List in its 2010 Trafficking in Persons Report.

Chile

Political Rights: 1
Civil Liberties: 1
Status: Free

Population: 17,100,000
Capital: Santiago

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline For Year Under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
2,2F	2,1F	1,1F							

Overview: Wealthy businessman and former senator Sebastian Piñera of the center-right Coalition for Change was elected president in a January 2010 runoff vote. His inauguration as Chile's first conservative head of state since the end of the dictatorship in 1990 represented a dramatic rupture with the past. Piñera's victory came despite the popularity of outgoing center-left president Michelle Bachelet and her administration's robust social-welfare programs.

The Republic of Chile was founded after independence from Spain in 1818. Democratic rule predominated in the 20th century until 1973, when General Augusto

Pinochet led a military coup against President Salvador Allende. An estimated 3,000 people were killed or "disappeared" under Pinochet's regime. The 1980 constitution provided for a plebiscite, in which voters could bar another presidential term for the general. When the poll was held in 1988, some 55 percent of voters rejected eight more years of military rule, and competitive presidential and legislative elections were scheduled for the following year. Christian Democrat Patricio Aylwin of the center-left bloc Concertación (Coalition of Parties for Democracy) won the presidential vote, ushering in an era of regular democratic power transfers as well as two decades of Concertación rule.

In the first step in what would become a years-long effort to hold Pinochet responsible for his regime's human rights atrocities, the former leader was detained in London in 1998 under an extradition order from Spain. After being released for health reasons in 2000, he returned to Chile, where he was eventually indicted in 2004 for tax evasion and two outstanding human rights cases. A September 2006 Supreme Court decision cleared the way for his trial, but Pinochet died in December of that year.

Michelle Bachelet, who served as health and defense minister under the outgoing Concertación president, won the January 2006 presidential election. Early in her term, Bachelet faced huge student demonstrations demanding education improvements, and oversaw a botched reform of Santiago's public transit system. Concertación's strength was also undermined in 2009 by infighting among its four member parties, three of which suffered defections. However, Bachelet presided over popular spending projects, including the construction of new hospitals, homes, and nursery schools, and her government was able to continue social spending during the global economic downturn that began in 2008 thanks to its aggressive saving of copper revenues during the previous commodities boom.

Despite Bachelet's personal popularity, Sebastian Pinera of the center-right Coalition for Change led the first round of the presidential election in December 2009, and went on to win the January 2010 runoff with 51.6 percent of the vote, defeating former president Eduardo Frei of Concertación. In the concurrent December 2009 congressional election, the Coalition for Change edged out Concertación in the 120-seat lower house, 58 seats to 57, with the remainder going to small parties and independents. In the Senate, the two main blocs split the 18 seats at stake, leading to a new total of 19 for Concertación, 16 for the Coalition for Change, and 3 for independents.

The new administration was challenged by a massive earthquake that struck Chile in late February 2010, but Pinera was able to carry out effective reconstruction due to Chile's sound public finances. The government also assumed full control of rescue operations after an accident trapped 33 miners in a gold and copper mine in northern Chile in August. Their successful rescue in October boosted Pinera's popularity as well as Chile's international image. Responding to the incident, the president vowed that Chile would pass an International Labour Organization convention that protects workers who raise safety concerns.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Chile is an electoral democracy. Elections are considered free and fair. The president is elected for a single four-year term. The Senate's 38 members serve eight-year terms,

with half coming up for election every four years, and the 120-member Chamber of Deputies is elected for four years.

In 2005, the Senate passed reforms that repealed some of the last vestiges of military rule, ending authoritarian curbs on the legislative branch and restoring the president's right to remove top military commanders. The reform package included the abolition of the Senate's nine unelected seats and reduced the presidential term from six years to four. In early 2010, the Bachelet administration introduced a bill that would remove another relic of the former regime—the Copper Reserve Law—that obliged the state-owned copper producer Codelco to transfer 10 percent of its earnings to the military. The revision of the Copper Law caused much debate within Chile and was not completed by year's end. However, public support for stopping the automatic military transfer increased after the massive reconstruction costs resulting from the February earthquake.

The major political groupings in Chile include the center-left Concertación, composed of the Christian Democratic Party, the Socialist Party, the Party for Democracy, and the Social Democratic Radical Party; the center-right Alliance coalition, consisting of the Independent Democratic Union and the National Renewal party; and the Communist Party. The Coalition for Change, encompassing the Alliance coalition, independents, and some Concertación defectors, was formed in May 2009.

Congress passed significant transparency and campaign finance laws in 2003 that contributed to Chile's reputation as Latin America's best-governed country. A 2007 law was designed to improve transparency further, in part by protecting public employees who expose corruption. Transparency International's 2010 Corruption Perceptions Index gave Chile a ranking of 21 out of 178 countries surveyed, making it the best performer in Latin America.

Guarantees of free speech are generally respected, and the media operate without constraint, though some laws barring defamation of state institutions remain on the books. The print media are dominated by two right-leaning companies, but the television market is considered highly diverse. A freedom of information law enacted in 2008 was praised by civil society groups. There are no government restrictions on the internet.

The constitution provides for freedom of religion, and the government generally upholds this right in practice. The government does not restrict academic freedom. The right to assemble peacefully is largely respected, and the constitution guarantees the right of association and collective bargaining, which the government has also upheld. Despite laws protecting worker and union rights, antiunion practices by private employers are reportedly common.

The constitution provides for an independent judiciary, and the courts are generally free from political interference. The right to legal counsel is constitutionally guaranteed, but indigent defendants have not always received effective representation. Chilean courts have convicted several former military officers of committing heinous crimes during military rule. In September 2009, arrest warrants were issued for 129 former security officials tied to disappearances and killings from that period. No formal convictions, however, had been made by the end of 2010.

The government has developed effective mechanisms to investigate and punish police abuse and corruption. However, excessive force and human rights abuses committed by the Carabineros—a national police element of the armed forces—still

occur. Chile's prisons are overcrowded and increasingly violent. Inmates suffer from physical abuse as well as substandard medical and food services.

Indigenous groups comprise approximately 5 percent of Chile's population. While they still experience societal discrimination, their poverty levels are declining, aided by government scholarships, land transfers, and social spending. For example, in 2010, President Sebastián Piñera promised to spend \$4 billion on development in the southern Araucanía region, one of Chile's poorest regions and the homeland of the Mapuche Indians. A 1993 law paved the way for the return of land to Chile's indigenous peoples, but in many cases, it has prompted additional claims, land seizures, and violence. More than 100 Mapuche are incarcerated in southern Chile for crimes including armed assault and arson, committed in attempts to reclaim ancestral lands that were sold by the government without the Mapuche's consent. Over 30 Mapuche accused of attacks participated in an extended hunger strike in 2010, which prompted a change to Chile's antiterrorism law. The law, which dated to the Pinochet era, allowed for secret witnesses, pretrial detention, and the use of military courts. As amended by Congress in September, the law presumes innocence and carries a reduced sentence for arson.

Violence against women and children remains a problem, though gender discrimination is on the decline. Divorce was legalized only in 2004. President Michelle Bachelet made great strides to reduce gender discrimination. She initially fulfilled a campaign promise by appointing women to half of the positions in her cabinet and helped enact new laws to remove public sector job candidates' gender from applications, mandate public sector job training during regular working hours, expand the right to nurse infants during working hours, improve pension benefits for low-income female homemakers, and eliminate the pay gap between men and women performing the same work. Reflecting an ongoing reduction in gender discrimination, the Ministry of Education announced in August 2010 that a majority of all higher education students were women.

China

Political Rights: 7

Population: 1,338,100,000

Civil Liberties: 6

Capital: Beijing

Status: Not Free

Note: The numerical ratings and status listed above do not reflect conditions in Hong Kong or Tibet, which are examined in separate reports.

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline For Year Under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
7,6NF									

Overview:

The ruling Chinese Communist Party continued in 2010 to suppress dissent and strengthen its security apparatus while neglecting institutional reforms that would

address the root causes of citizens' grievances. During the year, internet censorship and forced evictions increased; judicial procedures in commercial cases showed signs of political intervention; leading human rights lawyers were harassed, disbarred, and "disappeared"; and new regulations made it more difficult for civil society groups to obtain funding from overseas donors. While China's activist community was encouraged by the decision to grant the 2010 Nobel Peace Prize to jailed democracy advocate Liu Xiaobo, the Chinese government responded with a crackdown on Liu's associates and widespread censorship of related news. Despite the repressive atmosphere, many citizens continued to defy government hostility and assert their rights to free expression and association.

The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) took power in mainland China in 1949. Party leader Mao Zedong subsequently oversaw devastating mass-mobilization campaigns, such as the Great Leap Forward (1958-61) and the Cultural Revolution (1966-76), which resulted in tens of millions of deaths. Following Mao's death in 1976, Deng Xiaoping emerged as paramount leader. Over the next two decades, he maintained the CCP's absolute rule in the political sphere, while initiating limited market-based reforms to stimulate the economy.

The CCP signaled its resolve to avoid democratization with the deadly 1989 assault on prodemocracy protesters in Beijing's Tiananmen Square and surrounding areas. Following the crackdown, Jiang Zemin replaced Zhao Ziyang as general secretary of the party. Jiang was named state president in 1993 and became China's top leader following Deng's death in 1997. He continued Deng's policy of rapid economic growth, recognizing that regime legitimacy now rested largely on the CCP's ability to boost living standards. In the political sphere, Jiang maintained a hard line.

Hu Jintao succeeded Jiang as CCP general secretary in 2002, state president in 2003, and head of the military in 2004. Many observers expected Hu and Premier Wen Jiabao to implement modest political reforms to address pressing socioeconomic problems, including a rising income gap, unemployment, the lack of a social safety net, environmental degradation, and corruption. However, while it proved moderately more responsive to certain constituencies—especially the urban middle class—the government continued to exercise tight control over key institutions and intensified repression of perceived threats to the CCP's authority.

In March 2008, the National People's Congress bestowed additional five-year terms on Hu and Wen, while Shanghai party boss Xi Jinping was appointed vice president, setting the stage for him to succeed Hu in 2012. Xi's position as heir apparent was reinforced in October 2010, when he was appointed as deputy chair of the Central Military Commission. Intraparty power struggles related to the upcoming 2012 leadership transition appeared to strengthen hard-liners, contributing to a trend of heightened political repression that had begun in 2008.

In October 2010, jailed democracy advocate Liu Xiaobo was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize; he was the first Chinese citizen to receive it. In response, the government engaged in systematic censorship to prevent news of the prize and Liu's activities from circulating inside China. It also harassed and detained dozens of other activists, and refused to allow anyone to travel to the Oslo award ceremony in December to accept the prize on his behalf.

Growing anger over corruption, abuse of power, and injustice fueled tens of thousands of protests during the year, particularly in rural areas. The CCP committed more resources to internal security forces and intelligence agencies, and continued to tighten political control over the judiciary, expand the use of surveillance equipment, and employ a network of extralegal taskforces to coordinate the suppression of grassroots discontent. Conditions in Tibet and Xinjiang, both home to restive ethnic and religious minorities, remained highly repressive in 2010.

Despite government hostility, a growing nonprofit sector provided crucial social services and increased citizens' rights awareness. In addition, bloggers, journalists, legal professionals, workers, and religious believers tested the limits of permissible activity, sometimes effectively asserting the rights to free expression and association. Citizens managed to challenge local level abuses of power, obtain higher wages, and force the government to acknowledge certain rights violations, like the extralegal detention of petitioners. According to reports by activists and references on official websites, banned political texts continued to circulate, especially online.

The Chinese government showed a growing penchant for strong-arm tactics in its international relations in 2010. Among other actions, it engaged in maritime confrontations near disputed island groups, and used threats of economic retaliation to dissuade foreign governments from participating in the Nobel Peace Prize award ceremony. Relations between China and Taiwan continued to thaw, however, and the two governments signed an Economic Cooperation Framework Agreement aimed at reducing trade barriers.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: China is not an electoral democracy. The CCP has a monopoly on political power, and its nine-member Politburo Standing Committee sets government policy. Party members hold almost all top posts in the government, military, and internal security services, as well as in many economic entities and social organizations. The 3,000-member National People's Congress (NPC), which is elected for five-year terms by subnational congresses, formally elects the state president for up to two five-year terms, and confirms the premier after he is nominated by the president. However, the NPC is a largely symbolic body, meeting for just two weeks a year to approve proposed legislation. The country's only competitive elections are for village committees and urban residency councils, which hold limited authority and are generally subordinate to the local CCP committees. The nomination of candidates remains tightly controlled, and many of these elections have been marred by fraud, violence, corruption, and attacks on independent candidates.

Opposition groups like the China Democracy Party (CDP) are suppressed, and members are imprisoned. Democracy advocate and 2010 Nobel Peace Prize-winner Liu Xiaobo was sentenced in December 2009 to 11 years in prison for his involvement in drafting and circulating the prodemocracy manifesto Charter 08. Over 100 other individuals associated with Liu were harassed or detained in 2010 after his Nobel award was announced. In October, the U.S. Congressional-Executive Commission on China published a partial list of over 1,400 political prisoners, while the San Francisco-based Dui Hua Foundation estimated that 985 new arrests for "endangering state security" were made in 2010. Tens of thousands of people are thought to be held in extrajudicial forms of detention for their political or religious views.

Corruption remains endemic despite increased government antigraft efforts, generating growing public resentment. The problem is most acute in sectors with extensive state involvement, such as construction, land procurement, and banking. There is no independent anticorruption agency, but according to official figures, at least 113,000 officials were investigated and punished by government or CCP entities in 2010. However, prosecution is selective, with informal personal networks and internal CCP power struggles influencing the choice of targets. In May 2010, Huang Guangyu, formerly China's richest man, was sentenced to 14 years in prison for bribery. A series of other cases in 2010 exposed local officials or their children who committed homicides or caused fatalities while driving drunk and then sought to use their privileged position to escape punishment.

CCP officials increasingly seek input from academics and civic groups on pending legislation, though without relinquishing control over the decision-making process. New open-government regulations took effect in 2008, but implementation has been incomplete. Some agencies and local governments have been more forthcoming in publishing accounting details or official regulations; in 2010, authorities in Guangdong published the previously secret provincial budget and expenditures for 2009. However, courts have hesitated to enforce citizens' information requests. Local officials continued to hide vital information on topics including mining disasters, tainted food products, and polluting companies. China was ranked 78 out of 178 countries surveyed in Transparency International's 2010 Corruption Perceptions Index.

Despite relative freedom in private discussion and journalists' efforts to push the limits of permissible speech, China's media environment remains extremely restrictive. Routinely taboo topics include calls for greater autonomy in Tibet and Xinjiang, relations with Taiwan, the persecuted Falun Gong spiritual group, and any criticism of CCP leaders. Specific party directives in 2010 curbed reporting on the Nobel Peace Prize, public health issues, environmental accidents, tainted food, foreign policy, and other matters. Journalists who fail to comply with official guidance are harassed, fired, or jailed. In 2010, investigative journalists also faced punishment by powerful economic actors, who used connections with local authorities to prompt police intervention on their behalf. Growing violence against journalists is often met with little or no official investigation. This trend culminated with the brutal killing of Sun Hongjie, a reporter from the *Northern Xinjiang Morning Post*, in December; he had recently reported on the demolition of a factory to make way for government officials' housing, but police claimed the murder was unrelated to his work.

According to international watchdog groups, China tied with Iran in 2010 for the largest number of jailed journalists; the 34 identified were mostly freelancers. In addition, at least 70 cyberdissidents remained imprisoned at year's end for disseminating proscribed information, though the actual number is likely much higher. Throughout the year, particularly harsh punishments were meted out to Uighurs who hosted websites or otherwise circulated information that was critical of the government regarding ethnic violence in Xinjiang in July 2009. In April 2010, two individuals were sentenced to life in prison after a secret trial for translating and posting to the Uighur website Salkin information about a peaceful protest that had preceded the violent outbreak. In July, Uighur webmaster Gheytrat Niyaz was sentenced to 15 years in prison for comments made to a Hong Kong media outlet.

Local officials continue to block, harass, and sometimes assault foreign reporters while intimidating their Chinese sources and assistants. In March 2010, numerous foreign correspondents had their e-mail accounts hacked, and the website of the Foreign Correspondents' Club of China was disabled by a denial-of-service attack shortly thereafter. In July, two Polish journalists were denied visas, apparently as punishment for previous reporting that was critical of the Chinese government. Some international radio and television broadcasts, including the U.S. government-funded Radio Free Asia, remain jammed. Foreign outlets, including CNN, experienced periodic blackouts in 2010 when they reported on Liu Xiaobo's Nobel Peace Prize or certain content of U.S. diplomatic cables released by the antisecrecy group WikiLeaks.

The population of internet users in China remained the world's largest, reaching 450 million by December 2010, according to official figures. However, the government maintains an elaborate apparatus for censoring and monitoring internet use and personal communications, including via mobile telephones. The authorities block websites or force deletion of content they deem politically threatening and detain those who post the information. In early 2010, the U.S.-based search-engine company Google announced that it was no longer willing to censor the search results on its China version according to CCP instructions, and began redirecting China-based users to its uncensored Hong Kong site instead. In November, activist Cheng Jianping was sentenced without trial to one year in a "re-education through labor" camp in Henan province for sending a message over the banned microblogging platform Twitter, in which she jokingly suggested that anti-Japanese nationalists attack the Japanese Pavilion at the Shanghai World Expo. Also during the year, authorities systematically blocked international social-networking and microblogging sites, amended the state secrets law to reinforce service providers' responsibility for policing content, increased restrictions on anonymous communication, and cut off the personal internet and mobile-phone connections of dozens of activists at the time of the Nobel Peace Prize award ceremony. Despite the government's controls, factors including the technology's flexibility, circumvention tools, and the large volume of online communications have allowed many users to access censored content, expose official corruption, mobilize protests, and circulate banned political texts.

The number of religious believers, including Christians, has expanded in recent years. Nevertheless, religious freedom is sharply curtailed, and religious minorities remained a key target of repression during 2010. All religious groups are required to register with the government, which regulates their activities and guides their theology. Some groups, such as Falun Gong and certain Buddhist and Christian organizations, are formally banned, and their members face harassment, imprisonment, and torture. Other unregistered groups, such as unofficial Protestant and Roman Catholic congregations, operate in a legal gray zone, and state tolerance of them varies from place to place. Unregistered Buddhist temples were targeted for demolition during the year. Signs of a potential escalation in the persecution of Christians emerged toward the end of 2010. Prominent Christian activist Fan Yafeng was detained in December and remained in custody at year's end. Surveillance of Falun Gong practitioners in Shanghai increased in advance of the World Expo, and dozens of adherents were reportedly detained, with some sentenced to labor camps and prisons. According to Amnesty International, Guo Xiaojun, a former lecturer at Jiaotong

University in Shanghai, was taken from his home in January and later sentenced to four years in prison for possessing and distributing Falun Gong-related materials. In early 2010, the CCP also launched a three-year nationwide campaign to intensify efforts to "transform" Falun Gong adherents, a coercive process typically involving physical and psychological torture aimed at forcing them to renounce their beliefs.

Academic freedom remains restricted with respect to politically sensitive issues. The CCP controls the appointment of university officials, and many scholars practice self-censorship to preserve their positions and personal safety. Restrictions on scholars' ability to travel abroad increased in 2010. Political indoctrination is a required component of the curriculum at all levels of education.

Freedoms of assembly and association are severely restricted. Local officials face penalties if they fail to limit the flow of petitioners traveling to Beijing to report injustices to the central government. As a result, petitioners are routinely intercepted, harassed, detained in illegal "black jails," or sent to labor camps. Detained petitioners are reportedly subject to beatings, psychological abuse, and sexual violence. In September 2010, private security firm Anyuanding was found to have been hired by local governments to abduct petitioners and return them to their home localities. After the scandal was reported in the media, several Anyuanding executives were detained and faced criminal charges. Despite such repression, workers, farmers, and others held tens of thousands of protests during the year, reflecting growing public anger over wrongdoing by officials, especially regarding land confiscation, corruption, pollution, and fatal police beatings. Security forces and hired thugs often use excessive force to put down demonstrations. In several instances during 2010, this drove protesters to attack violently symbols of authority, such as police cars and government buildings. In January 2010, thugs armed with machetes and sticks reportedly killed a 22-year-old resident when they attacked villages in Jiangsu who had complained of land grabs, attacked villagers in Jiangsu who had complained of land grabs. Thousands took to the streets the next day to protest the death, sparking beatings by riot police. In other cases, officials tolerated demonstrations as an outlet for pent-up frustration, or agreed to protesters' demands.

Nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) are required to register and follow strict regulations, including vague prohibitions on advocating non-CCP rule, "damaging national unity," or "upsetting ethnic harmony." Many groups seeking more independence organize informally or register as businesses, though they are vulnerable to closure at any time. While the number of organizations whose work is not politically sensitive continues to expand, restrictions have tightened on those engaged in human rights advocacy or previously tolerated activism on issues like public health. In 2010, the authorities increased harassment of Aizhixing, a Beijing-based group known for its work with HIV/AIDS patients, leading founder Wan Yanhai to flee to the United States in May. A new set of regulations that came into force in March increased the obstacles for grassroots Chinese NGOs to receive donations from abroad, prompting concern that some would be forced to shut down.

The only legal labor union is the government-controlled All-China Federation of Trade Unions. Collective bargaining is legal but does not occur in practice, and independent labor leaders are harassed and jailed. Nevertheless, workers have increasingly asserted themselves informally via strikes, collective petitioning, and selection of negotiating representatives. In 2010, workers staged a series of strikes to demand

higher wages, primarily at the plants of foreign companies. The strikers made use of social-networking technology and sought help from legal experts. Following the strike actions, provincial governments across the country raised minimum wages. Three labor laws that took effect in 2008 were designed to protect workers, counter discrimination, and facilitate complaints against employers, while also empowering CCP-controlled unions. However, implementation has been undermined by the lack of independent arbitration bodies, a growing backlog of complaints, and the authorities' increased use of informal channels of negotiation. Dangerous workplace conditions continue to claim lives. The official number of workplace accidents during 2010 declined compared with 2008 figures, but the death toll for the year was still high at 79,552. Forced labor, including by inmates in "reeducation through labor" camps and juveniles in government-sanctioned "work-study" programs, remains a serious problem.

The CCP controls the judiciary and directs verdicts and sentences, particularly in politically sensitive cases. Judicial autonomy is greater in commercial litigation and civil suits involving private individuals. However, in 2010, there were several high-profile convictions of people who had obtained seemingly ordinary commercial information related to state-owned enterprises, but were imprisoned for mishandling "state secrets." An annual survey by the American Chamber of Commerce found for the first time that "inconsistent interpretation and application of laws" was the top challenge cited by members. A CCP veteran with no formal legal training was appointed as chief justice in 2008, and he subsequently issued a doctrine emphasizing the "Supremacy of the Cause of the Party" over the law. Multiple observers have noted that previous minor progress toward the rule of law has since stalled or been reversed.

In 2010, the government continued its crackdown on civil rights lawyers, law firms, and NGOs offering legal services. In March, Beijing University cut its ties with the Center for Women's Law Studies and Legal Services, a prominent women's rights advocacy group and public-interest law organization. In April, Beijing lawyers Tang Jitian and Liu Wei were permanently disbarred after they represented a Falun Gong practitioner and challenged the basis of the CCP's campaign against the group. Their punishment was a step up from the practice in recent years of temporarily disbarring human rights lawyers by rejecting their annual license renewals. Prominent lawyer Gao Zhisheng remained "disappeared" and at severe risk of torture following his abduction by security forces in 2009. In September 2010, self-trained lawyer Chen Guangcheng was released from serving a four-year prison term for helping victims of forced abortions to file a class-action suit; he remained under tight surveillance following his release.

Despite recent criminal procedure reforms, trials—which often amount to mere sentencing announcements—are frequently closed to the public. Torture remains widespread, coerced confessions are routinely admitted as evidence, and there is impunity for suspicious deaths in custody, prompting a growing public outcry in 2010. In response, judicial authorities in May released a new set of guidelines that prohibit the use of evidence obtained from torture to convict defendants; the extent of their implementation remained unclear at year's end, but credible cases of severe torture continued to be reported. Endemic corruption exacerbates the lack of due process. Many suspects are deprived of court hearings altogether, detained instead by bu-

reaucratic fiat in "reeducation through labor" camps. A 2009 study by the Chinese Human Rights Defenders group found that in addition to petty thieves and drug addicts, Falun Gong practitioners, Christians, and petitioners constituted a significant percentage of those incarcerated in the camps. The use of various forms of extralegal detention has increased in recent years, including secret jails and psychiatric arrest of petitioners and dissidents. Overall, detention facilities are estimated to hold a total of three to five million people. Conditions are generally harsh, with reports of inadequate food, regular beatings, and deprivation of medical care; the government generally does not permit visits by independent monitoring groups.

Some 68 crimes, including nonviolent offenses, carry the death penalty. Legislative amendments proposed in August 2010 would reduce the number of capital crimes to 55, but the changes had not been adopted at year's end. The number of executions is a state secret but was thought to be close to 5,000 in 2009. Recent reforms requiring the Supreme People's Court to review capital cases have reportedly led to a modest reduction in executions. In 2009, state-run media reported that executed prisoners, "provide the major source of [organ] transplants in China." Some experts have also raised concerns over the possible use of those imprisoned for their religious beliefs or ethnic identity as sources for organs.

Security forces work closely with the CCP at all levels. During 2010, the CCP continued to expand its network of extralegal "stability maintenance" offices, including at the neighborhood level and in some enterprises. These agencies are tasked with maintaining the party's monopoly on political power, including by suppressing the peaceful exercise of basic civil liberties. One study by scholars at Tsinghua University estimated that the government had spent 514 billion yuan (US\$80 billion) in 2010 on "stability maintenance," nearly equivalent to the country's military budget.

In the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region, tightened restrictions that followed violent clashes between Uighurs and members of China's ethnic Han majority in July 2009 remained in place for much of 2010. In the 2009 unrest, police forcibly suppressed a peaceful demonstration in Urumqi by Uighurs seeking justice for Uighur factory workers killed in a brawl with Han employees in southern China. The violent police action sparked clashes between Uighurs and Han residents, and state-run media reported that 197 people were killed, though state censorship and intimidation of witnesses made it difficult to verify such figures. Xinjiang's internet access and international telephone service remained at least partially severed until May 2010, and the number of police and surveillance cameras in the region increased. The crackdown following the clashes included large-scale "disappearances," imprisonment, and executions of Uighurs. Existing political indoctrination programs, curbs on Muslim religious practice, policies marginalizing use of the Uighur language in education, and government efforts to alter the region's demography continued throughout 2010, and in some instances grew worse.

Minorities, the disabled, and people with HIV/AIDS or hepatitis B face severe societal discrimination. A *hukou* (household registration) system remains in place, mostly affecting China's 150 million internal migrants. Some local governments have experimented with reforms to allow greater mobility, but citizens continue to face restrictions on changing employer or residence, and many migrants are unable to access fully social services, such as education for their children. In March 2010, a group of 13 newspapers published a joint editorial criticizing the hukou system as

corrupt and calling for urgent reforms. The article was deleted from websites within days, and one of the editors involved was forced to resign. Among other restrictions on freedom of movement, dissidents, scholars, and human rights defenders are prevented from traveling abroad or placed under house arrest, particularly at politically sensitive times. Law enforcement agencies continue to seek out and repatriate North Korean refugees, who face imprisonment or execution on return.

Property-rights protection remains weak in practice, and all land is formally owned by the state. Tens of thousands of forced evictions and illegal land confiscations occurred in 2010, increasing in scale and violence compared with the previous year. Local officials and developers were attempting to take advantage of weaker protections before the anticipated promulgation of implementing regulations for property rights legislation passed in 2007. Confiscated land was generally used for private development, state-led infrastructure projects, or international events such as the World Expo in Shanghai. Residents who resist eviction, seek legal redress, or organize protests face violence at the hands of local police or hired thugs. Reforms to rural land-use rules announced at the end of 2008 remained on hold in 2010.

China's policy of restricting population growth remains in place. In urban areas, only one child per couple is permitted, while many rural families are limited to two children. Although compulsory abortion and sterilization by local officials are less common than in the past, they still occur fairly frequently. According to the Congressional-Executive Commission on China, regulations in 18 of 31 provincial-level administrative units explicitly endorse mandatory abortions as an instrument for enforcing population-control policies. Officials who fail to meet birth and sterilization quotas risk disciplinary action, and relatives of unsterilized women or couples with unapproved pregnancies were subjected to high fines, job dismissal, and detention in special "study sessions" in 2010. These controls and a cultural preference for sons have led to sex-selective abortion and a general shortage of females, exacerbating the problem of human trafficking.

Domestic violence and sexual harassment affect one-third of Chinese families, according to statistics published in 2008 by the CCP-controlled All-China Women's Federation. The government has taken steps in recent years to improve the legal framework related to violence against women, but implementation remains weak. Although several laws prohibit gender discrimination in the workplace, a survey of college graduates published by the China University of Political Science and Law in July 2010 found that nearly 70 percent of the employers encountered by respondents had specific gender requirements.

Colombia

Political Rights: 3

Population: 45,500,000

Civil Liberties: 4

Capital: Bogota

Status: Partly Free

Trend Arrow: Colombia received an upward trend arrow due to an improved equilibrium between the three branches of government and the end of surveillance operations that had targeted both civil society and government figures.

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline For Year Under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
4,4PF	4,4PF	4,4PF	4,4PF	3,3PF	3,3PF	3,3PF	3,4PF	3,4PF	3,4PF

Overview: After the Constitutional Court barred President Álvaro Uribe from pursuing a third term, Colombians elected former defense minister Juan Manuel Santos as president in July 2010. Once in office, Santos established a "national unity" coalition and pursued conciliatory policies that created friction with hard-line Uribe supporters. One sensitive issue was an ongoing scandal involving government wiretapping of civil society members, opposition politicians, and judges; the surveillance appeared to decline sharply, but tensions over investigative processes grew sharper. In another shift, relations with neighboring Venezuela improved considerably. Many regions continued to suffer from guerrilla and criminal violence despite the military's September killing of Mono Jojoy, a feared guerrilla leader.

Following independence from Spain in 1819, Gran Colombia broke into what became Venezuela, Ecuador, and modern Colombia. The 1903 secession of Panama, engineered by the United States, left Colombia with its present boundaries. A civil war between Liberals and Conservatives, known as *La Violencia*, erupted in 1948 and resulted in some 200,000 deaths before subsiding after 1953. From 1958 to 1974, the two parties alternated in the presidency under the terms of a 1957 coalition pact (the National Front) aimed at ending civil strife. Colombia has since been marked by corrupt politics as well as by left-wing guerrilla insurgencies, right-wing paramilitary violence, the emergence of vicious drug cartels, and human rights abuses committed by all sides.

A peace process between the government and the leftist Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) rebel group unraveled in 2001, and Álvaro Uribe, a former provincial governor who ran as an independent, won the 2002 presidential election after pledging to crush the rebels by military means. Right-wing paramilitary death squads, grouped together as the United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia (AUC), also battled the guerrillas, sometimes with the tolerance or covert complicity of government forces.

Although by 2005 the leftist guerrillas had largely ceded control of major cities to the paramilitaries, they appeared determined to hold out in remote areas, using

the narcotics trade and extortion for financial support. Moreover, social and human rights conditions sometimes deteriorated further where paramilitaries replaced the guerrillas.

Debate continued over a plan to demobilize and grant a partial amnesty to the paramilitaries. Human rights groups claimed that the Justice and Peace Law, adopted in June 2005, failed to ensure the permanent dismantling of paramilitary organizations and did not allow adequate time for their many crimes to be investigated. The government denied that the law encouraged impunity—combatants could be required to spend between five and eight years in prison—and noted that it did not apply to drug-related offenses. In May 2006, the Constitutional Court struck down certain elements of the law and mandated full confessions, the seizure of illicitly acquired assets, and the provision of reparations to victims. Meanwhile, bolstered by a growing economy and the perception of improved security, Uribe won a second term in that month's presidential election, taking 62 percent of the vote, fully 40 points ahead of his closest rival.

By late 2006, more than 30,000 paramilitaries had formally demobilized. However, human rights groups reported subsequent problems with civilian reintegration, violence against former combatants, a lack of resources for investigations, nonparticipation in the justice and peace process, and delays in reparation payments and physical protection for victims. Territory vacated by demobilized groups was often occupied by the FARC or by new factions that were at least partly composed of recalcitrant or recidivist paramilitaries. These "successor groups" lacked the AUC's command structure but maintained its patterns of land theft, assassinations, and in some cases collaboration with security forces or guerrillas. A focus on drug trafficking was complemented by aggression—including both targeted killings and massacres—directed against social and human rights activists in order to maintain patterns of local control established during the AUC era.

In April 2008, 14 paramilitary chiefs were extradited to the United States, where they faced long prison sentences for drug trafficking. The Colombian government argued that this would break their ongoing control over drug distribution networks. However, rights groups feared that the transfers would truncate the confessions process, which—despite frequent frustration—had yielded valuable information on paramilitary operations and tens of thousands of unsolved murders. Most extradited leaders ceased cooperation, and in August 2009, the Colombian Supreme Court prohibited further extraditions of former paramilitary leaders still involved in the justice and peace process.

Observers also raised concerns that the extraditions effectively removed potential witnesses in the ongoing "parapolitics" scandal, which linked scores of politicians to paramilitaries. By the close of the 2006-2010 Congress, over 90 legislators had been arrested, convicted, or placed under investigation.

Meanwhile, in February 2009, evidence emerged of a massive telephone, e-mail, and personal surveillance operation initiated in 2003 by Colombia's intelligence agency, the Administrative Security Department (DAS). Among its targets were journalists, nongovernmental organization (NGO) workers, politicians, and Supreme Court justices. Although the closure of the DAS was announced in September 2009, it remained in operation as of the end of 2010. The dimensions of the scandal grew in early 2010, as the extent of the DAS's political activities became

clear. An expanding series of related investigations led to four convictions and the suspension of several of Uribe's close advisers.

The DAS scandal added to existing strains in the relationship between the president and the Supreme Court, which was less acquiescent than the Congress regarding Uribe's accrual of power. Other contributing factors included the administration's dubious accusations of corruption within the court, the court's rejection of all attorney general candidates proposed by Uribe, its parapolitics-related probe of the president's cousin Mario Uribe, and a series of court-led investigations surrounding the passage of a 2004 constitutional amendment that had allowed Uribe's reelection in 2006. These controversies continued in 2010, but the focus shifted to the Constitutional Court, which was charged with assessing Uribe's effort to stand for a third term in 2010. Uribe supporters had already gathered signatures for a constitutional referendum, gained congressional approval, and received the prosecutor general's blessing. However, in March 2010—just weeks before congressional elections—the Constitutional Court found not only that a third term would conflict with constitutional checks-and-balances requirements, but multiple regulations and procedural rules had been violated during the signature-gathering and referendum-approval process.

In the March congressional elections, Uribe allies won a substantial majority of seats in both chambers. Former defense minister Juan Manuel Santos, who benefited from his association with the Uribe administration's security achievements, overcame an ideologically diverse array of opponents in the first round of the presidential poll in May, taking 47 percent of the vote. Former Bogota mayor Antanas Mockus, running under the banner of the newly founded Green Party, mounted a spirited challenge, winning 22 percent. However, most of the other candidates endorsed Santos in the June runoff, and he won the contest easily, with 69 percent.

Soon after taking office in August, the Santos administration made clear that its priorities and tone would differ substantially from those of the previous government. Several cabinet ministers who had opposed a third term for Uribe were selected for important posts, and ambitious bills, including contentious victim-reparation and land-reform laws that had been opposition priorities but had stalled under Uribe, were put before Congress. In November, the government resolved a standoff between the Supreme Court and the executive by submitting a new list of nominees for attorney general. In addition, Santos and his ministers repeatedly emphasized respect for civil society groups and willingness to cooperate on their goals, a stark contrast to the Uribe administration's stigmatization of NGOs and opposition activists.

In September 2010, the Santos administration registered its first dramatic military success against the FARC, when a bombing killed Mono Jojoy, arguably the group's most feared commander. The killing followed a series of deaths of top FARC leaders—whether from government attacks, internal disputes, or natural causes—that began in 2008. Meanwhile, the positive trend in urban security established earlier in Uribe's tenure continued to waver in 2010, after a significant increase in 2008.

In the international arena, Santos emphasized détente with Ecuador and Venezuela, which had cut off diplomatic ties after a 2008 cross-border raid in which Colombian forces targeted a FARC camp in Ecuador. Venezuela had also objected

to a 2009 defense pact that granted U.S. military personnel and aircraft increased access to seven Colombian bases. During the second half of 2010, Santos met with the presidents of both Ecuador and Venezuela, reestablishing diplomatic and commercial ties with each.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Colombia is an electoral democracy. The 2010 legislative elections, while less violent than previous campaigns, were marred by vote-buying, opaque financing, and intimidation in some areas, particularly former paramilitary strongholds. The 2010 presidential election was relatively peaceful, and the 2007 regional and local elections repeated some of the flaws of the 2006 congressional polls but marked an improvement over the last such elections in 2003.

The Congress is composed of the Senate and the Chamber of Representatives, with all seats up for election every four years. Of the Senate's 102 members, 2 are chosen by indigenous communities and 100 by the nation at large using a closed-list system. The Chamber of Representatives consists of 166 members elected by closed-list proportional representation in multimember districts.

The traditional Liberal-Conservative partisan duopoly in Congress has in recent years been supplanted by a rough division between left-leaning forces opposed to outgoing president Álvaro Uribe and pro-Uribe forces on the right. Newly elected president Juan Manuel Santos's National Unity coalition has muffled but not completely replaced this division. Party fragmentation remains a problem, and several new parties formed in late 2009 to serve as vehicles for those implicated in the parapolitics scandal, who in many cases used relatives as proxy candidates. Such parties were fairly successful in the 2010 congressional elections.

Corruption occurs at multiple levels of public administration. A series of scandals involving a range of government agencies emerged late in the Uribe administration and accelerated after Santos took office. The alleged malfeasance affected an agricultural subsidies program, an agency handling confiscated assets, a fund used to assist kidnapping victims, the prison authority, and the customs agency, among others. In a November 2010 poll, nearly half of all businesses surveyed stated that bribes were necessary to obtain government contracts, and a procurement scandal in Bogota grew throughout the year, threatening the mayor's hold on office. Colombia was ranked 78 out of 178 countries surveyed in Transparency International's 2010 Corruption Perceptions Index.

The constitution guarantees freedom of expression, and opposition viewpoints are commonly expressed. However, crime and conflict make it difficult for journalists to conduct their work. Dozens of journalists have been murdered since the mid-1990s, many for reporting on drug trafficking and corruption. Most of the cases remain unsolved, though in 2010, perpetrators were convicted in two murders. Two reporters were killed during the year, and self-censorship remained common. The Uribe administration repeatedly accused journalists of antigovernment bias or links to guerrillas, and over a dozen reporters were confirmed as subjects of DAS surveillance. In February 2010, the weekly newsmagazine *Cambio*, published by Colombia's newspaper of record, *El Tiempo*, was shuttered. The owners cited weak finances, but top editors pointed to government pressure over stories that were unflattering to the Uribe administration. Slander and defamation remain criminal

offenses. The government does not limit or block access to the internet or censor websites.

The constitution provides for freedom of religion, and the government generally respects this right in practice. The authorities also uphold academic freedom, and university debates are often vigorous, though armed groups maintain a presence on many campuses to generate political support and intimidate opponents.

Constitutional rights regarding freedoms of assembly and association are restricted in practice by violence. Although the government provides extensive protection to hundreds of threatened human rights workers, trust in the program varies widely, and numerous activists have been murdered, mostly by paramilitaries and the successor groups. Uribe's rhetorical hostility toward NGOs and human rights defenders was on occasion interpreted as an invitation to attack them physically. While the Santos administration adopted a far more conciliatory and respectful tone, violations continued to occur. Victims' and land rights activists are especially threatened by former paramilitaries seeking to smother criticism of their ill-gotten assets. At least eight were killed in 2010, including prominent advocates for displaced people and several indigenous activists.

Colombia is considered the world's most dangerous country for organized labor. More than 2,600 union activists and leaders have been killed over the last two decades. Labor leaders are frequently targeted by all of Colombia's illegal armed groups. Although killings have declined from their early-2000s peak, murders rose from 39 in 2009 to 51 in 2010, and the issue continued to hold up ratification of a bilateral free-trade agreement by the U.S. Congress. A special unit of prosecutors has substantially increased prosecutions for assassinations of union members since 2007. More than 250 convictions have been secured since that year, compared with 50 between 2000 and 2006. Nonetheless, most convictions have not touched those who ordered the killings, and the impunity rate remains above 90 percent.

The justice system remains compromised by corruption and extortion. The Constitutional Court and Supreme Court have, on multiple occasions, demonstrated independence from the executive. Lower courts are more susceptible to political and criminal influence, and both judges and prosecutors confront serious risks when investigating powerful figures.

Many soldiers operating in Colombia's complex security environment work under limited civilian oversight. The government has in recent years increased human rights training and investigated a greater number of military personnel for grave human rights abuses. Collaboration between security forces and illegally armed groups declined following AUC demobilization, but rights groups report toleration of the roughly 6,000-strong paramilitary successor groups in some regions. Primary responsibility for combating them rests with the police, who lack the resources of the military and are largely absent from many rural areas where the groups are active.

The systematic killing of civilians to fraudulently inflate guerrilla death tolls has declined enormously since a 2008 scandal over the practice led to the firing of dozens of senior army officers. More than 2,000 people may have been killed in this way, and thousands of security personnel were under investigation by the end of 2010, with dozens of convictions obtained in cases transferred to civilian courts. Jurisdiction over human rights violations is a sensitive issue; in June 2010,

a civilian court stoked the Uribe administration's outrage by imposing a 30-year prison sentence on former army colonel Alfonso Plazas for the disappearance of 11 suspected rebels following the 1985 siege of the Palace of Justice.

All of the illegally armed groups systematically abuse human rights. While violence has declined since the early 2000s, massacres rose substantially in 2010, and nearly 500 police and soldiers were killed during the year. FARC guerrillas regularly extort payments from businesspeople and engage in forced recruitment, including of minors. The use of land mines has added to casualties among both civilians and the military. Impunity is rampant for all criminals, and victims of human rights abuses often express frustration with the government's level of commitment to providing reparations and prosecuting perpetrators. Victims and rights groups note that demobilized paramilitaries have returned just a fraction of the millions of acres of land they seized while ostensibly fighting the guerrillas.

Colombia's more than 1.7 million indigenous inhabitants live on more than 34 million hectares granted to them by the government, often in resource-rich, strategic regions that are increasingly contested by the various armed groups. Indigenous people are frequently targeted by all sides. Murders of indigenous people declined somewhat in 2010, after a spike in 2009, but threats and territorial pressure remained so common that the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees warned in August that many groups face extinction.

Afro-Colombians, who account for as much as 25 percent of the population, make up the largest sector of Colombia's at least 4 million displaced people, and 80 percent of Afro-Colombians fall below the poverty line. The displaced population as a whole suffers from social stigma, arbitrary arrest, and exploitation, as well as generalized poverty. In October 2010, the country's most prominent Afro-Colombian politician, Piedad Córdoba, was expelled from the Senate for alleged collaboration with the FARC. The charge was hotly contested by rights groups, which defended her highly publicized efforts to negotiate the liberation of FARC hostages.

Homosexuals face active discrimination, but in 2007, the Constitutional Court ruled that homosexual couples must be made eligible for various benefits, which were expanded in 2008 and 2009.

Child labor is a serious problem in Colombia, as are child recruitment into illegal armed groups and related sexual abuse. Sexual harassment, violence against women, and the trafficking of women for sexual exploitation remain major concerns. A December 2010 Oxfam report indicated that conflict-related rapes had led to over 26,000 pregnancies between 2001 and 2009. The country's active abortion-rights movement has challenged restrictive laws, and in 2006, a Constitutional Court ruling allowed abortion in cases of rape or incest, or to protect the mother's life.

Comoros

Political Rights: 3
Civil Liberties: 4
Status: Partly Free

Population: 690,000
Capital: Moroni

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline For Year Under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
6,4PF	5,4PF	5,4PF	4,4PF	4,4PF	3,4PF	4,4PF	3,4PF	3,4PF	3,4PF

Overview: In December 2010, Vice-President Ikililou Dhoinine won Comoros' presidential election with 61 percent of the vote. The vote was originally due to be held in May but was postponed due to political disputes. Meanwhile, in June, the World Bank determined that Comoros had met the conditions to start receiving debt relief under the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative.

The Union of the Comoros comprises three islands: Grande Comore, Anjouan, and Mohéli. Mayotte, the fourth island of the archipelago, voted to remain under French rule in 1974. Two mercenary invasions and at least 18 other coups have shaken the Comoros since it gained independence from France in 1975. The 1996 presidential election was considered free and fair by international monitors, but Anjouan and Mohéli fell under the control of separatists the following year. A 1999 coup restored order and prompted the signing of a reconciliation agreement, and a 2001 referendum approved a new constitution that increased autonomy for the three islands. The 2002 elections for the island presidencies were deemed largely legitimate by observers, but Colonel Azali Assoumani won the federal presidency after his two opponents claimed fraud and withdrew.

In the 2004 federal legislative elections, Azali supporters captured only 6 of the 33 seats. A moderate Islamist preacher and businessman, Ahmed Abdallah Sambu, won the federal presidency in May 2006 in an election that was also deemed legitimate by most observers.

Mohamed Bacar, the president of Anjouan, organized unauthorized elections in 2007 to extend his rule and claimed to have won with 90 percent of the vote. However, in March 2008, an African Union military force removed him from power, and a supporter of President Sambu was elected three months later.

In a May 2009 referendum, voters approved constitutional reforms that increased the powers of the federal government at the expense of the individual island governments. The reforms altered the composition of the federal parliament to include 24 directly elected seats and 9 seats elected by the three island assemblies, compared with 18 and 15 under the old system. During legislative elections in December 2009, the president's supporters—the Baobab coalition—won 19 of the 24 directly elected seats. President Sambu's term of office expired in May 2010, but an election to choose his successor was postponed due to political disputes. This delay provoked tension, especially among residents of Mohéli, which was the next island scheduled to hold the office of federal president, in a unique

system in which presidential candidates rotate sequentially from the country's three islands.

In December, Sambi's protégé, Vice-President Ikililou Dhoinine, won the presidential election with 61 percent of the vote. He became the first president of Comoros from Mohéli. His main rival, Mohamed Said Fazul, claimed fraud, including the stuffing of ballot boxes. However, the national election monitoring group upheld the legitimacy of the election.

Large numbers of Comorans illegally emigrate to Mayotte to settle or to seek entry into metropolitan France, and the economy depends heavily on remittances and foreign aid. In 2009, the global economic downturn contributed to delays or suspensions of public sector salary payments and a continued decline in public services. In June 2010, the World Bank determined that Comoros had met the conditions to start receiving debt relief under the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Comoros is an electoral democracy. Since 1996, Comorans have voted freely in several parliamentary and presidential elections. Constitutional reforms enacted in 2009 call for a rotation of the federal presidency among the islands every five (previously four) years. The reforms also downgraded individual island presidents to the status of governors, limited the size of cabinets, empowered the president to dissolve the federal parliament, and allowed the president to rule by decree with the parliament's approval.

The unicameral Assembly of the Union consists of 33 members, with 9 selected by the islands' local assemblies and 24 by direct popular vote; all members serve five-year terms. Political parties are mainly defined by their positions regarding the division of power between the federal and local governments.

Corruption remains a major problem. In 2007, former Mohéli president Said Mohamed Fazul received an 18-month suspended prison term and a fine for fraud. There have been complaints of corruption among the security forces, and in June 2010, a former army chief was accused of being an accomplice in the murder of his brother; he remained under house arrest at year's end. Comoros was ranked 154 out of 178 countries surveyed in Transparency International's 2010 Corruption Perceptions Index.

The constitution and laws provide for freedom of speech and of the press, but in the past, authorities have arrested journalists, seized newspapers, and silenced broadcast outlets for reports that are found to be objectionable. These practices are less common under the current administration. Several private newspapers that are at times critical of the government are sporadically published in the capital. Two state-run radio stations broadcast, as do about 20 regional radio stations and five local private television stations. Internet access is extremely limited for economic reasons.

Islam is the state religion. Tensions have sometimes arisen between Sunni and Shiite Muslims, and non-Muslims are reportedly subject to restrictions, detentions, and harassment. Conversion from Islam and non-Muslim proselytizing are illegal. Academic freedom is generally respected.

The government typically upholds freedoms of assembly and association. How-

162 Freedom in the World—2011

ever, security forces in the past have responded to demonstrations with excessive force. A few human rights and other nongovernmental organizations operate in the country. Workers have the right to bargain collectively and to strike, but collective bargaining is rare. In January 2010, teachers went on strike to protest nonpayment of salaries.

The judicial system is based on both Sharia (Islamic law) and the French legal code and is subject to influence by the executive branch and other elites. Minor disputes are often settled informally by village elders. Harsh prison conditions include severe overcrowding and inadequate sanitation, medical care, and nutrition. Women possess constitutional protections, but in practice, they enjoy little political or economic power and have far fewer opportunities for education and salaried employment than men, especially in rural areas.

Congo, Democratic Republic of (Kinshasa)

Political Rights: 6

Population: 67,800,000

Civil Liberties: 6

Capital: Kinshasa

Status: Not Free

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline For Year Under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
6,6NF	6,6NF	6,6NF	6,6NF	6,6NF	5,6NF	5,6NF	6,6NF	6,6NF	6,6NF

Overview: Celebrations to mark 50 years of independence in June 2010 were marred by brutal violence in the eastern provinces, including the killing, rape, and abduction of civilians. The outgoing electoral commission announced in August that the first round of the presidential election would take place in November 2011, while local elections were further delayed until 2013. Meanwhile, opposition politicians, human rights activists, and the press continued to be the targets of attacks and harassment, as evidenced by the murder of a cameraman in April and the suspicious death of a leading human rights activist in June.

The king of Belgium claimed a vast area of Central Africa as his private colony in the late 19th century, and the territory was exploited with a brutality that was extreme even for the imperialist era. After gaining independence from Belgium in 1960, the then Republic of Congo became an arena for Cold War rivalries, and Colonel Joséph Mobutu seized power with CIA backing in 1965. Mobutu changed the country's name to Zaire in 1971, renamed himself Mobutu Sese Seko, and assumed dictatorial powers.

Following the end of the Cold War, domestic agitation and international pressure for democratization led to a sovereign national conference in 1992. Mobutu was stripped of most of his powers and a new prime minister was named, but Mobutu created a rival government, leading to a political standoff. In a compromise that marginalized the conference's prime minister, the two governments merged in

1994, with Mobutu remaining head of state. Presidential and legislative elections were scheduled repeatedly but never took place.

After the 1994 genocide in neighboring Rwanda, the Rwandan and Ugandan governments turned their cross-border pursuit of Rwandan Hutu militia members into an advance on Kinshasa. Rwandan troops, accompanied by representatives of the Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo-Zaire (AFDL)—a coalition led by former Zairian rebel leader Laurent-Désiré Kabila—entered eastern Zaire in October 1996 and reached Kinshasa in May 1997. Mobutu fled to Morocco, where he died. Kabila declared himself president and changed the country's name to the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).

Relations between Kabila and his Rwandan and Ugandan backers deteriorated after he ordered all foreign forces to leave the DRC in 1998. Rwanda intervened in support of a newly formed rebel group, the Rally for Congolese Democracy (RCD), but the DRC government was defended by Angolan, Namibian, and Zimbabwean troops. Uganda later backed a rival rebel group, the Movement for the Liberation of the Congo (MLC), establishing control over the northern third of the DRC, while the RCD held much of the eastern Kivu region. The country's vast mineral wealth spurred the involvement of multinational companies, criminal networks, and other foreign governments.

Military stalemate led to the signing of the Lusaka Peace Agreement in 1999. The accord called for a ceasefire, the deployment of UN peacekeepers, the withdrawal of foreign troops, and a transitional government. Kabila drew international criticism for blocking the deployment of UN troops and suppressing internal political activity. He was assassinated in 2001 and succeeded by his son Joséph, who revived the peace process. The Sun City Agreement, signed in South Africa in 2002, led to the creation of a transitional government in 2003 and a formal end to the war.

A new constitution was passed by the transitional legislature, approved by referendum in 2005, and officially promulgated in 2006. Presidential and legislative elections—the first multiparty polls since independence—followed that year. Despite daunting logistical challenges, the elections were largely peaceful and drew a voter turnout of over 70 percent. Kabila's People's Party for Reconstruction and Democracy (PPRD) gained the most seats in the National Assembly, the legislature's lower house, but fell short of an outright majority. In a field of 33 presidential candidates, Kabila won approximately 45 percent of the first-round vote, and went on to defeat MLC leader and transitional vice president Jean-Pierre Bemba in the runoff.

Following the elections, two broad alliances emerged in the 500-seat National Assembly: the Alliance of the Presidential Majority (AMP), comprising 332 seats, and the opposition Union for the Nation (UpN), comprising 116 seats. Eleven provincial assemblies voted in the January 2007 Senate elections, granting the AMP 58 seats and the UpN 21. Gubernatorial polls that year handed 10 governorships to AMP-affiliated candidates and one to the UpN. In March 2007, fighting broke out in Kinshasa between the authorities and Bemba loyalists. Bemba went into exile in Europe, raising doubts as to whether Kabila would allow genuine political pluralism.

In January 2008, a peace agreement was signed between the government and 22 armed groups operating in the east. Notably, the agreement did not include the Rwandan government or the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda

(FDLR), an ethnic Hutu-dominated militia group led by perpetrators of the 1994 Rwandan genocide who had fled to the DRC. Heavy fighting broke out in August 2008 between government troops and the ethnic Tutsi rebel leader Laurent Nkunda's National Congress for the Defense of the People (CNDP), which allegedly received backing from the Rwandan government. The clashes resulted in further civilian displacement and an increase in human rights abuses.

Relations between the DRC and Rwanda began to improve significantly in late 2008, and the two governments signed an agreement to begin a joint military operation against the FDLR. The operation, which lasted from January to February 2009, coincided with the surprise arrest of Nkunda in Rwanda and led to a peace accord with the CNDP. The agreement provided an amnesty for acts of war committed by members of the CNDP and transformed the rebel group into a political entity under the leadership of Desiré Kamandji. The DRC also embarked on a joint military operation with Uganda from December 2008 to March 2009 to pursue the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), a Ugandan rebel group.

In March 2009, Congolese and UN forces began a new military operation against the FDLR. As with previous campaigns, it led to severe civilian suffering, including reprisal killings by the rebels. The operation concluded in December, but was succeeded in early 2010 by an additional offensive. While the number of deliberate killings of civilians by the FDLR declined in 2010, the group was believed to be partly responsible for a series of mass rapes in the Walikale region of north Kivu in July and August. Separately, in July, the Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of Congo (FARDC) launched a campaign against the Allied Democratic Forces-National Army for the Liberation of Uganda (ADF-NALU), an Islamic Ugandan rebel militia based in north Kivu. The ADF-NALU responded by attacking civilian and military targets in the north of the province, forcing at least 90,000 people to flee their homes. In addition, as violent LRA incursions into the DRC continued throughout 2010, the DRC announced in October that it was joining forces with the Central African Republic, Sudan, and Uganda to pursue militants.

The impact of years of fighting on civilians in the east has been catastrophic. As of late November 2010, there were an estimated 1.7 million internally displaced people, only a minority of whom had received assistance from humanitarian agencies. The government routinely failed to provide the displaced with adequate protection, harming their efforts to demonstrate that peace had been achieved. In October, the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights issued the results of a mapping exercise that detailed over 600 of the most serious violations of human rights and humanitarian law in the DRC—by armed forces and nonstate groups from Angola, Burundi, Rwanda, Uganda, Zimbabwe, and the DRC itself—between May 1993 and June 2003. The DRC government deemed the report "detailed and credible" and initiated draft legislation in November on the creation of special courts to prosecute the crimes.

Despite relative stability in regions outside of the eastern provinces, all of the DRC continued to suffer from the combined effects of war, economic crisis, and the breakdown of political and social institutions. At least 4.2 million people have died since fighting began in 1994, and humanitarian groups estimate that 1,000 people continued to die each day. Critical health and social services are nonexistent in many areas, and much of the country's infrastructure has disintegrated. The DRC

was ranked 168 out of 169 countries on the UN Development Programme's 2010 Human Development Index.

In March 2010, Prime Minister Adolphe Muzito ordered that the government double its domestic revenue. The resulting increase in import duties forced importers to quit or resort to smuggling. However, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank announced in July that the DRC had reached the completion point under the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) initiative, earning it debt-service savings worth \$12.3 billion over the next 50 years and canceling what the IMF estimated to be two-thirds of the country's external public debt.

In May, the UN Security Council approved a one-year extension of its mandate in the country, with increased emphasis on development, particularly in the eastern part of the country. However, UN efforts have been hampered by the remarkably difficult terrain of the eastern DRC, and marred by several allegations of corruption. While the government exerted pressure on the United Nations throughout the year to pull out of the country entirely by the end of 2011, the Security Council approved the removal of just 2,000 soldiers from a total of over 20,500.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: The DRC is not an electoral democracy. Though the 2006 elections were a significant improvement over previous voting, serious problems remained. The opposition Union for Social Democracy and Progress (UDPS) party did not participate as a result of its call for a boycott of the constitutional referendum, international observers noted voter registration irregularities, and the campaign period included clashes between opposition militants and government forces as well as an attempt on opposition leader Jean-Pierre Bemba's life. The 2007 Senate elections were marred by allegations of vote-buying. In August 2010, the outgoing Independent Electoral Commission (CEI) announced a timetable for new elections, with the first round of the presidential vote slated for November 2011. The proposed schedule only slightly exceeded the five-year limit mandated by the constitution. Local elections initially scheduled for 2005 were pushed back until 2013. However, it remained unclear whether the new Independent National Electoral Commission (CENI)—created by President Laurent-Désiré Kabila in July—would respect the timetable. The CENI's potential for independence has also been called into question, as four of its seven members were to be appointed by the presidential coalition. Also in 2010, the government announced that voters would be required to reregister and apply for new electoral cards, causing anxiety among those in the eastern provinces, whose existing electoral cards sometimes serve as their only proof of citizenship.

Under the 2006 constitution, the president is elected for up to two five-year terms. The president nominates a prime minister from the leading party or coalition in the 500-seat National Assembly, the lower house of the bicameral legislature, whose members are popularly elected to serve five-year terms. The provincial assemblies elect the upper house, the 108-seat Senate, as well as the provincial governors, for five-year terms. Of the approximately 247 registered political parties, only a dozen have broad representation. Kabila's coalition, the AMP, currently holds a majority of seats in both the National Assembly and the Senate. The 2007 exile of Bemba, whose MLC is the largest opposition party, represented a severe blow to political pluralism.

Opposition politicians and their supporters have increasingly faced violence

and harassment. On a number of occasions in 2010, police beat or arrested members of the UDPS who engaged in unauthorized protests. The mounting pressure on opposition figures has raised concerns that Kabila is leading the DRC back toward a highly centralized presidential system that allows for no more than the formalities of representative governance. Well-organized opposition presidential candidates had not emerged by the end of 2010.

Corruption is rampant in the DRC, particularly in the mining sector. The country ranked 182 out of 183 countries in the World Bank's 2010 Doing Business survey, and 164 out of 178 countries surveyed in Transparency International's 2010 Corruption Perceptions Index. In an apparent bid to improve the investment climate, the DRC became an Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) candidate country in 2008. The release of the DRC's initial EITI report in March 2010 marked the first time that figures on tax revenues from the country's natural resources had been made public. However, in June the government awarded two oil-drilling blocks in Lake Albert to companies owned by a nephew of South African president Jacob Zuma, despite claims that a rival bid by Ireland's Tullow Oil, which had already paid a signature bonus, had been the better deal. In September, a presidential ban on artisanal mining in north and south Kivu and Maniema was declared in an attempt to stem the flow of mining revenues to armed groups, though the actual impact of the ban remained unclear at year's end.

Although guaranteed by the constitution, freedoms of speech and expression are limited. Members of the state security apparatus threatened, detained, and attacked journalists whose reporting was critical of government officials or decisions regarding conflict and insurgencies, management of natural resources, or corruption. In July 2010, for example, the editor of *Le Monitor*, Pascale Mulunda, was arrested on charges of libel and held for three weeks for reporting alleged corruption by an official at the Ministry of Mines. In May, Etienne Maluka, chief technician of Radio Communautaire de Moanda, was jailed for 32 days in Matadi for allegedly "attacking international state security." Fidele Mwe, a journalist and technician at Radio Bandundu FM, was detained for 24 days in October, after the station was closed on the orders of the provincial governor. In separate cases in November, two other journalists were sentenced to prison in absentia for defamation. In the year's only reported killing of a journalist, freelance cameraman Patient Chebeya Bankome was murdered in north Kivu; a military court sentenced two Congolese soldiers to death for the crime just 12 days later.

Radio is the dominant medium in the country due to low literacy rates and limited access to television. The United Nations and Swiss-based Fondation Hirondelle launched Radio Okapi in 2002 to provide a source of independent news. The station draws nearly 2 million listeners each day but remains dependent on external support. Radio France Internationale resumed broadcasts in October, after its signal was suspended indefinitely in 2009, and it was allowed to open a local office with a foreign journalist. The government does not monitor online communications or restrict access to the internet, but internet use is limited by poor infrastructure.

Freedom of religion is guaranteed by the constitution and generally respected in practice. Although religious groups must register with the government in order to be recognized, unregistered groups operate unhindered. In April 2010, police arrested three members of the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ in Congo; political

involvement by the church's leader was cited as possible reason for the arrests. The government has failed to investigate or prosecute police officials responsible for a 2008 crackdown on the politico-religious movement Bundu Dia Kongo that killed at least 100 adherents and destroyed houses and temples. Academic freedom is restricted by fears of government harassment, which often lead university professors to engage in self-censorship.

The rights to freedom of assembly and association are limited under the pretext of maintaining public order, and groups holding public events must inform local authorities in advance. NGOs are able to operate, but they face pressure from the government and nonstate actors if they offend powerful interests. Floribert Chebeya Bahizire, the executive director of one of DRC's largest human rights organizations, Voix des Sans Voix, died under suspicious circumstances in June 2010, after being called to a meeting in Kinshasa with the head of the national police, John Numbi. Numbi was suspended from his position that month, but had not been charged at year's end; eight members of the national police were put on trial for the murder in November. In August, Sylvestre Bwira Kyahi, chairman of the Civil Society of Masisi, was abducted, beaten, and detained for six days by FARDC units composed of former CNDP members and led by former CNDP commander Jean-Bosco Ntaganda. Earlier that month, Kyahi had written an open letter to Kabila, denouncing the abuses of Ntaganda's troops in the area. Labor unions, though legal, exist only in urban areas and are largely inactive. Some unions are affiliated with political parties, and labor leaders and activists have faced harassment.

Despite constitutional guarantees of independence, the judiciary remains subject to corruption and manipulation, and the court system lacks both trained personnel and resources. Prison conditions are abysmal, and long periods of pretrial detention are common. While there are notable exceptions, most government and government-allied forces still enjoy apparent impunity for even the most heinous crimes.

The International Criminal Court (ICC) continues to pursue cases in the DRC, including those against rebel leaders Mathieu Ngudjolo Chui, Thomas Lubanga, and Germain Katanga, all of whom were on trial at year's end, as well as Bemba, who was transferred to the ICC in 2008 and remains behind bars. The ICC issued a warrant in 2008 for the arrest of Ntaganda, but the government had not arrested him at the end of 2010.

Civilian authorities do not maintain effective control of the security forces. Soldiers and police regularly commit serious human rights abuses, including rape. Low pay and inadequate provisions commonly lead soldiers to seize goods from civilians, and demobilized combatants have not been successfully integrated into the civilian economy. The rapid and chaotic incorporation of former rebel groups into the military has resulted in competing chains of command and factional conflicts.

Societal discrimination based on ethnicity is practiced widely among the country's 200 ethnic groups, particularly against indigenous Pygmy tribes and the Congolese Banyamulenge Tutsis. The ongoing fighting in the eastern Kivu region is driven in part by ethnic rivalries.

Although the law provides for freedom of movement, security forces seeking bribes or travel permits restricts this right in practice, and foreigners must regularly submit to immigration controls when traveling internally. In conflict zones, various armed groups and soldiers have seized private property and destroyed homes.

168 Freedom in the World—2011

Despite constitutional guarantees, women face discrimination in nearly every aspect of their lives, especially in rural areas. Violence against women and girls, including rape and sexual slavery, has soared since fighting began in 1994, though sex crimes often affect men as well. Between late July and early August 2010, various armed groups reportedly raped more than 560 women, children, and men in a series of incidents in north and south Kivu. A UN investigation in August found links between the rapes and the exploitation and control of mineral-rich areas by armed groups, including factions of the FARDC. An atmosphere of almost total impunity for such crimes means that perpetrators are rarely prosecuted, regardless of whether they are soldiers, rebels, or civilians. Congolese women are also subjugated as agricultural laborers, and armed groups regularly loot their harvests. Abortion is prohibited. Save the Children has ranked the DRC among the world's five worst conflict zones in which to be a woman or child. The number of children abducted to serve as fighters, porters, or sex slaves in various armed groups continues to increase.

Congo, Republic of (Brazzaville)

Political Rights: 6

Population: 3,900,000

Civil Liberties: 5

Capital: Brazzaville

Status: Not Free

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline For Year Under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
5,4PF	6,4PF	5,4PF	5,4PF	5,5PF	6,5NF	6,5NF	6,5NF	6,5NF	6,5NF

Overview: As the Republic of Congo celebrated 50 years of independence in August 2010, opposition parties refused to participate in official ceremonies, highlighting the country's continuing economic and human rights problems. During the year, the government announced initiatives to improve the rights and health of women and children, including adopting a new child protection framework. Meanwhile, a humanitarian crisis developed in the north following an influx of refugees fleeing violence in the neighboring Democratic Republic of Congo.

Since gaining independence from France in 1960, the Republic of Congo has been marked by conflict and military coups. The current president, Denis Sassou-Nguesso, first came to power in 1979, when the military installed him as president. Domestic and international pressure finally forced him to hold multiparty presidential elections in 1992. He lost, placing third in the first round. In the runoff, Pascal Lissouba defeated the late veteran oppositionist Bernard Kolelas.

In 1993, disputed parliamentary elections triggered violent clashes between rival militia groups. The fighting ended in 1997, when Sassou-Nguesso ousted Lissouba with the help of Angolan troops and French political support. In 2002, voters adopted a new constitution by referendum, which extended the presidential term from five to seven years. Sassou-Nguesso won the presidential election easily that year after

his main challenger, former National Assembly president Andre Milongo, alleged fraud and withdrew. In the 2002 legislative election, Sassou-Nguesso's Congolese Labor Party (PCT) and its allies captured 90 percent of the seats. Although the polls failed to foster genuine reconciliation, most of the country's rebel factions signed a peace agreement in 2003.

After the government ignored calls to create an independent electoral commission, opposition parties boycotted the 2007 legislative election, in which the PCT and its allies won 125 out of 137 seats in the National Assembly. The participation of former rebel leader Frederic Bitsangou's National Resistance Council (CNR) was an important step toward peace. Sassou-Nguesso also included members of Kolelas's Congolese Movement for Democracy and Integral Development (MCDDI) in the cabinet for the first time.

In 2008, the PCT and approximately 60 other parties formed a new political coalition, the Rally of the Presidential Majority (RMP), to broaden support for the government ahead of the 2009 presidential election. In August, councilors from seven departments elected members of the national Senate, and the RMP secured 34 out of 42 seats.

The opposition attempted to unify ahead of the July 2009 presidential election, with 20 parties forming the Front of Congolese Opposition Parties (FPÖC). Six of the original 16 opposition candidates withdrew to protest electoral conditions. The government again refused to establish an independent electoral commission, and the existing commission disqualified four opposition candidates, including Ange Edouard Pongui, leader of the largest opposition party in the National Assembly, the Pan-African Union for Social Democracy (UPADS). Sassou-Nguesso won another term with 79 percent of the vote; his closest challenger, independent candidate Joséph Kignoumbi Kia Mboungou, took 7 percent of the vote. The government reported voter turnout of 66 percent, while the opposition claimed 10 percent. Following the election, Sassou-Nguesso eliminated the position of prime minister, becoming both head of state and government.

In August 2010, Congo celebrated 50 years of independence. The FPÖC refused to participate in official ceremonies, highlighting continuing poverty and injustice.

Congo is one of sub-Saharan Africa's major oil producers, though corruption and decades of instability have contributed to poor humanitarian conditions. Congo ranked 136 out of 182 countries on the 2009 UN Human Development Index. In late 2009, a humanitarian crisis developed in the north following armed conflict in the neighboring Democratic Republic of Congo. In February 2010, the authorities recorded over 100,000 refugees in the area, though the number had declined considerably by year's end.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: The Republic of Congo is not an electoral democracy, Irregularities, opposition boycotts and disqualifications, and the absence of an independent electoral commission marred recent elections. The 2002 constitution limits the president to two seven-year terms. However, current president Denis Sassou-Nguesso, who ruled from 1979 to 1992, has held office continuously since seizing power in 1997. The Senate, the upper house of Parliament, consists of 72 members, with councilors from each department electing six senators for six-year terms. Half of them come up for

election every three years, although 42 seats were at stake in 2008. Members of the 137-seat National Assembly, the lower house, are directly elected for five-year terms. Most of the over 100 registered political parties are personality driven and ethnically based. The ruling RMP coalition faces a weak and fragmented opposition.

Corruption in Congo's extractive industries remains pervasive. The country's Anti-Corruption Observatory became operational in 2008, but the government maintains inadequate internal controls, and Sassou-Nguesso and his family have been beset by allegations of graft. In November 2010, a French court ruled that a case centering on how Sassou-Nguesso obtained assets in France could proceed. In January 2010, Congo fulfilled its obligations under a joint IMF-World Bank Highly Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Initiative, which reduced debt-service payments significantly. However, the government appeared to accrue more debt when it entered a new loan agreement with China in April 2010, though the terms of the loan were not made public. Congo was ranked 154 out of 178 countries surveyed in Transparency International's 2010 Corruption Perceptions Index.

The government's respect for press freedom is limited. Speech that incites ethnic hatred, violence, or civil war is illegal. Police harassment and violence against journalists was reported during the 2009 election period. Police attacked foreign journalists and confiscated their equipment during a post election opposition protest. The government monopolizes the broadcast media, which reach a larger audience than print publications. However, approximately 10 private weekly newspapers in Brazzaville often publish articles and editorials critical of the government. There are no government restrictions on internet access.

Religious and academic freedoms are guaranteed and respected.

Freedoms of assembly and association are generally upheld, although public demonstrations are rare. Police halted the political opposition's post-election protest aggressively in 2009. Nongovernmental organizations operate more or less without interference as long as they do not challenge the ruling elite. Workers' rights to join trade unions and to strike are protected, and collective bargaining is practiced freely. Most workers in the formal business sector, including the oil industry, are union members, and unions have made efforts to organize informal sectors, such as agriculture and retail trade.

Congo's weak judiciary is subject to corruption and political influence. Members of the security forces act with impunity, and there have been reports of suspects dying during apprehension or in custody. Prison conditions are life threatening. Women and men, as well as juveniles and adults, are incarcerated together, and rape is common.

Ethnic discrimination persists. Members of Sassou-Nguesso's northern ethnic group dominate key government posts. Pygmy groups suffer discrimination, and many are held in lifetime servitude through customary ties to ethnic Bantu "patrons." Members of virtually all ethnicities favor their own groups in hiring practices, and urban neighborhoods tend to be segregated. In December 2010, both houses of the legislature passed a bill to protect and promote indigenous rights, though the president had not signed the bill by year's end.

Harassment by military personnel and militia groups inhibits travel, though such practices have declined. Following the 2009 election, the government restricted the movements of several opposition leaders while investigating their links to

election violence. The government lifted these restrictions in November 2009, but it continued to question FPÖC members, and it detained several leaders briefly in January 2010. Former army colonel Ferdinand Mbaou returned from a 10-year exile in July 2009 and was held without charge until February 2010. The government pardoned former president Pascal Lissouba in December 2009, but Lissouba refused to return without a broader amnesty for political exiles. The judicial system offers few protections for business and property rights. Congo ranked 179 out of 183 countries surveyed in the World Bank's 2010 Doing Business index.

Despite constitutional safeguards, legal and societal discrimination against women persists. Equal access to education and employment is limited, and civil codes regarding marriage formalize women's inferior status; for example, adultery is illegal for women but not for men. In traditional marriages, widows often do not inherit any portion of their spouses' estates, and divorce is difficult for women. Violence against women is reportedly widespread. Abortion is prohibited. In June 2010, the government adopted a new child protection framework. In August, the government announced that it would provide free emergency obstetrical care to reduce the country's high maternal mortality rate.

Costa Rica

Political Rights: 1

Population: 4,600,000

Civil Liberties: 1

Capital: San José

Status: Free

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline For Year Under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
1,2F	1,2F	1,2F	1,1F						

Overview: Former vice president Laura Chinchilla was elected as Costa Rica's first female president in February 2010. As crime and insecurity continued to increase, President Chinchilla in May announced the creation of a national antidrug commission and in September accepted 13,000 foreign troops to help combat regional drug trafficking and organized crime.

Costa Rica achieved independence from Spain in 1821 and gained full sovereignty in 1838. The country enjoyed relative political stability until 1948, when José "Pepe" Figueres launched a 40-day civil war to restore power to the rightful winner of that year's presidential election and successfully pushed to disband Costa Rica's military. In 1949, the country adopted a new constitution that ultimately strengthened democratic rule. Figueres later served as president for two separate terms under the National Liberation Party (PLN). Since 1949, power has alternated between the PLN and the Social Christian Unity Party (PUSC).

The PUSC's Abel Pacheco succeeded Miguel Ángel Rodríguez, also of the PUSC, in the 2002 presidential election. Former president Óscar Arias recaptured

the presidency for the PLN in 2006. The PUSC has since been plagued by a series of damaging corruption scandals, including the 2010 sentencing of former president Rafael Ángel Calderón.

In February 2010, former vice president Laura Chinchilla of the PLN became Costa Rica's first female president, capturing nearly 47 percent of the vote in the first round. Chinchilla defeated Ottón Soils of the Citizens' Action Party (PAC), who won 25 percent, and the Libertarian Movement Party (PML)'s Otto Guevara, who finished with approximately 21 percent. The balloting resulted in a divided Legislative Assembly: the PLN lost 2 seats for a total of 24 seats, the PAC won 11, the PML captured 9, the PUSC took 6, and Accessibility without Exclusion captured 4 seats, while the remaining 3 seats went to other smaller parties.

Chinchilla began her presidency in May with a strong mandate and immediately signed three decrees: a ban on open-pit gold mining, the establishment of an anti-drug commission, and the creation of national elder- and child-care networks. The decrees were symbolic of her policy priorities: environmental protection, security, and family welfare. While she maintained a strong public approval rating during her first 100 days in office, members of the opposition insisted that her administration was an extension of Óscar Arias's government and did not represent a serious shift in policy. Several civil society organizations were also skeptical about her policy objectives.

Concerns over public security, crime, and narcotics trafficking continued in 2010. The spread of violent crime has been closely tied to drug trafficking, as Costa Rica is increasingly being used as a narcotics storage and transportation route. Organized criminal networks are also suspected of having infiltrated police and political institutions. President Chinchilla took several steps to fight crime in 2010, such as creating a national antidrug commission, hiring 700 new police officers, introducing a gambling tax to increase police funding, earmarking an additional \$6.5 million for the country's judicial investigation agency (Organismo de Investigación Judicial), and making plans to expand prison capacity. Additionally, the president in July agreed to station more than 13,000 U.S. military personnel, including 7,000 U.S. Marines, on Costa Rican territory to lead regional antidrug efforts. As Costa Rica has no standing army, these U.S. troops will comprise the largest military presence in the country since 1821, which has raised some concern among social organizations.

While the quality of life in Costa Rica is relatively high for the region, economic growth is hampered by the national debt, inflation, and cost-of-living increases. The global economic crisis has further threatened economic stability in the country, with unemployment rates reaching a 20-year high in 2009 of nearly 7.3 percent. Chinchilla introduced new social programs in 2010 and planned to explore free-trade agreements with the European Union, South Korea, China, and Singapore in an effort to increase foreign investment and reverse the trend of growing poverty.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Costa Rica is an electoral democracy. The 2010 legislative and presidential elections were considered free and fair. The president and members of the 57-seat, unicameral Legislative Assembly are elected for single four-year terms and can seek a nonconsecutive second term. The main political parties are the PLN, the PAC, the PML,

and the PUSC. A special chamber of the Supreme Court chooses an independent national election commission. Ahead of the 2010 elections, Costa Rica approved reforms to its electoral law, including the prohibition of anonymous and foreign campaign donations, revised regulations surrounding government financing of political parties, and new quotas designed to promote women's leadership roles within political parties.

Every president since 1990 has been accused of corruption after leaving office, with the exception of Óscar Arias. In 2010, Rodrigo Arias, brother of Óscar Arias, was accused of misusing funds from the Central American Bank of Economic Integration. The case was investigated by the government but quickly dropped due to pressure from Arias' allies. Costa Rica was ranked 41 out of 178 countries surveyed in Transparency International's 2010 Corruption Perceptions Index.

The Costa Rican media are generally free from state interference. There are six privately owned dailies, and both public and commercial broadcast outlets are available, including at least four private television stations and more than 100 private radio stations. Abuse of government advertising and direct pressure from senior officials to influence media content has been reported. A February 2010 Supreme Court ruling removed prison terms for defamation, though internet access is unrestricted.

The government recognizes freedom of religion. President Arias backed a 2009 bill that sought to declare Costa Rica a "secular state," rather than a Roman Catholic state, which created tension between his government and the church; however, the bill was not adopted by the legislature as of the end of 2010. However, President Laura Chinchilla made efforts in 2010 to repair government relations with the Catholic Church by putting a government representative in the church: Fernando Sánchez. Academic freedom is respected.

The constitution provides for freedom of assembly and association, and numerous nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) are active. Although labor unions organize and mount frequent protests with minimal governmental interference, employers often ignore minimum-wage and social security laws, and the resulting fines are insignificant.

The judicial branch is independent, with members elected by the legislature. However, there are often substantial delays in the judicial process and long pretrial detention. There have been complaints of police brutality, which are collected by an ombudsman's office. In September 2010, the Supreme Court outlawed police use of roadblocks and random searches as preventative security measures, deeming them a violation of civil rights. However, many Costa Ricans opposed the decision, saying these tactics were important tools in fighting against drug trafficking and other crimes. Prisons are notoriously overcrowded and offer inadequate medical services; in September 2010, the government received a \$200 million loan from the Inter-American Development Bank to increase the capacity of its prison system for an additional 3,000 inmates.

As the drug trade expands in Costa Rica, the country has experienced a significant increase in homicides, with a homicide rate in 2010 of approximately 11 murders per every 100,000 people. Costa Rica has become a popular location for the warehousing and transport of cocaine destined for the United States. Between 2005 and 2010, Costa Rica captured a total of 194 tons of cocaine. However, despite

such efforts, the United States included Costa Rica, which is a transshipment point between Colombia and Honduras, on its list of countries with major drug-trafficking operations. At least 500,000 Nicaraguan immigrants live in the country illegally. A 2006 law permits security forces to raid any home, business, or vehicle where they suspect undocumented immigrants, who can then be detained indefinitely. Abuse and extortion of migrants by the border guard have also been reported. Reforms made to a migration law that went into effect in March 2010 include implementing fines against employers who hire illegal immigrants and creating stricter controls over marriages between Costa Ricans and foreigners in an effort to prevent "marriages of convenience."

Indigenous rights are not a government priority, and NGOs estimate that about 73 percent of the country's 70,000 indigenous people have little access to health and education services, electricity, or potable water. Costa Ricans of African descent have also faced racial and economic discrimination.

Women still face discrimination in the economic realm, and only about a third of the economically active population is female. Most female employment is in the informal sector, where women on average earn 50 percent less than men. There are 22 women in the Legislative Assembly, occupying approximately 39 percent of legislator positions. Violence against women and children is a major problem. The number of female homicides in Costa Rica more than doubled between 2007 and 2010, from 16 to 38. Domestic workers have long been subject to exploitation; they lack legal protection, receive the lowest minimum wage, and are excluded from social security programs. An increasing number of sex tourists visit Costa Rica, and approximately 3,500 children were victims of sexual exploitation in 2007. Costa Rica has failed to enforce anti-trafficking legislation and remains a transit and destination country for trafficked persons. In July 2010, President Chinchilla faced criticism from civil society organizations and gay rights advocates when she supported a referendum put forth by conservative groups against same-sex unions. However, the Constitutional Court ruled in August that holding a referendum on this issue was unconstitutional.

Côte d'Ivoire

Political Rights: 1*

Population: 22,000,000

Civil Liberties: 6*

Capital: Yamoussoukro (official); Abidjan (de facto)

Status: Not Free

Ratings Change: Cote d'Ivoire's political rights rating declined from 6 to 7 and its civil liberties rating declined from 5 to 6 due to incumbent president Laurent Gbagbo's refusal to step down or recognize the November 2010 electoral victory of opposition presidential candidate Alassane Ouattara, as well as political violence that stemmed from the postelection standoff, including state security forces' targeting of ethnic minority groups that supported Ouattara.

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline For Year Under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
5,4PF	6,6NF	6,5NF	6,6NF	6,6NF	7,6NF	7,5NF	6,5NF	6,5NF	7,6NF

Overview: A long-delayed presidential election, required under a 2007 peace accord signed by President Laurent Gbagbo and rebel leader Guillaume Soro, was finally held in 2010, despite the failure of a disarmament program and problems with the voter registration process. While the October first round was peaceful and deemed relatively free and fair by the international community, Gbagbo refused to concede his loss to the internationally recognized winner of the November runoff, Alassane Ouattara. A curfew was imposed, international media were banned, and the country's borders were closed, as violence escalated between the two men's supporters at year's end.

Côte d'Ivoire gained independence from France in 1960, and its first president, Felix Houphouet-Boigny, ruled until his death in 1993. Henri Konan Bédié, then the speaker of the National Assembly, assumed power and won a fraudulent election in 1995. Opposition candidate Alassane Ouattara was disqualified on the grounds of his alleged Burkinabe origins.

General Robert Guei seized power in 1999 and declared himself the winner of an October 2000 presidential election after initial results showed that he was losing to opposition politician Laurent Gbagbo. Guei was soon toppled by a popular uprising, and Gbagbo, who was eventually declared the winner, refused to call new polls. The postelection violence cost hundreds of civilian lives and deepened the divisions between north and south, as well as between Muslims and Christians. In the December 2000 legislative elections, Gbagbo's Ivorian Popular Front (FPI) won 96 seats, while Bedie's Democratic Party of Côte d'Ivoire-African Democratic Rally (PDCI-RDA) took 94, and smaller parties and independents won the remainder.

Civil war erupted in September 2002, when some 700 soldiers mounted a coup attempt, and government forces killed Guei under unclear circumstances on the first day of fighting. Rebel forces quickly took control of the north and called for Gbagbo to step down. This call was echoed by other rebels in the west. By December 2002, the rebel factions had united to form the New Forces (FN), led by Guillaume Soro.

Gbagbo's government and the FN signed a French-brokered ceasefire in 2003, but it soon broke down. In 2004, following the deaths of nine French peacekeepers in a government bombing campaign against the FN, France destroyed the Ivorian air force and—with the backing of the African Union (AU)—persuaded the UN Security Council to impose a strict arms embargo on the country. In April 2005, South African president Thabo Mbeki brokered a new peace accord that set general elections for the end of that year. However, because the requisite disarmament and poll preparations were not completed in time, the AU postponed the elections, extended Gbagbo's term, and appointed an interim prime minister, economist Charles Konan Banny.

Similar delays prevented elections from taking place in 2006. With the expiration of Gbagbo's extended mandate in October, the UN Security Council passed a resolution transferring all political and military power to the prime minister until the next elections. Gbagbo refused to accept the move and called for the withdrawal of all foreign troops.

In March 2007, Gbagbo and Soro met in Burkina Faso and signed an entirely new peace deal, the Ouagadougou Political Accord (APO), according to which Soro was appointed interim prime minister until elections could be held. Gbagbo soon visited the north for the first time since 2002, and the "confidence zone" separating the two parts of the country was officially dismantled.

Despite the more peaceful climate, the elections envisioned in the APO were postponed five times over the next three years. Less than 12,000 of more than 30,000 FN troops and almost none of the pro-Gbagbo militia groups slated for formal disarmament actually went through the process. Some progress was made during this period on voter registration, particularly among previously disenfranchised groups in the north, who were often described as foreigners by the southern ethnic groups. Nonetheless, the registration effort was badly organized, cumbersome, and frequently contested by both sides of the political divide.

In February 2010, Gbagbo unilaterally suspended voter registration and dissolved the government and the electoral commission, accusing the commission of partisanship. This brought thousands of people, particularly in the north and in Abidjan, to the streets in protest, and five people died amid an aggressive police response. A new head of the electoral commission and a new cabinet had been appointed by April, and in September, the registration process yielded an official voter list of 5.8 million people, including 500,000 new voters.

The first round of the presidential election, held on October 31, was deemed relatively free and fair by domestic and international observers. Gbagbo led with 38 percent of the vote, and Ouattara of the Rally of the Republicans (RDR) party placed second with 32 percent. Bédié of the PDCI-RDA, who came in third with 25 percent, threw his support behind Ouattara ahead of the November 28 runoff. Dozens of people were injured in partisan clashes before the second-round vote, and the government imposed an indefinite nationwide curfew in response. The day of the runoff itself was relatively peaceful, and UN and European Union observers generally approved of the polling, but violence increased considerably during the period before the results were officially announced. On December 1, pro-Gbagbo militiamen and government security forces raided the Ouattara campaign headquarters in Abidjan, arresting dozens of people and leaving four dead.

On December 2, the electoral commission, backed by the United Nations, formally announced that Ouattara had won with 54 percent of the vote. Pro-Gbagbo officials had prevented the panel from announcing the results earlier. The Constitutional Council, which was made up of Gbagbo loyalists, quickly annulled the results from largely pro-Ouattara northern districts, alleging widespread fraud. It then announced that Gbagbo had won with 51 percent. The government closed the country's borders and banned all broadcasts of international news, as the international community formed a united front in pressing Gbagbo to concede to Ouattara. By December 4, both Gbagbo and Ouattara had been sworn in as president in separate, conflicting ceremonies. The standoff remained unresolved at year's end, with escalating violence between the two sides causing dozens of deaths.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Côte d'Ivoire is not an electoral democracy. The constitution provides for the popular election of a president and a 225-seat unicameral National Assembly for five-year terms. However, the last legislative elections were held in 2000, and the 2010 presidential election degenerated into a violent stalemate in which both runoff candidates—incumbent Laurent Gbagbo and challenger Alassane Ouattara—declared themselves president. Former rebel leader Guillaume Soro, who was appointed to the position of prime minister under the terms of the APO, resigned in December 2010 to protest Gbagbo's refusal to step down. Gbagbo's party, the FPI, dominates the legislature. Other major parties include former president Henri Konan Bedie's PDCI-RDA and Ouattara's RDR.

Corruption is a serious problem, and perpetrators rarely face prosecution or public exposure. Earnings from informal taxes and the sale of cocoa, cotton, and weapons have given many of those in power—including members of the military and rebel forces—an incentive to obstruct peace and political normalization. In June 2010, National Assembly members accused Interior Minister Desire Tagro of misappropriating compensation funds paid by the Dutch company Trafigura for the dumping of toxic waste in 2006. The prime minister was also implicated in the affair, but both were exonerated after an investigation found that the claims had been politically motivated.

Despite constitutional protections, press freedom is generally not respected in practice. Violence against journalists increased in the period surrounding the 2010 presidential election. Prior to the vote, local journalists who criticized the government were detained and harassed, and foreign journalists were directly targeted during and particularly after the balloting. All international broadcasts were banned amid the dispute over runoff results. An in-depth Reporters Without Borders report found that election coverage was remarkably balanced prior to the second-round vote, with even the state broadcaster giving equal airtime to both candidates. However, the National Broadcasting Council reportedly imposed tight restrictions on election coverage by private radio stations, and print outlets were often highly partisan. After the second round, the state broadcaster—the country's only national broadcasting station—was little more than a mouthpiece for Gbagbo.

The government does not generally restrict internet access and made no attempts to do so during the election, but mobile-telephone text messaging was suspended from October 31 through the end of the year.

Legal guarantees of religious freedom are typically upheld. However, the north-south political divide corresponds roughly with the distribution of the Muslim and Christian populations, and the voter registration effort of recent years was designed in part to address claims of disenfranchisement among Muslim ethnic groups.

The government, which owns most educational facilities, inhibits academic freedom by requiring authorization for all political meetings held on campuses. The progovernment Student Federation of Cote d'Ivoire (FESCI) engages in systematic intimidation. It and other student groups were involved in the political violence of **2010**.

The constitution protects the right to free assembly, but it is often denied in practice. While opposition parties were given some freedom to campaign in the months leading up to the 2010 election, street protests during the year often turned violent, and progovernment vigilante groups like FESCI and the Young Patriots reportedly joined security forces in cracking down on demonstrators. In February, security forces allegedly killed five protesters demonstrating against Gbagbo's decision to suspend the electoral commission. A number of planned opposition rallies against the repeated postponement of elections were banned by the Gbagbo administration during the year.

The right to organize and join labor unions is constitutionally guaranteed, and workers have the right to bargain collectively. However, these rights are not always respected. A number of strikes were harshly suppressed in 2010, particularly in the rebel-controlled north. Election and registration workers repeatedly went on strike during the year over unpaid wages.

The judiciary is not independent. Judges are political appointees without tenure and are highly susceptible to external interference and bribes. The Constitutional Council exhibited a remarkable lack of independence in 2010 when it annulled the election results from the north and declared Gbagbo the winner, despite endorsement of Ouattara's victory by the election commission and international observers.

In addition to Ivorian security forces, over 9,500 UN peacekeepers operated in Côte d'Ivoire in 2010, along with both rebel and pro-Gbagbo militias. The west continued to be particularly unstable, with pro-Gbagbo militias maintaining control through fear, setting up roadblocks, and attacking vehicles indiscriminately throughout the year.

Côte d'Ivoire's cocoa and other industries have historically depended on workers from neighboring countries, but conflicts between immigrant groups and longer-term residents have contributed to the broader political divisions in the country. Gbagbo's repeated use of xenophobic language helped to fuel ethnic violence during 2010.

Côte d'Ivoire has made symbolic efforts to combat child trafficking, but tens of thousands of children from all over the region are believed to be working on Ivorian plantations, and a large share of those involved in prostitution in the country are reportedly juveniles.

Despite official support for their constitutional rights, women suffer widespread discrimination. Equal pay is offered in the small formal business sector, but women have few chances of obtaining formal employment. Rape was reportedly common during the civil war and remained a serious problem in 2010, particularly in the militia-controlled west.

Croatia

Political Rights: 1

Population: 4,400,000

Civil Liberties: 2

Capital: Zagreb

Status: Free

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline For Year Under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
2,2F	1,2F	1,2F							

Overview: Ivo Josipovic captured a majority of the vote in the January 2010 runoff presidential election and subsequently devoted considerable energy towards promoting regional reconciliation. Corruption returned as a major concern during the year, with indictments against former prime minister Ivo Sanader and other high-ranking officials. Croatia continued to make slow progress towards its goal of European Union accession, with 29 of 33 chapters provisionally closed at year's end.

Formerly a constituent republic within socialist Yugoslavia, Croatia held its first multiparty elections in 1990, which resulted in a victory for the former communist general and dissident Franjo Tudjman and his Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ). Independence was subsequently declared in June 1991 under Tudjman's leadership. From 1991 to 1995, Croatia was consumed by the wars accompanying Yugoslavia's disintegration, both on its own territory, where the indigenous Serb population attempted to secede, and in neighboring Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Tudjman's HDZ continued to rule Croatia until his death in December 1999. An erstwhile Tudjman ally, Stjepan Mesic, was elected president in the January 2000 elections, and parliamentary elections held later that month resulted in a victory for a center-left coalition led by the Social Democratic Party (SDP). Ivica Racan, leader of the SDP, assumed the position of prime minister.

The HDZ returned to power in 2003 under the leadership of Ivo Sanader and refashioned itself as a conventional European center-right party. The Sanader government's foreign and domestic policy goals were focused on gaining Croatia's acceptance into the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the European Union (EU). Croatia formally joined NATO in April 2009.

The HDZ captured nearly 37 percent of the vote in the November 2007 parliamentary elections, while the SDP captured 31 percent. The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) deemed the elections to be free, fair, and transparent. Sanader began his second term as prime minister in January 2008, as the HDZ formed a governing coalition with the Croatian Peasant Party (HSS), the Croatian Social Liberal Party (HSLs), and seven out of eight ethnic minority representatives, including three members of the Independent Serbian Democratic Party (SDSS).

In July 2009, Prime Minister Sanader unexpectedly resigned and was replaced by a deputy prime minister, Jadranka Kosor, of the HDZ. Elections to replace

President Mesi were held over two rounds in December 2009 and January 2010, with Ivo Josipovic capturing 60 percent in the runoff vote. Since taking office in February, Josipovic has focused on promoting inter-ethnic reconciliation in both Croatia and the region. Systemic corruption and allegations of wrongdoing among high-level government officials continued to dominate public debate throughout the year. Of particular concern was the December indictment of former prime minister Sanader for his alleged involvement in illegal activity while in office.

Croatia's EU accession has stalled in recent years due to a number of problems, including insufficient cooperation with the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY), slow progress on internal reform (especially with respect to corruption and rule of law), and a territorial dispute with Slovenia. In June 2009, the EU cancelled Croatia's next round of accession negotiations after Slovenia blocked the closing of several chapters. However, the two sides reached an agreement later in the year, which unlocked Croatia's EU accession path. As of November 2010, negotiations had opened on all 33 chapters for Croatia's EU accession, 29 of which had been provisionally closed.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Croatia is an electoral democracy. Both the 2009-2010 presidential poll and the 2007 parliamentary elections were deemed free and fair. The 153-member unicameral parliament (Sabor) is composed of 140 members from geographical districts, 8 of which represent ethnic minorities, and a variable number representing Croatians living abroad. All members are elected to four-year terms. The president of the republic, who serves as head of state, is elected by popular vote for a maximum of two five-year terms. The prime minister is appointed by the president but must be approved by the parliament. The largest parties are the center-right HDZ and center-left SDP, but several smaller parties, including the HSS-HSLS coalition and the Croatian People's Party (HNS), have won representation in the parliament.

Corruption was a major problem in 2010. Investigations into corruption allegations were opened on a variety of fronts, including HDZ misappropriation of funds from state enterprises, customs duties, and the privatization of state-owned enterprises. Several high-ranking government officials, including former prime minister Ivo Sanader and former deputy prime minister Damir Polancec, were officially charged with embezzlement of state funds for use by the HDZ during electoral campaigns and for personal gain. Croatia was ranked 62 out of 178 countries surveyed in Transparency International's 2010 Corruption Perceptions Index.

The constitution guarantees freedoms of expression and the press. While these rights are generally respected in practice, reporters remain vulnerable to political pressure, and journalists have alleged that the media are becoming increasingly beholden to the interests of powerful advertisers. Additionally, violence against journalists investigating corruption issues has resulted in several murders in recent years. The state broadcaster, HRT, was accused of cancelling several popular television news programs in 2009 and 2010 that investigated cases of high-level government corruption. Access to the internet is unrestricted.

Freedom of religion is guaranteed by the constitution. A group needs at least 500 members and five years of operation as a registered association to be recognized as a religious organization. Members of the Serbian Orthodox Church continue to

report cases of intimidation and vandalism, although the number of such incidents has been declining as memories of the 1991-95 war recede. Little progress has been made in restoring property nationalized by the communists to non-Roman Catholic groups.

The constitution provides for freedoms of association and assembly. A variety of both international and domestic nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) operate in Croatia without governmental interference or harassment. The constitution allows workers to form and join trade unions, and they do so freely. Approximately 64 percent of the workforce is unionized. Despite these freedoms, the International Trade Union Confederation criticized Croatia's 2009 Act on the Basis for Wages in Public Services for endangering the right to collective bargaining. The position of trade unions in the country has also been weakened by the recent global economic crisis, which has forced some trade union organizations to suspend temporarily their participation in the state's Economic and Social Council, an advisory body to the Croatian government, which coordinates dialogue and harmonizes policies between employers, trade unions, and the government.

Judicial independence and the overall functioning of the judiciary remain problematic. Recent reforms, such as the creation of a State Judicial Council responsible for the appointment of judges (rather than the Ministry of Justice), have not delivered greater independence. While improvements in judicial efficiency have reduced the backlog of cases in the system by some 10 percent during 2010 compared to 2009, the number remains unacceptably high. Among other problems, the judicial system continues to suffer from the questionable selection of judges, excessively long trials, and poor implementation of court decisions, especially in cases related to the repossession of property owned by Serbs. Prison conditions do not fully meet international standards due to overcrowding and poor medical care.

The legacy of the 1991-95 war in Croatia remains a sensitive issue. In December 2010, Amnesty International reported that Croatia was processing an average of only 18 war crimes trials per year, with 700 trials yet to go. At the current rate, many individuals suspected of war crimes may never be prosecuted. War crimes trials held between 2005 and 2009 disproportionately targeted Serbs, who were accused of wrongdoing in 76 percent of cases. Nevertheless, Croatian authorities have, to a limited extent, shown greater willingness to prosecute Croatians accused of war crimes against Serbs during the 1990s.

Respect for minority rights in Croatia has improved over the past decade, but various forms of harassment and discrimination persist. Ethnic minorities, particularly Serbs, remain underrepresented at several levels of government and in the civil administration. Returning Serbs are still harassed by the local population, although the frequency of such incidents is on the decline. Eighty thousand Croatian Serbs remained registered as refugees in the region as of 2010. The Roma population also faces significant social and economic obstacles, as well as widespread discrimination.

The constitution prohibits discrimination on the basis of gender. However, women have a notably higher unemployment rate and earn markedly less than men. Women currently hold 38 of 153 seats in the parliament, and the current prime minister is a woman. The 2008 act on gender equity stipulates that women must comprise at least 40 percent of the candidate lists for each political party at the local, national, and EU levels. Domestic violence against women is believed

182 Freedom in the World—2011

to be widespread and underreported, though the government has helped to finance several shelters and counseling centers for victims. Trafficking in women for the purpose of prostitution continues to be a problem, as Croatia remains a transit country for women trafficked to Western Europe.

Cuba

Political Rights: 7

Population: 11,300,000

Civil Liberties: 6

Capital: Havana

Status: Not Free

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline For Year Under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
7,7NF	7,6NF	7,6NF	7,6NF						

Overview: After prolonged negotiations with the Roman Catholic Church and the Spanish government, Cuban authorities in 2010 began releasing the 52 remaining political prisoners from a 2003 crackdown on independent journalists and dissidents. In September, the government announced that it would lay off 500,000 employees, about 10 percent of the country's labor force, and opened 178 activities and professions for self-employment and private cooperatives. In November, President Raúl Castro announced that the long-delayed sixth congress of the Cuban Communist Party would be held in April 2011.

Cuba achieved independence from Spain in 1898 as a result of the Spanish-American War. The Republic of Cuba was established in 1902 but remained under U.S. tutelage until 1934. In 1959, the U.S.-supported dictatorship of Fulgencio Batista, who had ruled Cuba for 18 of the previous 25 years, was overthrown by Fidel Castro's July 26th Movement. Castro declared his affiliation with communism shortly thereafter, and the island has been governed by a one-party state ever since.

Following the 1991 collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of roughly \$5 billion in annual Soviet subsidies, Castro opened some sectors of the economy to direct foreign investment. The legalization of the U.S. dollar in 1993 created a new source of inequality, as access to dollars from remittances or through the tourist industry enriched some, while the majority continued to live on peso wages averaging less than \$10 a month. Meanwhile, the authorities remained highly intolerant of political dissent, enacting harsh new sedition legislation in 1999 and mounting a series of campaigns to undermine the reputations of leading opposition figures by portraying them as agents of the United States.

In 2002, the Varela Project, a referendum initiative seeking broad changes in the socialist system, won significant international recognition. However, the referendum proposal was rejected by the constitutional committee of the National Assembly, and the government instead held a counter-referendum, in which 8.2 million people supposedly declared the socialist system to be "untouchable." The

government initiated a crackdown on the prodemocracy opposition in March 2003. Seventy-five people, including 27 independent journalists, 14 independent librarians, and dozens of signature collectors for the Varela Project, were sentenced to an average of 20 years in prison following one-day trials held in April.

On July 31, 2006, Fidel Castro passed power on a provisional basis to his younger brother, defense minister and first vice president Raul Castro, after internal bleeding forced him to undergo surgery and begin a slow convalescence. The 81-year-old Fidel resigned as president in February 2008, and Raul, 76, formally replaced him. Though officially retired, Fidel continued to write provocative newspaper columns and remained in the public eye through the release of carefully selected photographs and video clips.

The government approved a series of economic reforms in March 2008. These included allowing ordinary Cubans to buy consumer electronic goods and stay in the country's top tourist hotels. After introducing a plan in April that permitted thousands of Cubans to receive titles to their homes, the government eliminated salary caps and raised pensions for the country's more than two million retirees. The state also began granting farmers a larger role in decisions about land use. In late August and early September, however, Cuba was struck by two hurricanes, and a global economic downturn began shortly thereafter, sending the Cuban economy into a crisis that halted the tentative reform process.

In 2009, the government began to distribute land leases to agricultural workers, but other key aspects of the reform agenda remained stalled. Cuba's heavy dependence on imports led to a shortage of foreign exchange, forcing layoffs and closures at many state enterprises, and the threat of blackouts led to electricity rationing during the summer.

Raúl Castro continued a series of significant cabinet shuffles in 2010, removing the minister of basic industries in September. The changes, which had begun in 2008, included the appointment of an unprecedented number of military officers to lead key economic ministries responsible for transport, the sugar industry, and CIMEX, the largest state-owned corporation in Cuba.

The authorities also pressed forward with economic reforms during the year. In August, the government approved an initiative that allowed foreign investors to obtain 99-year property leases. In a September interview with a U.S. magazine, Fidel Castro declared that the, "Cuban economic model doesn't even work for us anymore," a statement that was widely interpreted as a show of support for his brother's reform efforts. A few days later, it was announced that more than half a million workers, or 10 percent of the country's labor force, would be laid off from public sector jobs, while 178 economic activities would be opened up to self-employment and private sector participation. In October, the government began issuing licenses for self-employment (*cuentapropistas*). It also stated that entrepreneurs would be levied a 35 percent income tax, among other taxes, and that rural and other cooperatives would receive further incentives. Officials announced in November that the long-delayed sixth congress of the Cuban Communist Party would be held in April 2011, with the stated aim of discussing the direction and content of the ongoing economic restructuring.

Cuba continued to deny political and civil liberties to regime opponents in 2010. However, harassment and short-term detentions replaced long prison terms

as the preferred form of repression, and some dissidents won reprieves from the government. In February, imprisoned dissident Orlando Zapata Tamayo died after a hunger strike he had begun in December. Other political prisoners began their own hunger strikes amid international outrage over the death. Negotiations between the Cuban government, the Roman Catholic Church, and the Spanish government subsequently resulted in a July agreement to release the remaining 52 of the 75 political prisoners jailed in 2003.

U.S. government contractor Alan Gross, who had been arrested in December 2009 for distributing communications equipment to religious organizations, remained behind bars in 2010 without formal charges being filed. Meanwhile, despite ongoing bilateral negotiations, the U.S. government took no concrete steps to remove travel and other restrictions on the island.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Cuba is not an electoral democracy. Longtime president Fidel Castro and his brother, current president Raúl Castro, dominate the one-party political system, in which the Communist Party of Cuba (PCC) controls all government entities. The 1976 constitution provides for a National Assembly, which designates the Council of State. That body in turn appoints the Council of Ministers in consultation with its president, who serves as chief of state and head of government. Raúl Castro is now president of the Council of Ministers and the Council of State, and commander in chief of the armed forces. As of 2010, Fidel was presumed to remain first secretary of the PCC. The most recent PCC congress was held in 1997; in November 2010, the next congress was scheduled for April 2011.

In the January 2008 National Assembly elections, as in previous elections, voters were asked to either support or reject a single candidate for each of the 614 seats. All candidates received the requisite 50 percent approval, with Raúl Castro winning support from over 99 percent of voters. In April 2010, Cuba held elections for the approximately 15,000 delegates to the country's 169 Popular Municipal Assemblies, or municipal councils, which are elected every two and a half years.

All political organizing outside the PCC is illegal. Political dissent, whether spoken or written, is a punishable offense, and dissidents frequently receive years of imprisonment for seemingly minor infractions. The regime has also called on its neighbor-watch groups, known as Committees for the Defense of the Revolution, to strengthen vigilance against "antisocial behavior," a euphemism for opposition activity. Dissident leaders have reported intimidation and harassment by state-sponsored groups. The absolute number of political prisoners in Cuba decreased from 201 in 2009 to 167 in July 2010. The government agreed in July to release the remaining 52 people arrested in the March 2003 crackdown on independent journalists, librarians, and other activists. Those released went into exile in Spain, but the government missed a November 7 deadline for all 52 to be released, as a final group of 13 prisoners refused to agree to leave Cuba. As of December 2010, the November deadline still had not been met. The Damas de Blanco, a group of female relatives of the 2003 political prisoners, continued their protests during the year, despite repeated episodes of harassment from authorities and regime supporters. Meanwhile, 12 "prisoners of conscience" remained in Cuba under "extra-penal"

license, a form of parole granted to prisoners facing health or other problems that may have arisen during their incarceration.

Official corruption remains a serious problem, with a culture of illegality shrouding the mixture of private and state-controlled economic activities that are allowed on the island. The Raúl Castro government has made the fight against corruption an important priority. In July 2010, Chilean businessman and former Castro associate Max Marambio was summoned to Havana to testify in an investigation of alleged fraud in a joint Cuban-Chilean agribusiness enterprise, after his representative in Havana was found dead in his apartment in April; Marambio never appeared to testify in Havana. Chilean authorities declined to carry out an interrogation, citing irregularities in the process. Cuba was ranked 69 out of 178 countries surveyed in Transparency International's 2010 Corruption Perceptions Index.

The news media are controlled by the state and the PCC. The government considers the independent press to be illegal and uses Ministry of Interior agents to infiltrate and report on the outlets in question. Independent journalists, particularly those associated with the dozen small news agencies that have been established outside state control, are subjected to terms of hard labor and assaults by state security agents. Foreign news agencies may only hire local reporters through government offices, limiting employment opportunities for independent journalists. Nevertheless, some state media, such as the newspaper *Juventud Rebelde*, have begun to cover previously taboo topics, such as corruption in the health and education sectors.

Access to the internet remains tightly controlled, and it is difficult for most Cubans to connect from their homes. Websites are closely monitored, and while there are state-owned internet cafes in major cities, the costs are prohibitive for most residents. Only select state employees have workplace access to e-mail and restricted access to websites deemed inappropriate by the Ministry of Communications. There are an estimated 25 independent, journalistic bloggers working on the island. Although they have faced some episodes of harassment, they have avoided close links to dissidents and are not subject to the same type of systematic persecution as other independent journalists. Blogger Yoani Sánchez has emerged as a worldwide celebrity, though few within Cuba can access the ironic and critical musings about life in Cuba on her popular blog, *Generation Y*.

In 1991, Roman Catholics and other believers were granted permission to join the PCC, and the constitutional reference to official atheism was dropped the following year. The Catholic Church has been playing an increasingly important civil society role, mediating in the case of the 2003 political prisoners, enabling discussion of topics of public concern, and offering material assistance to the population, especially in the countryside. In November 2010, the Church inaugurated its first seminary in the country since the 1959 revolution. However, official obstacles to religious freedom remain substantial. Churches are not allowed to conduct ordinary educational activities, and many church-based publications are subject to censorship by the Office of Religious Affairs. While Roman Catholicism is the traditionally dominant faith, an estimated 70 percent of the population practices some form of Afro-Cuban religion. And as in the rest of Latin America, Protestantism is making rapid gains in Cuba.

The government restricts academic freedom. Teaching materials for subjects

including mathematics and literature must contain ideological content. Affiliation with PCC structures is generally needed to gain access to educational institutions, and students' report cards carry information regarding their parents' involvement with the party.

Limited rights of assembly and association are permitted under the constitution. However, as with other constitutional rights, they may not be, "exercised against the existence and objectives of the Socialist State." The unauthorized assembly of more than three people, even for religious services in private homes, is punishable with up to three months in prison and a fine. This rule is selectively enforced and is often used to imprison human rights advocates. Workers do not have the right to strike or bargain collectively. Members of independent labor unions, which the government considers illegal, are often harassed, dismissed from their jobs, and barred from future employment.

The Council of State, led by Raúl Castro, controls both the courts and the judicial process as a whole. Beginning in 1991, the United Nations voted annually to assign a special investigator on human rights to Cuba, which consistently denied the appointee a visa. In 2007, the UN Human Rights Council ended the investigator position for Cuba. However, Raúl Castro authorized Cuban representatives to sign two UN human rights treaties in February 2008. Cuba does not grant international humanitarian organizations access to its prisons.

Afro-Cubans have frequently complained about widespread discrimination by government and law enforcement officials. Many Afro-Cubans have only limited access to the dollar-earning sectors of the economy, such as tourism and joint ventures with foreign companies.

Freedom of movement and the right to choose one's residence and place of employment are severely restricted. Attempting to leave the island without permission is a punishable offense. Intercity migration or relocation requires permission from the local Committee for the Defense of the Revolution and other authorities. Recent economic reforms offering a variety of incentives for rural production hint at a possible attempt to stem the historical tide of migration from the countryside to Havana.

Only state enterprises can enter into economic agreements with foreigners as minority partners; ordinary citizens cannot participate. PCC membership is still required to obtain good jobs, suitable housing, and real access to social services, including medical care and educational opportunities.

Cuba positioned itself at the forefront of the gay rights movement in Latin America in 2008, due in part to the advocacy of Mariela Castro, Raúl Castro's daughter. The government helped to sponsor an International Day Against Homophobia, which featured shows, lectures, panel discussions, and book presentations, while the Ministry of Public Health authorized government-provided sex-change surgeries for transsexuals. By 2009, officials were debating the possible approval of artificial insemination for lesbians who wished to bear children. Cuba had already been considered the best performer in Latin America in terms of gender equality. About 40 percent of all women work in the official labor force, and they are well represented in most professions.

Cyprus

Political Rights: 1
Civil Liberties: 1
Status: Free

Population: 1,100,000
Capital: Nicosia

Note: The numerical ratings and status listed above do not reflect conditions in Northern Cyprus, which is examined in a separate report.

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline For Year Under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
1:1F									

Overview: During 2010, President Demetris Christofias met regularly with the leader of Northern Cyprus, though no truly contentious issues were resolved. A media mogul was shot dead outside his home in January, allegedly by gunmen working for a disgruntled former presenter on one of his stations.

Cyprus gained independence from Britain in 1960, after a five-year guerrilla campaign by partisans demanding union with Greece. In July 1974, Greek Cypriot National Guard members, backed by Greece's military junta, staged an unsuccessful coup aimed at such unification. Five days later, Turkey invaded from the north, seized control of 37 percent of the island, and expelled 200,000 ethnic Greeks from the portion it occupied. Today, the Greek and Turkish communities are almost completely separated in the south and north, respectively.

A buffer zone known as the Green Line has divided Cyprus, including the capital, since 1974. UN resolutions stipulate that Cyprus is a single country of which the northern third is illegally occupied. In 1983, Turkish-controlled Cyprus declared its independence, a move recognized only by Turkey.

Reunification talks accelerated after a more receptive Turkish government was elected in 2002, and a new pro-unification government was elected in Northern Cyprus in 2003. Then UN secretary general Kofi Annan led a round of negotiations that collapsed in 2004, after no consensus was reached. He subsequently proposed a plan that was put to a vote in April 2004 in simultaneous, separate referendums on both sides of the island. Ultimately, 76 percent of Greek Cypriots voted against the plan, while 65 percent of Turkish Cypriots voted in favor. With the island still divided, only Greek Cyprus joined the European Union (EU) as scheduled in May 2004.

In parliamentary elections held in the south in 2006, the Democratic Party (DIKO) won 11 seats, while the Democratic Rally (DISY) and the Progressive Party of the Working People (AKEL), a communist party, each took 18 seats; three small parties captured the remaining 9 seats. The 2004 referendum and the prospects for reunification were major campaign issues, and the results were considered a signal of support for President Tassos Papadopoulos of DIKO and his rejection of the UN plan. However, this sentiment was reversed in the 2008 presidential election, when

AKEL leader Demetris Christofias won 53 percent of the runoff vote, making him the only communist head of state in Europe. His cabinet included ministers from DIKO as well as the Movement for Social Democrats (EDEK).

Christofias's election paved the way for new reunification talks, and he met regularly with the Northern Cypriot leader. In September 2010, Christofias held a round of intensive talks with newly elected Northern Cypriot leader Dervis Eroglu, focusing primarily on property issues. Symbolic progress was made in October, when a seventh crossing point between the north and south was opened near the northwestern town of Limnitis, but no truly contentious issues were resolved. In November, UN secretary general Ban Ki-Moon convened talks with the two leaders himself and said he would follow up progress in January 2011.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Cyprus is an electoral democracy. Suffrage is universal, and elections are free and fair. The president is elected by popular vote to serve a five-year term. The unicameral House of Representatives has 80 seats filled through proportional representation for five-year terms. A bloc of 24 seats are reserved for the Turkish Cypriot community, but they have not been occupied since Turkish Cypriot representatives withdrew from the chamber in 1964.

Following a 2004 ruling against Cyprus by the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) in 2004, a law was passed allowing Turkish Cypriots living in the south to vote and run for office in Greek Cypriot elections. About 390 such voters registered before the 2008 presidential election, up from 270 in 2006, when one also ran for a seat in the parliament. Turkish Cypriots cannot run for president, as the constitution states that a Greek Cypriot should hold that post and a Turkish Cypriot should be vice president. The Maronites (Catholics of Lebanese descent), Armenians, and Latins (Catholics of European descent) elect special nonvoting representatives. Women are very poorly represented, with only one woman in the cabinet and seven in the parliament.

Corruption is not a major problem in Cyprus, although several police corruption scandals were uncovered in 2009. Laws passed in 2008 aimed to prevent conflicts of interest for government officials and criminalized the withholding of information on bribery in defense procurement. Cyprus was ranked 28 out of 178 countries surveyed in Transparency International's 2010 Corruption Perceptions Index. Parliamentary hearings on freedom of information in May 2009 indicated that many legal requests for information are not fulfilled, mostly due to lack of resources.

Freedom of speech is constitutionally guaranteed and generally respected. A vibrant, independent press frequently criticizes the authorities, and several private television and radio stations compete effectively with public stations. Although Turkish Cypriot journalists can enter the south, Turkish journalists based in the north have reported difficulties crossing the border. In January 2010, Andis Hadjicostis, the owner of Cyprus's largest media group, was shot and killed outside his home. The four people charged in the case included a well-known television presenter, who allegedly hired the assassins after being fired from one of the victim's stations. Access to the internet is unrestricted.

Freedom of religion is guaranteed by the constitution and protected in practice. Nearly all inhabitants of the south are Orthodox Christians, and some discrimination

against other religions has been alleged. In September 2009, more than 100 Muslims from rival sects clashed at a mosque in the capital. The police controversially arrested 150 people in a subsequent sweep; 36 were found to be illegal immigrants and faced deportation, while the remainder were released. State schools use textbooks containing negative language about Turkish Cypriots and Turkey.

Freedoms of association and assembly are respected. Nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) generally operate without government interference. Workers have the right to strike and to form trade unions without employer authorization.

The independent judiciary operates according to the British tradition, upholding due process rights. However, the ECHR ruled against Cyprus in 2009 for failure to provide a timely trial in a case that lasted nearly six years. The problem of indefinite detentions of asylum seekers has improved somewhat since the country's ombudswoman filed complaints on the matter in 2008, but long-term detention of migrants continues. The Council of Europe and other groups have noted cases of police brutality, including targeted beatings of minorities. In March 2010, the Supreme Court ordered a retrial for 8 of 10 plainclothes officers who were acquitted in 2009 after being videotaped beating two students in 2005. Prison overcrowding has decreased but remains a problem.

A 1975 agreement between the two sides of the island governs treatment of minorities. Turkish Cypriots are now entitled to Republic of Cyprus passports, and thousands have obtained them. However, Turkish Cypriots in the south have reported difficulty obtaining identity cards and other documents, as well as harassment and discrimination. Asylum seekers face regular discrimination, especially in employment, and the local human rights group KISA has warned of racially motivated attacks, such as the firebombing of a Palestinian cultural center in April 2010. The country's ombudswoman continues to highlight discrimination against homosexuals.

Since 2004, all citizens have been able to move freely throughout the island using a growing number of border crossings. While the Greek Cypriots have thwarted attempts to lift international trade and travel bans on the north, trade continues to increase between the two sides.

The status of property abandoned by those moving across the Green Line after the 1974 invasion is a point of contention in reunification talks. A 1991 law states that property left by Turkish Cypriots belongs to the state. Under the law in the north, Greek Cypriots can appeal to a property commission to resolve disputes. The government in the south does not recognize this commission, but in March 2010, it was recognized by the ECHR as an adequate local authority for the resolution of property disputes between the north and south.

Gender discrimination in the workplace, sexual harassment, and violence against women are problems. Local NGOs reported in 2009 that 80,000 Greek Cypriot women are subject to domestic violence, as well as an additional 30,000 immigrant women. While the government has made genuine progress in preventing human trafficking and launched a new anti-trafficking plan in 2010, Cyprus remains a transit and destination country, and prosecution is weak. Cases of slave labor have been occasionally uncovered in Cyprus. In November 2009, police freed 110 Romanian workers from a camp, where they were allegedly being forced to work without pay.

Czech Republic

Political Rights: 1

Population: 10,500,000

Civil Liberties: 1

Capital: Prague

Status: Free

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline For Year Under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
1,2F	1,2F	1,2F	1,1F						

Overview: The center-left Czech Social Democratic Party and the center-right Civic Democratic Party (ODS) led parliamentary elections held in May 2010. The president appointed ODS leader Petr Necas as prime minister, and he formed a coalition government with two smaller parties, replacing a year-old caretaker government. Parliament later passed an austerity package that cut public sector wages by 10 percent. Also in 2010, the country came under renewed criticism over its failure to correct discrimination against Romany children in the education system.

Czechoslovakia was created in 1918 amid the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Soviet forces helped establish a communist government after World War II, and in 1968, they crushed the so-called Prague Spring, a period of halting political liberalization under reformist leader Alexander Dubcek.

In December 1989, a series of peaceful anticommunist demonstrations led by dissident Václav Havel and the Civic Forum opposition group resulted in the resignation of the government, in what became known as the Velvet Revolution. Open elections were held the following year. In 1992, a new constitution and the Charter of Fundamental Rights and Freedoms were adopted, and the country began an ambitious program of political and economic reform under Václav Klaus of the center-right Civic Democratic Party (ODS), who became prime minister that year. In 1993, the state dissolved peacefully into separate Czech and Slovak republics.

Close parliamentary elections in 1998 brought the center-left Czech Social Democratic Party (CSSD) to power, though an "opposition agreement" between the CSSD and the ODS limited meaningful political competition and brought about several years of political gridlock. Klaus was elected president by Parliament in 2003.

The Czech Republic joined the European Union (EU) in May 2004, but the CSSD's poor showing in June elections for the European Parliament prompted Prime Minister Vladimir Spidla's resignation and a period of instability in the ruling coalition.

The 2006 lower-house elections produced a chamber that was evenly divided between left- and right-leaning parties, leading to a series of short-lived, ODS-led coalitions and caretaker governments. Klaus set early parliamentary elections for October 2009, but the Constitutional Court blocked them, leaving in place a caretaker government—headed by independent Jan Fischer—that had succeeded a failed ODS-led government in May.

The CSSD and the ODS led the May 2010 parliamentary elections, captur-

ing 56 and 53 seats in the lower house, respectively. The center-right, free-market Tradition Responsibility Prosperity 09 (TOP 09) party placed third with 41 seats, followed by the Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia (KSCM) with 26 and the right-leaning Public Affairs (VV) party with 24. In June, Klaus appointed ODS leader Petr Necas as prime minister, and he formed a center-right coalition government with TOP 09 and VV, pledging to implement judicial reforms and continue the fight against corruption. The new coalition held the strongest parliamentary majority since the country's 1993 split with Slovakia.

As part of a bid to trim the budget deficit in the wake of a damaging 2009 recession, the new government pledged to cut public sector wages by 10 percent in 2011 and replace seniority-based raises with a system of personal bonuses. Such unpopular austerity measures hurt the ruling parties' performance in October regional and Senate elections. The opposition CSSD took 12 of the 27 Senate seats at stake, giving it a total of 41 in the 81-seat chamber. With other opposition parties, the CSSD now had the power to obstruct legislation passed by the lower house, the Chamber of Deputies. At the end of October, the lower house declared a legislative state of emergency, allowing critical budget bills to be passed using expedited procedures. The ruling coalition's austerity plan, which was passed by Parliament in November, was scheduled to take effect in January 2011.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: The Czech Republic is an electoral democracy. Since 1989, the country has enjoyed free and fair elections. The Chamber of Deputies, the lower house of Parliament, has 200 members elected for four-year terms by proportional representation. The Senate has 81 members elected for six-year terms, with one-third up for election every two years. The president, elected by Parliament for five-year terms, appoints judges, the prime minister, and other cabinet members but has few other formal powers. The prime minister, whose recommendations determine the cabinet appointments, relies on support from a majority in the Chamber of Deputies to govern.

The two main political parties are the center-left CSSD and the center-right ODS. Two other right-leaning parties, TOP 09 and W, entered Parliament for the first time in 2010. The only other party to clear the 5 percent vote threshold for representation in the lower house was the KSCM. In February 2010, the far-right Workers' Party (DS) was dissolved by the Supreme Administrative Court, which found that it threatened the country's democracy by inciting violence and intolerance. However, outlawed parties are permitted to reregister with different names under Czech law, and the DS quickly reconstituted itself as the Workers' Party of Social Justice (DSSS).

Corruption and lack of transparency remain core structural problems, and government reforms have been slow. The authorities have consistently failed to investigate fully and follow through on corruption accusations brought against politicians. Police in July 2010 began investigating connections between Interior Minister Radek John of VV and a publishing firm accused of overcharging a state-owned company. Supreme state attorney Renata Vesecka was dismissed in October for allegedly manipulating a corruption case against former deputy prime minister Jiri Cunek. In November, a former U.S. ambassador accused Martin Barták, a former defense minister and deputy prime minister under Jan Fischer, of requesting bribes.

The Czech Republic was ranked 53 out of 178 countries surveyed in Transparency International's 2010 Corruption Perceptions Index.

Freedom of expression is respected, though the Charter of Fundamental Rights and Freedoms—included in the Czech constitution—prohibits threats against individual rights, state and public security, public health, and morality. The country's print and electronic media are largely in private hands. A 2009 amendment to the criminal code bans the publication of information obtained through police wiretaps, even in cases of public interest. In October 2010, Jiri Gaudin—a member of the far-right National Party—received a suspended sentence of 14 months in prison for inciting racial hatred through a publication called *The Final Solution to the Gypsy Question*, in which he advocated the expulsion of the country's entire Romany population. Internet access is unrestricted.

The government generally upholds freedom of religion. While academic freedom is widely respected, a 2009 scandal involving West Bohemia University's law school exposed ongoing inequities, corruption, and lack of transparency in access to higher education. A number of Czech politicians were among those accused of obtaining degrees without meeting the proper requirements.

Czechs may assemble peacefully, form associations, and petition the government. Trade unions and professional associations function freely but are weak in practice. The 2007 labor code requires unions within a single enterprise to act in concert when conducting collective bargaining. In September and December 2010, tens of thousands of public employees protested against government-proposed pay and job cuts.

The judiciary is independent. However, trial proceedings are slow, and the country continues to lack specialized labor courts. Prisons generally meet international standards, though abuse of vulnerable prisoners serving life sentences remains a problem. In an effort to address overcrowding, amendments to the criminal code adopted in January 2010 allowed for prisoners to be placed under house arrest, but the program suffered from inadequate staffing and a shortage of monitoring devices.

The Charter of Fundamental Rights and Freedoms gives minorities the right to participate in the resolution of matters pertaining to their group. The European Court of Human Rights ruled in 2007 that sending Romany children to special schools violated their rights to a full education, but a January 2010 Amnesty International report indicated that Romany children continue to receive substandard educations and constitute up to 80 percent of students in special schools for the mentally disabled. In November, several nongovernmental organizations filed a complaint with the EU over the Czech Republic's failure to provide Roma with sufficient educational opportunities. In addition to discrimination, Roma sometimes face threats and violence from right-wing groups. Four neo-Nazis received 20- to 22-year prison sentences and were fined 17 million Czech crowns (\$968,000) in October for their involvement in a 2009 arson attack on a Romany home that seriously injured a two-year-old girl.

Promoting denial of the Holocaust and inciting religious hatred remain illegal. The 2009 Antidiscrimination Act provides for equal treatment regardless of sex, race, age, or sexual orientation. However, asylum seekers who cite persecution based on sexual orientation have been subjected to a degrading procedure that supposedly proves homosexuality by measuring their physical response to erotic imagery.

Gender discrimination is legally prohibited. However, sexual harassment in the

workplace appears to be fairly common, and women are underrepresented at the highest levels of government and business. Women nevertheless increased their parliamentary presence in the 2010 elections, capturing 44 seats in the 200-member Chamber of Deputies. Trafficking of women and girls for prostitution remains a problem. The government has taken steps in recent years to strengthen the reporting and punishment of domestic violence.

Denmark

Political Rights: 1

Population: 5,600,000

Civil Liberties: 1

Capital: Copenhagen

Status: Free

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline For Year Under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)



Overview: Denmark continued to face controversy and attacks in 2010 related to the infamous Muhammad cartoons published in 2005. In January, cartoonist Kurt Westergaard escaped an assassination attempt by an assailant with suspected ties to the Shabaab, an Islamist militant group in Somalia. Changes made to Denmark's immigration laws in 2010 were criticized by the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination for unfairly penalizing vulnerable refugees seeking asylum.

Denmark has been a monarchy since the Middle Ages, but after the promulgation of its first democratic constitution in 1849, the monarch's role became largely ceremonial. The country was occupied by Nazi Germany during World War II, despite its attempts to maintain neutrality, and in 1949, it joined NATO. In 1973, Denmark became a member of the European Economic Community, forerunner of the European Union (EU).

Postwar Danish politics have been dominated by the Social Democratic Party. However, in the 2001 elections, a right-wing coalition led by Anders Fogh Rasmussen's Liberal Party won control by pledging to reduce immigration and lower taxes. The coalition, which also included the Conservative People's Party, was supported by the anti-immigrant and Euroskeptic Danish People's Party. Denmark has had a conflicted relationship with the EU, rejecting the bloc's 1992 Maastricht Treaty on justice, foreign, and monetary policy and opting not to adopt the euro as its sole currency in 2000.

The Liberals won reelection in 2005, maintaining their coalition with the Conservatives and receiving external support from the Danish People's Party. Prime Minister Rasmussen was returned to office again in the 2007 elections, with the Liberals, Conservatives, and Danish People's Party receiving 45, 18, and 25 seats, respectively. The Social Democrats captured 45 seats, and the Socialist People's Party, one of the smaller opposition parties, more than doubled its share of seats,

from 11 to 23. Rasmussen officially resigned his post in April 2009, after being named NATO secretary general; he was replaced by Finance Minister Lars Løkke Rasmussen (no relation).

In October 2009, two men were arrested in Chicago in connection with a terrorist plot to bomb the offices of the Danish newspaper *Jyllands-Posten*, which had printed controversial cartoons of the prophet Muhammad in 2005. Surveillance video had shown the men visiting two *Jyllands-Posten* offices over the course of the year. One of those arrested, Pakistani American David Headley, pleaded guilty in March 2010 to planning a terrorist attack on *Jyllands-Posten*, as well as participating in the planning of the 2008 attack in Mumbai, India.

The cartoonist Kurt Westergaard, who had drawn the most contentious of the Muhammad cartoons, was attacked in his home in January 2010 by a Somali assailant wielding an axe and a knife. Westergaard escaped unharmed, and the intruder, Mohamed Geele, was apprehended by police. Geele, who was believed to have ties to the Shabaab, an Islamist militant group based in Somalia, was scheduled to face trial in January 2011.

In September, a small bomb exploded in a hotel in central Copenhagen, causing little material damage but injuring the alleged bomber. Danish police, who apprehended the suspect, a Chechen man, several hours later, theorized that *Jyllands-Posten* had been the intended target of the failed attack.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Denmark is an electoral democracy. The current constitution, adopted in 1953, established a single-chamber parliament (the Folketing) and retained a monarch, currently Queen Margrethe II, with mostly ceremonial duties. The parliament's 179 representatives are elected at least once every four years through a system of modified proportional representation. The leader of the majority party or coalition is usually chosen to be prime minister by the monarch. Danish governments most often control a minority of seats in the parliament, ruling with the aid of one or more supporting parties. Since 1909, no single party has held a majority of seats, helping to create a tradition of compromise.

The territories of Greenland and the Faroe Islands each have two representatives in the Folketing. They also have their own elected institutions, which have power over almost all areas of governance.

Levels of corruption in Denmark are very low. Denmark was ranked 1 out of 178 countries surveyed in Transparency International's 2010 Corruption Perceptions Index.

The constitution guarantees freedom of expression. The media reflect a wide variety of political opinions and are frequently critical of the government. The state finances radio and television broadcasting, but state-owned television companies have independent editorial boards. Independent radio stations are permitted but tightly regulated. In March 2010, the Danish attorney general charged the Danish-based, Kurdish-language satellite television station Roj-TV for promoting the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), which the EU and United States consider a terrorist organization. While a trial date had not been set and Roj-TV continued to broadcast at year's end, the station was the first Danish media organization to face prosecution for promoting terrorism. Access to the internet is not restricted, and Denmark's internet penetration rate is among the world's highest.

Freedom of worship is legally protected. However, the Evangelical Lutheran Church is subsidized by the government as the official state religion. The faith is taught in public schools, though students may withdraw from religious classes with parental consent. At present, about half of all schoolchildren are exempted from the catechism taught in public schools. In 2009, religious or political symbols were banned from judicial attire.

The constitution provides for freedoms of assembly and association. Demonstrations during 2010 were peaceful, and there was no repetition of the violent clashes between police and protesters surrounding an international climate conference in 2009. Civil society is vibrant, and workers are free to organize. The labor market is mainly regulated by agreements between employers' and employees' organizations.

The judiciary is independent, and citizens enjoy full due process rights. The court system consists of 100 local courts, 2 high courts, and the 15-member Supreme Court, with judges appointed by the monarch on the government's recommendation. Prisons generally meet international standards.

Discrimination is prohibited under the law. However, strict immigration laws introduced in 2002 were tightened further during 2010, adding more obstacles for citizens attempting to bring foreign spouses into the country. The Danish partner is required to pass a solvency test, post a bond of \$12,000, and be at least 24 years of age. A reunified husband and wife must both prove that they maintain, "closer ties to Denmark than to any other country," and the Danish partner must not have received any kind of social benefits for three years. A new point system aimed at facilitating the reunification of spouses favors visa candidates who are considered attractive to the Danish economy and society. The rules were criticized by the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination for unfairly penalizing vulnerable refugees seeking asylum. Denmark also denies religious worker visas, which restricts access to missionaries entering the country from abroad.

Denmark has closed many of its asylum centers since the introduction of the restrictive 2002 immigration laws. In 2009, the government was criticized by the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights for deporting 22 Iraqis, even though their home country had been deemed "dangerous." The European Court of Human Rights in 2010 called on Denmark to stop deporting asylum seekers to Greece, their point of entry to the EU, on the grounds that the Greek asylum system no longer functioned effectively and could not process cases. Nevertheless, Denmark continued the policy through the end of the year, and a binding decision on the matter was pending at the Strasbourg-based court.

Women enjoy equal rights in Denmark and represent half of the workforce. However, disparities have been reported in the Faroe Islands and Greenland. Denmark is a destination and transit point for women and children trafficked for the purpose of sexual exploitation. Following the 2003 adoption of legislation that defined and criminalized such trafficking, the government began working regularly with nongovernmental organizations in their trafficking-prevention campaigns.

Djibouti

Political Rights: 6*

Population: 880,000

Civil Liberties: 5

Capital: Djibouti

Status: Not Free

Status Change: Djibouti's political rights rating declined from 5 to 6 and its status from Partly Free to Not Free due to constitutional changes that will allow President Ismael Omar Guelleh to run for a third term in office.

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline For Year Under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
4,SPF	4,SPF	5,SPF							

Overview: Djibouti's parliament amended the constitution in April 2010, clearing the way for President Ismael Omar Guelleh to run for a third term. Meanwhile, a growing insurgency by ethnic Afar rebels led to fears of a renewal of the country's 1991-94 civil war. Tensions with neighboring Eritrea were reduced in June, when both sides agreed to negotiate a solution to their border dispute.

Djibouti gained independence from France in 1977. Its people are divided along ethnic and clan lines, with the majority Issa (Somali) and minority Afar peoples traditionally falling into opposing political camps. An Afar rebel group, the Front for the Restoration of Unity and Democracy (FRUD), launched a guerrilla war against Issa domination in 1991. In 1994, the largest FRUD faction agreed to end its insurgency in exchange for inclusion in the government and electoral reforms. President Hassan Gouled Aptidon controlled a one-party system until 1992, when a new constitution authorized four political parties. In 1993, Gouled won a fourth six-year term in Djibouti's first contested presidential election, which was considered fraudulent by international observers.

Gouled stepped down in 1999, but his nephew, Ismael Omar Guelleh, won that year's presidential poll, with 74 percent of the vote. It was regarded as Djibouti's first fair election since independence. In 2001, a peace accord was signed with the remaining Afar rebel groups. A bloc of four parties under the umbrella Union for the Presidential Majority (UMP) ran against a four-party opposition bloc, the Union for a Democratic Alternative (UAD), in the 2003 parliamentary elections. The UMP captured all 65 seats.

In 2005, Guelleh won a second six-year term. The only challenger withdrew from the election, citing government control of the media and repression of the opposition. Legislative elections in 2008 were boycotted by the main opposition parties, which complained of government abuses, including the house arrest of opposition leaders and manipulation of the electoral process. Also in 2008, an Eritrean military incursion along the disputed border resulted in the deaths of a number of Djiboutian soldiers. Eritrea ignored a UN Security Council resolution calling for a withdrawal. The standoff continued until June 2010, when both

sides agreed to a Qatari offer of mediation, and Eritrea pulled its forces from the contested area.

Meanwhile, unresolved grievances among the Afar led to a revival of the FRUD insurgency. In the worst of many armed clashes between government troops and rebel forces in 2010, three government soldiers were killed in an ambush in May. Afar grievances were augmented by political developments. In April, Guelleh, a member of the Issa majority, pressured the parliament into passing a constitutional amendment that overturned the two-term limit for presidents. The change cleared the way for him to run for a third term in 2011.

Guelleh has used Djibouti's strategic location on the Gulf of Aden to generate millions of dollars in state revenue by renting military bases to his allies. Since 2001, Djibouti has been home to large U.S. and French bases, and in May 2010, Japan announced plans to build a \$40 million naval facility in the country.

Recurrent drought in 2010 posed serious hardships for many residents. An assessment by UN agencies found that half of the rural population needed emergency food aid, while the World Food Programme estimated that a quarter of the population was malnourished.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties:

Djibouti is not an electoral democracy. The formal structures of representative government and electoral processes have little relevance to the real distribution and exercise of power. The ruling party has traditionally used state resources to maintain itself in government.

The constitutional amendment passed by the parliament in April 2010, in addition to removing the existing two-term limit for presidents, reduced presidential terms from six years to five and specified that candidates must be aged between 40 and 75. Incumbent president Ismael Omar Guelleh announced in December his intention to stand for a third term in 2011.

The 65 members of the unicameral parliament, the National Assembly, are directly elected for five-year terms. Opposition parties are disadvantaged by electoral rules and the government's abuse of the administrative apparatus. In the 2003 legislative elections, the ruling UMP coalition won 62 percent of the vote. It captured all of the National Assembly seats, however, because the election law stipulates that the winner of the majority in each of the country's five electoral constituencies is awarded all seats in that district. Opposition parties boycotted the 2005 presidential election and the 2008 parliamentary polls.

Political parties are required to register with the government. In 2008, Guelleh issued a decree that dissolved the opposition Movement for Democratic Ren val party, whose leader had reportedly voiced support for that year's Eritrean military incursion.

Efforts to curb corruption have met with little success. Djibouti was ranked 91 out of 178 countries surveyed in Transparency International's 2010 Corruption Perceptions Index.

Despite constitutional protections, freedom of speech is not upheld in practice. The domestic media sector is very limited. The government owns the principal newspaper, *La Nation*, as well as Radio-Television Djibouti (RTD), which operates the national radio and television stations. Strict libel laws mean that journal-

ists generally avoid covering sensitive issues, including human rights, the army, the FRUD, and relations with Ethiopia. The opposition-oriented *Le Renouveau* newspaper was closed in 2007 over an article alleging that a businessman had paid a bribe to the national bank governor, the president's brother-in-law. Registered political parties are allowed to produce their own newspapers, and the opposition National Democratic Party took up the opportunity during 2010, publishing *La Republique*. Foreign radio broadcasts are available from the British Broadcasting Corporation, Voice of America, and Radio France Internationale. The government places few restrictions on internet access, although the Association for Respect of Human Rights in Djibouti (ARDHD) claims that its site is regularly blocked.

Islam is the state religion, and 94 percent of the population is Muslim. Freedom of worship is respected. While academic freedom is generally upheld, higher educational opportunities are limited.

Freedoms of assembly and association are nominally protected under the constitution, but the government is intolerant of criticism. The Interior Ministry requires permits for peaceful assemblies, and police have dispersed several demonstrations, including protests against high food prices. Local human rights groups do not operate freely. In 2007, Djibouti League of Human Rights chairman Jean-Paul Noël Abdi was found guilty of "defamation and spread of false information" and sentenced to six months in prison. An appeal before the Supreme Court was pending in 2010. Workers may join unions and strike. In practice, the government discourages truly independent unions and has been accused of meddling in their internal elections and harassing union representatives.

The judicial system is based on the French civil code, though Sharia (Islamic law) prevails in family matters. The death penalty was abolished as part of a series of constitutional amendments approved by the parliament in April 2010. The courts are not independent of the government. Allegations of politically motivated prosecutions surfaced in June, following the conviction in absentia of Djibouti's richest businessman, Abdourahman Boreh, on charges of terrorism. A friend-turned-critic of the president, he was accused of directing a grenade attack in Djibouti City. He was not represented by a defense lawyer. Boreh claimed that his 15-year sentence was intended to derail a potential presidential bid in 2011.

A lack of resources often delays legal proceedings. Security forces frequently make arrests without a proper decree from a judicial magistrate, in violation of constitutional requirements. Prison conditions are harsh, but there have been some improvements in recent years.

Minority groups including the Afar people, Yemeni Arabs, and non-Issa Somalis suffer social and economic marginalization.

Women face serious discrimination under customary practices related to inheritance and other property matters, divorce, and the right to travel. Female genital mutilation is widespread, though women's groups working to curb the practice have reportedly achieved some progress. An estimated 50 percent of girls are now receiving primary education following efforts to increase female enrollment. A law requiring at least 10 percent of elected offices to be held by women has also had a positive effect. The 2008 parliamentary elections resulted in a record nine female lawmakers, representing 14 percent of the legislature. Women are also well represented in the judiciary, as more than 50 percent of serving magistrates are female.

Dominica

Political Rights: 1
Civil Liberties: 1
Status: Free

Population: 70,000
 Capital: Roseau

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline For Year Under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1

Overview: Two members of the opposition United Workers Party (UWP), Edison James and Hector John, recaptured their seats in parliament following July 2010 by-elections. The two lawmakers had boycotted parliament to protest alleged fraud in the December 2009 elections, leading the speaker of the house to declare their seats vacant.

Dominica gained independence from Britain in 1978. The centrist Dominica Labour Party (DLP) swept to victory for the first time in 20 years in the January 2000 parliamentary elections, and formed a coalition with the right-wing Dominica Freedom Party (DFP). DLP leader Roosevelt "Rosie" Douglas was named prime minister, but died of a heart attack in October 2000. His replacement, Pierre Charles, died of heart failure in January 2004, and was succeeded by DLP member Roosevelt Skerrit.

Skerrit's government inherited financial troubles and lost public support as it implemented austerity measures. Increased global competition hit the agriculturally based economy hard, and the imposition of an International Monetary Fund stabilization and adjustment program proved unpopular. Despite such difficulties, the DLP easily won the April 2004 by-election.

Skerrit and the DLP secured 12 seats in the 2005 elections, ensuring a majority. Edison James, former prime minister and leader of the United Workers Party (UWP), initially accepted the results but later claimed that five of the DLP seats were obtained through fraud. Meanwhile, the DFP struggled to remain relevant and was not represented in the parliament.

In May 2009, Skerrit was forced to contend with the so-called "rubbish bin scandal," a national controversy, which emerged after the opposition accused the government of importing 2,700 garbage bins at four times their average retail price. Although the opposition continued to press for a resolution to the scandal, the issue remained unresolved as of the end of 2010.

In the December 2009 legislative election, the DLP won 61 percent of the popular vote and captured 18 seats, while the UWP took only 3 seats. The elections were deemed generally fair by observer teams from both the Organization of American States and CARICOM. However, opposition members accused the DLP of misconduct during the campaign and filed complaints of election irregularities, including having been denied equal access to state media during the campaign period. They also accused Skerrit and Education Minister Peter St. Jean of holding dual citizenship at the time of the election, which under Dominican law should have

made them ineligible to hold office. The courts rejected all of the complaints in 2010, except for the dual citizenship issue, which was in a pretrial stage at year's end. Meanwhile, two prominent opposition members, Edison James and Hector John of the UWP, boycotted parliament beginning in December 2009 to protest alleged electoral fraud and call for new elections. In May 2010, the speaker of the House of Assembly declared their seats vacant under a rule stipulating that parliamentarians must lose their seats if they miss three consecutive sessions. In July by-elections, both James and John recaptured their seats.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Dominica is an electoral democracy. The government is headed by a prime minister, and the unicameral House of Assembly consists of 30 members serving five-year terms. Twenty-one members are elected, and nine senators are appointed—five by the prime minister and four by the opposition leader. The president is elected by the House of Assembly for a five-year term; the prime minister is appointed by the president. The three main political parties are the ruling DLP, the opposition UWP, and the DFP.

Dominica was ranked 44 out of 178 countries surveyed in Transparency International's (TI) 2010 Corruption Perceptions Index, one of the largest increases in corruption noted by TI that year. The UWP held a peaceful rally in Dominica's capital on December 18, 2010, which it proclaimed as Anti-Corruption Day.

Although Dominica does not have legislation that guarantees access to information or freedom of expression, the press is free in practice, and there is no government censorship or intrusion. Four private newspapers and an equal number of political party journals publish without interference. Although the main radio station is state owned, there is also an independent station. Citizens have unimpeded access to cable television and regional radio broadcasts, as well as to the internet. Freedom of religion is recognized. While the majority of the population is Roman Catholic, there are some Protestant churches. Academic freedom is respected.

The authorities uphold freedoms of assembly and association, and advocacy groups operate freely. Workers have the right to organize, strike, and bargain collectively. Unions are independent of the government, and laws prohibit anti-union discrimination by employers. Approximately 13 percent of the workforce is unionized.

The judiciary is independent, and the rule of law is enhanced by the courts' subordination to the inter-island Eastern Caribbean Supreme Court. Efforts to establish the Caribbean Court of Justice as its final court of appeal, instead of the Privy Council in London, continued in 2010. The judicial system generally operates with efficiency, and its handling of cases compares favorably with other islands in the region, though staffing shortfalls remain a problem.

The Dominica police force, which became responsible for security after the military was disbanded in 1981, operates professionally and with few human rights complaints. Crime and homicide rates are low for the Caribbean. The island's only prison is overcrowded and has sanitation problems, though it otherwise generally met international standards.

The indigenous Kalinago population numbers less than 3,000 and has repeatedly complained of racial discrimination in law and in practice. In November 2010, the

Carib Council announced that it would replace the use of the term "Carib"—which has its roots in colonial times and carries derogatory connotations—with "Kalinago." In October 2010, the Dominican Bar Association admitted its first native Kalinago. The Protection against Domestic Violence Act allows abused persons, to appear before a judge and request a protective order without seeking legal counsel. There are no laws mandating equal pay for equal work in private sector jobs, and inheritance laws do not fully recognize women's rights.

Dominican Republic

Political Rights: 2
Civil Liberties: 2
Status: Free

Population: 9,900,000
Capital: Santo Domingo

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline For Year Under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
2,2F	2,2F	3,2F	2,2F						

Overview: In January 2010, the government promulgated a new constitution that includes some of the toughest restrictions on abortion and gay marriage in the world. The Dominican Liberation Party won a clear majority in both houses of Congress in the May legislative elections. Meanwhile, the country faced challenges during the year due to an increase in crime and the aftermath of the January earthquake in neighboring Haiti.

After achieving independence from Spain in 1821 and from Haiti in 1844, the Dominican Republic endured recurrent domestic conflict, foreign occupation, and authoritarian rule. The assassination of General Rafael Trujillo in 1961 ended 30 years of dictatorship, but a 1963 military coup led to civil war and U.S. intervention. Under a new constitution, civilian rule was restored in 1966 with the election of conservative president Joaquin Balaguer. His ouster in the 1978 election marked the first time an incumbent president peacefully handed power to an elected opponent.

Since the mid-1990s, Dominican politics have been defined by competition between the Dominican Liberation Party (PLD) and the Dominican Revolutionary Party (PRD), although Balaguer's Social Christian Reformist Party (PRSC) remained an important factor. Leonel Fernández of the PLD was first elected president in 1996, but term limits prevented him from running in 2000. He was succeeded by the PRD's Rafael Hipolito Mejia Dominguez, a former agriculture minister. In 2001, Mejia successfully enacted a constitutional change to allow a second consecutive presidential term, but decisively lost his 2004 reelection bid to Fernández.

While his 1996-2000 presidential term had featured substantial economic growth, Fernández returned to face serious financial difficulties, including a ballooning foreign debt, high unemployment and inflation rates, and a deep energy crisis. Nonetheless, inflation was quickly brought down to the single digits and macroeconomic stability improved dramatically, with the economy posting a 9

percent growth rate in 2005. In return for International Monetary Fund (IMF) financing, the government agreed to cut subsidies on fuel and electricity and reduce the bloated government payroll. The PLD captured a majority in both houses of Congress in the 2006 legislative elections, and Fernandez secured a third term in the 2008 presidential elections.

Fernández promoted a constitutional reform process that resulted in the promulgation of the country's 38th constitution in January 2010. The new constitution removed restrictions on non-consecutive presidential reelection, which would allow Fernández to run for president again in 2016. The new constitution also changed the electoral calendar so that future presidential, legislative, and local elections will be held on the same date.

The PLD, capitalizing on the president's continued successful economic management, captured 31 of 32 Senate seats in the May 2010 legislative elections. The PRSC took the remaining seat, leaving the PRD completely out of the upper parliamentary chamber. In the Chamber of Deputies, the PLD captured 105 seats, the PRD won 75, and the PRSC took only 3. The PLD also won a majority of the municipal elections. The opposition subsequently presented allegations of electoral fraud to the Organization of American States (OAS), and international observers noted that publicity and other campaigning resources were not equally distributed between government and opposition candidates. The OAS noted certain irregularities, including vote buying, though it certified the results.

The country faced several important challenges in 2010 stemming from rising crime and the consequences of the January Haitian earthquake. While the Dominican Republic became a conduit for relief and reconstruction efforts in Haiti, the tragedy and its consequences—in terms of human displacement and financial and technical assistance—also took a toll on the Dominican Republic. Despite continuous economic growth—even during the current global financial crisis—the Dominican Republic's performance in meeting the Millennium Development Goals has been well below the Latin American average. Economic growth has also not translated into better services for the poor, particularly in the areas of education and health, which has negatively affected President Fernandez's overall popularity. Increasing levels of criminal activity have also spurred multiple allegations of unlawful killings by security forces and overall police brutality.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: The Dominican Republic is an electoral democracy. The 2008 presidential election and the 2010 legislative elections were deemed free and fair, though the OAS did note several electoral violations in the 2010 polls, including vote buying. The constitution provides for a president and a bicameral National Congress, both elected to four-year terms. The Congress consists of the 32-member Senate and the 178-member Chamber of Deputies. The three main political parties are the ruling PLD, the opposition PRD, and the smaller PRSC.

Official corruption remains a serious problem. President Leonel Fernandez, whose first term in the 1990s was marred by the disappearance of \$100 million in government funds, made fighting corruption a central theme of his 2004 election campaign. However, the country's corruption problems have not improved markedly during his tenure. In 2010, it was revealed that foreign investors had complained

repeatedly to the U.S. embassy about being asked to pay bribes to receive certain concessions. The Dominican Republic was ranked 101 out of 178 countries surveyed in Transparency International's 2010 Corruption Perceptions Index.

The law provides for freedom of speech and of the press, and the government generally respects these rights. There are five national daily newspapers and a large number of local publications. The state-owned Radio Television Dominicana operates radio and television services. Private owners operate more than 300 radio stations and over 40 television stations, most of which are small, regional broadcasters. Internet access is unrestricted but not widely available outside of large urban areas; the Fernández government has worked to improve access to technology in rural areas.

Constitutional guarantees regarding religious and academic freedom are generally observed.

Freedom of association is constitutionally guaranteed, but is limited for public servants. The government upholds the right to form civic groups, and civil society organizations in the Dominican Republic are some of the best organized and most effective in Latin America. Labor unions are similarly well organized. Although legally permitted to strike, they are often subject to government crackdowns. In 2010, peasant unions were occasionally targeted by armed groups working for major landowners, and the rights of Haitian workers were routinely violated.

The judiciary, headed by the Supreme Court, is politicized and riddled with corruption, and the legal system offers little recourse to those without money or influence. However, reforms implemented in recent years, including measures aimed at promoting greater efficiency and due process, have helped to increase citizen access to justice. For example, the Attorney General's Office and the Supreme Court were among the best government agencies at implementing legislation requiring public access to information, though access to such information among the poor remains inadequate. The 2010 constitution seeks to modernize further the judiciary, with measures such as the creation of a Constitutional Court and Judiciary Branch Council, as well as mandating retirement for Supreme Court magistrates over the age of 75 years.

Extrajudicial killings by police remain a problem, and low salaries encourage endemic corruption in law enforcement institutions. Prisons suffer from severe overcrowding, poor health and sanitary conditions, and routine violence has resulted in a significant number of deaths.

The Dominican Republic is a major transit hub for South American drugs, mostly cocaine, en route to the United States. Local, Puerto Rican, and Colombian drug smugglers use the country as both a command-and-control center and a transshipment point. The government estimates that some 20 percent of the drugs entering the country remain there as "payment in kind."

The mistreatment of Haitian migrants continues to mar the Dominican Republic's international reputation, but no strategy has been adopted to handle this growing problem. After establishing certain controls on the border and managing the refugee crisis after the 2010 earthquake, more than 3,000 Haitians were forcibly deported from the Dominican Republic in late 2010, after a cholera epidemic in Haiti led to massive inflows of illegal Haitian immigrants to the Dominican Republic. The new 2010 constitution removed the possibility of Dominican citizenship for chil-

dren born of illegal Haitian migrants. Despite important advances in relations with Haiti, especially after the January earthquake, Dominican authorities continued to illegally deprive Dominicans of Haitian descent of their nationality, leaving them without access to health, education, employment, or the right to vote. This virtual statelessness increases their chance of being subject to arbitrary detentions and mass expulsion, without judicial review. The situation has been further exacerbated by poor economic prospects in the country, which has intensified competition for work among local and migrant populations.

Violence and discrimination against women remain serious problems, especially for women under the age of 18. The trafficking in women and girls, child prostitution, and child abuse are also major issues. The new Dominican constitution includes one of the most restrictive abortion laws in the world, making the practice illegal even in cases of rape, incest, or to protect the life of the mother. The measure was strongly opposed by Amnesty International and domestic women's rights groups, who feared the law would have drastic consequences for women's health. The new constitution also defined marriage as solely between a man and a woman, making the country one of the few in the world to ban gay marriage at the constitutional level.

East Timor

Political Rights: 3

Population: 1,200,000

Civil Liberties: 4

Capital: Dili

Status: Partly Free

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline For Year Under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
3,3PF	3,3PF	3,3PF	3,3PF	3,3PF	3,4PF	3,4PF	3,4PF	3,4PF	3,4PF

Overview: In February 2010, two dozen defendants were sentenced to prison terms for their roles in the 2008 assassination attempt against Prime Minister Kay Rala Xanana Gusmão and President José Ramos-Horta. However, in August, Ramos-Horta pardoned and commuted the sentences of 23 of those convicted, along with several others who had been convicted in connection with civil unrest in 2006. The ruling coalition continued to weaken throughout the year, with one deputy prime minister resigning in September and another facing corruption charges in October.

Portugal abandoned its colony of East Timor in 1975, and Indonesia invaded when the leftist Revolutionary Front for an Independent East Timor (Fretilin) declared independence. Over the next two decades, Fretilin's armed wing, Falintil, waged a low-grade insurgency against the Indonesian army, which committed widespread human rights abuses as it consolidated control. Civil conflict and famine reportedly killed up to 180,000 Timorese during Indonesian rule.

International pressure on Indonesia mounted following the 1991 Dili massacre, in which Indonesian soldiers were captured on film killing more than 200 people.

In 1999, 78.5 percent of the East Timorese electorate voted for independence in a referendum approved by Indonesian president B. J. Habibie. The Indonesian army's scorched-earth response to the vote killed roughly 1,000 civilians, produced more than 250,000 refugees, and destroyed approximately 80 percent of East Timor's buildings and infrastructure before an Australian-led multinational force restored order.

In 2001, East Timor elected a Constituent Assembly to draft a constitution. Kay Rala Xanana Gusmão, a former head and chairman of Falintil until he broke from the party in 1988 to form a wider resistance coalition, won the presidency the following year. Independence was officially granted in May 2002. Fretilin, led by Prime Minister Mari Alkatiri, won the country's first local elections in 2004 and 2005.

A political crisis in 2006 erupted into widespread rioting and armed clashes with the police, leading to numerous deaths and the displacement of 150,000 people. Alkatiri was forced to resign in June. José Ramos-Horta, who was appointed to replace him, won the May 2007 presidential runoff election. Outgoing president Gusmão launched a new party, the National Congress for Timorese Construction (CNRT), to contest the June legislative elections. Fretilin led with 21 of the 65 seats, but the CNRT, which had captured 18, joined smaller parties to form the Alliance of the Parliamentary Majority (AMP). The new coalition held 37 seats, and Ramos-Horta invited it to form a government, with Gusmão as prime minister.

In 2008, former army major Alfredo Reinado was killed while leading a group of armed men in an unsuccessful attack against Gusmão and Ramos-Horta. Legal proceedings against the suspects, which were generally deemed fair and in conformity with human rights standards, concluded in March 2010 with the sentencing of 24 of the 28 defendants to between 9 and 16 years in prison for offenses ranging from the attempted murder of the head of state to the illegal use of firearms. While an appeals court upheld the decision in June, in August, President Ramos-Horta pardoned 23 of the convicted men.

The ruling AMP coalition continued to falter in 2010 amid ongoing corruption concerns. Deputy Prime Minister for State Administration Mário Carrascalão resigned in September, following a series of public disagreements with Gusmão and after the cabinet removed his powers over government procurement. Deputy Prime Minister for Social Issues José Luís Guterres and Foreign Minister Zacarias da Costa were indicted on corruption charges in October. A court later rejected the accusations against da Costa, while trial proceedings against Guterres had not begun by year's end.

The country's weak economy is fueled primarily by oil and gas revenue. In 2010, the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) granted "compliance status" to East Timor, acknowledging that it had successfully undertaken public audits, published payments by companies to governments, and engaged in public consultation. However, despite oil reserves valued at over \$6 billion, East Timor remained the poorest country in Southeast Asia, with an unemployment rate of about 50 percent and more than 40 percent of the population living below the poverty line. The country also has one of the highest aid-per-capita ratios in the world.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: East Timor is an electoral democracy. The 2007 presidential and parliamentary elections were generally deemed free

and fair, as were the 2009 local elections. The directly elected president is a largely symbolic figure, with formal powers limited to the right to veto legislation and make certain appointments. The leader of the majority party or coalition in the 65-seat, unicameral Parliament becomes the prime minister. The president and members of Parliament serve five-year terms, with the president eligible for a maximum of two terms. Fretilin, now in opposition, remains the single largest political party. Political outcomes are influenced more by personalities and old loyalties tied to the 1970s resistance movement than by policy issues.

Voter frustration with corruption and nepotism has plagued both Fretilin and AMP governments. In a rare demonstration of multiparty support, Parliament in 2009 unanimously voted to create an anticorruption commission with a broad mandate, except for powers of prosecution. A commissioner was appointed in February 2010, and 10 commission investigators were appointed in November. The Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) signed a \$10.5 million threshold program with East Timor in September 2010, which will focus on addressing corruption concerns in addition to immunization services. The country was ranked 127 out of 178 countries surveyed in Transparency International's 2010 Corruption Perceptions Index.

Journalists often practice self-censorship, and authorities regularly deny access to government information. The 2009 penal code excludes defamation as a criminal offense, but it remains part of the civil code. The free flow of information is hampered primarily by poor infrastructure and scarce resources. An estimated 68 percent of Timorese are reached by the national radio broadcaster, East Timor Radio. Since 2007, East Timor Television has been available via satellite beyond the Dili broadcast area. The country has three major daily newspapers and three major weekly papers, some of which are loosely aligned with the ruling or opposition parties. Printing costs and illiteracy rates generally prevent the expansion of print media. In 2010, an estimated 0.2 percent of the population had access to the internet.

East Timor is a secular state, though 98 percent of the population is Roman Catholic. Church rules prohibit persons living under religious vows from holding political office. There are no significant threats to religious freedom or clashes involving the country's Muslim and evangelical Christian minorities. Academic freedom is generally respected, though religious education is compulsory in schools.

Freedoms of association and assembly are constitutionally guaranteed. However, a 2004 law regulates political gatherings and prohibits demonstrations aimed at "questioning constitutional order" or disparaging the reputations of the head of state and other government officials. The law requires that demonstrations and public protests be authorized in advance.

Workers, other than police and military personnel, are permitted to form and join labor organizations, bargain collectively, and strike, though written notice must be given 10 days before a strike. Unionization rates are low due to high levels of unemployment and informal economic activity.

The country suffers from weak rule of law and a prevailing culture of impunity. The understaffed court system, which relies in part on international personnel, has only 24 judges (three international), 20 prosecutors (seven international), and 18 public defenders (two international) who hear cases in four district courts and one court of appeal. There is a considerable backlog, with approximately 5,000 criminal cases pending at the Office of Prosecutor General as of December 2010. Due process

rights are often restricted or denied, owing largely to a lack of resources and personnel. Alternative methods of dispute resolution and customary law are widely used, though they lack enforcement mechanisms and have other significant shortcomings, including unequal treatment of women.

In August 2009, authorities captured Martenus Bere, an Indonesian citizen who had been indicted by the UN Serious Crimes Unit for alleged human rights violations during the independence-related violence of 1999. However, the Timorese government released him without a court order in a move widely decried as a violation of judicial independence and the rule of law. Ramos-Horta's decision to commute the sentences of those convicted for the 2008 assassination attempts was also criticized as an example of ongoing impunity.

While there was a significant improvement in internal security in 2010, underlying tensions remained unresolved. Gang violence—sometimes directed by rival elites or fueled by land disputes—continued sporadically. The UN mission in the country began a phased transfer of policing responsibility to the national police (PNTL) in 2009, and by the end of year, the PNTL had resumed primary policing in 10 of 13 districts. However, neither the Timorese police nor the military are well trusted by the population, and relations between the two forces remained poor due to political rifts dating back to the independence struggle. Security-sector reform is complicated by a lack of accountability and problems of internal discipline. A May 2010 report by the Centre for International Governance Innovation (CIGI) cited a "militarization" of the PNTL and warned of paramilitary policing and a visible increase in PNTL weaponry since the 2006 crisis. However, some progress was made within the PNTL's internal disciplinary mechanism, as the Ministry of Justice recorded initiating 291 disciplinary cases involving PNTL policemen between January and June 2010. At the end of 2010, approximately 1,500 UN police and military liaison officers remained in East Timor.

Community property comprises approximately 90 percent of the land in East Timor. A 2010 report issued by the International Crisis Group warned that land rights are likely to become increasingly contentious in light of ambitious government development plans. A draft law focused on addressing land disputes remained under consideration at the end of 2010.

Equal rights for women are constitutionally guaranteed, but domestic violence remains a persistent problem. A law against domestic violence was adopted in May 2010, and in 2009, domestic violence was established as a public crime. Trafficking of women and children is reportedly on the rise, as is the sex trade. The 2009 penal code criminalizes abortion except in cases that endanger the health of the mother. Women hold just three senior cabinet posts and 19 of 65 seats in Parliament.

Ecuador

Political Rights: 3

Population: 14,200,000

Civil Liberties: 3

Capital: Quito

Status: Partly Free

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline For Year Under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
3,3PF									

Overview: On September 30, 2010, a police uprising against a variety of government actions temporarily threatened Ecuador's constitutional order. President Rafael Correa attempted to intervene personally when officers took control of a barracks in Quito; instead of negotiating, the officers fired tear gas and other projectiles, injuring the president. Correa fled to a police hospital, where he remained until the military was able to break through a surrounding blockade. The event, which Correa and many other Latin American leaders labeled an attempted coup, led to hundreds of investigations and raised questions about the degree of civilian control over the security forces.

Established in 1830 after the region achieved independence from Spain in 1822, the Republic of Ecuador has endured many interrupted presidencies and military governments. The last military regime gave way to civilian rule after a new constitution was approved by referendum in 1978, although President Jamil Mahuad was forced to step down in 2000, after midlevel military officers led by Colonel Lucio Gutiérrez joined large protests by indigenous groups. Mahuad was succeeded by Vice President Gustavo Noboa.

Gutiérrez won a surprise victory in the 2002 presidential election, marking the first time that Ecuador's head of state shared the ethnicity and humble background of the country's large indigenous population. However, by the end of 2003, Gutiérrez's popularity had been weakened by political conflicts and the immediate effects of his fiscal austerity policies. The powerful Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador (CONAIE) movement soon withdrew its support for the president. Dissent over fiscal and labor reforms spilled into the streets, and the opposition began to press for his removal in 2004. The protest movement grew after Gutiérrez engaged in a series of arbitrary dismissals of and appointments to the Supreme Court. He was ousted in April 2005 on the spurious charge of "abandonment of post," and Vice President Alfredo Palacio assumed the presidency.

Demonstrations against foreign oil companies and a proposed free-trade agreement (FTA) with the United States dominated the first half of 2006. In May, the government annulled the contract of U.S.-based Occidental Petroleum, accusing the company of violating its terms; the move prompted the United States to suspend FTA talks indefinitely.

Charismatic former finance minister Rafael Correa—who criticized free-market economic policies and pledged to renegotiate the country's foreign debt and end

the FTA talks with the United States—won the 2006 presidential election, defeating banana magnate Álvaro Noboa with 57 percent of the vote in the November runoff. However, Álvaro Noboa's Institutional Renewal Party of National Action (PRIAN) led concurrent congressional elections with 28 out of 100 seats. Gutierrez's Patriotic Society Party (PSP) placed second with 24.

Correa soon began pressing for a constituent assembly that would be empowered to write a new constitution. By the spring of 2007, Congress, the Supreme Electoral Tribunal (TSE), and the Constitutional Court were engaged in an institutional struggle over the rules governing the prospective body. In April, some 82 percent of referendum voters approved the creation of a constituent assembly, and Correa's Proud and Sovereign Fatherland (PAIS) party captured 80 of the assembly's 130 seats in September delegate elections.

After fitful progress, the constituent assembly approved a draft constitution in July 2008, and the charter was adopted in a September referendum with 64 percent of the vote. A subset of 76 constituent assembly members were tasked with fulfilling legislative duties until fresh presidential and legislative elections could be held in 2009. Supporters of the new constitution said it would guarantee an array of rights and services to all citizens, and praised the charter's separation of powers into five independent branches—executive, legislative, judicial, electoral, and transparency and social control. Critics of the document argued that it concentrated both political and economic power in the hands of the president, and posited a long list of rights that the state would be hard pressed to uphold.

Correa won a new four-year term in the April 2009 general elections, taking 52 percent of the vote in the first round. Gutiérrez placed second with 28 percent, followed by Álvaro Noboa with 11 percent. PAIS captured 59 of 124 seats in the new National Assembly, followed by the PSP with 19, the Social Christian Party (PSC) with 11, PRIAN with 7, and a range of smaller parties with the remainder. Parties allied with PAIS garnered over a dozen seats, giving it a working majority.

In late 2009 and early 2010, holding the coalition together became increasingly difficult. Indigenous groups—including CONAIE—distanced themselves from the executive over mining and water laws. However, Correa used his popularity and an unyielding style of leadership to maintain control of his congressional bloc. In September 2010, PAIS legislators passed a number of important laws after careful negotiation with opposition groups. Several controversial measures, including the Law on Superior Education, were subsequently returned to Congress, after Correa used his line-item veto power to strike many of the opposition's key demands.

Tensions peaked following the passage of the Public Service Law, which altered the system of salaries, bonuses, and promotions for the police, among other provisions. On September 30, several police units and a few military regiments initiated angry protests; many police refused to patrol, leading to looting and lawlessness in a number of cities, especially Guayaquil. Correa showed up at a particularly tense protest at a police barracks in Quito, attempting to discuss the officers' grievances. However, his characteristically combative approach only escalated the situation, and the officers blocked his attempt to flee. Correa sustained minor injuries and eventually sought refuge in a police hospital. The government responded to the protests by declaring a state of emergency and interrupting private broadcasts on

the country's airwaves. In early evening, a military unit broke through the police blockade and rescued the president; 5 were killed in the firefight, adding to a day-long total of at least 10 fatalities.

In the aftermath, the government alleged an attempted coup, a position supported by the Organization of American States and the Union of South American Nations. The government blamed both internal and external conspirators, focusing on former president Gutiérrez and foreign interests that were purportedly opposed to Correa's progressive policies. Meanwhile, the opposition denied that a coup attempt had occurred and generally condemned the police actions. Many also blamed the president's high-handed governing style for tensions prior to and during the mutiny. By October 9, the state of emergency was lifted everywhere except in Quito. Many analysts supported the government's view that the police's specific concerns over compensation were misguided, but also noted that discontent over a variety of other issues had not been addressed by the government. In addition, the military waited several hours during the crisis before making a strong statement upholding the constitutional order, thereby implicitly confirming the armed forces' traditional—but illegitimate—role as the ultimate arbiter of regime stability. At year's end, hundreds of investigations were under way, and several dozen police and military officers faced charges ranging from insubordination to attempted murder of the president.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Ecuador is an electoral democracy. However, it suffers from an unstable political system that has brought it eight presidents since 1996. The 2009 elections, the first under the 2008 constitution, were deemed generally free and fair by international observers, although the European Union monitoring team noted some problems with vote-tabulation procedures and the abuse of state resources on behalf of government-aligned candidates.

The new constitution provides for a president elected to serve up to two four-year terms; in practice, this means that President Rafael Correa, who won his first term under the charter in 2009, could serve until 2017. The unicameral, 124-seat National Assembly is elected via open-list proportional representation for four-year terms. The president has the authority to dissolve the legislature once in his term, which triggers new elections for both the assembly and the presidency; in 2010, rumors of a dissolution ran through Ecuador during the tense legislative period before the police mutiny. The assembly can likewise dismiss the president, though under more stringent rules.

For decades, Ecuador's political parties have been largely personality based, clientelist, and fragile. Correa's PAIS party—while not fully ideologically coherent—is currently the largest in the legislature, though several members left the bloc in 2010. Its competitors include the right-of-center PRIAN and PSC, the populist PSP, and the center-left Ethics and Democracy Network (RED).

Political representation of the indigenous population has increased greatly over the past 15 years; the CONAIE indigenous movement is one of the better-organized and more vocal social groups in the country. CONAIE's leadership appeared to break definitively with the Correa government in 2010, though some member groups continued to support the administration.

Ecuador is racked by corruption, and numerous politicians and functionaries have been investigated for graft. In 2009, a corruption scandal erupted over hundreds of millions of dollars in government contracts that had been awarded to Fabricio Correa, the president's brother and former fundraiser. The contracts were nullified that year, and while investigations and counteraccusations of government corruption by Fabricio continued in 2010, no charges had been filed by year's end. Ecuador was ranked 127 out of 178 countries surveyed in Transparency International's 2010 Corruption Perceptions Index.

Freedom of expression is generally observed, and the media are outspoken. The sector is increasingly polarized between the active private media, which is generally sympathetic to the opposition, and the growing set of state-controlled outlets. President Correa often lambastes journalists, and his hostile rhetoric has been blamed for an increase in physical attacks on and harassment of reporters and news outlets. In 2010, press watchdog Fundamedios reported 151 cases of harassment against journalists, a sharp increase over the previous year. An outspoken columnist, Emilio Palacio, was sentenced to three years' imprisonment under criminal defamation laws in March, though the charges were eventually withdrawn. A controversial media law remained under consideration in Congress throughout the year. Internet access is unrestricted.

Freedom of religion is constitutionally guaranteed and generally respected in practice. However, tensions between the government and the Roman Catholic Church have increased in recent years. Academic freedom is not restricted.

The right to organize political parties, civic groups, and unions is upheld by the authorities. Ecuador has numerous nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) that operate with relative freedom and report openly on human rights concerns, including arbitrary arrests and instances of police brutality and military misconduct. Numerous protests occur peacefully, but NGOs have strongly objected to repression by security forces—specifically hundreds of arrests, including of top indigenous leaders, on vaguely defined charges of terrorism—during protests in 2009 and 2010. The country's labor unions have the right to strike, though the labor code limits public sector strikes. As little as 1 percent of the workforce is unionized, partly because most people work in the informal sector.

The judiciary, broadly undermined by the corruption afflicting all government institutions, has in recent years also been subject to significant political pressures. The highest judicial bodies under the new constitution are the 9-member Constitutional Court and the 21-member National Court of Justice. In early 2010, tensions between some PAIS members and the executive increased after the attorney general, a presidential ally, was accused of pressuring prosecutors to protect his wife from the legal repercussions of her involvement in a fatal traffic accident.

Judicial processes remain slow, and many inmates reach the time limit for pretrial detention while their cases are still under investigation. Prisons are seriously overcrowded, and torture and ill-treatment of detainees and prisoners remain widespread. Various projects to reform the penal and criminal procedure codes in order to improve the system's efficiency and fairness were undertaken in 2009 and 2010, but rising crime—partly blamed on prisoners who had been released to relieve overcrowding—pushed the tenor of debate away from comprehensive reform and toward calls to tighten restrictions. In June 2010, a truth commission

appointed by the president in 2007 released its findings, which called for investigations, prosecutions, and victims' reparations in the cases of over 450 Ecuadoreans whose rights were violated by government agents over the previous 25 years. Most of the violations—which included torture, extrajudicial execution, and forced disappearance—dated to the 1984-88 government of León Febres Cordero. Also that month, UN Special Rapporteur on Extrajudicial Executions Philip Alston concluded a visit to Ecuador, decrying widespread impunity for murders perpetrated by both criminals and the police.

In 2008, after the Colombian military launched a cross-border raid on leftist Colombian rebels encamped on Ecuadorean territory, it emerged that Ecuadorean military officials had provided information to their Colombian counterparts that had not been provided to Correa. The president consequently dismissed his defense minister and several senior commanders, and broke off relations with Colombia. Efforts to step up patrols along the border continued in 2010, as did attempts to regularize the status of the tens of thousands of Colombian refugees living in Ecuador. In November, Correa met with Colombian president Juan Manuel Santos and reestablished diplomatic ties.

Despite their political influence, indigenous people continue to suffer discrimination at many levels of society. In the Amazon region, indigenous groups have attempted to win a share of oil revenues and a voice in decisions on natural resources and development. The government has maintained that it will not hand indigenous groups a veto on core matters of national interest, but the Constitutional Court ruled in April 2010 that a draft water bill could not be passed prior to parliamentary consultation with potentially affected groups. A mining law enacted in January 2009, combined with the introduction of the draft water law, stirred conflict between the government and CONAIE-led indigenous groups. A September 2009 protest ended in the death of one indigenous man and dozens of injuries to demonstrators and police. In July 2010, forensics experts angered indigenous groups by reporting that the fatal shot came from a weapon commonly used by indigenous hunters and not the police.

Women took 40 of 124 seats in the 2009 legislative elections, and the new constitution calls for a significant female presence throughout the public sphere. Violence against women is common, as is employment discrimination. Trafficking in persons, generally women and children, remains a problem.

↓ Egypt

Political Rights: 6
Civil Liberties: 5
Status: Not Free

Population: 80,400,000
Capital: Cairo

Trend Arrow: Egypt received a downward trend arrow due to extensive restrictions on opposition candidates and reform advocates during the 2010 parliamentary elections, as well as a widespread crackdown on the media that resulted in increased self-censorship.

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline For Year Under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

2001 6,6NF	2002 6,6NF	2003 6,6NF	2004 6,5NF	2005 6,5NF	2006 6,5NF	2007 6,5NF	2008 6,5NF	2009 6,5NF	2010 6,5NF
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Overview: The ruling National Democratic Party won a sweeping victory in November 2010 elections for the lower house of parliament, amid allegations of widespread fraud, violent repression, and severe restrictions on opposition candidates. The authorities pursued a media crackdown throughout the year, closing independent outlets and subjecting journalists and bloggers to physical attacks and arbitrary arrests. High-profile cases of police brutality reflected a growing disregard for the rule of law among state security services.

Egypt formally gained independence from Britain in 1922 and acquired full sovereignty following World War II. After leading a coup that overthrew the monarchy in 1952, Colonel Gamal Abdel Nasser ruled until his death in 1970. The constitution adopted in 1971 under his successor, Anwar al-Sadat, established a strong presidential system with nominal guarantees for political and civil rights that were not respected in practice. Sadat signed a peace treaty with Israel in 1979 and built an alliance with the United States, which provided the Egyptian government with roughly \$2 billion in aid annually.

Following Sadat's assassination in 1981, then vice president Hosni Mubarak became president and declared a state of emergency, which has been in force ever since. A deterioration in living conditions and the lack of a political outlet for many Egyptians fueled an Islamist insurgency in the early 1990s. The authorities responded by jailing thousands of suspected militants without charge and cracking down on political dissent. Although the armed infrastructure of Islamist groups had been largely eradicated by 1998, the government continued to restrict political and civil liberties as it struggled to address Egypt's dire socioeconomic problems.

Economic growth in the late 1990s temporarily alleviated these problems, but the country experienced a downturn after the 2001 terrorist attacks on the United States. Popular disaffection with the government spread palpably, and antigovernment demonstrations were harshly suppressed by security forces.

The government sought to cast itself as a champion of reform in 2004. Mubarak appointed a new cabinet of younger technocrats and introduced market-friendly eco-

conomic reforms. However, associates of the president's son Gamal, a rising star in the ruling National Democratic Party (NDP), received key portfolios, stoking suspicions of an impending hereditary succession.

Meanwhile, a consensus emerged among leftist, liberal, and Islamist political forces as to the components of desired political reform: direct, multicandidate presidential elections; the abrogation of the Emergency Law; full judicial supervision of elections; the lifting of restrictions on the formation of political parties; and an end to government interference in the operation of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs). The opposition nevertheless remained polarized between unlicensed and licensed political groups, with the latter mostly accepting the regime's decision to put off further reform until after the 2005 elections.

In December 2004, Kifaya (Enough), an informal movement encompassing a broad spectrum of secular and Islamist activists, held the first-ever demonstration explicitly calling for Mubarak to step down. Despite a heavy-handed response by security forces, Kifaya persisted with demonstrations in 2005, leading other opposition groups to follow suit. The United States was also pressing Egypt to democratize at the time.

Mubarak proposed a constitutional amendment that would allow Egypt's first multicandidate presidential election, but it required candidates to be nominated by licensed parties or a substantial bloc of elected officials. Consequently, all major opposition groups denounced the measure and boycotted the May 2005 referendum that approved it.

The results of the September 2005 presidential election were predictably lopsided, with Mubarak winning 88 percent of the vote. His main opponent, Al-Ghad (Tomorrow) Party leader Ayman Nour, took just 8 percent and was sentenced to five years in prison on dubious charges shortly thereafter.

Three rounds of parliamentary elections in November and December 2005 featured a strong showing by the formally banned Muslim Brotherhood, whose candidates ran as independents. The Brotherhood increased its representation in the NDP-dominated lower house sixfold, to 88 of 454 seats. Voter turnout was low, and attacks on opposition voters by security forces and progovernment thugs abounded. Judges criticized the government for failing to prevent voter intimidation and refused to certify the election results, prompting the authorities to suppress judicial independence in 2006.

After postponing the 2006 municipal elections by two years, the government began a renewed crackdown on the Muslim Brotherhood. In 2007, a set of 34 constitutional amendments were passed in a referendum, with turnout as low as 5 percent, according to some estimates. Opposition leaders boycotted the referendum on the grounds that the amendments would limit judicial monitoring of elections and prohibit the formation of political parties based on religious principles. The Judges' Club accused the government of ballot stuffing and vote-buying. Upper-house elections held that June were similarly marred by irregularities, and the Muslim Brotherhood was prevented from campaigning freely or winning any seats. When the postponed municipal elections were held in 2008, the Brotherhood was again shut out, and many senior members were sentenced to lengthy prison terms.

Political tension rose in 2010 amid rumors of Mubarak's failing health and growing uncertainty over his successor. In February, former International Atomic

Energy Agency director general Mohamed ElBaradei and several opposition leaders formed the nonpartisan National Association for Change to advocate for electoral reform, particularly the removal of restrictions on presidential candidates. Popular support for reform and dissatisfaction with the regime swelled after parliamentary elections in November, in which the NDP was officially credited with 420 seats in the lower house. Six small parties won a total of 15 seats, and independents—none of whom were affiliated with the Muslim Brotherhood and all of whom reportedly cooperated with the NDP—took the remainder. The campaign period was seriously marred by an array of state abuses, and the results were seen as blatantly rigged.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Egypt is not an electoral democracy. The political system is designed to ensure solid majorities for the ruling NDP at all levels of government. Constitutional amendments passed in 2007 banned religion-based political parties, ensuring the continued suppression of the Muslim Brotherhood, a nonviolent Islamist group that represents the most organized opposition to the government. President Hosni Mubarak, who has been in power since 1981, serves six-year terms and appoints the cabinet and all 26 provincial governors. The first multicandidate popular election for the presidency was held in 2005, and Mubarak's main challenger, Ayman Nour, was jailed on dubious charges soon after the vote. It was unclear in 2010 whether Mubarak, who was rumored to be ill, would run in the 2011 presidential election or would, instead, be replaced by his son Gamal or another NDP stalwart. This uncertainty was the source of great tension within the party and among the Egyptian public, and it reportedly fueled the government's tightening of restrictions on political rights and civil liberties during the year.

The 518-seat People's Assembly (Majlis al-Sha'b), the parliament's lower house, exercises only limited policy influence, as the executive branch initiates almost all legislation. Ten of its members are appointed by the president, and the rest are popularly elected to five-year terms, with 64 new seats set aside for women. The November 2010 elections for the People's Assembly did not meet international standards. Massive crackdowns started before the official campaign period and included clashes between security forces and opposition candidates and supporters, severe curbs on mass communication through SMS (text messaging), and the arbitrary arrest of more than 1,200 people, including at least 700 Muslim Brotherhood supporters. The government barred international observers from the elections, and domestic observers were hamstrung by registration and election day access restrictions. Informal monitors reported that security forces prevented people from voting, sometimes closing polls completely, and noted the widespread occurrence of vote-buying, ballot stuffing, intimidation, and police violence. Opposition supporters were harassed and arrested for disseminating information and collecting signatures for political petitions. After the announcement of a sweeping first-round victory for the NDP, the opposition withdrew from the December runoff, denouncing it as completely fraudulent.

The 264-seat upper house, the Consultative Council (Majlis al-Shura), functions solely in an advisory capacity. The president appoints 88 of its members, and the rest are elected to six-year terms, with half up for election every three years. The most recent elections for the Consultative Council were held in June 2010 and, like the subsequent People's Assembly elections, showed increased manipulation on behalf

of the government. Abuses included violent clashes between security forces and opposition supporters, the obstruction of election observers, vote rigging, and harsh campaigning restrictions, particularly for the Muslim Brotherhood. The final results gave the NDP all but seven of the seats up for renewal.

The 2007 constitutional amendments allow citizens to form political parties, "in accordance with the law," but no party can be based on religion, gender, or ethnic origin. New parties must be approved by a presidentially appointed committee according to very restrictive yet vague criteria. Religious parties had long been banned, and while Muslim Brotherhood candidates have competed as independents, rigging ensured that none won seats in the 2010 elections. Indeed, the government had waged a vigorous crackdown on the Muslim Brotherhood since 2006. Members and supporters have regularly been detained on questionable charges, and senior Brotherhood officials are sometimes charged in military courts. A political party must have been continuously operating for at least five years and occupy at least 5 percent of parliamentary seats to nominate a presidential candidate, making it nearly impossible for any opposition candidate to participate in the 2011 presidential election.

Corruption remains pervasive at all levels of government. Egypt was ranked 98 out of 178 countries surveyed in Transparency International's 2010 Corruption Perceptions Index.

Freedom of the press is restricted in law and practice. The state dominates the broadcast media and exercises influence over all privately owned publications through its printing and distribution monopoly. The three leading daily newspapers are state controlled, and their editors are appointed by the president. Foreign publications and Egyptian publications registered abroad are subject to direct government censorship. Foreign journalists are sometimes harassed or expelled. Several privately owned Egyptian satellite television stations have been established, but their programming is subject to state influence, which was particularly strong during the 2010 election season. The popular political talk show *Al-Qahira al-Youm* was cancelled after a dispute with a government-owned production studio, which claimed that the show had failed to pay its studio rental fees; the show's cohost argued that the cancellation was a move by the government to tighten control of political coverage. Similarly, Ibrahim Eissa was fired as editor of the independent newspaper *Al-Dustour* shortly after publishing an editorial that was critical of the military. The newspaper's owner, a close ally of the NDP, claimed that Eissa was fired for incompetence, but others pointed to the editor's frank coverage of corruption and the political succession question as the real reason behind his dismissal. Other signs of stricter government control over the Egyptian media in 2010 included the cancellation of numerous political columns and shows, the closing of four independent television channels, and widespread arbitrary arrests of journalists before and during the election campaign.

Films, plays, and books are subject to censorship, especially for content deemed contrary to Islam or harmful to the country's reputation. A number of books and movies have been banned on the advice of the country's senior clerics.

Authorities use an array of security-related and other laws to curb independent reporting. A 2006 law abolished custodial sentences for libel, but increased the possible fines, and journalists are still jailed for other offenses. The authorities also routinely use *hisba* lawsuits, in which a defendant is charged with blasphemy or other supposed religious violations, to intimidate bloggers and journalists.

Blogger Abdel Karim Nabil Suleiman was released in November 2010 after serving a four-year prison sentence for criticizing Islam and the president, but internet journalists and bloggers continue to face severe repression. The New York-based Committee to Protect Journalists ranks Egypt as one of the ten worst countries in which to be a blogger, and reports that the authorities monitor internet traffic to gather information on potential targets for legal action.

Islam is the state religion. The government appoints the staff of registered mosques and closely monitors the content of sermons in thousands of small, unauthorized mosques. Most Egyptians are Sunni Muslims, but Coptic Christians form a substantial minority, and there are a very small number of Jews, Shiite Muslims, and Baha'is. A March 2009 ministerial decree recognized the right of adherents of "nonrecognized" religions to obtain identification papers, effectively ending the policy of forcing Baha'is to identify as Muslims or Christians. Separately, a 2008 court ruling found that Christian converts to Islam were free to return to Christianity. Despite these positive developments, anti-Christian employment discrimination is evident in the public sector, especially the security services and military, and the government frequently denies or delays permission to build and repair churches. When clashes between Christians and Muslims occur, the authorities generally attempt to downplay the religious nature of the strife. However, interreligious bloodshed has been increasing, with Coptic Christians suffering the brunt of the violence. Tensions continued to rise in 2010, particularly following the drive-by shooting of six Coptic Christians and one Muslim after a Coptic mass in January. The attack was purportedly a response to the alleged rape of a Muslim girl by a Christian man months earlier. In July, Camilia Shehata, a Coptic priest's wife, was apprehended by police after leaving her husband. Demonstrations ensued in both Christian and Muslim communities after rumors arose that Shehata had been kidnapped and forcibly converted to Islam and, conversely, that the Coptic Church was holding her against her will to prevent such a conversion.

Academic freedom is limited. Senior university officials are appointed by the government, and the security services reportedly influence academic appointments, censor the curriculum, and monitor classroom discussion. University professors and students have been prosecuted for political and human rights advocacy outside of the classroom.

Freedoms of assembly and association are heavily restricted. Organizers of public demonstrations must receive advance approval from the Interior Ministry, which is rarely granted. The Emergency Law allows arrest for innocuous acts such as insulting the president, blocking traffic, or distributing leaflets and posters. Authorities have cracked down more zealously on protesters and labor activists in recent years. In 2010, the government routinely arrested civilians who were protesting police brutality and demanding political reform, holding them without charge.

The Law of Associations prohibits the establishment of groups, "threatening national unity [or] violating public morals," bars NGOs from receiving foreign grants without the approval of the Social Affairs Ministry, requires ministry approval of members of NGO governing boards, and allows the ministry to dissolve NGOs without a judicial order. Security services have rejected registrations, decided who could serve on boards of directors, harassed activists, and intercepted donations.

The 2003 Unified Labor Law limits the right to strike to "nonstrategic" industries

and requires workers to obtain approval for a strike from the government-controlled Egyptian Trade Union Federation. Though strikes are often subject to violent police repression, a wave of wildcat strikes that began in 2006 continued through 2010.

The Supreme Judicial Council, a supervisory body of senior judges, nominates and assigns most members of the judiciary. However, the Justice Ministry controls promotions and compensation, giving it undue influence over the courts. The 2006 Judicial Authority Law offered some concessions to judicial independence, but fell short of Judges' Club recommendations.

Egypt's Emergency Law, in effect since 1981, was again renewed in 2010, despite Mubarak's 2005 promise that it would be replaced with specific antiterrorism legislation. Under the Emergency Law, "security" cases are usually referred to executive-controlled exceptional courts that deny defendants many constitutional protections. Special courts issue verdicts that cannot be appealed and are subject to ratification by the president. Although judges in these courts are typically selected from the civilian judiciary, they are appointed directly by the president. Political activists are often tried under the Emergency Law. The 2007 constitutional amendments essentially enshrined many controversial aspects of the Emergency Law, such as the president's authority to transfer civilians suspected of terrorism to military courts.

Because military judges are appointed by the executive branch to renewable two-year terms, military tribunals lack independence. Verdicts are based on little more than the testimony of security officers and informers, and are reviewed only by a body of military judges and the president. Legislation passed in 2007 allows for limited appeal of military court decisions, but opposition figures denounced it as an inadequate attempt to bolster the rights guarantees of that year's constitutional amendments.

The Emergency Law restricts many other basic rights, empowering the government to tap telephones, intercept mail, conduct warrantless searches, and indefinitely detain suspects without charge if they are deemed a threat to national security. Prison conditions are very poor; inmates are subject to torture and other abuse, overcrowding, and a lack of sanitation and medical care. Police brutality appeared to be on the rise in 2010. In one high-profile case in June, Alexandria-based blogger Khaled Said was beaten to death in public by security forces after he posted a video recording of police sharing the spoils of a drug bust. Widespread riots over the killing seemed to have no deterrent effect, as at least one other civilian, Ahmed Shabaan, was found beaten to death in October, after being detained in the same police precinct as Khaled Said.

Although the constitution provides for equality of the sexes, some aspects of the law and many traditional practices discriminate against women. Job discrimination is evident even in the civil service. Muslim women are placed at a disadvantage by laws on divorce and other personal status issues, and a Muslim heiress typically receives half the amount of her male counterparts. However, Christians are not subject to such provisions of Islamic law. Domestic violence is common, as is sexual harassment on the street. Spousal rape is not illegal, and the penal code allows for leniency in so-called honor killings. The government has been involved in a major public information campaign against female genital mutilation, but it is still widely practiced.

El Salvador

Political Rights: 2

Population: 6,200,000

Civil Liberties: 3

Capital: San Salvador

Status: Free

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline For Year Under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
2,3F	2,3FA	2,3F							

Overview: Tensions between President Mauricio Funes and his party—the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN)—as well as rifts within the right-wing National Republican Alliance (ARENA) opposition party made for challenging governance in 2010. El Salvador also faced serious economic and social problems during the year, including a \$500 million budget deficit and high levels of violent crime. In September, the Legislative Assembly passed a law criminalizing gang membership, indicating a return to a *mono dura* (firm hand) approach to crime.

El Salvador gained independence from Spain in 1821 and broke away from the Central American Federation in 1841. A republican political system dominated by the landowning elite, and subject to foreign interference, gave way to military rule in the mid-20th century. A 1979-92 civil war pitted the right-wing, military-dominated government against Marxist guerrillas led by the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN), leaving more than 75,000 people dead and 500,000 displaced.

The conservative National Republican Alliance (ARENA) party held the presidency for two decades beginning in 1989, but it faced growing competition from the FMLN, which evolved into a strong opposition party after the war.

In 2007, ARENA and the smaller National Conciliation Party (PCN) began building an alliance aimed at preventing the FMLN from taking power in the 2009 elections. Through a fear-based campaign, ARENA sought to link the FMLN and its candidate for the 2009 presidential elections, Mauricio Funes, to more extreme leftists in the region such as Venezuelan president Hugo Chávez. As political violence escalated ahead of the elections, all major parties signed an agreement that obliged them to prevent violence among their supporters, avoid confrontational language while campaigning, and recognize the legitimacy of the election results.

Funes ultimately led the FMLN to a historic victory in both the legislative and presidential votes. In January 2009, the FMLN took 35 of 84 seats in the Legislative Assembly, with ARENA capturing 32. However, shifting political alliances in the months following the election, including the creation of the Grand Alliance for National Unity (GANU) party by former ARENA deputies, changed the distribution of seats. By January 2010, ARENA held 19 seats, GANU held 12, PCN held 10, the Christian Democratic Party held 5, Democratic Convergence held 1, and independents held 2; the FMLN retained its original 35 seats.

Observers reported a number of irregularities in the concurrent municipal and

legislative polls, including voter cards being issued to residents of other districts. Community activist Gustavo Marcelo Rivera, who had been vocal in denouncing electoral fraud in San Isidro, was abducted and murdered in June 2009. While police dismissed the crime as the work of gang members, Rivera's family maintained that it had been a politically motivated attack.

In the March 2009 presidential election, Funes defeated ARENA'S Rodrigo Avila, 51.3 percent to 48.7 percent, and assumed the presidency in June. Observers noted that many of the irregularities seen during the January parliamentary elections were rectified in the presidential vote. However, calls continued for the Supreme Electoral Tribunal to address the well-documented irregularities in the voter registry.

The FMLN, which had hoped to assert its power through Funes, instead faced opposition on a variety of policy issues, causing a rift between the president and his party. While the FMLN supported Funes on a number of issues in 2010, several important disagreements complicated their relationship. In February, the president dismissed Secretary of Culture Breni Cuenca, reportedly due to lack of confidence. Separately, the minister of agriculture resigned in May, citing tensions between the cabinet and the president's office that he alleged were negatively affecting resource allocation. Funes was accused of moving toward the center since taking office and deviating from the FMLN's original program, leading long-standing left-wing party members to distance themselves from the party.

In addition to political tensions, Funes faced a series of economic difficulties in 2010 stemming from a \$500 million budget deficit left by the outgoing ARENA administration and years of financial mismanagement. The global economic crisis has also had a significant effect on the country, whose economy is closely linked to that of the United States through trade and migrant remittances. It is estimated that between 30 and 40 percent of all Salvadorans live in poverty, which has fueled social alienation as well as organized crime and violence.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: El Salvador is an electoral democracy. The 2009 legislative and presidential elections were deemed free and fair, although some irregularities were reported. The president is elected for a five-year term, and the 84-member, unicameral Legislative Assembly is elected for three years. The two largest political parties are the conservative ARENA and the FMLN. However, ARENA'S political influence has declined since 12 deputies abandoned the party in 2009 to establish the new GANA party.

Corruption remains a serious problem at all levels of government. A 2010 World Bank report revealed that some \$200 million in discretionary aid funds received under former president Tony Saca (2004-2009) remained unaccounted for. While Saca was expelled from ARENA, no investigation into the situation had been initiated by year's end. The country continues to lack an access-to-information law. El Salvador was ranked 73 out of 178 countries surveyed in Transparency International's 2010 Corruption Perceptions Index.

The constitution provides for freedom of the press, and this right is generally respected in practice. The media are privately owned, but ownership is confined to a small group of powerful businesspeople who often impose controls on journalists to protect their political or economic interests. The ARENA-aligned Telecorporacion Salvadoreña (TCS) owns three of the five private television networks and dominates

the market. Judges can close legal proceedings to the media on national security grounds. In 2009, French filmmaker Christian Poveda, who had directed the 2008 film *La Vida Loca* about the 18th Street gang, was murdered in a suburb of San Salvador. By December 2010, 33 suspects had been detained in connection with the crime, and legal proceedings had begun. A September 2010 Supreme Court ruling extended criminal penalties for defamation to journalists, editors, and media owners and managers. There is unrestricted access to the internet, and the government and private organizations have worked to extend internet access to the poor.

The government does not encroach on religious freedom, and academic freedom is respected. In September 2010, the Legislative Assembly passed legislation requiring the reading of Bible passages at the start of each school day. The FMLN abstained from the vote in protest of what they considered an inappropriate mixing of church and state, and President Mauricio Funes subsequently vetoed the law.

Freedoms of assembly and association are generally upheld. In September 2010, the Legislative Assembly passed a controversial law criminalizing gang membership, partly in response to an attack on a public bus in the municipality of Mejicanos in June that left 14 passengers dead. Critics argued that the law threatened freedom of association and would not succeed in addressing gang-related crime. Nationwide transportation strikes, supposedly led by gang leaders, were staged in protest of the law's passage.

El Salvador's wide array of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) generally operate freely, but some have reported registration difficulties. Labor unions have long faced obstacles in a legal environment that has traditionally favored business interests.

The judicial system improved its performance in 2010, demonstrating its independence in a number of important cases, including corruption investigations against former political officials. Violent crime, though still extensive, appeared to decline in 2010, with 3,900 homicides reported after a record-breaking total of 4,365 in 2009. The forced repatriation of hundreds of Salvadoran criminals from the United States has contributed to the violence and reflects the international reach of major gangs like Mara Salvatrucha (also known as MS-13). There were an estimated 20,000 gang members in the country as of 2009, about 9,000 of whom were in prison. In 2010, more than 18,700 Salvadorans were deported from the United States, 7,556 of whom had a criminal record.

The office of the human rights ombudsman, who is elected by the Legislative Assembly for a three-year term, was created by the 1992 peace accords. While human rights abuses have declined steadily since the end of the war, civil liberties are still limited by sporadic political violence, repressive police measures, and vigilante groups. The previous ARENA governments, like others in Central America, used *mano dura* (firm hand) tactics to combat gang violence, including house-to-house sweeps by the police and military. However, judges often refused to approve warrants for such wide searches. Unofficial death squads and vigilantes, allegedly linked to the police and army, have also emerged to combat the gangs with extrajudicial killings. In November 2009, Funes authorized a six-month deployment of troops to high-crime communities to address public security issues. In May 2010, Funes extended the program—which granted the military greater power to conduct patrols and searches among civilians—for an additional year, signaling a return to ARENA-

style *mano dura* practices. In an attempt to halt the development of organized crime in the penitentiary system, the military was also granted permission to patrol inside the country's prisons.

Law enforcement officials have been criticized for brutality, corruption, arbitrary arrest, and lengthy pretrial detention. In 2010, an estimated 14 police officers were investigated each month for misconduct, including alleged involvement in criminal activities. As of November, there were roughly 24,000 inmates in a prison system designed to house just 8,000; approximately 35 percent of inmates were believed to be awaiting trial.

Salvadoran law, including a 1993 general amnesty, bars prosecution of crimes and human rights violations committed during the civil war, and the authorities have faced criticism from NGOs and the Inter-American Court of Human Rights for failing to investigate adequately such crimes. During his first year in office, President Funes publicly apologized on behalf of the Salvadoran government for crimes committed during the civil war.

There are no national laws regarding indigenous rights. According to the U.S. State Department's 2010 human rights report, access to land and credit remains a problem for indigenous people.

Businesses are subject to regular extortion by organized criminal groups. Transport companies estimated in 2009 that between 20 and 30 percent of their income is paid to criminal groups.

While women are granted equal rights under family and property law, they are occasionally discriminated against in practice; women also suffer discrimination in employment. El Salvador remains a source, transit, and destination country for the trafficking of women and children for the purposes of prostitution and forced labor. A 2010 study conducted by the Ministry of Economics found that 10 percent of children between the ages of 5 and 17 were working. Violence against women and children also remained widespread.

Equatorial Guinea

Political Rights: 7

Population: 690,000

Civil Liberties: 7

Capital: Malabo

Status: Not Free

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline For Year Under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
6,6NF	7,6NF	7,6NF	7,6NF	7,6NF	7,6NF	7,6NF	7,7NF	7,7NF	7,7NF

Overview: After winning reelection with 95.4 percent of the vote in late 2009, President Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo reappointed nearly all of his former cabinet ministers in January 2010, including members of his family. His son and favored successor, Teodoro Nguema Obiang Mangue, who faced money-laundering allegations by a U.S. Senate subcommittee, was appointed vice president of the ruling Democratic Party

of Equatorial Guinea. Trials in connection with a 2009 coup attempt resulted in four executions that were decried by international human rights organizations. Meanwhile, UNESCO suspended plans to grant a prize sponsored by President Obiang after human rights groups lobbied against it.

Equatorial Guinea achieved independence from Spain in 1968. Current president Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo seized power in 1979, after deposing and executing his uncle, President Francisco Macías Nguema. International pressure forced Obiang to establish a multiparty system in 1992, though he and the ruling Democratic Party of Equatorial Guinea (PDGE) retained power over the next two decades in a series of seriously flawed elections.

The government thwarted a 2004 coup attempt that reportedly aimed to install Severo Moto, an exiled opposition figure, as president. Among the accused coup plotters was former British commando Simon Mann, who was pardoned in 2009 and returned to the country as a presidential adviser in 2010.

Obiang dissolved the parliament in February 2008 and called legislative and municipal elections for May. A new coalition composed of the PDGE and nine smaller parties won a reported 100 percent of the vote in many districts, taking 99 out of 100 seats in the parliament amid allegations of widespread irregularities. The Convergence for Social Democracy (CPDS), the sole opposition party, was reduced from two seats to one.

In February 2009, a group of unidentified gunmen attacked the presidential palace in Malabo. The government blamed a Nigerian rebel group, the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta, for the attack, though the group rejected the accusation. Seven Nigerian suspects were convicted the following year on charges relating to the attack. In August 2010, four former military and government officials were executed within an hour of being sentenced to death by a military court for their involvement in the attack on the presidential palace. According to Amnesty International, they had been abducted from Benin, where they had been living as refugees, and were held incommunicado in Black Beach Prison and reportedly tortured before confessing to the attack.

Meanwhile, Obiang swept the November 2009 presidential election with a 95.4 percent of the vote, although as with past balloting, the election was widely regarded as rigged. The president's main opponent, CPDS leader Plácido Micó Abogo, was left with less than 4 percent. The new government appointed in January 2010 included nearly all of the previous cabinet members, and the creation of many new junior minister posts increased the total size of the cabinet by 50 percent. Obiang's son and favored successor, Teodoro Nguema Obiang Mangue, retained the agriculture and forests portfolio, was promoted to minister of state, and became vice president of the PDGE. After the changes, members of the president's family held 11 ministerial posts.

Equatorial Guinea's abundant oil revenues do not reach the majority of its citizens. According to the watchdog group Global Witness, 60 percent of the population lives on less than \$1 a day. In 2010, Obiang hired a "reform adviser" and made a number of public pledges to increase social spending, protect human rights, and increase the transparency of the country's oil revenues; however, substantive reforms had not transpired by year's end.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Equatorial Guinea is not an electoral democracy and has never held credible elections. The 2009 presidential election reportedly featured intimidation and harassment of the opposition by security forces and restrictions on foreign observers, among other irregularities. President Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo, who won a new seven-year term, marked his 31st year in power in 2010, making him sub-Saharan Africa's longest-serving ruler. The 100 members of the unicameral House of People's Representatives are elected to five-year terms but wield little power; all but one of the chamber's seats are held by the propresidential coalition. The few opposition parties, in particular the CPDS, are closely monitored by the government.

Equatorial Guinea is considered one of the most corrupt countries in the world. A clan network linked to the president undergirds the formal political structure and has allowed Obiang and members of his inner circle to amass huge personal fortunes stemming from the oil industry. In 2010, the government for the first time released oil revenue figures for 2007 (\$4 billion) and 2008 (\$5.8 billion) in a bid to join the Extractive Industry Transparency Initiative (EITI). Nevertheless, EITI ultimately rejected Equatorial Guinea because of a lack of consensus among its board members as to whether there were extenuating circumstances that warranted an extension to complete all requirements. In 2010, a U.S. Senate subcommittee implicated the president's eldest son, Teodoro Nguema Obiang Mangue, as a principal suspect in its investigation of large-scale money laundering, alleging that he transferred \$110 million in suspicious funds to U.S. banks between 2004 and 2008. Equatorial Guinea was ranked 168 out of 178 countries surveyed in Transparency International's 2010 Corruption Perceptions Index.

Although the constitution guarantees press freedom, the 1992 press law authorizes government censorship. A few private newspapers and underground pamphlets are published irregularly, but they face financial and political pressure. Libel remains a criminal offense, and all journalists are required to register with the government. The state holds a monopoly on broadcast media, with the exception of RTV-Asonga, a private radio and television outlet owned by the president's son. In February 2010, a journalist in Bata was arrested and held for three days after reporting on the discovery of seven bodies at a city dump. In April, a correspondent for Agence France-Presse and Africa No. 1 radio was detained at Malabo International Airport, where he had planned to cover arrivals for a regional economic summit. Satellite television is increasingly popular, and Radio Exterior, Spain's international short-wave service, has a large audience in the country. The government reportedly does not restrict access to the internet or monitor e-mail.

The constitution protects religious freedom, though in practice, it is sometimes affected by the country's broader political repression. Official preference is given to the Roman Catholic Church and the Reform Church of Equatorial Guinea. Academic freedom is also politically constrained, and self-censorship among faculty is common.

Freedoms of assembly and association are severely restricted, and political gatherings must have official authorization to proceed. The few international nongovernmental organizations in the country promote social and economic improvements rather than political and civil rights. The constitution provides for the right to organize unions, but there are many legal barriers to collective bargaining. While it has ratified key International Labour Organization conventions, the government

has refused to register the Equatorial Guinea Trade Union, whose members operate in secret. The country's only legal labor union is the Small Farmers' Syndicate.

The judiciary is not independent, and security forces generally act with impunity. Civil cases rarely go to trial, and military tribunals handle national security cases. Prison conditions are deplorable. Equatorial Guinea has been criticized internationally for holding detainees in secret, denying them access to lawyers, and jailing them for long periods without charge. UN investigators have also reported systematic torture in the penal system. The country's human rights record gained international attention in 2010 when advocacy groups raised strenuous objections to Obiang's offer to sponsor a scientific prize through UNESCO. The plan was eventually withdrawn.

Obiang's Mongomo clan, part of the majority Fang ethnic group, monopolizes political and economic power. Differences between the Fang and the Bubi are a major source of political tension that has often erupted into violence. Fang vigilante groups have been allowed to abuse Bubi citizens with impunity.

All citizens are required to obtain exit visas to travel abroad, and some opposition figures have been denied such visas. Those who do travel are sometimes subjected to interrogation on their return.

Constitutional and legal guarantees of equality for women are largely ignored. Both violence against women and discriminatory traditional practices are reportedly widespread.

Eritrea

Political Rights: 7

Population: 5,200,000

Civil Liberties: 7

Capital: Asmara

Status: Not Free

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline For Year Under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
7,6NF	7,7NF	7,7NF							

Overview: The political system remained frozen in 2010, with no plans for national elections despite 17 years of independence and 10 years of tense peace with Ethiopia. The government continued to use the threat of arrest and an onerous conscription system to maintain control over the population. Diplomatic friction with neighboring Djibouti eased during the year, after Eritrea withdrew its forces from contested territory and agreed to a negotiated settlement.

Britain ended Italian colonial rule in Eritrea during World War II, and the country was formally incorporated into Ethiopia in 1952. Its independence struggle began in 1962 as a nationalist and Marxist guerrilla war against the Ethiopian government of Emperor Haile Selassie. The seizure of power in Ethiopia by a Marxist junta in 1974 removed the ideological basis of the conflict, and by the time Eritrea finally defeated Ethiopia's northern armies in 1991, the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF) had discarded Marxism. Formal independence was achieved in May 1993,

after a referendum supervised by the United Nations produced a landslide vote for statehood.

War with Ethiopia broke out again in 1998. In May 2000, an Ethiopian offensive made significant gains. The two sides signed a truce in June 2000, and a peace treaty was signed that December. Both countries accepted an independent ruling that set the common border, but Ethiopia later reneged on the agreement. The war and the unresolved grievances stemming from the broken peace deal have driven the Eritrean government's fixation with national security and perpetuated the militarization of the state.

In May 2001, a group of 15 senior ruling party members publicly criticized President Isaias Afwerki and called for, "the rule of law and for justice, through peaceful and legal ways and means." Eleven members of the group were arrested for treason in September of that year. The small independent media sector was also shut down, and a number of journalists were imprisoned. Many of the jailed dissidents and journalists were subsequently reported to have died in custody, though little official information about their whereabouts or well-being was disclosed.

The government clamped down on nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) in 2005, and ordered the U.S. Agency for International Development to end its operations in the country. In 2006, reports emerged that hundreds of followers of various unregistered churches were being detained, harassed, and abused.

The government continued this pattern of suppressing civil society and political dissent over the next several years, and arbitrary detention remained the authorities' most common method of stifling independent action by citizens.

Eritrea took measures to reduce tensions with its neighbors in 2010. A border dispute with Djibouti that had led to a military confrontation in 2008 was resolved when both sides agreed to a negotiated settlement, and Eritrea had withdrawn its forces from the contested territory by July. The United Nations welcomed the move, but said it was not sufficient to justify lifting international sanctions on Eritrea, citing persistent concerns about the country's alleged support for Islamist insurgents in Somalia.

A serious drought across the Horn of Africa placed an estimated one million Eritreans at risk of hunger in 2010. UNICEF said that 17 percent of children in some regions suffered from acute malnutrition, though the figures were rejected by President Isaias.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Eritrea is not an electoral democracy. Created in 1994 as a successor to the EPLF, the Popular Front for Democracy and Justice (PFDJ) is the only legal political party. Instead of moving toward a democratic system, the PFDJ government has become harshly authoritarian since the end of the war with Ethiopia.

A new constitution was ratified in 1997, calling for "conditional" political pluralism and an elected 150-seat National Assembly, which would choose the president from among its members by a majority vote. However, this system has never been implemented, as national elections have been postponed indefinitely. President Isaias Afwerki has remained in office since independence. In 2004, regional assembly elections were conducted, but they were carefully orchestrated by the PFDJ and offered no real choice to voters. The PFDJ and the military, both

strictly subordinate to Isaias, are in practice the only institutions of political significance in Eritrea.

Corruption appears to have increased in Eritrea in recent years. The government's control over foreign exchange effectively gives it sole authority over imports. At the same time, those in favor with the regime are allowed to profit from the smuggling and sale of scarce goods, such as building materials, food, and alcohol. According to the International Crisis Group, senior military officials are the chief culprits in this trade. They have also been accused of enriching themselves by charging fees to assist the growing number of Eritreans who wish to flee the country and using conscript labor for private building projects.

There are no independent media in Eritrea. The government controls all broadcasting outlets and banned all privately owned newspapers in its 2001 crackdown. A group of journalists arrested in 2001 remain imprisoned without charge, and as many as half of the original 10 are believed to have died in custody. In 2009, the entire staff of the Asmara-based broadcaster Radio Bana was detained. At least six of them remain in custody without charge. Two more journalists were detained in 2010, including a reporter with the state-owned radio station Dimtsi Hafash, who was arrested as he tried to cross the border into Ethiopia. At least 17 journalists were known to be behind bars at the end of 2010, according to the U.S.-based Committee to Protect Journalists. The government controls the internet infrastructure and is believed to monitor online communications, though only a small fraction of the population has internet access.

The government places significant limitations on the exercise of religion. Since 2002, it has officially recognized only four faiths: Islam, Orthodox Christianity, Roman Catholicism, and Lutheranism as practiced by the Evangelical Church of Eritrea. Persecution of minority Christian sects has escalated, particularly for Jehovah's Witnesses, who were stripped of their basic civil rights in 1994, and evangelical and Pentecostal churches. Abune Antonios, patriarch of the Eritrean Orthodox Church, has been under house arrest since speaking out against state interference in religion in 2006. According to Amnesty International, members of other churches have been jailed and tortured or otherwise ill-treated to make them abandon their faith. As many as 3,000 Christians are currently in prison because of their beliefs. Muslims also complain of discrimination. In February 2010, a leading Islamic organization published a document accusing the government of marginalizing Muslims, closing traditional Muslim schools, persecuting religious leaders, and appropriating Muslim-owned land.

Academic freedom is constrained. Secondary-school students are subject to the highly unpopular policy of obligatory military service, and are often stationed at bases far from their homes. The official 18-month service period is frequently open-ended in practice, and conscientious-objector status is not recognized. The government imposes collective punishment on the families of deserters, forcing them to pay heavy fines or putting them in prison. Eritrea's university system has been effectively closed, replaced by regional colleges whose main purposes are military training and political indoctrination.

Freedom of expression in private discussions is limited. People are guarded in voicing their opinions for fear of being overheard by government informants.

Freedom of assembly is not recognized. The government maintains a hostile

attitude toward civil society, and independent NGOs are not tolerated. A 2005 law requires NGOs to pay taxes on imported materials, submit project reports every three months, renew their licenses annually, and meet government-established target levels of financial resources. International human rights NGOs are barred and only six international humanitarian NGOs are present in the country. Eritrea in 2010 accepted a recommendation by the UN Human Rights Council to establish an independent national human rights institution, but nothing had been set up by year's end.

The government controls all union activity. The National Confederation of Eritrean Workers is the country's main union body and has affiliated unions for women, teachers, young people, and general workers.

The judiciary, which was formed by decree in 1993, has never issued rulings significantly at variance with government positions. Constitutional due process guarantees are often ignored in cases related to state security. The International Crisis Group describes Eritrea as a "prison state" for its flagrant disregard of the rule of law and its willingness to detain anyone suspected of opposing the regime, often without charge. According to Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch, torture, arbitrary detentions, and political arrests are common. The police are poorly paid and prone to corruption. Prison conditions are poor, and outside monitors such as the International Committee of the Red Cross have been denied access to detainees. In some facilities, inmates are held in metal shipping containers or underground cells in extreme temperatures. Prisoners are often denied medical treatment. The government maintains a network of secret detention facilities and frequently refuses to disclose the location of prisoners to their families.

The Kunama people, one of Eritrea's nine ethnic groups, reportedly face severe discrimination. They are viewed with suspicion for having backed a rival group of the EPLF during the war of independence and for resisting attempts to integrate them into national society. Members of the Afar ethnic group have also been targeted. In May and June 2010, several hundred Afars were arrested, according to Human Rights Watch. Sexual minorities face legal discrimination due to the criminalization of homosexual conduct.

Freedom of movement is heavily restricted. Eritreans under the age of 50 are rarely given permission to leave the country, and those who try to travel without the correct documents face imprisonment. Eritrean refugees and asylum seekers who are repatriated from other countries are also detained. These strict penalties fail to deter many thousands of people from risking their lives to escape the country each year.

Government policy is officially supportive of free enterprise, and citizens are in theory able to choose their employment, establish private businesses, and operate them without government harassment. However, few private businesses remain in Eritrea. This is largely because of the conscription system, which ties most able-bodied men and women to an indefinite period of national service and can entail compulsory labor for enterprises controlled by the political elite. The enforced contraction of the labor pool, combined with a lack of investment and rigid state control of private enterprise, has crippled the national economy. The Heritage Foundation ranked Eritrea as the fourth least free economy in the world in its 2010 Index of Economic Freedom.

Women hold some senior government positions, including four ministerial posts. The government has made genuine attempts to promote women's rights, and laws

mandate equal educational opportunity, equal pay for equal work, and penalties for domestic violence. However, traditional societal discrimination against women persists in rural areas. Female genital mutilation was banned by the government in 2007, but the practice remains widespread.

Estonia

Political Rights: 1

Population: 1,300,000

Civil Liberties: 1

Capital: Tallinn

Status: Free

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline For Year Under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
1,2F	1,2F	1,2F	1,E	1,1F	1,1F	1,1F	1,1F	1,1F	1,1F

Overview: Estonia in 2010 became the first former Soviet republic to be formally accepted into the euro currency zone, and was also admitted to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. Political parties began preparing for the March 2011 parliamentary elections amid internal struggles and defections. Support for the center-right Reform Party, which led the ruling coalition, rose during the last months of the year.

Estonia gained independence from Russia in 1918, but it was captured—along with Latvia and Lithuania—by Soviet troops during World War II. Under Soviet rule, approximately one-tenth of Estonia's population was deported, executed, or forced to flee abroad. Subsequent Russian immigration reduced ethnic Estonians to just over 61 percent of the population by 1989. Estonia regained its independence with the disintegration of the Soviet Union in 1991. It adopted a new constitution in July 1992 and held its first legislative elections in September of that year. Russian troops withdrew from Estonia in 1994. The country joined both NATO and the European Union (EU) in 2004.

A series of shifting multiparty coalitions have held power since independence. Former foreign minister Toomas Hendrik Iivask defeated incumbent Arnold Ruutel in the 2006 presidential vote. In the March 2007 parliamentary elections, the center-right Reform Party captured 31 seats, followed closely by the left-leaning Center Party with 29 seats. The Reform Party, the right-leaning Union of Pro Patria and Res Publica (IRL), and the Social Democratic Party (SDP) then formed a coalition, and Andrus Ansip stayed on as prime minister, a position he had held since 2005.

The new government faced a major crisis in April 2007, when plans to relocate a Soviet World War II memorial and exhume the remains of Soviet soldiers buried at the site touched off two days of violent protests, mostly by young ethnic Russians. Meanwhile, large-scale cyberattacks, which were reportedly traced to internet addresses within Russia, took down Estonian commercial and governmental websites. Intermittent tensions with Russia continued in the subsequent years, and Estonia

expressed alarm when, in July 2010, Russia deployed missiles to a position within striking distance of the Baltic states.

The economy in 2010 began to show some signs of recovery from the international downturn that began in late 2008. Growth in the last quarter was over 6 percent, and the unemployment rate decreased from 19.8 percent in the first quarter to 13.6 percent at the end of 2010. Meanwhile, the government continued to pursue long-term fiscal austerity measures. Amid protests outside Parliament, lawmakers in April passed amendments to the State Pension Insurance Act that would raise the retirement age to 65 by 2026. Such efforts were rewarded in July, when Estonia received a formal invitation from the EU to join the euro currency zone on January 1, 2011. In December, Estonia joined the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).

Estonia's political parties spent the last six months of 2010 preparing for the March 2011 parliamentary elections. Toward the end of the year, the prime minister's Reform Party had a strong lead over its rivals in opinion polls, with roughly 36 percent support.

**Political Rights
and Civil Liberties:**

Estonia is an electoral democracy. Elections have been free and fair, and the 2007 polls were the world's first parliamentary elections to employ internet voting. The 1992 constitution established a 101-seat, unicameral Parliament, or Riigikogu, whose members are elected for four-year terms. A prime minister serves as head of government, and is chosen by the president and confirmed by Parliament. The president is elected by parliamentary ballot to a five-year term, filling the largely ceremonial role of head of state. Only citizens may participate in national elections, though resident noncitizens may vote (but not run as candidates) in local elections. Nine seats in the 101-seat Riigikogu are held by minorities.

Political parties organize freely, though only citizens may be members. Major parties include the Reform Party, the IRL, the SDP, the Center Party, the Greens, and the People's Union. The SDP, the Greens, and the People's Union all suffered from internal divisions and dwindling public support in 2010, with the People's Union losing five of its six representatives in Parliament to defections (three to SDP and one each to the Reform Party and the Center Party).

Corruption is regarded as a relatively minor problem in Estonia, which was ranked 26 out of 178 countries surveyed in Transparency International's 2010 Corruption Perceptions Index. In May 2010, the Supreme Court upheld the 2009 suspended jail sentence of former environment minister Villu Reiljan, who had been convicted of attempted bribery involving the sale of a state-owned building, and stripped him of his seat in Parliament. Also in 2010, three county court judges were convicted on corruption charges, receiving sentences of between six months and nearly three years in prison, and Tallinn mayor Edgar Savisaar, head of the Center Party, was accused of taking 1.5 million euros (\$2 million) from the president of the Russian Railways for use in the 2011 elections. Savisaar maintained that the money was for the construction of a Russian Orthodox church in Tallinn. In November, Parliament approved the creation of a party-financing oversight committee. Legal guarantees for public access to government information are respected in practice, and government decisions are published almost instantly on the internet.

The government respects freedom of the press. In addition to the public broadcaster, Estonian Television, there are a variety of commercial channels as well as independent newspapers and radio stations. Concerns were raised in 2010 that the city-funded Tallinn TV was being used as a mouthpiece for the Center Party, which in turn has claimed that the national media are biased against it. In November, lawmakers passed the Sources Protection Act, which allows for fines against outlets that provide an "inappropriate," "inaccurate," or libelous assessment of events. It also prescribes fines—and potentially even jail time—for journalists who refuse to reveal sources under certain circumstances. The government does not restrict access to the internet, and Estonia has an internet penetration rate of 75.1 percent, among the highest in the world.

Religious freedom is respected in law and in practice, as is academic freedom. In 2010, the government continued to implement a program calling for 60 percent Estonian-language instruction in the country's Russian-language public high schools by 2011. Many schools were already implementing the law in 2010, though the National Language Inspectorate found that 70 percent of teachers at Russian-language schools still did not have an adequate command of Estonian, a shortcoming that can draw fines.

The constitution guarantees freedoms of assembly and association, and the government upholds those rights in practice. Civil society is vibrant, and the government involves nongovernmental organizations in the drafting of legislation. Workers may organize freely, strike, and bargain collectively, though the Estonian Confederation of Trade Unions, whose members make up slightly more than 10 percent of the workforce, has reported antiunion discrimination in the private sector.

The judiciary is independent and generally free from government interference. Laws prohibiting arbitrary arrest and detention and ensuring the right to a fair trial are largely observed. The average length of pretrial detention is seven months, due to judicial extensions of the six-month legal limit. There have been reports of police officers physically or verbally abusing suspects. Of 37 criminal cases brought against officers in 2010 for alleged use of excessive force, 27 had been dropped by year's end, and the remainder were pending or had been sent to the prosecutor for further action. The country's prison system continues to suffer from overcrowding and poor access to health care. In October, a former prison warden was sentenced to three years in prison for negligence that led to the deaths of two inmates in 2006.

Many ethnic Russians arrived in Estonia during the Soviet era and are now regarded as immigrants who must apply for citizenship through a process that requires knowledge of the Estonian language. Roughly 30 percent of Estonians speak Russian as their first language. At the end of 2010, over 100,000 people, or roughly 7.5 percent of the population, were of undetermined citizenship, according to the Estonian government. The authorities have adopted policies to assist those seeking Estonian citizenship, including funding Estonian language courses. The use of Estonian is mandatory in certain work environments, including among public sector employees, medical professionals, and service personnel. International rules on the granting of asylum or refugee status are legally recognized and upheld in practice, though the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees commented in July on the "remarkably low number" of asylum seekers in Estonia, which may suggest that some are not granted access to formal processing or are turned away at the border.

Though women enjoy the same legal rights as men, the World Economic Forum's 2010 Global Gender Gap Report downgraded Estonia's ranking by 10 places, finding that Estonian women make only 65 percent of a man's wage for the same job—the largest gap in the EU. Moreover, employment segregation by gender remained high. In 2010, the government ran a media campaign in both Estonian and Russian to promote equal opportunities for women and combat gender stereotypes. Violence against women, including domestic violence, remains a problem, and Estonia is a source, transit point, and destination for women trafficked for the purpose of prostitution. In April, the government adopted a four-year plan to decrease both domestic violence and human trafficking and provide better services for victims.

Ethiopia

Political Rights: 6*
Civil Liberties: 6*
Status: Not Free

Population: 85,000,000
Capital: Addis Ababa

Status Change: Ethiopia's political rights rating declined from 5 to 6, its civil liberties rating from 5 to 6, and its status from Partly Free to Not Free due to national elections that were thoroughly tainted by intimidation of opposition supporters and candidates as well as a clampdown on independent media and nongovernmental organizations.

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline For Year Under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
5,5PF	6,6NF								

Overview: Prime Minister Meles Zenawi and his Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) party sealed their complete dominance of political life with a crushing victory in the May 2010 general elections. The EPRDF and its allies took all but 2 seats in the 547-seat Parliament. The government stepped up its repression of independent media through interference with foreign broadcasts, including the jamming of Voice of America's radio signal. Opposition political rallies were suppressed, while nongovernmental organizations struggled to sustain themselves under restrictive legislation enacted in 2009.

One of the few African countries to avoid decades of European colonization, Ethiopia ended a long tradition of monarchy in 1974, when Emperor Haile Selassie was overthrown in a Marxist military coup. Colonel Mengistu Haile Mariam ruled the country until he was toppled by guerrilla groups led by forces from the northern Tigray region in 1991. The main rebel group, the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF), formed a new regime under the leadership of Meles Zenawi.

The EPRDF introduced democratic institutions and a new constitution. Most of the opposition boycotted elections in 1995, claiming harassment of its support-

ers, and Meles became prime minister. The EPRDF easily won the 2000 elections, and Meles began his second five-year term. Opposition parties and some observers criticized the government's conduct of the vote.

A border dispute with Eritrea, which had gained formal independence from Ethiopia in 1993 after a long guerrilla conflict, triggered a 1998-2000 war between the countries. The border dispute has yet to be resolved.

The EPRDF and its allies led the 2005 parliamentary elections, though the main opposition parties performed well, winning a third of the seats. Claiming that voter fraud had deprived them of outright victory, opposition supporters took to the streets. The authorities responded harshly, killing at least 193 people and arresting more than 4,000, including leading opposition figures. All were finally pardoned and released in 2007.

The opposition boycotted local elections in 2008, accusing the EPRDF of harassment. Opposition activities were further restricted in 2009, when 40 members of an unregistered political party were convicted of trying to topple the government. In contrast to the 2005 elections, the federal and regional elections held in May 2010 were tightly controlled by the EPRDF, halting Ethiopia's faltering process of democratization. The campaign was heavily weighted in favor of the ruling party, with European Union (EU) observers noting the use of state resources for EPRDF campaign activities. The gradual usurpation of the state by the EPRDF enabled the party to influence voter behavior down to the village level. According to Human Rights Watch, local officials or neighborhood militia reportedly went door to door, verifying that residents had registered as members of the EPRDF. Voters were threatened with losing their jobs, homes, or government services if they did not turn out for the party.

An electoral code of conduct was agreed between the EPRDF and several leading opposition parties, but others, including the Forum for Democratic Dialogue in Ethiopia (Medrek) coalition, refused to sign it, arguing that it failed to incorporate much-needed reforms of the electoral board and did not enable the media to freely report on the election campaign. The code was enacted as law despite such objections. Of the 79 registered parties, 63 decided to participate in the elections. The opposition failed to mount more than a token challenge to the EPRDF. Part of this failure can be blamed on a poorly run campaign, though official harassment and intimidation were also major factors. Opposition meetings were broken up, and candidates were threatened and detained. Ethiopia's most charismatic opposition figure, the leader of the Unity and Justice Party, Birtukan Mideksa, remained in prison during the election. She had been convicted of trying to overthrow the constitutional order following the election-related disturbances of 2005. After seeking an official pardon, she was released in October 2010.

Several opposition candidates were also reportedly attacked during the 2010 election. In March, Aregawi Gebre-Yohannes, a member of a Medrek-aligned party, was stabbed to death in what colleagues considered a political killing. However, the government claimed Gebre-Yohannes had died in a bar fight, and the man responsible had been arrested and imprisoned. Other incidents of violence were similarly difficult to substantiate amid the claims and counterclaims of opposition activists and government officials.

Polling day was peaceful and orderly, though monitoring assessments conducted

by teams from the EU and the African Union (AU) differed sharply. The EU contingent said the election had not been conducted on a level playing field, while the AU delegation—which was not present in the weeks preceding the election—described the vote as free and fair. The United States declined to send observers because of restrictions placed on its mission, but said the election fell short of international standards and criticized the limitations placed on independent observers and the media in the run-up to the vote.

Opposition-aligned parties ultimately saw their 160-seat presence in Parliament virtually disappear. The EPRDF and its allies won all but 2 of the 547 seats in the lower house, while Medrek and an independent candidate each captured 1 seat. Of the nearly 30 million voters who took part in the election, 99.6 percent chose the EPRDF or one of its allied parties, according to official results. The EU and the United States expressed serious reservations about the outcome, but opposition demands for a rerun were dismissed by the Supreme Court.

Meles was sworn in for a third term as prime minister at the EPRDF conference in September. Several long-serving cabinet members were subsequently replaced by younger party loyalists, strengthening Meles's personal control over the government.

Ethiopia's relations with its neighbors were tense in 2010, as diplomatic contact with Eritrea remained frozen. In August, the Ethiopian military reportedly mounted incursions into areas of Somalia controlled by the Shabaab, an Islamist militia group. Internally, government forces appeared to gain the upper hand against separatist movements in Oromiya and the Ogaden. In September, Ethiopian forces claimed to have killed or captured 200 fighters from the Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF) following a tip-off from the Somaliland authorities. A month later, an ONLF faction signed a peace deal with the government. The main Oromo rebel movement, the Oromo Liberation Front, was weakened by factionalism, defections, and arrests.

Ethiopia struggled with a prolonged drought in 2010. The UN World Food Programme estimated that 10 million people were in need of support, but the government played down the crisis and pledged to end Ethiopia's dependence on food aid within five years.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Ethiopia is not an electoral democracy. The Parliament is made up of a 108-seat upper house, the House of Federation, and a 547-seat lower house, the House of People's Representatives. The lower house is filled through popular elections, while the upper chamber is selected by the state legislatures, with both serving five-year terms. The lower house selects the prime minister, who holds most executive power, and the president, a largely ceremonial figure. The EPRDF remains the most important political institution in Ethiopia, and Parliament rarely asserts its independence. While the 1995 constitution in theory grants the right of secession to ethnically based states, the government acquired powers in 2003 to intervene in states' affairs on issues of public security. More than 79 political parties are legally recognized, though the EPRDF dominates political life.

Corruption is a significant problem in Ethiopia. According to the Heritage Foundation's Index of Economic Freedom, EPRDF officials receive preferential access to credit, land leases, and jobs.

The news media are dominated by state-owned broadcasters and government-

oriented newspapers. One of the few independent papers in the capital, *Addis Neger*, closed in 2009, as staff said they feared prosecution by the authorities. Several new, privately owned papers were published in 2010, but most shied away from political issues and had low circulations. A 2008 media law allows prosecutors to seize material before publication in the name of national security and gives the government broader powers to pursue defamation cases. The election code of conduct adopted in March 2010 prohibited journalists from interviewing voters, candidates, or observers on election day or reporting anything that might incite rebellion or terrorism. The government jammed the Amharic-language services of Voice of America (VOA) from late February until October. Prime Minister Meles Zenawi equated VOA's coverage to the hate speech aired by a notorious Rwandan station during that country's 1994 genocide. In June, a VOA reporter was expelled from Ethiopia for broadcasting claims that government forces had killed more than 70 civilians in the Ogaden region.

Constitutionally mandated religious freedom is generally respected, though religious tensions have risen in recent years. The Ethiopian Orthodox Church is influential, particularly in the north. In the south, there is a large Muslim community, made up mainly of the Somali, Oromo, and Afar ethnic groups.

Academic freedom is restricted. The prime minister has accused universities of being friendly to the opposition, and their activities are closely monitored. There have been reports of students being pressured into joining the EPRDF in order to secure places at universities. The presence of the EPRDF at all levels of society inhibits free speech. Many people are wary of speaking out against the government for fear of being overheard by party officials.

Freedoms of assembly and association are guaranteed by the constitution but limited in practice, as street demonstrations have been banned since 2005. During the 2010 election campaign, police routinely broke up political rallies and meetings organized by the opposition. The 2009 Charities and Societies Proclamation restricts the activities of foreign nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) by prohibiting work on human and political rights. Foreign NGOs are defined as groups receiving more than 10 percent of their funding from abroad, a classification that affects most domestic organizations as well. NGOs have struggled to maintain operations as a result of the law, which also obliged them to reregister with the authorities. The Ethiopian Human Rights Council and the Ethiopian Women Lawyers' Association had their bank accounts frozen in August 2010 for violating the rules on receiving foreign funds. Another prominent group, the Ethiopian Bar Association, had its license suspended for alleged irregularities in April.

Trade union rights are tightly restricted. All unions must be registered, and the government retains the authority to cancel union registration. Two-thirds of union members belong to organizations affiliated with the Confederation of Ethiopian Trade Unions (CETU), which is under government influence. Unions that are independent of the CETU face harassment. There has not been a legal strike since 1993.

The judiciary is officially independent, but its judgments rarely deviate from government policy. Suspects are routinely held without warrants, and cases can face lengthy delays before reaching court. A 2009 counterterrorism law defines terrorist activity very broadly and gives great discretion to the security forces. Conditions in Ethiopia's prisons are harsh, and detainees frequently report abuse.

The government has tended to favor Tigrayan ethnic interests in economic and political matters. Politics within the EPRDF have been dominated by the Tigrayan People's Liberation Front. Repression of the Oromo and ethnic Somalis, and government attempts to co-opt their parties into subsidiaries of the EPRDF, have fueled nationalism in both Oromiya and the Ogaden. Persistent claims that war crimes have been committed by government troops in the Ogaden are difficult to verify because independent media are barred from the region.

Private business opportunities are limited by rigid state control of economic life and the prevalence of state-owned enterprises. All land must be leased from the state.

Women are relatively well represented in Parliament, winning 152 seats in the lower house in the 2010 election. Legislation protects women's rights, but they are routinely violated in practice. Forced child labor is a significant problem, particularly in the agricultural sector.

↓ Fiji

Political Rights: 6

Civil Liberties: 4

Status: Partly Free

Population: 850,000

Capital: Suva

Trend Arrow: Fiji received a downward trend arrow due to the replacement of additional magistrates with appointees who support the legitimacy and actions of the current military regime.

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline For Year Under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
4,3PF	4,3PF	4,3PF	4,3PF	4,3PF	6,4PF	6,4PF	6,4PF	6,4PF	6,4PF

Overview: The interim government under the leadership of Commodore Frank Bainimarama continued to tighten its grip on power in 2010. Critics of the military regime were silenced through legal suits, arrests, and the suspension of pensions, among other measures. A Media Industry Development Authority was created in June to implement repressive media regulations. New military personnel were appointed to replace senior civil servants throughout the year, and a number of magistrates hired by previous governments were dismissed.

Fiji, colonized by Britain in 1874, became an independent member of the Commonwealth in 1970. Intense rivalry between indigenous Fijians and Indo-Fijians is the main source of political and social tension. Indians were first brought to Fiji in the 19th century to work on sugar plantations, but later made up a majority of the population and controlled a large share of the economy. Armed coups by indigenous factions in 1987 and 2000 overthrew governments led by Indo-Fijian parties.

Following the 2000 coup, the military installed Laisenia Qarase, an indigenous Fijian of the United Fiji Party (UFP), to lead an interim government. Qarase was

elected prime minister in 2001 and won a second term in 2006. That year, a rift between Qarase and military chief Frank Bainimarama—an indigenous Fijian—emerged over the fate of the 2000 coup participants. In December 2006, Bainimarama ousted Qarase in another military coup and dissolved Parliament, asserting that the prime minister's removal was essential to addressing rampant official corruption.

Bainimarama became head of the interim government in January 2007. His emphasis quickly shifted from investigating alleged corruption to silencing critics, including filing legal suits against opposition leaders and detaining, arresting, and expelling journalists and news editors. Civil servants faced wage cuts, forced early retirement, and dismissals, while cabinet officials of the interim government received salary increases.

In 2008, a 45-member council—handpicked by Bainimarama—completed the People's Charter for Change, Peace, and Progress, a legal document that the interim government said must complement the constitution to guide government policies. The government also made its passage by Parliament a precondition for new elections. The charter recommended that the major sources of ethnic tensions be addressed, including the replacement of communal electoral rolls with a one-person-one-vote system and the designation of all citizens as Fijians, a term previously reserved only for the indigenous. The charter also officially confirmed the military's role in governing Fiji, paving way for the replacement of civilians with military personnel in numerous high-level positions. Opposition members, the teachers' union, the Methodist Church of Fiji, and residents of outlying Rotuma Island all opposed the charter.

In 2009, the court of appeal ruled that the 2006 dismissal of Qarase and his cabinet, the dissolution of Parliament, and the 2007 appointment of Bainimarama as interim prime minister were illegal. The interim president, Joséfa Iloilo, was ordered to appoint a caretaker prime minister to dissolve Parliament and call elections. The following day, Iloilo suspended the 1997 constitution, dismissed the judges involved in the case, reconfirmed himself as president under a "new legal order," nullified all judicial appointments, named Bainimarama as caretaker prime minister, and imposed Public Emergency Regulations (PER) to suppress public opposition. These regulations gave the interim government authority to stop public protests and censor the media. Permits granted for public assemblies were revoked, and new media laws were adopted to tighten government control over news outlets.

In May, the European Union (EU) terminated millions of dollars in development aid, and Fiji was suspended from the Pacific Islands Forum, a regional political and economic bloc. The country was officially suspended from the Commonwealth in September. To spur the troubled economy, the interim government intensified efforts to attract Chinese investment and in November, proposed allowing a casino to open to broaden tourism. It also threatened retailers with prison if they refused to stock certain items or raise prices above the government-recommended level.

In spite of international criticism and pressure, Bainimarama announced in September 2009 that new elections would not be held until September 2014, pending the passage by 2013 of a new constitution that addressed the recommendations of the People's Charter. In an effort to sideline the existing political class, Bainimarama declared in March 2010 that no politician active since 1987 would be allowed to run in the 2014 elections.

The interim government continued to silence critics and tighten its grip on

power in 2010. In January, 20 Suva city council staffers were suspended on allegations of antigovernment activities. Also that month, a human rights lawyer was ordered to surrender her passport, and the government halted pension payments for former ministers who had criticized the regime. Former prime minister Mahendra Chaudhry, who had been under investigation for alleged tax evasion and money laundering, was arrested in October for purportedly breaching the PER by holding a public meeting. Chaudhry denied the allegations, claiming that he, his driver, and three friends had only met for a drink. The five were arrested and held in police custody for three days. Amnesty International and the U.S. State Department issued statements condemning the arrests and other human rights violations.

The regime issued a decree in April awarding immunity from prosecution to all those involved in the 2000 and 2006 coups who had not been convicted in court hearings. Beneficiaries of this decree included Iloilo, Bainimarama, and all persons in the military, police, and prison service who had acted under the instructions of the coup leaders. Iloilo retired as interim president in July, and Ratu Epeli Nailaikau was appointed to replace him.

Diplomatic relations remained strained with most countries in 2010. Fiji's ties with traditional trading and development partners like Australia, New Zealand, and the EU continued to deteriorate, while Bainimarama sought to expand relations with China, which maintained strong interest in Fiji's energy, fishery, and extractive industries.

**Political Rights
and Civil Liberties:**

Fiji is not an electoral democracy. Under the 1997 constitution, which was suspended in 2009, Parliament consisted of the 32-seat Senate and the 71-seat House of Representatives. The president appointed 14 senators on the advice of the Great Council of Chiefs, 9 on the advice of the prime minister, 8 on the advice of the opposition leader, and 1 on the advice of the council representing Rotuma Island. House members were elected for five-year terms, with 25 seats open to all ethnicities, 23 reserved for indigenous Fijians, 19 for Indo-Fijians, 3 for other ethnic groups (mainly citizens of European and East Asian descent), and 1 for Rotuma voters. The president was appointed to a five-year term by the Great Council of Chiefs in consultation with the prime minister, who was, in turn, appointed by the president. The prime minister was generally the leader of the majority party or coalition in Parliament. Since the suspension of the constitution, the interim government has essentially ruled by decree.

The two main political parties are the UFP, largely supported by indigenous Fijians, and the predominantly Indo-Fijian Labor Party.

Official corruption and abuse remain widespread, and reform agendas by multiple governments have not produced significant results.

While the 1997 constitution provided for freedom of speech and the press, media conditions have deteriorated considerably since 2009, when the PER authorized extensive government censorship. The interim authorities have openly warned against publishing or broadcasting criticism of Prime Minister Frank Bainimarama or his government. While privately owned newspapers and radio and television stations continue to operate, they face official harassment. For example, in 2009, all broadcasting licenses were revoked and two Australian Broadcasting Corporation FM radio transmitters were shut down. The government admitted to pressuring Fiji

TV into dismissing two senior newsroom editors for allegedly biased reporting in April 2010. Also that month, the government created the Media Industry Development Authority to enforce more restrictive media laws that were adopted at the end of 2009. One of these laws requires all media organizations to be 90 percent owned by local entities. The new media authority consequently forced the U.S.-based News Corporation to sell or close the *Fiji Times*. Motibhai, a local business group, purchased the paper in September. Access to mobile telephony and the internet is spreading with increased competition, but cost and infrastructure constraints still limit access outside the capital.

Freedom of religion is generally respected, but the interim government appears to target anyone, including religious leaders, who speak out against the regime. In December 2010, the government lifted a ban on Methodist Church meetings; a conspiracy case against the church had been dropped in November for lack of evidence. Most indigenous Fijians are Christians, and Indo-Fijians are generally Hindus. Places of worship, especially Hindu temples, have suffered attacks.

While academic freedom is generally respected, the education system suffers from a lack of resources, and indigenous Fijians are granted special privileges in education. The interim government has promised that the new constitution will eliminate such favoritism. In November 2010, the government announced that beginning in 2011, students at the National University of Fiji who seek to become teachers must be fluent in both Hindi and Fijian to graduate.

Freedoms of assembly and association have been restricted since the suspension of the 1997 constitution and the imposition of the PER in 2009. The interim government has used the PER to outlaw public protests and ban public demonstrations by the Methodist Church and the teachers' union against the regime's policies. Workers can form and join trade unions, though these rights have reportedly been constrained under Bainimarama.

The 2009 suspension of the constitution and the related dismissals of judges raised serious concerns about the independence of the judiciary. The interim government in 2010 continued to purge the court system of individuals who came to their positions under previous governments, replacing them with its own appointees. These arbitrary firings have exacerbated an already serious backlog of cases. Prisons are highly overcrowded, with poor sanitary and living conditions.

Race-based discrimination is pervasive. Indigenous Fijians receive preferential treatment in education, housing, land acquisition, and other areas. Discrimination, economic hardship, and political turmoil have caused many Indo-Fijians to leave the country in recent decades. The resulting void has been filled in part by Chinese migrants, though their growing economic strength has made them targets of indigenous Fijian resentment and attacks.

Discrimination and violence against women are widespread. Cases of rape, child abuse, incest, and infanticide are reportedly increasing, as is the number of pregnancy-related deaths. Women are not well represented in government or leadership positions, and they do not receive equal pay. Fiji is a source and destination country for the trafficking of women and children. A controversial law banning all forms of prostitution came into effect in February 2010, but critics have argued that it may drive prostitution underground and increase the risk of HIV/AIDS infection. Homosexuality was decriminalized in March 2010.

Finland

Political Rights: 1

Population: 5,400,000

Civil Liberties: 1

Capital: Helsinki

Status: Free

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline For Year Under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
1:1F									

Overview: A seaport strike in March halted the country's economy and led to discussions on limiting the right to strike. Prime Minister Matti Vanhanen resigned in June and was replaced by Mari Kiviniemi, Finland's second female prime minister. Investigations into Vanhanen's involvement in distributing government funds to a nongovernmental organization that had contributed to his campaign were ongoing at year's end. Immigration became a dominant political topic in 2010, ahead of the April 2011 elections.

After centuries of Swedish and then Russian rule, Finland gained independence in 1917. The country has traditionally been neutral, but its army has enjoyed broad popular support since it fended off a Soviet invasion during World War II. Finland joined the European Union (EU) in 1995 and is the only Nordic country to have adopted the euro currency. In the 2000 presidential election, Tarja Halonen of the Social Democratic Party (SDP) was elected as the country's first female president. She defeated six other candidates—including four women—from across the political spectrum.

Halonen won a second term as president in 2006, defeating the candidate fielded by the opposition center-right National Coalition Party. In the 2007 parliamentary elections, the ruling Center Party held on to its plurality by 1 seat, while the National Coalition Party gained 10 seats; the left-leaning parties received record-low levels of support. Acknowledging the shift to the right, Prime Minister Matti Vanhanen formed a four-party coalition consisting of his Center Party, the National Coalition, the Greens, and the Swedish People's Party, leaving the SDP in opposition for the first time since 1995.

In February 2010, the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) began investigating accusations of malfeasance against Vanhanen over his involvement in the distribution of government funds to a nongovernmental organization (NGO) that had supported his 2006 campaign. The prime minister announced his resignation in June, but cited medical and family issues for his departure. In October, the Parliamentary Constitutional Law Committee launched a follow-up investigation into a possible conflict of interest.

On June 22, the Finnish parliament appointed Center Party leader Mari Kiviniemi as Vanhanen's replacement. Kiviniemi, the country's second female prime minister, will hold the post until the April 2011 elections. For the second time in Finnish history, both posts of president and prime minister were held by women.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Finland is an electoral democracy. The prime minister is responsible for running the government. The president, whose role is mainly ceremonial, is directly elected for a six-year term. The president appoints the prime minister and deputy prime minister from the majority party or coalition after elections. The selection must be approved by Parliament. Representatives in the 200-seat unicameral Parliament, or Eduskunta, are elected to four-year terms. The Åland Islands—an autonomous region located off the southwestern coast whose inhabitants speak Swedish—have their own 29-seat parliament as well as a seat in the national legislature. The indigenous Saami of northern Finland also have their own parliament.

Corruption is not a significant problem in Finland. A new law came into effect in September 2010 requiring candidates and parties to report campaign donations of more than 800 euros (\$1,072) in local elections or 1,500 euros (\$2,010) in national elections. Investigations into bribery among several members of Parliament continued throughout the year. Finland was ranked 4 out of 178 countries surveyed in Transparency International's 2010 Corruption Perceptions Index.

Finnish law provides for freedom of speech, which is also respected in practice. Finland has a large variety of newspapers and magazines, grants every citizen the right to publish printed material, and protects the right to reply to public criticism. Newspapers are privately owned but publicly subsidized, and many are controlled by or support a particular political party. In February 2010, human rights and freedom of speech advocates protested Lauri Kivinen's appointment to the post of director-general at the Finnish Broadcasting Company (YLE). Kivinen had previously served as head of corporate affairs at Nokia, during which time the company sold a monitoring center to Iran that enables the Iranian government to locate and arrest political dissidents. In April, a Finnish court upheld libel convictions against two YLE journalists, fining them 10,000 euros (approximately \$ 14,000) for suggesting that a married couple had committed a crime while the suspects remained under preliminary investigation. In March 2010, the Finnish police launched an internet tip-off system in an effort to simplify flagging threats of violence and racist slander.

Finns enjoy freedom of religion. The Evangelical Lutheran Church and the Orthodox Church are both state churches and receive public money from income taxes, but citizens may exempt themselves from contributing to those funds. Under current legislation, religious communities other than the state churches may also receive state funds. According to the U.S. State Department, communities with 200 members or more can receive a statutory subsidy of over \$5 per member. Religious education is part of the curriculum in all secondary public schools, but students may opt out in favor of more general instruction in ethics. In September 2010, Finland's Evangelical Lutheran Church ordained its first female bishop. Academic freedom is respected.

Freedoms of association and assembly are upheld in law and in practice. Workers have the right to organize, bargain collectively, and strike. In March 2010, a transit strike in Helsinki halted transportation for two days, and a harbor strike by dockworkers interrupted the country's imports and exports for over two weeks. The severity of the strikes led Prime Minister Matti Vanhanen to call for restrictions on the right to strike in certain sectors, though no changes to the country's labor code had been implemented by year's end. Approximately 80 percent of workers belong to trade unions.

The constitution provides for an independent judiciary, which consists of the Supreme Court, the supreme administrative court, and the lower courts. The president appoints Supreme Court judges, who in turn appoint the lower-court judges. Finland has been criticized by the European Court of Human Rights for slow trial procedures. The Ministry of the Interior controls police and Frontier Guard forces. Ethnic minorities and asylum seekers report occasional police discrimination.

The criminal code covers ethnic agitation and penalizes anyone who threatens a racial, national, ethnic, or religious group. Since 1991, the indigenous Saami, who make up less than 1 percent of the population, have been heard in the Eduskunta on relevant matters. The constitution guarantees the Saami cultural autonomy and the right to pursue their traditional livelihoods, which include fishing and reindeer herding. Their language and culture are also protected through public financial support. However, representatives of the community have complained that they cannot exercise their rights in practice and that they do not have the right to self-determination with respect to land use. While Roma also make up a very small percentage of the population, they are more significantly disadvantaged and marginalized.

Immigration issues became increasingly important in the lead-up to the 2011 elections. According to a March 2010 poll by Helsingin Sanomat, anti-immigrant sentiment had risen to 60 percent compared to 37 percent in 2007. The newspaper also reported that several immigration researchers had halted their work after receiving racially motivated threats. In February, one minister suggested capping Finland's already low refugee quota, as threats against politicians who support immigration and racial integration have also risen. A Facebook hate group was found to be issuing death threats against Minister of Migration and European Affairs, Astrid Thors, while another website was dedicated to death threats against the president and prime minister for their support of Finland's immigration bills. In June, a group of immigrants established the Immigrant Parliament, an unofficial body that would debate issues of immigration in an attempt to counter the government and public opinion.

Women enjoy equal rights in Finland. In 1906, the country became the first in Europe to grant women the vote and the first in the world to allow women to become electoral candidates. In the current cabinet, 12 out of 20 ministers are women. In addition, women hold approximately 42 percent of the seats in Parliament. Despite a law stipulating equal pay for equal work, women earn only about 80 percent as much as men of the same qualifications. Domestic violence is an ongoing concern in Finland. In March, journalist Jóhanna Korhonen was compensated 80,000 euros (approximately \$ 115,000) for being fired from Northern Media after she failed to disclose that her domestic partner was female.

Finland remains a destination and a transit country for trafficked men, women, and children. Amendments to the Alien Act in 2006 allow trafficked victims to stay in the country and qualify for employment rights.

France

Political Rights: 1

Population: 63,000,000

Civil Liberties: 1

Capital: Paris

Status: Free

Trend Arrow: France received a downward trend arrow due to a continued pattern of political and societal discrimination against ethnic minorities, manifested in policies including a government-sponsored debate about national identity, the passage of a ban on facial coverings in public places, and the systematic deportation of some 8,000 Roma.

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline For Year Under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
1,2F	1,2F	1,1F							

Overview: France was censured by the European Commission in September for the deportation of over 8,000 Roma to Eastern Europe, as well as for the failure to transpose properly European Union law on internal migration into domestic law. The government also came under criticism for banning full facial coverings, including the burqa and niqab, in public spaces.

After the French Revolution of 1789, France experienced both a republic and monarchist regimes until the creation of the Third Republic in 1871. The Fourth Republic was established after World War II, but it eventually fell victim to domestic political turbulence and a series of colonial setbacks. In 1958, Charles de Gaulle, France's wartime leader, created the strong presidential system of the Fifth Republic, which stands today.

Jacques Chirac, a right-leaning Gaullist, was first elected president in 1995. In the first round of the 2002 presidential election, Jean-Marie Le Pen—head of the far-right, xenophobic National Front—unexpectedly received more votes than Lionel Jospin, the prime minister and head of the center-left Socialist Party (PS). With Socialist support, Chirac defeated Le Pen overwhelmingly in the second round.

In early 2003, France joined Russia in blocking UN Security Council authorization for the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq. France's stance severely strained its relations with the United States, but bolstered Chirac's popularity at home. After the invasion, Chirac moved to strengthen the European Union (EU) as a counterweight to U.S. power.

In late 2005, the accidental deaths of two teenagers of North African descent who were fleeing police touched off weeks of violent riots. Most of the rioters were youths descended from immigrants from North and sub-Saharan Africa. Despite their French birth and citizenship, many reported discrimination and harassment by police in anticrime operations. The violence provoked a major discussion about the failure to fully integrate minorities into French society.

The ruling Union for a Popular Movement (UMP) nominated party leader Nico-

las Sarkozy as its candidate for the 2007 presidential elections. However, Sarkozy's law-and-order message, pro-American foreign policy views, opposition to Turkish EU membership, and other positions made him a controversial candidate. In the May election, Sarkozy defeated the PS candidate Segolene Royal in the second round, with 53 percent of the vote, and the UMP renewed its majority in subsequent parliamentary elections. Sarkozy appointed a popular Socialist, Bernard Kouchner, as foreign minister, and a North African-descended Muslim woman, Rachida Dati, as justice minister. Dati, who had always been a controversial figure, stepped down when she was elected to the European Parliament in June 2009.

The government's popularity declined in late 2007, when riots erupted after two teenagers of African descent were killed in a collision with a police car. Unlike in 2005, the riots were better organized, and scores of police were wounded.

By May 2008, Sarkozy's popularity was the lowest of any first-year president in 50 years. His reputation recovered somewhat with a revived foreign and domestic agenda, including economic liberalization, though it declined again with the arrival of the global economic crisis, particularly after he began vocally criticizing laissez-faire capitalism. The economic downturn caused an increase in already high unemployment and incited many protests in 2009, including some militant demonstrations.

The government considered a number of reforms in 2010 to decrease the country's debt, the most significant of which was an increase in the retirement age from 60 to 62 that became law in November. The controversial proposals touched off weeks of protests and strikes throughout the summer and fall, attracting as many as 3.5 million people on some days and leading to occasional violence.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: France is an electoral democracy. The president and members of the lower house of Parliament, the 577-seat National Assembly, are elected to five-year terms; the upper house, the 321-seat Senate, is an indirectly elected body. The prime minister must be able to command a majority in Parliament. Until 1986, the president and prime minister were always of the same party, and the president was the most powerful figure in the country. However, since 1986, there have been periods lasting several years (such as 1997-2002) in which the president and prime minister hailed from rival parties. In such circumstances, the prime minister has the dominant role in domestic affairs, while the president largely guides foreign policy.

Parties organize and compete on a free and fair basis. The center-left PS and the center-right UMP are the largest parties, though the largely unreformed French Communist Party on the left and the anti-immigrant and anti-EU National Front on the right receive significant support. While the National Front saw a decline in popularity following the 2002 elections, the party—now led by Jean-Marie Le Pen's daughter, Marine—has rebounded, as President Nicolas Sarkozy has become increasingly unpopular. France remains a relatively unitary state, with some political and administrative powers devolved to regions, departments, towns, and cities, but with key decisions made in Paris.

Members of the French elite, trained in a small number of prestigious schools, often move between politics and business, increasing opportunities for corruption. In 2010, Labor Minister Eric Woerth was accused of tax evasion and involvement

in accepting illegal donations from L'Oréal heiress Liliane Bettencourt on behalf of Sarkozy's campaign in 2007; no direct connection to Sarkozy has been found though. After formal corruption charges were brought against former president Jacques Chirac in 2009, he remained in negotiations throughout 2010 over paying compensation instead of going to trial. In April, Chirac's interior minister, Charles Pasqua, was handed a one-year suspended prison sentence in connection to arms trafficking to the Angolan government in the 1990s, though the Constitutional Court acquitted him of two other corruption-related charges. France was ranked 25 out of 178 countries surveyed in Transparency International's 2010 Corruption Perceptions Index.

The media operate freely and represent a wide range of political opinion. Though an 1881 law forbids "offending" various personages, including the president and foreign heads of state, the press remains lively and critical. However, journalists covering events involving the National Front or the Corsican separatist movement have been harassed and have come under legal pressure to reveal sources. Journalists have also faced difficulty covering unrest in the volatile suburbs. Reporters covering criminal cases or publishing material from confidential court documents have occasionally come under pressure by the courts to reveal sources. In September 2010, the domestic intelligence agency was allegedly used to uncover a *Le Monde* journalist's sources concerning leaks in the Woerth-Bettencourt case. *Le Monde* filed a complaint in November—which a judge rejected—after a public prosecutor was ordered to obtain a list of calls made by two of its journalists in connection with the Bettencourt case.

While internet access is generally unrestricted, a controversial 2009 law sanctions users who are found illegally downloading music and films. Those found in violation of this law will receive three warnings before their internet access is disconnected, with suspensions lasting up to a year. Repeat offenders could face heavy fines of up to 300,000 euros (approximately \$430,000) or three years in prison. The first warnings were issued in October 2010, with second warnings scheduled to begin in January 2011. According to the French record industry, 70 percent of people who received a first warning ceased to download illegally.

Freedom of religion is protected by the constitution, and strong antidefamation laws prohibit religiously motivated attacks. Denial of the Nazi Holocaust is illegal. France maintains the policy of *laïcité*, whereby religion and government affairs are strictly separated. A 2004 law bans "ostentatious" religious symbols in schools. In September 2010, the Senate nearly unanimously passed a bill banning clothing that covers the face, including the burqa and niqab, in public spaces. The ban, which was upheld by the Constitutional Council in October, was scheduled to go into effect in April 2011. Reportedly less than 400 women—mostly French converts—wear the full veil. Academic freedom is respected by French authorities.

Freedoms of assembly and association are respected. Civic organizations and nongovernmental organizations can operate freely. Trade union organizations are weak, and membership has been declining since 1980. Nevertheless, civil service unions remain relatively strong, and strike movements generally gain wide public support.

France has an independent judiciary, and the rule of law is firmly established. Citizens are generally treated equally. However, the country's antiterrorism cam-

paign has included surveillance of mosques, and terrorism suspects can be detained for up to four days without charge. France has some of the most overcrowded prisons in Europe, and suicides are common. To address such problems, a 2009 penitentiary law included alternatives to prison, such as parole and electronic bracelets.

French law forbids the categorization of people according to ethnic origin, and no official statistics are collected on ethnicity. However, the riots and violence in 2005 and 2007 fueled concerns about Arab and African immigration and the failure of integration policies in France, where minorities are woefully underrepresented in leadership positions in both the private and public sectors. Recent studies have shown that applicants with foreign (and especially Islamic) names remain disadvantaged in the hiring process. The government initiated a "debate" on national identity in the fall of 2009, which quickly evolved into a political discussion of Islam and diversity. The debate led to several new measures in April 2010, such as distributing a "citizens' handbook" to every schoolchild, requiring that all schools fly the French flag, introducing classes for immigrant parents, and increasing language and civic commitment requirements for immigrants.

During 2010, France deported at least 8,000 Roma to Bulgaria and Romania and dismantled over 400 camps on the outskirts of French cities. Although the government claimed that the deportations were part of a larger crackdown on illegal immigration, a leaked memo from the Interior Ministry revealed that officials had been instructed to prioritize the dismantling of Roma camps. The European Commission strongly criticized the deportations and began infringement procedures for failure to properly implement EU law related to internal migration.

Corsica continues to host a sometimes violent separatist movement. Low-level attacks against property and government targets continue to occur, though people are rarely harmed. In 2001, the government devolved some legislative powers to the island and allowed teaching in the Corsican language in public schools.

Gender equality is protected in France. Constitutional reforms in 2008 institutionalized economic and social equality, though women still earn approximately 25 percent less than men with similar qualifications. Some electoral lists require the alternation of candidates by sex. Women hold only 18 percent of seats in the legislature, and have served as key ministers, as well as prime minister. The rights of homosexuals are protected in France, and a type of nonmarriage civil union (civil pact of solidarity, or PACS) is recognized.

Gabon

Political Rights: 6
 Civil Liberties: 5
 Status: Not Free

Population: 1,500,000
 Capital: Libreville

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline For Year Under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
5,4PF	5,4PF	5,4PF	5,4PF	6,4PF	6,4PF	6,4PF	6,4PF	6,5NF	6,5NF

Overview: A new opposition party, the National Union, received accreditation in 2010, but the ruling Gabonese Democratic Party dominated a special election for the National Assembly in June. Restrictions on opposition-affiliated media continued during the year, while prosecutions for corruption appeared to target opposition members. In February, the U.S. Senate released a damaging report detailing instances of money laundering in the United States by the ruling Bongo family.

Gabon gained independence from France in 1960. Omar Bongo became president in 1967 and went on to establish a one-party regime. In 1990, protests prompted by economic hardship led to multiparty legislative elections. Bongo and the ruling Gabonese Democratic Party (PDG) retained power over subsequent years through a series of flawed elections.

In 2006 legislative elections, the PDG and allied parties won 97 of the 120 seats in the National Assembly, the bicameral parliament's lower house. Observers called the elections credible and an improvement over the 2005 presidential contest, which led to postelection violence and accusations of irregularities. Regional and municipal councilors voted in the 2009 Senate election; the PDG captured 75 of 102 seats, reflecting its success in 2008 local elections.

Bongo died in June 2009, after more than 40 years in power, and in keeping with the constitution, Senate president Rose Francine Rogombe became interim head of state. Defense Minister Ali Bongo, son of the late president, was nominated as the PDG candidate for a snap presidential election. Several senior PDG figures, including former interior minister Andre Mba Obame, decided to run as independents. Bongo won the election with almost 42 percent of the vote, while Mba Obame and Pierre Mamboundou placed second and third, respectively, each with approximately 25 percent of the vote. The opposition challenged the official results and claimed that 15 people died in subsequent clashes between police and protesters. Following a recount in September, the Constitutional Court upheld Bongo's victory.

The PDG held an extraordinary congress in March 2010 and elected Bongo as party president. In June, the PDG won three out of five National Assembly seats during a special election, while the opposition party National Union (UN), participating for the first time, gained the remaining two seats. In August, the country celebrated 50 years of independence.

The country's dwindling oil production accounts for some 60 percent of state income. However, new onshore exploration that began in 2010 is expected to increase the country's oil production.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Gabon is not an electoral democracy. The 2009 presidential election was marred by irregularities, including allegations of vote rigging and intimidation of the press. The president is elected for seven-year terms, and a 2003 constitutional amendment removed the two-term limit imposed in 1991. The president has extensive powers, including the authority to appoint judges and dissolve the parliament. The bicameral legislature consists of a 102-seat Senate and a 120-seat National Assembly. Regional and municipal officials elect senators for six-year terms, while National Assembly members are elected by popular vote for five-year terms. In December 2010, the legislature approved several constitutional amendments, including additional eligibility requirements to hold the office of president.

Freedom to form and join political parties is generally respected, but civil servants face harassment and discrimination if they affiliate with opposition groups. The PDG has held power continuously since 1968. Of some 50 other registered parties, 40 are part of the PDG's ruling coalition, the Union for the Gabonese Presidential Majority. In late 2009, eight opposition parties formed a new alliance, the Coalition of Groups and Political Parties for Change (CGPPA), with presidential runner-up Andre Mba Obame as a leading member. In 2010, the CGPPA coalesced into the opposition UN party, which received accreditation in April.

Corruption is widespread. Rampant graft prevents the country's significant natural resource revenue from benefiting most citizens. In 2008, Transparency International sued the late president for graft in a French court, which dismissed the case on procedural grounds. In February 2010, the U.S. Senate released a report highlighting money laundering by the former president and his family in the United States. Combatting corruption is touted as a priority by the government, which has, among other things, audited government agencies to expunge ghost workers from pay rolls. A former official at the Bank of Central African States (BEAC) and a local mayor were convicted separately of corruption in July 2010, but these prosecutions may be politically motivated; the mayor is a member of the opposition, and prosecution of the former BEAC official was likely motivated by suspension of International Monetary Fund support. Gabon was ranked 110 out of 178 countries surveyed in Transparency International's 2010 Corruption Perceptions Index.

Press freedom is guaranteed by law but restricted in practice. The state has the power to criminalize civil libel suits, and because legal cases against journalists are relatively common, many reporters practice self-censorship. State-controlled outlets dominate the broadcast media, but there are some private broadcasters, and foreign news sources are available. The government imposed restrictions on the media ahead of the 2009 presidential election, including curtailing media access to polling stations and denying accreditation to foreign journalists. In late 2009, the government suspended six independent newspapers and one private television channel for several months. Opposition-affiliated media continued to face restrictions in 2010, including limited access to broadcasting towers. The National Communications Council imposed a six-month ban on *Enzombolo*, the newspaper's third suspension in five years, for, "persistently insulting the head of state." Additionally, in June, a journalist for the state-owned *L'Union* received a suspended three-month prison sentence and fine for criminal defamation for his article on the unsolved murder of a government official. In October, the editor of

Le Temps was imprisoned for not paying damages from a 2004 libel case. Access to the internet is not restricted by the government.

Religious freedom is enshrined in the constitution and generally upheld by the authorities. The government does not restrict academic freedom.

The rights of assembly and association are legally guaranteed but not always respected in practice. Following the 2009 presidential election, security forces violently dispersed hundreds of protesters staging a peaceful demonstration. In February 2010, police used tear gas to disperse university students who took to the streets to protest the nonpayment of monthly scholarship funds.

Due to the lack of strong opposition parties, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) are important vehicles for scrutiny of the government. However, it is difficult for these groups to operate freely. In 2008, the interior minister suspended 22 NGOs for a week after they issued a public statement criticizing the government.

Virtually the entire private sector workforce is unionized. Collective bargaining is allowed by industry, not by firm. In 2009, the government imposed a number of conditions on trade unions, including prohibiting public sector employees from holding paid senior union positions. In 2010, oil-sector workers, teachers, health workers, and civil workers went on strike over wages and working conditions.

The judiciary is not independent. Judges may deliver summary verdicts in some cases, and torture is sometimes used to extract confessions. In addition, prosecutions of former government officials appear to target opposition members. In late 2009, a civil society leader won a case against former interior minister and current opposition leader Obama for the imposition of a travel ban in 2008. However, rights to legal counsel and a public criminal trial are generally respected. Prison conditions are poor, and long periods of pretrial detention are common.

Discrimination against immigrants is widespread. Though equal under the law, most of Gabon's several thousand indigenous Pygmies live in extreme poverty in isolated forest communities and are often exploited as cheap labor. In August 2010, a local NGO published a report highlighting the negative effects of mining on indigenous people, including the polluting of water sources.

While there are no legal restrictions on travel, interference by the authorities occurs regularly. In 2009, the government banned opposition leaders from leaving the country pending an investigation into postelection violence.

Gabon has been criticized for the exploitation of thousands of child laborers who arrive from other African countries to work as domestic servants. In 2010, Gabon acceded to two UN anti-trafficking treaties, one on the trafficking of humans and the other on the trafficking of arms, and ratified the Optional Protocol on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict; it is not clear, though, how or whether Gabon will honor its obligations in practice.

Legal protections for women include equal access to education, business, and investment, but these favor educated women in urban areas. Several women hold high-level positions in the government, including the minister of defense and the minister of justice. Women have no property rights in common-law marriages and continue to face societal discrimination, particularly in rural areas. Domestic violence is reportedly widespread. Children and young adults are susceptible to ritual killings, and 11 ritual crimes were confirmed in 2009. Rape is illegal but seldom prosecuted, and abortion is prohibited.

The Gambia

Political Rights: 5

Population: 1,800,000

Civil Liberties: 5

Capital: Banjul

Status: Partly Free

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline For Year Under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
5,5PF	4,4PF	4,4PF	4,4PF	5,4PF	5,4PF	5,4PF	5,4PF	5,5PF	5,5PF

Overview: President Yahya Jammeh sought to maintain personal control over the government in 2010 by publicly threatening those in opposition to his rule. Gambian security forces, who continued to harass and intimidate journalists throughout the year, were implicated in a torture case against a newspaper editor in late 2010. A number of dissenters were sentenced to death in July for their alleged involvement in a coup plot against Jammeh in 2009.

After gaining independence from Britain in 1965, The Gambia functioned for almost 30 years as an electoral democracy under President Dawda Jawara and his People's Progressive Party. A 1981 coup by leftist soldiers was reversed by intervention from Senegal, which borders The Gambia on three sides. The two countries formed the Confederation of Senegambia a year later, but it was dissolved in 1989.

Lieutenant Yahya Jammeh deposed Jawara in a 1994 military coup. The junior officers who led the coup quickly issued draconian decrees curtailing civil and political rights. A new constitution, adopted in a closely controlled 1996 referendum, allowed Jammeh to transform his military dictatorship into a nominally civilian administration.

Jammeh defeated human rights lawyer Ousainou Darboe in the 2001 presidential election, and the ruling Alliance for Patriotic Reorientation and Construction (APRC) won all but three seats in the 2002 National Assembly elections, thanks to a widespread boycott by opposition parties.

The government announced in March 2006 that it had foiled an attempted coup, leading to the arrest of dozens of people, including several prominent journalists and senior intelligence and defense personnel. Ten military officers were sentenced to lengthy prison terms in April 2007. Jammeh won a new five-year term in the September 2006 presidential election, taking 67 percent of the vote, and the APRC swept legislative elections in January 2007.

Jammeh has drawn criticism for erratic statements and behavior. He has claimed that he can personally cure HIV/AIDS using traditional herbs, and in 2008, the president threatened decapitation for any homosexuals who remained in the country. In 2009, he publicly warned against causing instability through human rights activism. Eight individuals, most of whom belonged to the military, were arrested in late 2009 on suspicion of planning a coup to overthrow Jammeh. In July 2010, all of the accused were found guilty of treason and conspiracy, among other charges, and received death sentences.

Throughout 2010, Jammeh sought to tighten his grip on power ahead of the 2011 presidential elections. In a tour of the country in July 2010, the president threatened to withhold government services to voters who fail to support him in the 2011 elections. In a July celebration of the 1994 coup that brought him to power, Jammeh declared that he would rule The Gambia for as long as he wished.

Although The Gambia is a poor, agrarian country, it has experienced modest economic growth thanks to its tourism industry and the government's increased emphasis on economic development. According to the International Monetary Fund, the economic outlook for The Gambia was positive, with a projected 5.7 percent real GDP growth in 2010.

The Gambia has increasingly become a transit point for drug shipments from South and Central America due to pervasive corruption among Gambian officials and growing demand in Europe. In May 2010, 12 foreign nationals were arrested in connection with a drug-trafficking ring, leading to the confiscation in June of over two tons of cocaine valued at U.S. \$ 1 billion in one of the largest drug seizures in West Africa. In October, the National Assembly voted to introduce the death penalty for possession of more than 250 grams of cocaine or heroin.

**Political Rights
and Civil Liberties:**

The Gambia is not an electoral democracy. The 2006 presidential election was marred by serious government repression of the media and the opposition. The ruling party swept the 2007 legislative elections, taking 42 of 46 seats. The president is elected by popular vote for unlimited five-year terms. Of the 53 members of the unicameral National Assembly, 48 are elected by popular vote, and the remainder are appointed by the president; members serve five-year terms. The president and the ruling APRC are in clear control, and opposition involvement is largely symbolic.

Official corruption remains a serious problem, although President Yahya Jammeh's recent focus on economic development policies has led to increased anticorruption efforts, including the establishment of an Anti-Corruption Commission. In March 2010, the government prosecuted and dismissed several high-ranking security officials for corruption and drug-related charges. The Gambia was ranked 91 out of 178 countries surveyed in Transparency International's 2010 Corruption Perceptions Index.

The government does not respect freedom of the press. Laws on sedition give the authorities great discretion in silencing dissent, and independent media outlets and journalists are subject to arrests, harassment, and violence. The 2004 assassination of journalist and press freedom activist Deyda Hydara is still unsolved, and the whereabouts of *Daily Observer* journalist Ebrima Manneh has remained unknown since he was arrested in 2006 for publishing a report critical of Jammeh. The government runs Radio Gambia as well as the sole television channel and the *Gambia Daily* newspaper. There are several private radio stations and newspapers, and foreign broadcasts are available. While the state generally does not restrict internet usage, some websites have been blocked. In June 2010, the government blocked in-country access to the website of U.S.-based newspaper *Gambia Echo*.

Freedom of religion is legally guaranteed and generally upheld by the government. Academic freedom is respected on the surface, but the broader limitations on freedom of speech are thought to encourage self-censorship among scholars.

Private discussion is limited by fears of surveillance, searches, and arrest by the National Intelligence Agency (NIA).

Freedoms of assembly and association are provided by law, though in practice, they are constrained by state intimidation. Gambians, except for civil servants and members of the security forces, have the right to form unions, strike, and bargain for wages. However, the climate of fear generated by the state, and the NIA reportedly dissuades workers from taking action.

The constitution provides for an independent judiciary, but the courts are hampered by corruption and executive influence. The president has the authority to appoint and dismiss judges. The judicial system recognizes customary law and Sharia (Islamic law), primarily with regard to personal status and family matters. Impunity for the country's security forces, particularly the NIA, is a problem. A 1995 decree allows the NIA to search, arrest, or seize any person or property without a warrant in the name of state security. Individuals are often arrested without warrant, including journalists, and some individuals are held incommunicado by the government for their political views or associations.

Prison conditions are poor, with overcrowded, poorly ventilated, and unsanitary cells. Inmates suffer from inadequate nutrition and lack of medical attention. Torture of prisoners, including political prisoners, has been also reported. Musa Saidykhan, newspaper editor for the *Independent*, alleges that he was detained without trial and tortured by presidential security agents in March of 2006. An Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) court ruled in Saidykhan's favor in December 2010, awarding him damages to be paid by the Gambian government.

The Gambia's various ethnic groups coexist in relative harmony, though critics have accused Jammeh of privileging members of the Jola ethnic group in the military and other positions of power. The constitution prohibits discrimination based on religion, language, ethnicity, gender, and other factors.

The government has encouraged female education by waiving primary school fees for girls, but women have fewer opportunities for higher education and employment than men. While the vice president and several cabinet ministers are women, there are just four women in the 53-seat National Assembly. Spousal rape and domestic violence are problematic, as many do not consider these crimes, and social stigma results in underreporting. Sharia provisions regarding family law and inheritance restrict women's rights, and female genital mutilation remains legal and widely practiced. Women and children are routinely subject to trafficking for sexual exploitation and domestic servitude, and The Gambia does not fully comply with the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking. However, the government revised anti-trafficking laws are included the death penalty as punishment in October 2010.

Georgia

Political Rights: 4
Civil Liberties: 3*
Status: Partly Free

Population: 4,600,000
Capital: Tbilisi

Ratings Change: Georgia's civil liberties rating improved from 4 to 3 due to a reduction in the political instability the country confronted in the aftermath of the 2008 Russian invasion, as well as greater media diversity, including the launch of satellite broadcasts by the opposition television station Maestro.

Note: The numerical ratings and status listed above do not reflect conditions in South Ossetia or Abkhazia, which are examined in separate reports.

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline For Year Under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
4,4PF	4,4PF	4,4PF	3,4PF	3,3PF	3,3PF	4,4PF	4,4PF	4,4PF	4,3PF

Overview: In 2010, Georgia began to recover from the conflict and political tumult of previous years, which among other effects had knocked its reform ambitions off course. Local elections held in May 2010 were considered improvements over earlier polls, and the campaign took place in a generally open media environment. Georgia's relations with Russia remained poor in 2010, with Russian troops still occupying a considerable portion of Georgia's internationally recognized territory.

Georgia gained its independence from Russia in 1918, only to become part of the Soviet Union in 1922. In 1990, shortly before the Soviet Union's collapse, an attempt by the region of South Ossetia to declare independence from Georgia and join Russia's North Ossetia republic sparked a war between the separatists and Georgian forces. Although a ceasefire was signed in 1992, South Ossetia's final political status remained unresolved.

Following a national referendum in April 1991, Georgia declared its independence from the Soviet Union. Nationalist leader and former dissident Zviad Gamsakhurdia was elected president in May. The next year, he was overthrown by opposition militias and replaced with former Georgian Communist Party head and Soviet foreign minister Eduard Shevardnadze. Parliamentary elections held in 1992 resulted in more than 30 parties and blocs winning seats, with none securing a majority.

In 1993, Georgia was rocked by the violent secession of the Abkhazia region and an insurrection by Gamsakhurdia loyalists. Shevardnadze legalized the presence of some 19,000 Russian troops in Georgia in return for Russian support against Gamsakhurdia, who reportedly committed suicide after his defeat. In early 1994, Georgia and Abkhazia agreed to a ceasefire, the stationing of Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) troops under Russian command along the Abkhazian border, and the return of refugees under UN supervision.

In 1995, Shevardnadze and his Citizens' Union of Georgia (CUG) party won

presidential and parliamentary polls. The CUG won again in the 1999 parliamentary elections, and observers from the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) concluded that, despite some irregularities, the vote was generally fair. In the 2000 presidential poll, however, Shevardnadze's wide margin of victory led to fraud accusations that were supported by election monitors.

Shevardnadze faced growing opposition from prominent members of the CUG, including Justice Minister Mikheil Saakashvili, who criticized the president's failure to contain widespread corruption. While Shevardnadze resigned as CUG chairman in 2001, Saakashvili left to form his own party, the National Movement.

A flawed parliamentary vote in November 2003 sparked a campaign of street protests known as the Rose Revolution. While official results put a pro-Shevardnadze coalition in the lead with 21 percent, independent domestic monitors concluded that the National Movement had actually won with nearly 27 percent. OSCE observers reported a variety of electoral violations. The postelection demonstrations forced Shevardnadze to resign, and Parliament Speaker Nino Burjanadze, a Saakashvili ally, was named interim president. Meanwhile, the Supreme Court cancelled the results of the parliamentary elections. Saakashvili won a snap presidential election in January 2004, running virtually unopposed and capturing 96 percent of the vote. Fresh parliamentary elections in March gave two-thirds of the seats to the National Movement and allied parties.

Georgia's relations with Russia soured as Saakashvili quickly reestablished Tbilisi's control over the semiautonomous southwestern region of Ajaria and pledged to reintegrate the separatist enclaves of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, which were tacitly supported by the Kremlin. Russia imposed a trade and transport embargo on Georgia in 2006—in response to Georgia's brief detention of several alleged Russian spies—and the two countries exchanged accusations of military provocation surrounding the two breakaway territories over the next two years.

Growing opposition to Saakashvili's dominance of the domestic political scene culminated in large street protests in late 2007. Demonstrations in November drew between 50,000 and 100,000 people, prompting a violent police crackdown and the imposition of a November 7-16 state of emergency that barred opposition media from the airwaves and restricted freedom of assembly. Responding to opposition demands for elections, Saakashvili scheduled an early presidential vote for January 5, 2008, giving his opponents little time to prepare.

Saakashvili won reelection with roughly 53 percent of the vote, but his main challenger alleged fraud, and OSCE observers noted an array of irregularities. The ruling party and its allies captured 119 of the 150 seats in May parliamentary elections, with the opposition again declaring that the balloting was rigged.

Tensions with Russia mounted during the spring and summer of 2008. Armed conflict erupted in South Ossetia in early August, and an ensuing Russian invasion pressed deep into Georgian territory. A French-brokered ceasefire took hold after more than a week of fighting, and by fall, Russian forces had largely withdrawn to the confines of South Ossetia and Abkhazia. Russia recognized the territories' independence in the wake of the conflict, but few other countries followed suit. Russia also established a substantial, long-term troop presence in both territories, despite the fact that the ceasefire deal called for a withdrawal of all forces to their

positions before the fighting. A European Union (EU) report released in September 2009 assigned blame to both Russia and Georgia for the 2008 hostilities.

Georgian opposition factions continued to press their case against Saakashvili in 2009, and the confrontations between the two sides—while still intense—took place in a somewhat more stable and permissive environment than in the previous two years. Opposition leaders demanded the president's resignation in April, and his refusal led to a series of street protests, beatings, and arrests that lasted into the summer. Some opposition members were accused of plans to foment violence during the year, and a tank battalion allegedly launched an abortive mutiny in early May.

Political and security conditions eased considerably in 2010, and the frequent protests that characterized the preceding three-year period were largely absent. Local elections held in May 2010 showed an improvement over the previous cycle, with more accurate voter lists and a more open media environment for parties and candidates.

Georgia's relations with Moscow remained poor. Russian troops continued to occupy South Ossetia and Abkhazia, and in November Georgian authorities announced that they had broken an alleged Russian spy ring. Thirteen people were arrested, including four Russian citizens. In a sign of ongoing public anxiety about Russia, a fictional but realistic television program broadcast in March caused a mass panic by leading viewers to believe that Russian forces had invaded Georgia. The program was aired by the progovernment station Imedi, and effectively depicted the opposition as welcoming the invaders.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Georgia is not an electoral democracy. OSCE monitors have identified electoral problems, such as the abuse of state resources, reports of intimidation aimed at public employees and opposition activists, and apparent voter-list inaccuracies, including during the 2008 presidential and parliamentary elections.

The local elections held on May 31, 2010, represented an improvement over previous cycles. The voting was governed by a new electoral law passed in December 2009, which among other changes allowed the direct election of Tbilisi's mayor for the first time. International observers cited gains in the quality of voter lists and a more open media environment. At the same time, the process of vote tabulation was flawed, and the abuse of administrative resources remained a problem.

According to the constitution, the president appoints the cabinet and serves up to two five-year terms, though current president Mikheil Saakashvili—first elected in 2004—was reelected in 2008 after calling an early vote. The cabinet's membership under Saakashvili has been fairly unstable; in 2009 he named Nikoloz Gilauri to serve as his fifth prime minister. Under a package of constitutional amendments adopted in October 2010, the bulk of executive authority will shift from the president to the prime minister in 2013, and new rules surrounding votes of no confidence will make it difficult for Parliament to remove the prime minister. The opposition claimed that the amendments were designed to allow Saakashvili to remain in power by becoming prime minister after the end of his second presidential term.

Parliament until the 2008 elections consisted of 235 members, with 100 elected by party list, 75 elected in single-member districts, and 10 others representing displaced citizens from Abkhazia. Under the new structure, Parliament has just 150 seats, with half chosen by party list and the other half in single-member districts.

The amended electoral code did not require the constituencies to be of equal size, and observers have noted that the number of voters in each district ranges from 6,000 to 140,000.

Saakashvili's National Movement has been the dominant party since 2004. The fragmented opposition parties have formed a series of shifting alliances in recent years, and the defection of former Parliament Speaker Nino Burjanadze and other Saakashvili allies to the opposition in 2008 set off a new round of reorganization. Irakli Alasania, previously Georgia's ambassador to the United Nations, has emerged as one of several potential leaders of a unified opposition, having formed a new party called Our Georgia-Free Democrats.

Corruption remains a challenge in Georgia. While notable progress has been made in recent years with respect to lower- and mid-level corruption, efforts to combat high-level corruption that began in the mid-2000s have stalled. The government's achievements have included university-level education reforms that curbed bribery in admissions and grading. However, implementation of a 2005 plan aimed at improving the transparency and effectiveness of the civil service, in part by strengthening the role of inspectors general within public agencies, has been lacking. Georgia apparently continues to suffer from corruption at elite levels, and the administration's insularity has fostered opportunities for cronyism and insider deals. Georgia was ranked 68 out of 178 countries surveyed in Transparency International's 2010 Corruption Perceptions Index.

The constitution provides guarantees for press freedom, and the print media offer a range of political views. The state television and radio outlets were converted into public-service broadcasters in 2005, but critics maintain that the stations show a progovernment bias. The private broadcast media feature a degree of pluralism, though each station tends to favor a specific political camp, and progovernment stations are dominant. The opposition-oriented television station Maestro, previously available on cable in only part of the country, began broadcasting via satellite in May 2010. However, the station experienced financial problems late in the year, and on December 31, Kakha Bekauri resigned as Maestro's general director, claiming that Erosi Kitsmarishvili, a leader of the opposition Georgian Party and founder of the company that manages Maestro, was withholding funds to force the station to serve his political interests. Kitsmarishvili denied the allegation. The relative lack of transparency in media ownership is an ongoing challenge. A draft law designed to make ownership information more accessible was prepared in November by a parliamentary committee, but it had not been enacted by year's end.

The authorities do not restrict access to the internet, but high-speed connections are prohibitively expensive for many citizens. Unlike in 2009, when the posting of Web videos that mocked the head of the Georgian Orthodox Church drew a police response, there were no major instances of state interference with online content in 2010.

Freedom of religion is respected for the country's largely Georgian Orthodox Christian population and some traditional minority groups, including Muslims and Jews. However, members of newer groups, including Baptists, Pentecostals, and Jehovah's Witnesses, have faced harassment and intimidation by law enforcement officials and Georgian Orthodox extremists. The government does not restrict academic freedom.

Freedoms of association and assembly were generally respected in 2010, with fewer significant clashes between police and protesters than in previous years.

However, some legal restrictions on freedom of assembly have drawn objections from the Council of Europe and Georgia's human rights ombudsman. Nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) are able to register and operate without arbitrary restrictions. They play an active role in public debate, but their influence has been limited by the general unwillingness of the current administration to engage with civil society on a consistent basis.

The constitution and the Law on Trade Unions allow workers to organize and prohibit antiunion discrimination. The Amalgamated Trade Unions of Georgia, the successor to the Soviet-era union federation, is the principal trade union bloc. It is not affiliated with and receives no funding from the government. While Georgia replaced its Soviet-era labor code with a new framework in 2006, union influence remains marginal in practice.

The judiciary continues to suffer from significant corruption and pressure from the executive branch. The government has taken some measures designed to improve the independence and capacity of the judiciary, such as pay increases for judges and the implementation of jury trials, but more comprehensive reforms have yet to be enacted. The human rights ombudsman has repeatedly accused the police of abusing and torturing detainees. Prison conditions in Georgia remain grim.

The government generally respects the rights of ethnic minorities in areas of the country that are not contested by separatists. Freedom of residence and freedom to travel to and from the country are observed.

Societal violence against women is a problem, and cases of rape and domestic violence are believed to be underreported. A 2006 law on domestic violence allows victims to file immediate protective orders against their abusers and permits police to issue a temporary restrictive order against suspects, but these orders are rarely utilized, and the penalties for violating them are relatively mild. Georgia remains primarily a source country for trafficking in persons, but the government's efforts to combat the problem have earned it a Tier 1 ranking in the U.S. State Department's Trafficking in Persons Report since 2007.

Germany

Political Rights: 1

Population: 81,600,000

Civil Liberties: 1

Capital: Berlin

Status: Free

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline For Year Under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
1,2F	1,2F	1,1F							

Overview: Elections held in May 2010 in North Rhine-Westphalia, Germany's most populous state, were largely seen as a test of the federal government's performance. Two major parties, Chancellor Angela Merkel's Christian Democratic Union (CDU) and the Social Demo-

cratic Party (SPD), performed poorly, while the Greens and the Left Party made significant gains. A minority coalition was eventually formed between the SPD and the Greens. In June, Christian Wulff was elected president after his predecessor, Horst Köhler, abruptly resigned.

Modern Germany emerged in 1871, when the patchwork of German states united under Prussian leadership following the Franco-Prussian war. After Germany's defeat in World War I, the German Empire was replaced in 1919 by the Weimar Republic, which gave way in 1933 to Nazism and led to World War II. Following its defeat in World War II, Germany was divided into two states—the capitalist and democratic Federal Republic in the west and the communist German Democratic Republic in the east—during the ensuing Cold War. The Berlin Wall, which had kept East Berliners from fleeing west, was opened in 1989, and East Germany was absorbed into the Federal Republic the following year. Despite nearly two decades of massive subsidies, the federal states of former East Germany remain considerably poorer than the rest of the country. The economic situation has contributed to greater support for extremist political groups in the east.

Chancellor Helmut Kohl and a coalition of his center-right Christian Democratic Union and Christian Social Union (CDU/CSU) and the socially liberal, market-oriented Free Democratic Party (FDP) ruled Germany for 16 years. In 1998, Germans elected the so-called "red-green coalition," consisting of the Social Democratic Party (SPD) and the Green Party, with the SPD's Gerhard Schröder as chancellor. The red-green coalition won a narrow victory in the 2002 election, despite sluggish economic growth in its first term. In its second term, the Hartz I-IV labor market reforms were enacted, which aimed to create a more flexible market. However, the reforms eroded the support of labor unions, a key component of the SPD's electoral base, and failed to improve the economy quickly enough to please voters.

In 2005, Schröder engineered a no-confidence vote against himself to trigger national elections. Neither the red-green coalition nor the CDU/CSU-FDP opposition was able to garner an outright majority, and both sides were unwilling to cooperate with the newly formed Left Party. After unusually protracted coalition negotiations, the CDU/CSU and the SPD were obliged to form a "grand coalition," and the CDU's Angela Merkel became Germany's first female chancellor.

Tensions between the two parties of the grand coalition began to build during the second half of its term, with each party trying to distinguish itself. Despite a lackluster political year, Merkel was overwhelmingly reelected as party leader at the end of 2008, and the SPD named Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier as its chancellor candidate for the 2009 elections.

The political scene in 2009 was dominated by the federal parliamentary election. The CDU/CSU won 239 seats, with approximately 34 percent of the vote, while the FDP took 93 seats, up from 61 in 2005. The SPD captured only 146 seats—an 11 percent decline over the 2005 results—representing its worst performance in a German federal election and the most significant decline in voter support of any party in federal elections in 60 years. Gains by the Greens were not significant enough to offset the SPD's losses, and once again, no party was willing to form a coalition with the Left Party. The CDU/CSU and FDP formed a majority coalition together without the SPD for the first time since 1998, and Merkel was reelected as chancellor.

In November 2009, the controversial trial of John Demjanjuk—a Ukrainian-born former U.S. citizen and alleged World War II Nazi concentration camp guard—began in Munich. Demjanjuk is suspected of facilitating the murder of thousands of Jews at the Sobibor concentration camp. The ongoing trial has been contentious and continually delayed because Demjanjuk is quite elderly and in poor health. He is the only low-ranking official and the only foreign suspect to have been charged with Holocaust-related crimes. His trial is likely to be the last for Nazi-era war crimes because few people from that time are still alive.

Parliamentary elections for Germany's most populous state, North Rhine-Westphalia (NRW), were held on May 9, 2010. Similar to its federal counterpart, the incumbent government was a CDU-FDP coalition, with the main opposition coming from the SPD. At 59.3 percent, the voter turnout rate was atypically low for an NRW election. While the FDP gained 1 seat for a total of 13, the CDU lost 22 seats and the SPD lost 7, each securing only 67 of the 181 available seats. The Greens and the previously unrepresented Left Party fared better than expected, gaining 11 seats each for a total of 23 and 11, respectively. The resulting hung parliament severely complicated local NRW politics. A variety of coalition options were explored during two months of heated political posturing until the SPD and the Greens formed a minority coalition. Political analysts predict that this outcome could indicate trouble for Merkel's government during the next federal elections.

President Horst Köhler resigned on May 31, after receiving criticism for comments that seemed to imply that military intervention abroad could be justified by economic interests. He defended the remarks as referring specifically to issues of piracy. On June 30, CDU candidate Christian Wulff was elected to replace Köhler.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties:

Germany is an electoral democracy. The constitution provides for a lower house of parliament, the 622-seat Bundestag (Federal Assembly), elected at least every four years through a 50-50 mixture of proportional representation and single-member districts, as well as an upper house, the Bundesrat (Federal Council), which represents the states. The country's head of state is a largely ceremonial president, chosen jointly by the Bundestag and a group of state representatives to serve up to two five-year terms. In Germany's federal system, state governments have considerable authority over matters such as education, policing, taxation, and spending. The chancellor, the head of government, is elected by the Bundestag and usually serves for the duration of a four-year legislative session, which can be cut short only if the Bundestag chooses a replacement in a so-called constructive vote of no confidence.

For historical reasons, political pluralism is somewhat constrained. Under electoral laws intended to restrict the far left and far right, a party must receive either 5 percent of the national vote or win at least three directly elected seats to be represented in parliament. The constitutional court outlawed the Socialist Reich Party (SRP, a successor to the Nazi Party) in 1952 and the Communist Party of Germany (KPD) in 1956 on the grounds that their goals disregard the principles of the constitution. However, the former ruling party of Communist East Germany, renamed the Party of Democratic Socialism (PDS), was a legal and democratic far-left party that participated in state governments after reunification. It merged with former left-wing SPD members to form the new Left Party ahead of the 2005

elections. The two main far-right parties, the National Democratic Party (NPD) and the German People's Union (DVU), are hostile to immigration and the EU, and have been accused of glorifying Adolf Hitler and the Third Reich. In the run-up to the 2009 elections, the NPD—which captured less than 2 percent of the vote—made headlines by sending fake deportation notices to prominent Green and CDU politicians of immigrant or minority ethnic backgrounds.

The government is held accountable for its performance through open debates in the parliament, which are covered widely in the media. Germany is free of pervasive corruption and was ranked 15 out of 178 countries surveyed in Transparency International's 2010 Corruption Perceptions Index.

Freedom of expression is protected in the constitution, and the media are largely free and independent. The Constitutional Court ruled in 2003 that surveillance of journalists' telephone calls could be deemed legal by judges in "serious" cases, which threatens journalists' source confidentiality. Journalists have also been prosecuted for "divulging state secrets." Nevertheless, the press remains lively, investigative, and professional. It remains illegal to advocate Nazism, deny the Holocaust, or glorify the ideology of Hitler.

Freedom of belief is protected under law. However, Germany has taken a strong stance against the Church of Scientology, which it deems an economic organization rather than a religion. The four biggest political parties deny membership to Scientologists, the group has been under surveillance by intelligence agencies, and local labor offices in some cases help employers screen prospective employees (and vice versa) for membership of Scientology groups. However, Hamburg announced plans to close down its Scientology task force in August 2010. Eight states have passed laws prohibiting female Muslim schoolteachers from wearing hijabs (headscarves) on duty. Economic uncertainties in the aftermath of the global recession have worsened xenophobic tendencies toward immigrants in general and Muslims in particular, and there have been sporadic crimes against minorities. The far-right NPD, while failing to make headway at the federal level, does have some regional strongholds in the former East Germany, where it has been represented in two state parliaments since 2004. In October 2010, Chancellor Angela Merkel declared that multiculturalism in Germany had failed, adding fuel to an ongoing debate about immigrant integration in Germany. Academic freedom is generally respected.

Civic groups and nongovernmental organizations operate without hindrance. The right of peaceful assembly is not infringed upon, except in the case of outlawed groups, such as those advocating Nazism or opposing the democratic order. Trade unions, farmers' groups, and business confederations are free to organize.

The judiciary is independent, and the rule of law prevails. The Federal Constitutional Court vets the compatibility of legislation with the basic law. In addition to having its own provisions, Germany is a party to the European Convention on Human Rights. Prison conditions are adequate, though the Council of Europe has criticized the practice of preliminary detention before formal arrest; people so detained may not contact a lawyer or family members.

Women's rights are well protected, with generous maternity policies and antidiscrimination laws. Women hold 6 of the 16 federal cabinet positions and 32.8 percent of the seats in parliament. Limited same-sex partnership rights are respected.

Ghana

Political Rights: 1

Population: 24,000,000

Civil Liberties: 2

Capital: Accra

Status: Free

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline For Year Under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
2,3F	2,3F	2,2F	2,2F	1,2F	1,2F	1,2F	1,2F	1,2F	1,2F

Overview: While Ghana enjoyed relative political stability in 2010, hostilities increased between the ruling party, the National Democratic Congress (NDC), and its main opposition, the New Patriotic Party (NPP), particularly as President John Atta Mills continued corruption investigations of former NPP politicians. Tensions within the NDC, generated in large part by former president John Rawlings's criticisms of Atta Mills, also grew.

Ghana achieved independence from British rule in 1957. After the 1966 ouster of its independence leader, Kwame Nkrumah, the country was rocked for 15 years by a series of military coups and experienced successive military and civilian governments.

In 1979, air force officer Jerry Rawlings led a coup against the ruling military junta. His administration proved to be brutally repressive, banning political parties and quelling all dissent. While he agreed under economic and political pressure to hold multiparty elections in the late 1980s, the elections were considered neither free nor fair, and Rawlings and his National Democratic Congress (NDC) party remained in power. The 1996 elections were generally respected at home and abroad, but Rawlings and the NDC again retained their positions.

In 2000, free and fair presidential and parliamentary polls led to a peaceful transfer of power from Rawlings—who was forced to step down due to term limits—and the NDC to opposition leader John Kufuor and his New Patriotic Party (NPP). Kufuor secured 57 percent of the vote, while NDC candidate John Atta Mills captured 43 percent. Kufuor was reelected in 2004, defeating Atta Mills for a second time as the NDC alleged irregularities. The NPP won 128 seats in concurrent legislative elections, while the NDC took 94. Although there were reports of sporadic violence and a few incidents of intimidation and other irregularities, domestic and international observers judged the elections to be generally free and fair.

In advance of the December 2008 presidential election, the NPP faced internal divisions as over 20 candidates vied for the party's nomination. Ultimately, former foreign minister Nana Akufo-Addo was chosen over Kufuor's preferred candidate, Alan Kyerematen. Akufo-Addo and many of his supporters belonged to the Akyem tribes while Kufuor and Kyerematen were Ashanti, illustrating how ethnic rifts often complicated political ones. Meanwhile, the NDC chose Atta Mills as its candidate for the third time.

While problems with voter registration and fighting between NDC and NPP

supporters were reported before and during the vote, the election was ultimately viewed as a success by domestic and international observers. The January 2009 inauguration of Atta Mills, who won the runoff with just 50.23 percent of the vote, marked the second peaceful, democratic transfer of power in Ghana. The NDC also won concurrent parliamentary elections, taking 114 seats, while the NPP secured 107.

During his first two years in office, Atta Mills has faced the difficult task of attempting to fulfill at least some of his campaign pledges while also steering Ghana through the global economic crisis. Rawlings has increasingly and outspokenly criticized Atta Mills over a number of public policy decisions. Some NDC supporters, backed by Rawlings, have complained about the new president's inability to make good on his promises or, "support those who supported him"—a reference to the patronage networks underlying Ghanaian politics. In August 2010, the NPP selected Akufo-Addo as its presidential candidate for the 2012 presidential election, setting the stage for another race between Akufo-Addo and Atta Mills, assuming the latter runs again. Meanwhile, tensions between Atta Mills and Rawlings continued to grow, and the Real Democratic Patriots Party (RDPP), a splinter group of the NDC claiming loyalty to Rawlings, formed in September.

While Ghana has been working to move away from donor dependency, Atta Mills's government has been forced to make exceptions to counter the economic crisis. In 2009, it was awarded \$1.2 billion in interest-free loans over three years from the World Bank and \$602.6 million from the International Monetary Fund to help tackle "macroeconomic instability." During Atta Mills's visit to Beijing in October 2010, Ghana and China signed agreements totaling \$15 billion in support of infrastructure projects in the country. Ghana started producing oil for the first time in December, and experts predicted that oil exports would bring serious economic growth for the country in 2011.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Ghana is an electoral democracy. The December 2008 presidential and parliamentary elections were considered fair and competitive. The president and vice president are directly elected on the same ticket for up to two four-year terms. Members of the unicameral, 230-seat Parliament are also elected for four-year terms. The political system is dominated by two rival parties: the NPP and the NDC.

One of Atta Mills's campaign promises was to fight corruption and improve governance. The NDC administration has used the Bureau of National Investigation to examine corruption allegations against a number of former NPP officials, including John Kufuor's health, information, and foreign ministers. While many Ghanaians have supported these anticorruption efforts, NPP officials allege that the cases are politicized. In the summer of 2010, NPP leaders accused the government of corruption when documents regarding a \$10 billion housing deal with the company STX Korea were not made available for review by Parliament. Nonetheless, the government signed an agreement to commence construction in December. Although approved by the cabinet in 2009, the government has yet to pass the Right to Information Bill, which could pave the way for greater government transparency. Ghana was ranked 62 out of 178 countries surveyed in Transparency International's 2010 Corruption Perceptions Index.

Freedom of expression is constitutionally guaranteed and generally respected. Numerous private radio stations operate, and many independent newspapers and magazines are published in Accra. However, the government occasionally restricts press freedom in practice through harassment, arrests, and criminal charges. In February 2010, NPP activist Nana Darkwa Baafi was detained on charges of, "publishing false news with intent to cause fear or harm to the public or to disturb the public peace." His arrest prompted the NPP to boycott parliamentary proceedings for two days. Baafi had alleged during a radio interview that former president John Rawlings had set fire to his own government-sponsored residence in an effort to acquire new housing. During Baafi's hearing in March, NPP and NDC supporters clashed at the Accra courthouse, leaving two injured. The case was ultimately dropped in October. In July, criminal charges were brought against the acting news editor of Joy FM, Ato Kwamena Dadzie, for his coverage of the scandal surrounding the STX Korea housing deal. In January, the government began the Phone Chip Registration Project, which requires that all prepaid mobile phone users register with the government before June 30, 2011, or face disconnection. The measure is aimed at curbing crime by mobile phone users, but some civil society organizations argue that such an initiative could infringe upon privacy rights, lead to abuse of users' personal data, and encourage improper monitoring of telephone conversations. Internet access is unrestricted.

Religious freedom is protected by law and largely respected in practice. While relations between Ghana's Christian majority and Muslim minority are generally peaceful, Muslims often report feeling politically and socially excluded, and there are few Muslims at the top levels of government. Both domestic and international human rights observers have reported a high incidence of exorcism-related physical abuse at Pentecostal prayer camps. Academic freedom is legally guaranteed and upheld in practice.

The rights to peaceful assembly and association are constitutionally guaranteed, and permits are not required for meetings or demonstrations. Multiple demonstrations took place in 2010 over unpaid wages, including those led by university teachers, nurses and midwives, and prison officers. Additionally, citizens protested against increases in electricity and water tariffs in June. Civil society organizations have noted that NDC "foot soldiers"—activists that assist NDC campaigns by distributing literature and generating crowds, among other activities—have become increasingly disgruntled with the government and have reportedly harassed and attacked state officials, with few consequences. Nongovernmental organizations were generally able to operate freely.

Under the constitution and 2003 labor laws, which conform to International Labour Organization (ILO) conventions, workers have the right to form and join trade unions. However, the government forbids industrial action in a number of essential industries, including fuel distribution, public transportation, and the prison system.

Ghanaian courts have acted with increased autonomy under the 1992 constitution, but corruption remains a problem. Scarce resources compromise the judicial process, and poorly paid judges are tempted by bribes. The Accra Fast Track High Court is specifically tasked with hearing corruption cases involving former government officials, but many observers raised doubts about its impartiality and respect

for due process under the Kufuor administration. In August 2010, the chairman of the NDC urged the chief justice to "purge" the judiciary of corruption or face government intervention, leading critics to condemn the NDC for attempting to infringe upon the judiciary's independence.

Prisons suffer from overcrowding and often life-threatening conditions. In an attempt to reduce overcrowding, a government initiative introduced in 2008 has led to the release of some prisoners who had been on prolonged remand without trial. A 2009 presidential pardon of 1,021 prisoners eased some of the strain on prison infrastructure.

Communal and ethnic violence occasionally flares in Ghana. In March 2010, tensions rose in the Brong Ahafo region between the Tuobodom and Techiman groups, resulting in three deaths. Some argued that the regional police failed to prevent the escalation of violence, though a government investigation into the incident was ongoing at year's end. Other isolated cases of communal and ethnic violence occurred throughout the year, including several ritual killings and murders of suspected thieves.

Despite equal rights under the law, women suffer societal discrimination, especially in rural areas, where opportunities for education and wage employment are limited. Notwithstanding legal protections, few victims report cases of domestic violence because of persistent social stigmas. However, women's enrollment in universities is increasing, and there are a number of high-ranking women in the current government. In 2009, for the first time, there was a female Speaker of Parliament, police inspector general, and attorney general.

The country serves as a source, transit point, and destination for the trafficking of women and children for the purposes of labor and sexual exploitation. In 2009, following undercover work conducted by a journalist working for the *New Crusading Guide* newspaper, three Chinese nationals were sentenced to a combined 36 years of hard labor for trafficking fellow Chinese for prostitution in Ghana.

Greece

Political Rights: 1

Population: 11,300,000

Civil Liberties: 2

Capital: Athens

Status: Free

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline For Year Under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
1,3F	1,2F								

Overview: In an effort to address a debt crisis that began in 2009, the government announced a second round of austerity measures in 2010, inciting a series of strikes and protests that engulfed the country at several points during the year. In July, a radio journalist and blogger was shot dead, marking the first murder of a journalist in Greece in 20 years.

The core of modern Greece gained independence from the Ottoman Empire in 1830. The ensuing century brought additional territorial gains at the Ottomans' expense, as well as domestic political struggles between royalists and republicans. Communist and royalist partisans mounted a strong resistance to Nazi German occupation during World War II, but national solidarity broke down in the early postwar period, when royalists won national elections and eventually defeated the Communists in a civil war. In 1967, a group of army officers staged a military coup, suspending elections and arresting hundreds of political activists. A 1974 referendum rejected the restoration of the monarchy, and a new constitution in 1975 declared Greece a parliamentary republic.

The Panhellenic Socialist Movement (PASOK) governed the country from 1981 to 2004, except for a brief period from 1990 to 1993, when the conservative New Democracy party held power. New Democracy returned to power in the 2004 elections and won another term in 2007.

Prime Minister Costas Karamanlis called national elections halfway through his four-year mandate in October 2009, partly due to a number of corruption scandals that had rocked his coalition. PASOK led the voting with 160 seats, followed by New Democracy with just 91 seats. The Communist Party of Greece (KKE) took 21 seats, the Popular Orthodox Rally (LAOS)—a nationalist and xenophobic party—won 15, and the Coalition of the Radical Left (SYRIZA) took 13. George Papan-dreou of PASOK was elected as the new prime minister.

At the end of 2009, Greece faced a serious fiscal and economic crisis, with public debt amounting to over \$400 billion. In January 2010, the government presented a plan to cut the budget deficit from 12.7 percent of gross domestic product (GDP) in 2009 to 2.8 percent in 2012. In the subsequent months, it initiated a number of other austerity measures, including a freeze on public sector pay, an increase in the retirement age, and a hike of the value-added tax (VAT) from 19 to 23 percent. These steps were met with a series of national strikes and protests. Those who viewed the austerity measures as an attack on the working class staged protests in May, leading to the deaths of three people in a firebomb attack on a bank. Journalists reported being subjected to excessive force by police while covering the protests.

Also in May, a 110 billion euro (\$145 billion) rescue plan, including financing from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and 15 eurozone countries, was issued to help prevent a Greek debt default. Greece's budget deficit stood at about 9.4 percent of GDP by the end of 2010, still about three times the official eurozone limit.

Despite the fallout from its fiscal policies, PASOK won 13 gubernatorial elections, including the race in the capital, during regional balloting in November. Protests resumed in December after the government passed another austerity budget for the following year.

Greece continued to struggle with an influx of illegal immigrants during 2010. In October, the rapid intervention border team of the EU was deployed for the first time since its creation in 2007 to guard Greece's frontiers. The European Commission dispatched the unit after deciding that the flow of immigrants—many of whom claimed to be from Afghanistan—from Turkey into Greece had reached alarming numbers. According to the Greek government, over 100,000 illegal border crossings took place during the year.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Greece is an electoral democracy. All 300 members of the unicameral Parliament are elected by proportional representation for four-year terms. The largely ceremonial president is elected by a supermajority of Parliament for a five-year term. The prime minister is chosen by the president and is usually the leader of the majority party in Parliament.

The country has generally fair electoral laws, equal campaigning opportunities, and a system of compulsory voting that is weakly enforced. Some representatives of the Romany community complain that certain municipalities have failed to register Roma who did not fulfill basic residency requirements. A law passed in early 2010 allows legal immigrants to vote in municipal elections. A small percentage took advantage of this right during the elections in November.

Corruption remains a problem, particularly within the police forces. A parliamentary panel ruled in October 2010 that five former New Democracy ministers should stand trial on charges of fraud and breach of duty related to the Vatopedi land-swap scandal, which involved exchanging state-owned land for property of much poorer quality owned by the Vatopedi monastery. Greece was ranked 78 out of 178 countries surveyed in Transparency International's 2010 Corruption Perceptions Index, the worst ranking of any country in Western Europe.

The constitution includes provisions for freedom of speech and the press, and citizens have access to a broad array of privately owned print and broadcast outlets. There are, however, some limits on speech that incites fear, violence, and public disharmony, as well as on publications that offend religious beliefs, are obscene, or advocate the violent overthrow of the political system. Requirements under a 2007 media law place disproportionate burdens on smaller, minority-owned radio stations, such as the use of Greek as the main transmission language, maintaining a certain amount of money in reserve, and hiring a specific number of full-time staff. In the first murder of a journalist in 20 years, radio journalist and blogger Sokratis Giolias was shot dead by several men dressed in security uniforms outside of his Athens apartment in July 2010. The killing was believed to be linked to a left-wing militant group, though the motive remained unclear, and no one had been arrested for the crime by year's end. Journalists were subjected to physical violence and, in some cases, forced to delete images taken while covering the austerity protests during the year. Internet access is generally not restricted.

Freedom of religion is guaranteed by the constitution, though the Orthodox Church receives government subsidies and is considered the "prevailing" denomination of the country. Members of some minority religions face social discrimination and legal barriers, such as permit requirements to open houses of worship and restrictions on inheriting property. Proselytizing is prohibited, and consequently, Mormons and Jehovah's Witnesses are routinely arrested and have reported abuse by police officers. Anti-Semitism also remains a problem. Athens is still awaiting the construction of the city's first licensed mosque, and in November 2010, the far-right Chrysi Avgi party threatened to block the project. Academic freedom is not restricted.

Freedoms of assembly and association are guaranteed by the constitution and generally protected by the government, though there are some limits on groups representing ethnic minorities. Nongovernmental organizations generally operate

without interference from the authorities, and some domestic human rights groups receive government funding and assistance. Workers have the right to join and form unions.

The judiciary is independent, and the constitution provides for public trials. Human rights groups have raised concerns about the ill-treatment of asylum seekers by law enforcement officials, and prisons suffer from overcrowding.

Acts of violence by left- and right-wing extremist groups remain a problem. In November 2010, a number of letter bombs were sent to foreign embassies in Athens, among other targets, causing the government to halt temporarily the receipt of foreign mail. Police arrested two men associated with a local terrorist organization, the Conspiracy of the Cells of Fire, in connection with the letter bombs.

Despite government efforts to combat it, racial intolerance is pervasive in society and is often expressed by public figures. A rally held in January 2010 in support of a draft law that would grant Greek citizenship to second-generation immigrants was met with violence by far-right groups. The government does not officially recognize the existence of any non-Muslim ethnic minority groups, particularly Slavophones. Macedonian is not recognized as a language, and using the terms *Turkos* or *Tourkikos* ("Turk" and "Turkish," respectively) in the title of an association is illegal and may lead to the dissolution of the group. The Romany community continues to face considerable discrimination and a general denial of justice. Following a visit in February 2010, however, the Council of Europe's commissioner for human rights reported that Greece was moving in a positive direction with respect to its treatment of the Romany population.

Immigrants are disproportionately affected by institutional problems in the judicial system. Bureaucratic delays force many into a semilegal status whereby they are not able to renew their documents, putting them in jeopardy of deportation. A July 2010 Amnesty International report noted that asylum seekers are often treated as criminals and face inhuman conditions in detention centers. The Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) made similar complaints in its 2010 annual report, citing squalid and overcrowded conditions in detention facilities.

Greece lacks specific legislation to address domestic violence, and women continue to face discrimination in the workplace. Women currently hold only 17 percent of the seats in Parliament. While trafficking in women and children for prostitution remains a problem, the U.S. State Department's 2010 Trafficking in Persons Report noted that the country has made efforts to comply with the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking.

Grenada

Political Rights: 1
Civil Liberties: 2
Status: Free

Population: 110,000
Capital: St. George's

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline For Year Under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
1,2F									

Overview: In 2010, Prime Minister Tillman Thomas of the National Democratic Congress continued to grapple with the effects of the global economic crisis and faced difficult choices regarding foreign investment. In August, a state appellate court in the United States cleared former deputy prime minister Gregory Bowen of any wrongdoing in the cancellation of the drilling and oil exploration rights of an American investor in Grenada. Additionally, a controversial maritime border treaty with Trinidad was concluded in April, which the Thomas government hopes will boost oil and gas exploration in Grenadian waters.

Grenada gained independence from Britain in 1974. Maurice Bishop's Marxist New Jewel Movement seized power in 1979, creating a People's Revolutionary Government (PRG). In 1983, Bishop was murdered by New Jewel hard-liners Bernard Coard and Hudson Austin, who took control of the country. However, a joint U.S.-Caribbean military intervention quickly removed the PRG and set the country on a path toward new elections. In 1986, Coard and 18 others were sentenced to death; subsequently, 2 of the 19 were pardoned, and the rest—who became known as the Grenada 17—had their sentences commuted to life imprisonment. In 2006, an additional 4 of the 17 were released. In February 2007, the London-based Privy Council ruled that the same findings that had invalidated the death sentences also rendered the life sentences unconstitutional. The 13 remaining inmates received reduced sentences in June 2007, and 3 were immediately freed. The last prisoners were released in September 2009.

Prime Minister Keith Mitchell of the New National Party (NNP) ruled Grenada from 1995 to 2008, when his party lost parliamentary elections to the opposition National Democratic Congress (NDC). The NDC captured 11 seats in the 15-member House of Representatives, leaving the NNP with just 4. Tillman Thomas, the NDC leader, was sworn in as prime minister in July 2008.

Grenada enjoys greater economic stability than some neighboring countries, and a report released by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in September 2010 found that the country had made considerable progress in realizing its economic program. Despite certain levels of recovery, Grenada's economy remained in recession in 2010, as the country continued to struggle with the effects of the global financial crisis. In the summer, the government refused to provide a Swedish development company with public financing for a massive tourism project, which would have created 4,000 new jobs. The government's denial of funding led to the opposition NPP to accuse the Thomas administration of incompetence.

Grenada concluded a maritime demarcation treaty with Trinidad in April, which may facilitate private investment in oil exploration. However, Grenada's link with foreign oil exploration investors remains a contentious issue. In August, a state appellate court in the United States cleared former deputy prime minister Gregory Bowen of any wrongdoing in the 2005 cancellation of American investor Jack Grynberg's oil exploration contract. Bowen's legal costs were assumed by Global Petroleum Group, a Russian company that was granted oil exploration rights in 2005 after the termination of Grynberg's contract.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Grenada is an electoral democracy. The 2008 parliamentary elections were considered generally free and fair, although there were allegations of voter-list manipulation. The bicameral Parliament consists of the directly elected, 15-seat House of Representatives, whose members serve five-year terms, and the 13-seat Senate, to which the prime minister appoints 10 members and the opposition leader names 3. The prime minister is typically the leader of the majority party in the House of Representatives and is appointed by the governor-general, who represents the British monarch as head of state. Grenada's main political parties are the NDC, the NNP, the Grenada United Labor Party, and the People's Labor Movement.

Corruption remains a serious political issue in Grenada, and the country compares unfavorably with several of its neighbors. In August 2010, the NDC announced plans to request a special prosecutor to investigate multiple allegations of corruption in the Keith Mitchell administration, including accusations of corruption in relation to the decision to switch Grenada's diplomatic relations from Taiwan to China.

The right to free expression is generally respected. The media, including three weekly newspapers and several other publications, are independent and freely criticize the government. A private corporation, with a minority stake owned by the government, operates the principal radio and television stations. There are also nine privately owned radio stations, one privately owned television station, and a privately owned cable company. Access to the internet is unrestricted.

Citizens of Grenada generally enjoy the free exercise of religious beliefs, and there are no official restrictions on academic freedom.

Constitutional guarantees regarding freedoms of assembly and association are respected. Grenada has a robust civil society that participates actively in domestic and international discussions, although limited resources hamper its effectiveness. Workers have the right to organize and bargain collectively. Labor unions represent an estimated 52 percent of the workforce, according to the Labor Ministry. All unions belong to the government-subsidized Grenada Trades Union Council (GTUC). A 1993 law gives the government the right to establish tribunals empowered to make "binding and final" rulings when a labor dispute is considered to be of vital interest to the state; the GTUC has expressed concerns that the law is an infringement on the right to strike. Employers are not legally bound to recognize a union if less than half of its workers are unionized.

The independence and authority of Grenada's judiciary is generally respected by the Royal Grenada Police Force. Grenada is a member of the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States court system and a charter member of the Trinidad-based

270 Freedom in the World—2011

Caribbean Court of Justice, but the country still relies on the Privy Council in London as its final court of appeal. Detainees and defendants are guaranteed a range of legal rights, which the government respects in practice. However, a lack of judges and facilities has led to a backlog of six months to one year for cases involving serious offenses. The highly publicized Grenada 17 case was repeatedly criticized for perceived political manipulation by the government, and Amnesty International classified the group as political prisoners. Grenada's prison conditions, though poor, meet minimum international standards, and the government allows visits by human rights monitors. Flogging is still legal but employed rarely, primarily as a punishment for sex crimes and theft.

Grenada has few significant minorities, although its gay population remains a target of discrimination.

Women are represented in the government, including both houses of Parliament and the cabinet. Women generally earn less than men for equal work. Domestic violence against women is common, and most instances of abuse go unreported or are settled out of court.

Guatemala

Political Rights: 4

Population: 14,400,000

Civil Liberties: 4

Capital: Guatemala City

Status: Partly Free

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline For Year Under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
3,4PF	4,4PF	4,4PF	4,4PF	4,4PF	3,4PF	3,4PF	3,4PF	4,4PF	4,4PF

Overview: Carlos Castresana, head of the UN-backed International Commission against Impunity in Guatemala (CICIG), resigned in June 2010, citing a lack of cooperation from the Guatemalan government and accusing newly appointed attorney general Conrado Reyes of having ties to organized crime. Reyes was subsequently replaced, but tensions between the CICIG and Guatemalan authorities continued, particularly after the government failed to seek the prompt extradition of former interior minister Carlos Vielmann from Spain, where he had been arrested for alleged abuses dating to 2006. Several high-level officials faced corruption charges during the year, including the chief of the national police, the interior minister, and former president Alfonso Portillo. Guatemala continued to face challenges related to food security, violent crime, and threats to civil society activists.

The Republic of Guatemala, which was established in 1839, has endured a history of dictatorship, foreign intervention, military coups, and guerrilla insurgencies. Civilian rule followed the 1985 elections, and a 36-year civil war, which claimed the lives of more than 200,000 people, ended with a 1996 peace agreement. The Guatemalan National Revolutionary Unity (URNG) guerrilla movement became a

legal political group, and a truth commission began receiving complaints of rights violations committed during the conflict. However, voters in 1999 rejected a package of constitutional amendments that had been prepared in accordance with the peace plan. The general consensus was that the government had failed to implement substantive reforms, including ending military impunity, fully recognizing the rights of the Maya Indians, and reforming taxation to pay for health, education, and housing programs for the poor.

In 2003, the Constitutional Court ruled that retired general Efraín Ríos Montt—who had employed brutal tactics against the URNG as ruler of Guatemala in 1982 and 1983—could run for the presidency, and he was later chosen as the candidate of the Guatemalan Republican Front (FRG) party. However, he placed third in the first round, and Óscar Berger of the Grand National Alliance (GAN) went on to defeat Álvaro Colom of the National Unity for Hope (UNE) in the runoff vote.

The 2007 general elections were the bloodiest in Guatemala's recent history, with more than 50 candidates, activists, and their relatives slain during the campaign period. This violence, some of which was not overtly political, was fueled by the drug trade, gang activity, and armed groups, including rogue soldiers. The September vote was nevertheless regarded by international observers as largely free and fair. The UNE party captured 51 seats in Congress, followed by GANA with 37 seats, and former general Otto Pérez Molina's Patriot Party with 29 seats. The FRG won just 14 seats, though the seat secured by Ríos Montt gave him immunity from prosecution; a Spanish court in 2006 had issued arrest warrants for eight former military leaders, including Ríos Montt, for crimes against humanity. In the presidential contest, Colom defeated Molina in a runoff vote in November, capturing 53 percent of the ballots amid a turnout of 45 percent.

After taking office, Colom made efforts to curb official corruption and impunity, including the dismissal of several senior officials in response to scandals, corruption charges, or policy ineffectiveness. In 2009, the mandate of the UN-backed International Commission against Impunity in Guatemala (CICIG)—tasked with investigating corruption, violence, and organized crime within Guatemalan public institutions, political parties, and civil society—was extended through September 2011. In January 2010, a CICIG investigation led by Commissioner Carlos Castresana found that Guatemalan lawyer Rodrigo Rosenberg had arranged his own death in 2009 in an effort to incriminate Colom's administration. Eight people were sentenced in July to between 38 and 48 years in prison for their involvement in the crime.

In May 2010, Attorney General Conrado Reyes—who had been appointed by Colom that same month—began removing prosecutors and investigators working with the CICIG, obstructing its ability to carry out investigations. In June, Castresana resigned in protest, citing insufficient support from Guatemalan officials and alleging that Reyes had connections to organized crime. While Reyes denied the accusations, the Constitutional Court removed him from office in June, due in part to the public outcry that resulted from Castresana's resignation. The United Nations selected former Costa Rican attorney general Francisco Dall'Anese as the CICIG's new commissioner. In August, President Colom asked the United Nations to extend the CICIG's mandate for four more years and expand its scope to include the investigation of war crimes committed during Guatemala's civil war.

However, the commission criticized the government again in October, after Spanish authorities arrested former interior minister Carlos Vielmann in connection with the deaths of seven inmates in a 2006 prison uprising. Guatemalan authorities failed to file a request for his extradition promptly, leading a Spanish judge to release him in November. He was rearrested the following month, and the case remained before the Spanish courts at year's end.

Also in 2010, Guatemala continued to battle the threat of famine, particularly in rural areas. Severe malnourishment claimed the lives of at least 6,575 people during 2010 due to rising food prices, prolonged drought, and a decline in migrant remittances linked to the global economic downturn. In May 2010, Tropical Storm Agatha and the eruption of the Pacaya volcano further threatened food security in the country. Roughly 80 percent of the population lives below the poverty line and does not benefit from social security. Guatemala also performs poorly on inequality indicators, with some 63 percent of gross domestic product concentrated in the hands of 20 percent of the population. The country is a party to the Dominican Republic-Central American Free Trade Agreement (DR-CAFTA) with the United States, and it joined Venezuela's Petrocaribe program in 2008 to receive preferential rates on oil imports.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Guatemala is an electoral democracy. Despite intimidation and violence during the campaign period, the 2007 presidential and legislative elections were regarded by international observers as generally free and fair. The constitution stipulates a four-year presidential term and prohibits reelection. The unicameral Congress of the Republic, consisting of 158 members, is elected for four years. Elections take place within a highly fragmented and fluid multiparty system. Two notable traditional parties are the FRG and the National Advancement Party (PAN). Other parties include the URNG, formerly a guerrilla movement, and the UNE, led by current president Álvaro Colom. The GANA coalition, which had supported former president Óscar Berger, split into two factions in 2008.

Efforts to combat corruption, such as the introduction of an electronic procurement system for government entities, have made some progress, but serious problems remain. Unregulated campaign financing enables graft and criminal influence on politics. Among other high-profile corruption cases in 2010, former president Alfonso Portillo was captured by Guatemalan police in January after being indicted by a federal court in New York. Portillo allegedly embezzled \$70 million in Guatemalan state funds while in office, laundering the money through Guatemalan, European, and U.S. banks. A decision on his extradition was pending at year's end. In February, Interior Minister Raúl Velasquez was removed from office following accusations that he had laundered more than \$2 million in payments to the energy company Maskana. Guatemala was ranked 91 out of 178 countries surveyed in Transparency International's 2010 Corruption Perceptions Index.

The 2009 Law for Free Access to Public Information grants citizens access to information on budgets and salaries. In line with this legislation, the government has taken steps toward developing an institutional framework for transparency, including the creation of a Vice Ministry of Fiscal Transparency and Evaluation and a Public Information Unit responsible for handling requests for public records. In a

landmark decision in August 2010, the Constitutional Court ruled that information on the beneficiaries of Guatemala's conditional cash transfer (CCT) program, *Mi Familia Progres*a, should be made publicly available.

While freedom of speech is protected by the constitution, those who vigorously condemn the government or past human rights abuses can face persecution. The press and most broadcast outlets are privately owned. Mexican businessman Remigio Angel González owns a monopoly of broadcast television networks and has significant holdings in radio. Newspaper ownership is concentrated in the hands of moderate business elites, and most papers have centrist or conservative editorial views. Journalists often face threats and practice self-censorship when covering drug trafficking, corruption, and organized crime. Journalist Marvin del Cid, who frequently covers corruption cases, received multiple death threats and was robbed of computers and work documents in 2010. In September, Victor Hugo Juárez, a journalist and the owner of two online media outlets, was tortured and killed by unidentified assailants.

The constitution guarantees religious freedom. However, members of indigenous communities have faced discrimination for openly practicing the Mayan religion. The government does not interfere with academic freedom, but scholars have received death threats for raising questions about past human rights abuses or continuing injustices.

Freedom of assembly is guaranteed and generally respected in practice, though police have at times used force to end disruptive demonstrations, resulting in the injury and death of some protesters.

The constitution guarantees freedom of association, and a variety of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) operate without major legal or government obstacles. However, the Unit for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders in Guatemala (UDEFE^{GUA}) found that 305 activists—including journalists and advocates of union and environmental rights—were victims of intimidation, attacks, or assassinations between January and December 2010. International agencies also encountered intimidation and office burglaries during the year. Amid continued protests against the Marlin Mine in Guatemala's western highlands, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) in May granted precautionary protective measures to members of 18 indigenous Mayan communities in the Sipacapa and San Miguel Ixtahuacan municipalities. The indigenous inhabitants allege that the Marlin mine has resulted in grave human rights violations and created serious health hazards for the communities. Despite the IACHR's recommendations, anti-mining activist Deodora Hernandez was shot by unknown assailants in July, while other activists received threats throughout the year.

Guatemala is home to a vigorous labor movement, but trade unions are subject to intimidation and violence, particularly in rural areas during land disputes. Workers are frequently denied the right to organize and face mass firings and blacklisting, especially in export-processing zones. Countless union members have been threatened or attacked, and some union activists' families have been targeted for rape and murder. In July 2010, the United States filed a formal complaint against Guatemala under DR-C AFTA due to the government's failure to address violations of workers' rights. This is the first case that the United States has pursued against a free-trade partner. Also that month, two former policemen were arrested in con-

nection with the 1984 forced disappearance of union leader Fernando García; their trial began in October.

The judiciary is troubled by corruption, inefficiency, capacity shortages, and the intimidation of judges, prosecutors, and witnesses. Threats against judicial sector workers are common, and according to a 2010 report by the NGO Lawyers' Rights Watch Canada, at least 40 judges and lawyers have been murdered since 2005. In 2009, the CICIG reported irregularities in the selection of judges and accused the public prosecutor's office of impeding its investigations of corruption and organized crime within public institutions.

Pretrial detention is legally limited to three months, but inmates often spend years in jail before trial. Prison conditions are harsh, and the facilities are rife with gang- and drug-related violence and corruption. Although the provision of indigenous-language translators in courtrooms is legally mandated, a lack of funding has prevented proper implementation.

Police have been accused of torture, extortion, kidnapping for ransom, and extrajudicial killings of suspected gang members. In September 2010, Congress passed a Law for the National Prevention of Torture and Other Cruel and Unusual Punishment, which provides for the creation of a monitoring unit to oversee the prevention of torture in prisons. Police officers continue to be charged with drug-related crimes. In March 2010, authorities detained the chief of the national police, Baltazar Gomez, and the head of the antinarcotics unit, Nelly Bonilla, in connection with a firefight in 2009 that left five antinarcotics agents dead; the two officials were also charged with drug trafficking and obstructing justice. The government continues to use the military to maintain internal security, despite restrictions on this practice imposed by the 1996 peace accord.

Guatemala is one of the most violent countries in Latin America. There were 5,960 homicide victims in 2010, down from 6,451 in 2009. The country registered an average of 16 murders a day. Violence related to drug trafficking has spilled over the border from Mexico, with rival gangs battling for territory. Trafficking organizations operate with impunity in the northern jungles, which serve as a storage and transit hub for cocaine en route to the United States. The local drug problem has also worsened, as traffickers have paid Guatemalan associates in cocaine rather than cash. In the wake of the global economic downturn, Guatemala has been forced to cut funding for the military's efforts to fight drug smuggling and organized crime. Indigenous communities suffer from especially high rates of poverty, illiteracy, and infant mortality. Indigenous women are particularly marginalized. Discrimination against the Mayan community continues to be a major concern. The government in recent years has approved the eviction of indigenous groups to make way for mining, hydroelectric, and other development projects.

Sexual harassment in the workplace is not penalized. Young women who migrate to the capital for work are especially vulnerable to harassment and inhumane labor conditions, and women overall earn 60 percent as much as men with the same qualifications. Violence against women and children is widespread. Guatemalan women and children are drawn into prostitution both locally and in neighboring countries. The number of women murdered during the first six months of 2010 increased by 16 percent, compared with the same period in 2009. Transgender women and gay men also continue to be targets of violent attacks.

Guatemala has the highest rate of child labor in the Americas, with one-third of school-aged children forced to work illegally on farms or in factories. A 2009 law against human trafficking clarified the legal definition of the crime and increased penalties. However, according to the U.S. State Department's 2010 Trafficking in Persons Report, the government has failed to comply with minimum international standards to eliminate trafficking.

Guinea

Political Rights: 5*

Population: 10,800,000

Civil Liberties: 5*

Capital: Conakry

Status: Partly Free

Status Change: Guinea's political rights rating improved from 7 to 5, its civil liberties rating from 6 to 5, and its status from Not Free to Partly Free due to a transition from military to civilian rule, credible presidential elections held in November 2010, and heightened observance of freedoms of expression and association.

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline For Year Under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
6,5NF	7,5NF	7,6NF	5,5PF						

Overview: Following a turbulent year in 2009, Guinea saw modest progress towards establishing democratic institutions in 2010. Interim president Sékouba Konaté oversaw two rounds of presidential elections during the year, culminating in the inauguration of longtime opposition leader Alpha Condé as president in December. However, the run-up to the second round of elections in November was marred by significant violence and population displacements. New media laws passed in June sought to ease restrictions on journalists by removing prison sentences for press offenses.

Guinea gained independence from France in 1958 and grew increasingly impoverished under the repressive, one-party rule of President Ahmed Sékou Touré. After his death in 1984, a military junta led by Lieutenant Colonel Lansana Conté abolished all political parties and the constitution and began a program of economic liberalization.

A new constitution was adopted in 1990. Conté won the country's first multi-party presidential elections in 1993, but international observers said the polls were deeply flawed. Presidential, legislative, and municipal elections over the next 12 years were similarly marred by state patronage, media bias, broad manipulation of the electoral process, and opposition boycotts; all resulted in lopsided victories for Conté and the ruling Party for Unity and Progress (PUP).

In 2007, a general strike to protest corruption, the cost of basic goods, and inadequate government services grew into nationwide antigovernment demonstrations. Security forces opened fire on protesters, killing more than 130. The

president declared martial law in the face of a near-revolt of unprecedented scale. With mediation by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), union leaders agreed to suspend a general strike, while Conté pledged to control inflation, organize legislative elections, and name a "consensus" prime minister backed by unions and civil society. He appointed veteran diplomat Lansana Kouyaté, but initial optimism faded, as the prime minister's reform plan was stymied by structural challenges, backroom opposition from the president and his associates, and perceptions that Kouyaté was pursuing his own political agenda.

President Conté unilaterally dismissed Kouyaté in May 2008. A faction of the army mutinied later that month, and security forces brutally suppressed a police uprising in June as well as sporadic antigovernment demonstrations by civilians. The ailing president died in December, and junior officers quickly mounted a successful military coup, promising to hold elections in two years.

Captain Moussa Dadis Camara, the coup leader, initially enjoyed considerable popularity, especially as he sought to expose corruption among former officials. However, his arbitrary and personalized style of rule quickly engendered opposition. In August 2009, under international and domestic pressure, the ruling junta—known as the National Council for Democracy and Development (CNDD)—set presidential and legislative elections for January and March 2010, respectively. Following signs that Camara might renege on his earlier promise not to run for president, opposition forces mounted a massive rally in late September. The gathering was viciously suppressed by security forces, who killed more than 150 people and raped and beat hundreds of others. The international community, including ECOWAS, the African Union, the European Union, and the United States, roundly condemned the crackdown and imposed sanctions on the Guinean regime. However, China broke ranks and signed a \$9 billion mining agreement with the junta in October. In December, as the International Criminal Court (ICC) and a special UN panel investigated the September massacre, the commander of Guinea's presidential guard shot Camara in the head, seriously injuring him.

In 2010, the country took several steps towards opening up its political system. While Camara traveled to Burkina Faso to recuperate, his deputy, General Sékouba Konaté, became interim president. In January, Konaté negotiated an accord with Camara that established conditions for the upcoming presidential election. Prodemocracy opposition leader Jean-Marie Doré, who was named interim prime minister in January, was charged with leading the power-sharing government and facilitating a return to civilian rule. The accord also created a broad-based interim parliament, the Transitional National Council (TNC), composed of 101 members from political parties, civil society, and the military regime. In February, the ICC ruled that the September 2009 massacre was a crime against humanity and initiated proceedings.

The long-anticipated presidential election took place in June, though no candidate was able to garner more than 50 percent of the vote. In a runoff election held in November, longtime opposition leader Alpha Condé of the Rally of the Guinean People Party defeated former prime minister Cellou Dalein Diallo of the Union of Democratic Forces of Guinea by 52 to 48 percent of the vote. The election was deemed legitimate and representative of popular opinion by most domestic and international observers, and Diallo eventually accepted the results. However,

violence and voter intimidation in Guinea's eastern region, including beatings, shootings, and the vandalizing of homes by mobs, resulted in the displacement of thousands of ethnic Peul supporters of Diallo.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Guinea is not an electoral democracy. While the 2010 presidential election process was deemed free and fair by observers, legislative elections had not been held by year's end. Elections under former presidents Ahmed Sékou Touré and Lansana Conté were heavily manipulated. The 2010 elections represented the country's first ever peaceful rotation of power. In May 2010, President Sékouba Konaté approved a new constitution that reinforces democratic rights, including explicitly outlining the legal status of the prime minister and establishing a number of bodies, such as an independent electoral commission, a national human rights body, and a constitutional court. There are several significant political parties, most of which have clear regional and ethnic bases.

Corruption has been cited as a serious problem by international donors, and many government activities are shrouded in secrecy. Under Moussa Dadis Camara, the CNDD had promised to crack down on corruption, but instead, it oversaw a continued disintegration of the rule of law and legal institutions. While President

Konaté sought to reestablish a state of law through adoption of the new constitution, the global economic crisis, combined with a deeply ingrained culture of corruption made sustained progress difficult. Guinea was ranked 164 out of 178 countries surveyed in Transparency International's 2010 Corruption Perceptions Index.

In June 2010, the TNC passed two new media laws to replace restrictive legislation from 1991. One of the laws decriminalized press offenses and more clearly defined defamation provisions, while the other provided for the creation of a new media regulatory body, the Higher Authority of Communication (HAC). The new laws, which were written in consultation with journalists and media executives, are applied to online and state-owned media in addition to print outlets. Prison sentences for most press offenses were eliminated, though journalists can still face high fines. Libel against the head of state remains a criminal offense, and the country continues to lack a freedom of information law. The state controls the national radio station and the only television broadcaster, but permits the airing of a range of viewpoints. A variety of newspapers publish and appear on the internet. Internet access is limited to urban areas, but has generally not been restricted by the government when available. Under the 2010 media laws, news websites must register with the HAC.

Religious rights are generally respected in practice, though there have been cases of discrimination against non-Muslims in government employment, as well as restrictions on Muslims' freedom to convert to other religions. Academic freedom has been hampered to some degree by government influence over hiring and curriculum content. Free private discussion, which had been limited under previous authoritarian governments and Camara's repressive and erratic rule, improved in 2010.

Freedoms of association and assembly, which had been seriously circumscribed, were generally respected in 2010. In May, a Special Force for a Safe Electoral Process was created that effectively provided security for the presidential elections. However, the unit was criticized for lacking restraint and using excessive

force, among other violations, when responding to political violence prior to the runoff election. Many established and emerging nongovernmental organizations and civil society groups expanded their activities in 2010 as a result of the more open political environment. Trade unions enjoyed greater freedoms in 2010. In contrast to previous years, there were no reports of intervention into strike activities or official discrimination against unions.

Under former president Conté, the nominally independent courts were marred by corruption, a lack of resources, nepotism, ethnic bias, and political interference. The judicial system demonstrated a modest degree of independence in 2010; a panel of magistrates was empowered to investigate the September 2009 massacre, though no perpetrators were brought to justice by year's end. More than 100 prisoners who were judged to have been held in lengthy pretrial detention were released in May. Informal customary justice mechanisms continue to operate in addition to official courts.

Security forces have long engaged in arbitrary arrests, torture of detainees, and extrajudicial execution with impunity. According to Human Rights Watch, they used excessive force and displayed a lack of political neutrality when responding to election-related violence in November 2010. Prison conditions remain harsh and sometimes life threatening.

While the law prohibits ethnic discrimination, human rights reports have noted societal discrimination in employment, housing, and marriage patterns. Ethnic clashes during the campaign for the second round of presidential elections in 2010 pitted the principally Peul supporters of Cellou Dalein Diallo against Malinké partisans of Condé.

Societal discrimination against women is common, and while women have legal access to land, credit, and business, inheritance laws and the traditional justice system favor men. Security personnel openly raped dozens of women in the 2007 and 2009 crackdowns. Human Rights Watch has reported that thousands of young girls serving as unpaid domestic workers in Guinea are subject to beatings or rape by their employers. Location and political instability have made Guinea a source and transit point for many irregular migrants heading to Europe. Advocacy groups are working to eradicate the illegal but nearly ubiquitous practice of female genital mutilation.

↓ Guinea-Bissau

Political Rights: 4
Civil Liberties: 4
Status: Partly Free

Population: 1,700,000
Capital: Bissau

Trend Arrow: Guinea-Bissau received a downward trend arrow due to the military's interference in the country's politics and the civilian president's increasingly apparent willingness to acquiesce to its demands.

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline For Year Under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
4,5PF	4,5PF	6,4PF	4,4PF	3,4PF	4,4PF	4,4PF	4,4PF	4,4PF	4,4PF

Overview: An army mutiny in April 2010 plunged Guinea-Bissau into another political crisis. President Malam Bacai Sanhá appointed the leader of the mutiny and a former navy chief with known ties to international drug cartels to top military posts in June and October. The appointments, which drew international condemnation, reflected the growing influence of the military and a severe weakening of civilian control over the government.

Guinea-Bissau declared independence from Portugal in 1973, following a 13-year guerrilla war by the leftist African Party for the Independence of Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde (PAIGC). Luís Cabral became president in 1974, but disaffection with his repressive rule led to divisions within the PAIGC, and in 1980, he was toppled by the prime minister and former military commander João Bernardo "Nino" Vieira.

Vieira ruled from 1980 to 1984 as head of a Revolutionary Council, and was made head of state by a reconstituted single-party legislature in 1984. International pressure from donors eventually led to economic liberalization and, in 1994, the country's first multiparty legislative and presidential elections, in which Vieira won the presidency.

An army mutiny broke out in 1998 after Vieira fired General Ansu Mané, accusing him of smuggling arms to separatist rebels in Senegal's Casamance region. Hostilities escalated when Vieira called on troops from neighboring Senegal and Guinea to put down the uprising. The war that ensued displaced hundreds of thousands of people and destroyed the country's infrastructure and economy. Vieira was ousted in 1999 and went into exile in Portugal.

The 1999 presidential and legislative elections resulted in a sound defeat for the PAIGC and the election of Kumba Yalá, leader of the Social Renovation Party (PRS), as president. Mané declared himself head of the armed forces in 2000, inciting violence between the military factions supporting him and those backing Yalá. Mané was subsequently killed. In 2002, Yalá dissolved the parliament and ruled by decree, until he was overthrown in a 2003 coup led by General Veríssimo Correia Seabra.

The PAIGC returned to power with a plurality of seats in the 2004 legislative elections, and Carlos Gomes Júnior became prime minister. Vieira returned from exile to stand for the 2005 presidential election as an independent candidate, and ultimately defeated both Yalá of the PRS and Malam Bacai Sanhá of the PAIGC. Vieira soon dismissed Carlos Gomes Júnior and appointed former PAIGC ally Aristides Gomes to replace him as prime minister, causing tensions between Vieira's supporters and the opposition. After months of negotiations, the PAIGC, PRS, and United Social Democrat Party (PUSD) agreed on a national political stability pact in March 2007. Days later, the coalition passed a no-confidence vote against Gomes, leading to his resignation and the appointment of Martinho Ndafo Kabi of the PAIGC to the premiership.

The 2008 legislative elections resulted in a resounding victory for the PAIGC, which took 67 seats in the 100-seat legislature. The PRS took 28, and the Vieira-backed Republican Party for Independence and Development (PRID) captured 3. Carlos Gomes Júnior of the PAIGC once again became prime minister.

In March 2009, Vieira and the chief of the armed forces, Batista Tagme Na Wai, were assassinated in separate attacks. A new presidential election was held in June despite serious political violence during the campaign, including the fatal shootings of presidential candidate Baciro Dabó and former defense minister Helder Proença. Following an inconclusive first round, Sanhá of the PAIGC defeated Yalá of the PRS in the July runoff, 63.3 percent to 36.7 percent. International observers reported that the voting itself was peaceful, free, and transparent. Sanhá took office in September, pledging to work on security-sector reform and to combat drug trafficking.

On April 1, 2010, mutinous soldiers led by the deputy chief of the armed forces, Antonio Indjai, detained Prime Minister Gomes as well as armed forces chief General José Zamora Induta and 40 of his subordinates. The same morning, soldiers stormed the UN building in Bissau to provide safe passage to former navy commander Rear Admiral José Americo Bubo Na Tchuto, who had sought protection at UN headquarters after his involvement in a 2008 coup attempt. With Na Tchuto at his side, Indjai proclaimed himself head of the armed forces, while Sanhá declared that the government remained in civilian hands. Gomes was released the following day and remained in office, but Induta and military intelligence chief Colonel Samba Diallo were detained without charges until late December 2010, when they were finally released. In June, Sanhá officially appointed Indjai as chief of the armed forces, a decision that drew condemnation from the international community. In October, Sanhá reappointed Na Tchuto as chief of the navy, just months after he had been named a drug kingpin by the U.S. Treasury Department.

Despite the recent political unrest, the government demonstrated some commitment to reining in public spending in 2010. In July, it reported the completion of a census of civil servants, the first step in its efforts to eliminate large numbers of "ghost workers" on government payrolls. Strict spending restrictions for government officials were also announced in July. However, the success of these and other reforms rested on the government's ability to maintain political stability and donor funding, both of which were disrupted by the events of April 1.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Guinea-Bissau is not an electoral democracy. Legislative and presidential elections have generally been declared free

and fair by international observers, but military intervention and the influence of the drug trade have undermined the authority of elected officials. The 100 members of the unicameral National People's Assembly are elected by popular vote to serve four-year terms. The president is elected for a five-year term, and there are no term limits. The prime minister is appointed by the president after consultation with party leaders in the legislature.

Political parties in Guinea-Bissau are competitive but institutionally weak. They routinely suffer from military interference and shifting personal cliques. Party leaders are often unable or unwilling to carry out fully their constitutional functions and policy agendas, as military factions have repeatedly shown a readiness to maintain or expand their own interests through coups, assassinations, and threats. The illegal arrest of the prime minister on April 1, 2010, represented a major blow to the integrity of democratic governance, and the president's subsequent military appointments rendered the government all but powerless to reform the security sector and strengthen the rule of law.

Corruption is pervasive, driven in large part by the illicit drug trade. With weak institutions and porous borders, Guinea-Bissau has become a major transit point for Latin American drug traffickers moving cocaine to Europe. Powerful segments of the military, police, and government are reportedly complicit in the trade. The 2010 reappointment of Rear Admiral José Americo Bubo Na Tchuto in particular has bolstered claims that the country is fast becoming a "narcostate." Guinea-Bissau ranked 154 out of 178 countries surveyed in Transparency International's 2010 Corruption Perceptions Index.

Although the constitution provides for freedoms of speech and press, these freedoms are not always respected. Journalists regularly face harassment and intimidation, and practice self-censorship. In May 2010, newspaper owner João de Barros was attacked for publishing stories on drug trafficking in the country. There are a number of private and community radio stations in addition to the national broadcasters, and several private newspapers publish sporadically. Internet access is unrestricted.

Religious freedom is legally protected and usually respected in practice. Academic freedom is similarly guaranteed and upheld.

Freedoms of assembly and association are recognized and usually respected, but security forces have occasionally suppressed public demonstrations. When citizens gathered in Bissau to protest the illegal detention of the prime minister in April 2010, General Antonio Indjai threatened to kill the elected leader if the crowd did not disperse; he later retracted his statement. Nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) generally operate freely, though members of local human rights organizations have at times been subject to harassment and even physical attack. Workers are allowed to form and join independent trade unions, but few work in the wage-earning formal sector. The right to strike is protected, and government workers frequently exercise this right.

Scant resources and endemic corruption severely challenge judicial independence. The U.S. State Department has reported that there are essentially no resources to conduct criminal investigations and few formal detention facilities. With support from the UN Office on Drugs and Crime, work was completed in late 2010 on the refurbishment of two jails in Mansôa and Bafatá, making them the only secure

282 Freedom in the World—2011

prisons in the country. However, no prisoners had been transferred by the end of the year. Judges and magistrates are poorly trained, irregularly paid, and highly susceptible to corruption. A culture of impunity prevails, especially in the military. A 2008 law provides amnesty to persons who have committed political crimes. Investigations into the assassinations of the president and the chief of the armed forces in 2009 were deemed inconclusive. Admiral Na Tchuto was reappointed as head of the navy despite repeated calls for his arrest due to his involvement in earlier coup plots and his role in the illicit drug trade.

Ethnic identity is an important factor in politics, and the military is dominated by the country's largest ethnic group, the Balanta.

Women face significant traditional and societal discrimination, despite some legal protections. They generally do not receive equal pay for equal work and have fewer opportunities in education and employment. Women of certain ethnic groups cannot own or manage land or inherit property. Domestic violence, female genital mutilation, and early marriage are widespread. Trafficking in persons, especially children, is a significant problem, despite efforts by NGOs to raise awareness, improve law enforcement, and repatriate victims.

Guyana

Political Rights: 2

Population: 770,000

Civil Liberties: 3

Capital: Georgetown

Status: Free

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline For Year Under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
2,2F	2,2F	2,2F	2,2F	3,3PF	2,3F	2,3F	2,3F	2,3F	2,3F

Overview: In 2010, preparations for the 2011 presidential elections began, though uncertainty remained over who would be nominated by the country's two main political parties. President Bharrat Jagdeo of the People's Progressive Party retained a strong base of support amidst speculation that he might amend the constitution to run for a third term. Midyear, the government slowly started to implement a security forces reform plan announced at the beginning of 2010.

Guyana gained independence from Britain in 1966 and was ruled by the autocratic, predominantly Afro-Guyanese People's National Congress party (PNC) for the next 26 years. In 1992, Cheddi Jagan of the largely Indo-Guyanese People's Progressive Party (PPP) won the presidency in Guyana's first free and fair elections. He died in 1997, and the office passed to his wife, Janet, who resigned in 1999 for health reasons. She was succeeded by Finance Minister Bharrat Jagdeo of the PPP-C, an alliance of the PPP and the Civic Party. President Jagdeo was elected in his own right in 2001.

Guyanese politics are dominated by a tense split between descendants of inden-

ured workers from India, known as Indo-Guyanese, who make up about half of the population and generally back the PPP-C, and Afro-Guyanese, who compose 36 percent of the population and largely support the PNC-Reform (PNC-R) party. In 2004, the political climate showed brief signs of improving, when the PPP-C and PNC-R announced that they had reached agreement on a wide variety of issues. However, the emerging harmony was disrupted when a police informant revealed the existence of death squads that enjoyed official sanction and had killed some 64 people. An investigation exposed apparent links to the home affairs minister, Ronald Gajraj, but he was largely exonerated by an official inquiry in 2005.

Violence escalated in 2006 ahead of that year's elections. In the spring, Agriculture Minister Satyadeo Sawh was brutally slain by masked gunmen, and four newspaper employees were shot dead on the outskirts of the capital in early August. The National Assembly was dissolved amid acrimony and mudslinging, and the elections were delayed by several weeks, as deep conflicts within the seven-member Guyana Elections Commission undermined the credibility of the process. Despite those concerns, the elections unfolded without incident in August, due in part to the heavy presence of international observers.

President Jagdeo handily won another five-year term as his PPP-C captured 36 seats in the National Assembly. The PNC-R took 21 seats; a new party, the Alliance for Change (AFC), won 6 seats; and two minor parties, the United Force and the Justice for All Party, each captured 1 seat. The emergence of the multiracial AFC suggested that the fierce racial divide of Guyanese politics was on the wane, though relations between the government and opposition remained tense.

In 2009, President Jagdeo's strong support fueled speculation that he might seek to amend the constitution and run for a third term in the December 2011 presidential elections. While he denied such claims, the PPP-C had not chosen a successor by year's end, and no clear frontrunner existed. Meanwhile, opposition leader Robert Corbin of the PNC-R—who publicly charged that the Jagdeo government had links to convicted drug trafficker Robert Khan—repeatedly stated he would not seek the presidential nomination for the PNC-R. The possibility of a united coalition under the PNC-R seemed unlikely after the AFC chose to align with smaller parties and civil society groups rather than the PNC-R.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Guyana is an electoral democracy. The 1980 constitution provides for a strong president and a 65-seat National Assembly, elected every five years. Two additional, nonvoting members are appointed by the president. The leader of the party with a plurality of parliamentary seats becomes president for a five-year term and appoints the prime minister and cabinet.

The 2006 elections strengthened the hand of the ruling PPP-C, but also demonstrated that some Guyanese are beginning to vote across racial lines, as symbolized by the establishment of the multiracial AFC. The main opposition party remains the PNC-R. Other significant political parties or groupings include the Alliance for Guyana, the Guyana Labor Party, the United Force, the Justice for All Party, the Working People's Alliance, and the Guyana Action Party, which enjoys strong support from indigenous communities in the south.

The country is a transshipment point for South American cocaine destined for

North America and Europe, and counternarcotics efforts are undermined by corruption that reaches to high levels of the government. The informal economy is driven primarily by drug proceeds and may be equal to between 40 and 60 percent of formal economic activity. Guyana was ranked 116 out of 178 countries surveyed in Transparency International's 2010 Corruption Perceptions Index, the worst in the English-speaking Caribbean.

Freedom of the press is generally respected. Several independent newspapers operate freely, including the daily *Stabroek News* and *Kaieteur News*. However, opposition party leaders complain that they lack access to state media. The state owns and operates the country's sole radio station, which broadcasts on three frequencies. However, Guyana's courts ruled in 2009 that this represented an unfair media monopoly, and the government pledged to adopt new broadcast legislation to rectify it, though no such legislation had been introduced by year's end. Seventeen privately owned television stations freely criticize the government. In 2009, the Guyana Press Association denounced a government initiative to license media professionals as an attempt to impose control over the profession. Government officials occasionally use libel lawsuits to suppress criticism. President Bharrat Jagdeo filed libel charges against *Kaieteur News* and journalist Freddie Kissoon in July 2010 in relation to an article that allegedly portrayed the president and his government as racist. Jagdeo demanded GUY \$10 million (US\$48,550) in damages, but the case was still pending at year's end. The government also closed an internationally funded Media-Monitoring Unit, established in 2006 to monitor media ahead of national elections. There are no government restrictions on the internet.

Guyanese generally enjoy freedom of religion, and the government does not restrict academic freedom.

The government largely respects freedoms of assembly and association. The right to form labor unions is also generally upheld, and unions are well organized. However, employers are not required to recognize unions in former state enterprises.

The judicial system is independent, but due process is undermined by shortages of staff and funds. In 2005, Guyana cut all ties to the Privy Council in London, the court of last resort for other former British colonies in the region, and adopted the Trinidad-based Caribbean Court of Justice as its highest appellate court. Prisons are overcrowded, and conditions are poor.

The Guyana Defence Force and the national Guyana Police Force are under civilian control. Racial polarization has seriously eroded law enforcement, with many Indo-Guyanese complaining that they are victimized by Afro-Guyanese criminals and ignored by the predominantly Afro-Guyanese police. Meanwhile, many Afro-Guyanese claim that the police are manipulated by the government for its own purposes. Official inquiries have repeatedly pointed to the need for improved investigative techniques, more funding, community-oriented policing, better disciplinary procedures, greater accountability, and a better ethnic balance in the police force, but the government has taken few concrete steps to implement the proposed reforms. The government announced a security sector reform plan in early 2010, after three years of consultations and important political maneuvering. The plan proposes a constitutional reform that would establish a standing parliamentary committee to oversee the security sector. Implementation, however, has proceeded slowly.

Guyana is home to nine indigenous groups with a total population of about

80,000. Human rights violations against them, particularly with respect to land and resource use, are widespread and pervasive. Indigenous peoples' attempts to seek redress through the courts have been met with unwarranted delays by the judiciary. While racial clashes have diminished in the last decade, long-standing animosity between Afro- and Indo-Guyanese remains a serious concern. A Racial Hostility Bill passed in 2002 increased the penalties for race-based crimes.

Domestic abuse and violence against women in general are widespread. Rape is illegal but often goes unreported and is infrequently prosecuted. The Guyana Human Rights Association has charged that the legal system's treatment of victims of sexual violence is intentionally humiliating. In May 2010, the Sexual Offenses Act was signed into law, which makes rape gender-neutral and expands its definition to include spousal rape and coercion and child abuse; the new law also provides for offenses committed against the mentally disabled. Sodomy is punishable with a maximum sentence of life in prison, and cross-dressing is criminalized for both men and women. In 2009, seven men were convicted of cross-dressing and fined GUY \$7,500 (US\$36) each. In February 2010, the Society against Sexual Orientation Discrimination (SASOD) filed a motion with the Supreme Court, challenging the constitutionality of the law banning cross-dressing; the case was still pending at year's end.

Haiti

Political Rights: 4
Civil Liberties: 5
Status: Partly Free

Population: 9,800,000
Capital: Port-au-Prince

Trend Arrow: Haiti received a downward trend arrow due to evidence of massive fraud in November 2010 elections, as well as disregard for electoral laws and lack of transparency in the operation of the Provisional Electoral Council.

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline For Year Under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
6,6NF	6,6NF	6,6NF	7,6NF	7,6NF	4,5PF	4,5PF	4,5PF	4,5PF	4,5PF

Overview: A powerful earthquake struck Haiti in January 2010, killing approximately 200,000 people and leaving close to 1.2 million others homeless. The country's bureaucratic infrastructure was heavily damaged, as were prisons, police stations, and judicial facilities. A cholera outbreak that began in October had killed more than 3,000 people by the end of 2010. The November first round of the presidential and parliamentary elections was marred by instances of massive fraud, violations of electoral law, and violent street protests, leading to a political crisis that paralyzed the country through year's end.

Since gaining independence from France in 1804 following a slave revolt, the Republic of Haiti has endured a history of poverty, violence, instability, and die-

tatorship. A 1986 military coup ended 29 years of rule by the Duvalier family, and although the military permitted the implementation of a French-style constitution under international pressure in 1987, army officers continued to dominate political affairs for most of the next eight years.

Jean-Bertrand Aristide, a popular former priest, was elected president in 1990. After only eight months in office, he was deposed and exiled by a military triumvirate. While paramilitary thugs terrorized the populace, the ruling junta engaged in blatant narcotics trafficking. The United Nations ultimately authorized a multinational force to restore the legitimate Haitian government, and in September 1994, facing an imminent invasion, the military rulers stepped down. U.S. troops took control of the country, and Aristide was reinstated. He dismantled the military before the June 1995 parliamentary elections, but his support began to fracture when international observers questioned the legitimacy of the balloting. Aristide retained the backing of the more radical Lavalas Family (FL) party, which won an overwhelming parliamentary majority.

FL nominee René Préval, who had been Aristide's prime minister in 1991, won the 1995 presidential election and took office in February 1996. The constitution had barred Aristide from seeking a second consecutive term. U.S. forces withdrew from the country in April 1996, while the UN force extended its stay at Préval's urging.

Aristide returned to the presidency in the 2000 election, which was boycotted by all major opposition parties amid widespread civil unrest and voter intimidation. He ran on a populist platform of economic revitalization, though opponents claimed that he was bent on establishing a one-party state. His supporters gained a majority of seats in both the upper and lower houses in that year's parliamentary elections.

Aristide's second term was undermined by cuts in foreign aid, increasing levels of poverty, and conflict with business elites and opposition groups. Faced with an armed revolt by political gangs and former army officers in February 2004, Aristide was flown out of the country in a plane chartered by the United States. He eventually accepted exile in South Africa.

A constitutional transition elevated Boniface Alexandre, head of the Supreme Court, to the position of president, and a new prime minister was named in March. As political decay continued throughout the country, the UN peacekeeping force gradually expanded beyond the capital. Renewed with troop contributions from Brazil and other Latin American countries, the force grew to approximately 9,000 personnel.

Former president Préval returned to power in the relatively well-conducted 2006 elections with 51 percent of the presidential vote, but his newly organized Front for Hope (Lespwa) party failed to win a majority in either house of parliament. Security improved the following year, after a UN crackdown on gangs in the capital.

The parliament clashed with the government in 2008 and 2009, forcing out two prime ministers, though the replacement for the second was approved in an orderly succession in late 2009. Also during 2009, Lespwa won 5 of 11 seats at stake in elections for the Senate, retaining a plurality in the chamber.

On January 12, 2010, a powerful earthquake struck 16 miles from Port-au-Prince, killing more than 200,000 people and injuring as many as 300,000. At year's end, over a million people remained homeless, living in approximately 460

camps. The UN headquarters in Port-au-Prince was destroyed, and the infrastructure of the police force and judiciary were severely damaged, compromising security and leading to lost casework and trial delays for an already overburdened court system. In October, the country suffered an outbreak of cholera, which had killed over 3,000 people by year's end.

The first round of parliamentary and presidential elections, held in November, was marred by widespread reports of fraud, voter intimidation, violations of electoral law, and problems with the composition of the Provisional Electoral Council (CEP). Prior to the elections, the government refused to consider changes to the council that had been requested by the opposition and strongly recommended by the international community. Moreover, new documents had to be issued to displaced voters, and purging the deceased from voter lists proved difficult, as death certificates were unavailable in many cases. Following the election, doctored election tally sheets (*procès-verbal*) were posted online, and the majority of opposition candidates reiterated their calls for the election to be voided, receiving growing support in Haiti and from abroad.

In the presidential contest, Mirlande Manigat, a former first lady and the candidate for the opposition Rally of Progressive National Democrats (RDNP), won a surprising 31 percent in the first round of voting. Jude Célestin, backed by Préval, captured approximately 22.5 percent, while popular musician Michel Martelly finished third with 21.84 percent. All three candidates had supported voiding the elections, but Manigat and Célestin retracted their calls after the results were released. Meanwhile, Martelly's supporters took to the streets, claiming that fraud had prevented their candidate from advancing to the runoff. The resulting political crisis remained unresolved at year's end, with a runoff election between Manigat and Célestin scheduled for January 2011.

In the parliamentary elections, 22 candidates for the lower house won outright majorities in the first round, with the remainder of the seats to be decided in the second round in 2011. Inite took 13 of the 22 initial seats, and five smaller parties won the others. Of the 11 Senate seats at stake, Inite won 3 outright, and Alternativ secured 1; the rest went to the 2011 runoff.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Haiti is not an electoral democracy. The first round of the presidential and parliamentary elections held in November 2010 suffered from a number of critical flaws. These included widespread complaints of unfairness and lack of transparency in the approval of candidates by the CEP, as FL candidates and the Haitian-born hip-hop star Wyclef Jean were barred from participating despite high levels of support. Several past and current FL party members ran under other party banners, however. The country's 1987 constitution provides for a president elected for a five-year term, a National Assembly composed of the 30-member Senate and the 99-member Chamber of Deputies, and a prime minister appointed by the president. Senators are elected for six-year terms, with one-third coming up for election every two years, and deputies for four-year terms. There are no term limits, but a president cannot serve consecutive terms. Lawmakers are sorely short of financial and administrative resources, and the parliament plays a reactive role, opposing or accepting initiatives from the executive branch.

The legislature is currently divided among several small parties, with no single faction holding a majority. Most parties are driven by personality or support from a particular region.

Endemic corruption continues to hobble Haiti's political and economic development. A number of lawmakers elected in 2006 and several on the 2010 ballot have reportedly been involved in drug trafficking and other criminal activities; many seek parliamentary seats primarily to obtain immunity from prosecution. President

René Prével identified the fight against corruption as a major priority, demanding full disclosure of financial records for top government officials. However, campaign financing remains unregulated and emerged as a serious issue in the 2010 campaign. Foreign donors attempted to safeguard the massive inflows of post-earthquake aid, though their success in preventing graft was not immediately clear. Haiti was ranked 146 out of 178 countries surveyed in Transparency International's 2010 Corruption Perceptions Index.

Freedom of the press has been constrained by the absence of a viable judicial system and widespread insecurity. Violence against journalists remains a problem, and media outlets tend to practice self-censorship to avoid violent retribution for critical reporting. The country hosts a number of newspapers from across the political spectrum, though their circulations are fairly small. More than 90 percent of Haitians have access to radio, and more than 290 stations operate without a license on FM bandwidth. There are more than 70 community radio stations that are often linked to political groups or parties. Television stations are far less common, with about 20 in Port-au-Prince and another 15 in the provinces; and the total television audience in Haiti remains below 10 percent due to lack of electricity and resources. Internet access is hampered by similar problems.

The government generally respects religious and academic freedoms. However, the absence of an effective police force has led to poor protection for those who are persecuted for their views.

Freedoms of assembly and association, including labor rights, are not respected in practice. While Haiti has rich civil society traditions at the local level, many of its formally organized civil society groupings have been co-opted by political and economic elites. Unions are too weak to engage in collective bargaining, and their organizing efforts are undermined by the country's high unemployment rate. New labor regulations introduced in 2009 included a stratified minimum wage system for the commercial and industrial sectors, and minimum health and safety standards. Still, the minimum wage increases apply only to a small segment of the population, and enforcement remains weak.

The judicial system is corrupt, inefficient, and dysfunctional. It is burdened by a large backlog of cases, outdated legal codes, and poor facilities. Moreover, official business is conducted in French rather than Creole, rendering large portions of court proceedings only marginally comprehensible to those involved. Prison conditions are harsh, and the ponderous legal system guarantees lengthy pretrial detentions. An estimated 60 to 80 percent of prisoners have not been formally charged, and the majority are not suspected of violent or serious crimes. On average, defendants wait more than a year to appear before a judge, and family members have reportedly been incarcerated when a suspect cannot be found. In the aftermath of the earthquake in January 2010, some 4,000 prisoners escaped from the heavily

damaged National Penitentiary in Port-au-Prince. During a prison riot in Les Cayes that month, police shot dead 12 prisoners who had been living in overcrowded and inhumane conditions, and subsequent investigations found evidence of excessive use of force.

Hundreds of police officers suspected of corruption have been purged from the Haitian National Police (HNP), and new recruitment and training expanded the total police force from 5,700 officers in 2006 to more than 11,000 in 2009, though that was far short of the target of 15,000 officers. The UN peacekeeping force has helped to establish a minimum level of security in some parts of the country, but the HNP remains unprepared to take over in the peacekeepers' absence. The police force virtually collapsed following the 2010 earthquake, but had recovered to some extent by the end of the year.

Widespread violence against women and children worsened considerably in the aftermath of the 2010 earthquake. Rapes were reportedly commonplace and pervasive in the camps, where insufficient police protection and inadequate housing exacerbated the vulnerability of women and children. Trafficking of children out of the country also reportedly increased sharply after the earthquake. More than 7,300 thousand were thought to have been smuggled to the Dominican Republic in 2010, often to work in the sex trade, compared with an estimated 950 in 2009. Also in 2010, approximately 300,000 children in Haiti were reportedly serving in *restavec* ("live with," in Creole), a form of unpaid domestic labor with a long history in the country.

Honduras

Political Rights: 4

Population: 7,600,000

Civil Liberties: 4

Capital: Tegucigalpa

Status: Partly Free

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline For Year Under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
3,3PF	4,4PF	4,4PF							

Overview: The period since the June 2009 coup has featured few improvements in rule of law. Human rights activists, journalists, union leaders, and members of the anticoup movement continued to be targeted in attacks, kidnappings, and assassinations in 2010. President Porfirio Lobo took office in January, and a Truth and Reconciliation Commission established to investigate events surrounding the coup started operating in May. However, the commission's mandate was limited, and the national government generally ignored politically motivated violence during the year, creating an environment of impunity for human rights violations.

The Republic of Honduras was established in 1839, some 18 years after independence from Spain. The country endured decades of military rule and

intermittent elected governments, with the last military regime giving way to civilian authorities in 1982. However, the military remained powerful in the subsequent decades; the first president to exercise his constitutional authority to veto the military and choose its leaders did so in 1999.

Under civilian rule, power has alternated between the Liberal Party (PL) and the National Party (PN). In the 2005 elections, José Manuel Zelaya of the PL defeated the PN's Porfirio Lobo in the presidential poll. In concurrent parliamentary elections, the PL won 62 seats, the PN took 55, and three minor parties captured the remainder. The run-up to the balloting had been marred by political violence that left several PL supporters injured and at least two dead.

Under Zelaya's administration, political polarization increased in an environment characterized by poor policy performance and faltering public institutions. The president deepened the country's political divisions, including within his own party, and pitted factions of the political and business elite against one another through increasingly populist posturing. In 2008, he brought Honduras into two Venezuelan-led regional trade initiatives, drawing objections from business organizations, the opposition, and elements within his own government.

Zelaya announced in March 2009 that he would push forward with a highly controversial overhaul of Honduras's constitution, including the elimination of presidential term limits. His opponents interpreted the proposal as a power grab, although the constitutional reform process would have begun only after the end of his nonrenewable four-year term in 2010. Zelaya's plan to hold a nonbinding referendum in June to gauge support for the overhaul sparked a political crisis. In May, the president of Congress, Roberto Micheletti of the PL, declared that the proposed reforms were prohibited by the constitution and the June balloting would be illegal. The military, siding with Micheletti, announced that it would not participate in the mobilization of ballots, as is customary during Honduran elections. In response, Zelaya dismissed army commander Romeo Vásquez on June 24. The following day, the Supreme Court ordered Vásquez's reinstatement, claiming that his removal was unwarranted. Zelaya refused, and led a group of supporters to collect ballots for the referendum, vowing to follow through with the vote as scheduled.

On June 28, the day of the intended poll, armed soldiers abducted Zelaya from the presidential palace and forcibly deported him to Costa Rica. Congress accepted a forged letter of resignation later that day and named Micheletti the acting president. While Micheletti argued that Zelaya's removal was allowed by the constitution, the international community condemned the coup and continued to recognize Zelaya as the legitimate president. Both the UN General Assembly and the Organization of American States demanded Zelaya's reinstatement.

The *de facto* government curtailed civil and political liberties in the months following the coup, particularly in September, after Micheletti issued an executive decree suspending civil liberties for 45 days. Police were granted new powers of detention, all public meetings were banned, and the security forces were effectively permitted to act without regard for human rights or the rule of law. Nationwide curfews were imposed at times, and public demonstrations supporting Zelaya's reinstatement were violently suppressed, which reportedly resulted in the death of several protesters. Media outlets and journalists faced harassment, threats, power

outages, and blocked transmissions; authorities also temporarily closed radio and television stations. Civil society organizations and human rights defenders similarly encountered harassment, including increased surveillance, threats, and physical assaults. Micheletti reversed his decree under international pressure on October 5, though many of the abuses continued.

Zelaya reentered the country on September 21, but took refuge in the Brazilian embassy, where he remained through the end of 2009 under threat of arrest by the de facto government. The international community fostered lengthy negotiations aimed at reinstating Zelaya and allowing him to serve out his legal term; many countries warned that they would not recognize the national elections scheduled for November if the coup leaders refused to comply. Nevertheless, the talks repeatedly broke down, and the de facto authorities pressed ahead with the elections. Lobo won the presidency with 56 percent of the vote, defeating Zelaya's vice president, Elvin Santos Lozano of the PL. The PN captured 71 seats in Congress, followed by the PL with 45, and three smaller parties with the remainder. Despite Zelaya's call for a boycott, turnout was reportedly not much lower than in previous elections.

Lobo was inaugurated in January 2010, and Zelaya went into exile in the Dominican Republic the same month. However, the new government made little progress toward restoring the rule of law in Honduras. After a visit to Honduras in May, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) voiced concern over the high rates of violent crime and continued human rights violations—including the harassment and killing of journalists and human rights activists—in the aftermath of the 2009 coup. As of May, the IACHR reported that only 12 people had been charged with human rights violations related to the coup. The four lower-court judges who challenged the legality of the coup in 2009 were dismissed from their posts in May 2010. The judges subsequently appealed to the Inter-American Court on Human Rights to review their cases. Also in May, a Truth and Reconciliation Commission charged with leading an impartial investigation into events surrounding the coup began operating, though it received little institutional support and was considered ineffective because of its limited mandate and difficulties in accessing the key players involved in the coup.

Honduras's political crisis, combined with the global economic downturn, has severely inhibited economic activity, isolated the country from major trading partners, and exacerbated existing poverty.

**Political Rights
and Civil Liberties:**

Honduras is not an electoral democracy. Elected president Zelaya was forcibly removed by the military in a June 2009 coup, and although his term ran through January 2010, he was never reinstated. Roberto Micheletti, the president of Congress, was named the interim leader, and his de facto government oversaw previously scheduled general elections in November 2009. The elections were generally considered to have met international standards, but they took place in a climate of severely compromised civil liberties and press freedoms.

The president is elected by popular vote for a single four-year term. Members of the 128-seat, unicameral National Congress are also elected for four-year terms. The proportion of the votes received by a party's presidential candidate determines its representation in the National Congress. The PL was the ruling party at the time

of the coup, with the PN in opposition and three smaller parties also holding seats. The PL then fractured between Zelaya supporters and opponents, and the PN won a majority in the November elections. The military has long exerted considerable influence on civilian governments.

Official corruption continues to dominate the political scene. Army officers have been found guilty of involvement in drug trafficking and related criminal conflicts. A 2006 transparency law was marred by claims that it contained amendments designed to protect corrupt politicians. However, the Institute for Access to Public Information has made efforts to enforce transparency rules and punish entities that fail to respond properly to information requests. Honduras was ranked 134 out of 178 countries surveyed in Transparency International's 2010 Corruption Perceptions Index.

Since the 2009 coup, authorities have systematically violated the constitution's press freedom guarantees. The de facto government regularly restricted press coverage, temporarily shutting down the operations of Radio Globo, Radio Catracha, and television's Channel 36 in September and October 2009. José Arnulfo Jiménez, one of the officials responsible for the closures, was released from prison in August 2010, suggesting that the new government would not address press freedom violations. Numerous radio and television stations reported continued harassment in 2010, including police surveillance and assault, threats, blocked transmissions, and power outages. In April, a criminal complaint was lodged against the new community radio station La Voz de Zacate Grande for allegedly building on land belonging to a powerful landowner, Miguel Facussé, and for operating without registration. In June, several hundred police and army officers tried to force the closure of the station, which remained a target of violence and intimidation throughout the year. In August, two Radio Globo journalists were attacked by police while covering a demonstration in Tegucigalpa. Radio Uno, based in San Pedro Sula, suffered from regular violence and intimidation, including tear-gas attacks by army and police forces in September.

Honduras is considered one of the most dangerous countries for journalists, with nine murders reported in 2010. The majority appeared to have been contract killings. The national government's reaction has been inadequate, alternating between remaining silent and dismissing the cases as routine street crime.

Media ownership is concentrated in the hands of a few powerful business interests, and many journalists practice self-censorship, particularly given the deterioration in conditions for the media since the coup. Lack of access to public officials and information is also a significant obstacle for reporters. Payments to journalists and manipulation of state advertising are reportedly used to secure favorable coverage or silence criticism. Internet use is generally unrestricted, but access was impaired following the coup by multiple politically motivated power outages and cuts in telephone service.

Freedom of religion is generally respected, though religious gatherings were included in the de facto government's temporary restrictions on freedom of assembly in the fall of 2009. Academic freedom is also usually honored, but scholars have faced pressure to support the privatization of the national university, and academic critics of the coup were subject to harassment in 2009.

Constitutional guarantees on the freedoms of assembly and association have not been consistently upheld. In 2009, public meetings were temporarily banned,

and security forces' violent suppression of peaceful demonstrations led to more than a dozen civilian deaths. Police were accused of using excessive force during confrontations with striking teachers in August 2010.

The 2006 Citizen Participation Law protects the role of civil society groups and individuals in the democratic process. However, human rights defenders and political activists faced significant threats following the coup, including harassment, surveillance, and detentions, as well as the murder of a number of coup opponents. In 2010, persecution of members of the anticoup movement escalated, leading to assassinations and kidnappings of activists and their families. Labor unions are well organized and can strike, but labor actions often result in clashes with security forces. Labor, gay and transgender rights, land rights, environmental, and Afro-Honduran activists are regularly victims of threats and repression.

The judicial system is weak and inefficient. The vast majority of inmates are awaiting trial, prison conditions are harsh, and the facilities are notoriously overcrowded. There is an official human rights ombudsman, but critics claim that the office's work is politicized. The ombudsman not only supported and justified the coup, but has also publicly declared his opposition to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. In a positive development for the rule of law, a police officer was sentenced to 10 to 13 years in prison in September 2010 for his role in an attack on a transgender woman in 2008. The case had featured serious intimidation of those involved in the prosecution, including the abduction and nonfatal shooting of the victim in March 2010.

Honduras had one of highest murder rates in the world in 2010, with a total of 6,236 homicides. In October, Human Rights Commissioner Ramón Custodio reported a homicide rate of 72.8 murders per 100,000 inhabitants. Most homicides are attributed to youth gangs, including transnational groups like Mara Salvatrucha (MS-13) and 18th Street, or to Mexican drug-trafficking syndicates active in Honduras. The violence has been exacerbated by the presence of an estimated 800,000 firearms in private hands, only 21 percent of which are registered. The government has made membership in a gang punishable by up to 12 years in prison and uses the military to help maintain order. However, police officers and other vigilantes have committed extrajudicial killings, arbitrary arrests, and illegal searches. Hundreds of juveniles have reportedly been killed in "social cleansing" campaigns.

Indigenous and Afro-Honduran residents have faced various abuses by property developers and their allies in recent years, including corrupt titling processes and acts of violence.

Women remain vulnerable to exploitation by employers, particularly in the low-wage maquiladora (assembly plant) export sector. Child labor is a problem in rural areas and in the informal economy. The nongovernmental organization Casa Alianza has estimated that as many as 10,000 children are working as prostitutes. According to UNESCO, 29 percent of Honduran children drop out of school before the fifth grade, and youths head about 10 percent of households. The overall population is dominated by young people: 38 percent are under 15, and 30 percent are aged 15 to 24. The U.S. State Department's 2010 Trafficking in Persons Report found that while Honduras does not fully comply with minimum international standards to combat trafficking, the government is making efforts to do so. The report also found that criminal gangs' use of forced child labor is a serious concern.

↓ Hungary

Political Rights: 1

Population: 10,000,000

Civil Liberties: 1

Capital: Budapest

Status: Free

Trend Arrow: Hungary received a downward trend arrow due to the government's efforts to consolidate control over the country's independent institutions, including the creation of a new media council dominated by the ruling party that has the ability to impose large fines on broadcast, print, and online media outlets.

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline For Year Under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

2001	2001	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
1,2F	1,2F	1,2F	1,1F						

Overview: In April 2010 parliamentary elections, the conservative Alliance of Young Democrats-Hungarian Civic Union (Fidesz) and its junior partner, the Christian Democratic People's Party, won a two-thirds majority in the National Assembly. The resulting government, headed by Fidesz leader Viktor Orbán, passed a series of laws that consolidated its control over the media and other institutions. The country continued to face serious economic hardship, and fiscal negotiations with the International Monetary Fund and the European Union broke down in July.

Hungary achieved full independence from the Austro-Hungarian Empire following World War I, though it lost large portions of its previous territory. Soviet occupation after World War II led to communist rule, and Soviet troops crushed an uprising by Hungarians seeking to liberalize the political and economic system in 1956. However, in the late 1980s, the ruling Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party came under intense pressure to accept reforms. Free parliamentary elections were held in 1990, and over the next decade, power alternated between conservative and socialist blocs, both of which pursued European integration. Hungary formally entered the European Union (EU) in 2004.

A ruling coalition consisting of the Hungarian Socialist Party (MSzP) and the Alliance of Free Democrats (SzDSz) won reelection in April 2006. In September 2006, Prime Minister Ferenc Gyurcsany's recorded admission that his government had repeatedly lied to the electorate about its budgetary and economic performance was leaked to the press, sparking major riots and severely damaging public confidence in the government as it struggled to rein in a large budget deficit.

The SzDSz withdrew from the coalition in 2008, but after Gyurcsany announced his resignation in March 2009, it joined the larger MSzP in endorsing Economy Minister Gordon Bajnai, an independent, as the new prime minister in April.

The governing parties' loss of public support was confirmed in the April 2010 parliamentary elections, in which a conservative opposition bloc consisting of the Alliance of Young Democrats-Hungarian Civic Union (Fidesz) and the much smaller Christian Democratic People's Party (KDNP) captured 263 of 386 Na-

tional Assembly seats, giving it a two-thirds majority and the ability to amend the constitution. The MSzP won just 59 seats, the far-right Movement for a Better Hungary (Jobbik) entered the parliament for the first time with 47 seats, and the liberal Politics Can Be Different (LMP) party, also new to the legislature, took 16. An independent took the remaining seat. Fidesz leader Viktor Orbán, who had served as prime minister from 1998 to 2002, reclaimed the post in May. In October local elections, the Fidesz-KDNP bloc carried 22 out of 23 major cities and all 19 county assemblies.

The new government used its dominance of the legislature to increase its control over other institutions during the year. Among other steps, it installed a Fidesz loyalist as president in August, passed a series of laws that threatened to establish political control over media content, and curtailed the jurisdiction of the Constitutional Court over budgetary matters in November, after the court attempted to block a retroactive tax law.

The government's discussions with its main creditors, the International Monetary Fund and the EU, collapsed in July after it refused to adhere to their prescribed budget cuts, leaving it without access to the remainder of its 2008 emergency loan. In December, the government pushed through legislation that effectively nationalized the assets in the country's system of compulsory private pension funds, allowing it to temporarily ease public debt problems.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Hungary is an electoral democracy. Voters elect representatives every four years to the 386-seat, unicameral National Assembly under a mixed system of proportional and direct representation. The National Assembly elects both the president and the prime minister. The president's duties are mainly ceremonial, but he can influence appointments and return legislation for further consideration before signing it into law. Elections in Hungary have been generally free and fair since the end of communist rule.

The main political parties have historically been the center-left MSzP and the conservative Fidesz. However, the MSzP was seriously weakened in the April 2010 elections, leaving the new Fidesz government with little parliamentary opposition. Hungary's constitution guarantees the right of ethnic minorities to form self-governing bodies, and all 13 recognized minorities have done so. Despite their large population, Roma hold just four seats in the current National Assembly.

The country lacks a comprehensive anticorruption policy, and a number of regional organizations noted in 2010 that corruption seemed to be on the rise. In November, the Fidesz government announced plans to disband the independent Fiscal Council, which is responsible for overseeing budgetary policy. Former MSzP politician János Zsúchlag was sentenced in March to eight and a half years in prison for embezzling \$356,800 in state funds, and a special commissioner appointed by Prime Minister Viktor Orbán investigated a number of cases of alleged corruption by officials from previous governments. A law providing whistle-blower protections took effect in April. Hungary was ranked 50 out of 178 countries surveyed in Transparency International's 2010 Corruption Perceptions Index.

Freedom of speech is generally respected, and independent media operate freely. However, Orbán's government in June 2010 amended a February law that had

criminalized Holocaust denial, effectively replacing it with a more general ban on denial of the crimes of both the Nazis and Hungary's communist regime. The offense carries penalties of up to three years in prison. Also in June, the Fidesz government announced a package of media legislation that, after passing through the parliament over the subsequent months, threatened to tighten government control over print, broadcast, and online media. The overhaul merged existing regulatory bodies into a single entity, the National Media and Infocommunications Authority (NMHH), and created a Media Council under the NMHH that would have the power to impose fines of up to \$950,000 on outlets for violations of vaguely defined content rules. Media outlets must register with the NMHH, which can revoke licenses for infractions. Fidesz, with its parliamentary supermajority, controlled appointments to the Media Council, whose members serve nine-year terms. The council's president, who is directly appointed by the prime minister, nominates the heads of all public media outlets for approval by a Fidesz-dominated board of trustees. Fidesz also removed an article from Hungary's constitution that banned media monopolies. While foreign ownership of Hungarian media is extensive, domestic ownership is highly concentrated in the hands of Fidesz allies. In November, the government passed a law that will force journalists to reveal their sources for articles concerning national security or public safety issues.

The constitution guarantees religious freedom and provides for the separation of church and state. While adherents of all religions are generally free to worship, the state provides financial support to four "historical" religious groups: the Roman Catholic Church, the Calvinist Church, the Lutheran Church, and the Alliance of Hungarian Jewish Communities. The state generally does not restrict academic freedom.

The constitution provides for freedoms of assembly and association, and the government typically respects these rights in practice. Nongovernmental organizations operate without restrictions. The government recognizes workers' rights to form associations, strike, and petition public authorities. Trade unions represent less than 30 percent of the workforce.

Hungary has an independent judiciary. Courts are generally fair, but the judiciary has in recent years faced criticism for lax regulations on judges' asset statements and conflicts of interest. Significant progress had been made in bringing the system up to EU standards, though case processing remains slow and transparency is weak. In October 2010, the Constitutional Court rejected a government-backed law imposing a 98 percent retroactive tax on public sector severance payments exceeding 2 million forints (\$10,200). The government responded in November by amending the constitution to curtail the court's jurisdiction over budgetary and taxation matters and passing the tax law a second time.

Prisons are generally approaching Western European standards, though overcrowding, inadequate medical care, and poor sanitation remain problems. Inmates do not have access to independent medical staff to assess abuse allegations.

Hungary has taken a number of steps to improve monitoring of Romany legal rights and treatment, but the community still faces widespread discrimination. Romany children continue to be segregated in schools and improperly placed in schools for students with mental disabilities. A total of nine Roma were murdered in apparent hate crimes in 2009 and 2010, and the government has faced interna-

tional criticism for failing to respond adequately. The authorities took a full year to charge four men arrested in August 2009 for a string of murders and other violence against Roma that began in July 2008, and their cases had not gone to trial by the end of 2010.

The Constitutional Court in April 2010 postponed implementation of a new civil code passed in 2009 that banned plenary guardianship for the disabled and granted them more independence. A lawmaker had petitioned the court, arguing that more time was needed to prepare for the new rules to take effect.

Same-sex couples can legally register their partnerships. However, homosexuals remain a target of discrimination and occasional violence. Women possess the same legal rights as men, but they face hiring discrimination and tend to be underrepresented in high-level business and government positions. Women hold only 35 of 386 seats in the National Assembly. An October 2010 UN Human Rights Committee report criticized Hungary for its failure to adopt adequate legislation outlawing domestic abuse and spousal rape. Hungary remains a transit point, source, and destination for trafficked persons, including women trafficked for prostitution.

Iceland

Political Rights: 1

Population: 320,000

Civil Liberties: 1

Capital: Reykjavik

Status: Free

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline For Year Under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)



Overview: In October 2010, thousands assembled to express their frustration with the country's slow economic recovery after a credit crisis triggered an economic collapse in 2008. Several members of parliament, including former prime minister Geir Haarde, were implicated in the Icesave banking crash that crippled Iceland's economy. Meanwhile, parliament passed an unprecedented initiative in June, mandating the adoption of stringent free speech and press freedom laws.

Iceland gained independence from Denmark in 1944. It became a founding member of NATO in 1949, despite having no standing army. The country declared itself a nuclear-free zone in 1985. Davið Oddsson of the center-right Independence Party (IP), first elected prime minister in 1991, finally stepped down in 2004. He was succeeded by Halldór Ásgrímsson of the Progressive Party (PP), the coalition partner of the IP. After a poor government showing in local elections, Ásgrímsson resigned the premiership in favor of the IP's Geir Haarde in June 2006.

The ruling coalition broke up following May 2007 parliamentary elections, in which the IP took 25 seats and the PP slipped to 7 in the 63-seat legislature. The IP then formed a new coalition with the center-left Social Democratic Alliance (SDA),

which held 18 seats, and Haarde returned as prime minister. A credit crisis forced the government to nationalize three large banks in 2008, resulting in widespread protests and Prime Minister Haarde's resignation on January 26, 2009.

In February, Jóhanna Sigurðardóttir of the SDA was named interim prime minister. Her center-left coalition, consisting of the SDA and the Left-Green Movement, captured 34 of 63 seats in early parliamentary elections in April 2009, marking the first time leftist parties have held a majority in Iceland. The elections also resulted in the highest number of first-time members and the largest percentage of women in parliament in Iceland's history. A government shakeup in September 2010 reduced the number of cabinet seats from 12 to 10.

In a bizarre outcome during May 2010 local elections, the Best Party, which is made up of comedians promising to distribute free towels at swimming pools and build an amusement park in the airport, won 6 of the 15 seats on the Reykjavik city council. The party's success was widely viewed as the public's rejection of traditional politics.

For several days in October, approximately 8,000 demonstrators gathered in front of parliament to protest the government's perceived failure to protect citizens from the economic collapse of 2008, specifically in the area of housing foreclosures. The protests were largely peaceful, though minor injuries were sustained by protestors and police officers, and some property damage occurred.

While the majority of Icelanders remain opposed to European Union (EU) membership, the country opened EU accession negotiations in July 2009. Elections for a constitutional assembly, to be convened for the purpose of revising the constitution, took place in November 2010. Some 500 individuals competed for a seat on the 25-member council. However, three unidentified parties challenged the legitimacy of the elections due to a lack of secrecy in voting stations, among other complaints. The validity of the elections remained under review by the Supreme Court at the year's end.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Iceland is an electoral democracy. Elections are free, fair, and competitive. The constitution, adopted in 1944, vests power in a president, a prime minister, the 63-seat unicameral legislature (the Althingi), and a judiciary. The president, whose duties are mostly ceremonial, is directly elected for a four-year term. The legislature is also elected for four years, but it can be dissolved for early elections in certain circumstances, as was the case in 2009. The prime minister is appointed by the president but responsible to the legislature. Ólafur Ragnar Grímsson was reelected as president in the 2008 elections. The center-right IP dominated politics since the country's independence until May 2009, when Jóhanna Sigurðardóttir's center-left coalition took power. Six major political parties and several smaller parties are represented in the Althingi.

Corruption is generally not a problem for Iceland, although it has experienced politically tinged business-fraud scandals in recent years. In May 2010, Steinunn Valdís Óskarsdóttir of the SDA stepped down after it was revealed that she had accepted large corporate donations for her 2006 campaign. A number of bankers—including former director of Kaupthing Iceland, Ingolfur Helgason—were arrested throughout 2010 in connection with the Icesave banking crash in 2008. Several

members of parliament were also implicated in the crash, including former prime minister Geir Haarde and three other high-level ministers. Haarde could face trial at the Landsdómur, the never-before convened high court established in 1905 to hear cases brought by the Althingi against members of parliament. Iceland was ranked 11 out of 178 countries surveyed in Transparency International's 2010 Corruption Perceptions Index.

The constitution guarantees freedom of speech and of the press. On June 17, 2010, parliament unanimously passed the Icelandic Modern Media Initiative, which mandates the establishment of stringent free speech and press freedom laws with a focus on the protection of investigative journalists and media outlets. Iceland's wide range of print publications includes both independent and party-affiliated newspapers. The autonomous Icelandic National Broadcasting Service competes with private radio and television stations. Private media ownership is concentrated, with the Norðurljós (Northern Lights) Corporation controlling most of the private television and radio outlets and two of the three national newspapers. Internet access is unrestricted.

The constitution provides for freedom of religion, though nearly 90 percent of Icelanders belong to the Evangelical Lutheran Church. The state supports the church through a special tax, which citizens can choose to direct to the University of Iceland instead. A 2008 law requires the teaching of theology in grades 1-10. Academic freedom is respected, and the education system is free of excessive political involvement.

Freedoms of association and peaceful assembly are generally upheld. Large-scale peaceful protests occurred in October 2010 against government economic policies and failure to protect Icelanders from housing foreclosures. Many nongovernmental organizations operate freely and enjoy extensive government cooperation. The labor movement is robust, with over 80 percent of all eligible workers belonging to unions. All unions have the right to strike.

The judiciary is independent. The law does not provide for trial by jury, but many trials and appeals use panels of several judges. The constitution states that all people shall be treated equally before the law, regardless of sex, religion, opinion, ethnic origin, race, property, or other status. However, the charter does not specifically prohibit racial discrimination in other contexts. Prison conditions generally meet international standards.

The Act on Foreigners was amended in 2004 to allow home searches without warrants in cases of suspected immigration fraud, among other changes. Foreigners can vote in municipal elections if they have been residents for at least five years, or three years for citizens of Scandinavian countries. In September 2010, a father and son of Cuban origin who had held Icelandic citizenship for more than a decade fled the country after intense racially motivated intimidation. Approximately 1,000 people gathered for an antiracism rally on September 20 in response to the threats received by the family.

Women enjoy equal rights, and more than 80 percent of women participate in the workforce. However, a pay gap exists between men and women despite laws designed to prevent disparities. In 2009, Sigurðardóttir became Iceland's first female prime minister and the world's first openly homosexual head of state. Women hold nearly 43 percent of seats in the parliament, the highest number in the country's

history, and Iceland topped the World Economic Forum's 2010 ratings on gender equality. The government participates in the Nordic-Baltic Action Group against Human Trafficking. A committee was appointed in 2008 to develop new strategies to combat human trafficking in Iceland, and in April 2009, parliament passed a law criminalizing human trafficking.

India

Political Rights: 2

Population: 1,188,800,000

Civil Liberties: 3

Capital: New Delhi

Status: Free

Note: The numerical ratings and status listed above do not reflect conditions in Indian-controlled Kashmir, which is examined in a separate report.

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline For Year Under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
2,3F									

Overview: The Congress Party-led coalition government considered several reforms aimed at poverty alleviation and social development in 2010. The entry into force of the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act in April marked the first time that the right to education was legally guaranteed to children throughout the country. While the year was relatively peaceful, ongoing Maoist and separatist insurgencies, lawlessness, and human rights violations continued to plague a number of states.

India achieved independence from Britain in 1947. The centrist, secular Congress Party ruled at the federal level for nearly all of the first 50 years of independence. In the 1990s, however, the Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) became a major factor in Parliament, leading a number of subsequent governments. In addition, the pattern shifted from single-party to coalition governments, typically involving large numbers of parties and an increasingly important role for parties based in a single state. The 1990s also featured major economic reform, with a Congress government initiating a shift toward market-oriented policies following a balance-of-payments crisis in 1991.

The BJP, which had held power since 1998, was unexpectedly defeated after calling early national elections in 2004. The Congress Party formed a ruling coalition with a number of regional parties, but Congress leader Sonia Gandhi decided to hand the premiership to former finance minister Manmohan Singh. The new, Congress-led United Progressive Alliance (UPA) government agreed to reverse several of the previous government's policies, including controversial antiterrorism legislation and the injection of Hindu nationalist ideology into state-run schools. However, the UPA faced internal rifts and pressure from leftist allies

over economic issues such as privatization and labor law reform. The government survived a contentious July 2008 confidence vote in Parliament triggered by leftist objections to a nuclear pact with the United States, though the vote was marred by bribery allegations.

The UPA gained strength in the April-May 2009 parliamentary elections, decisively defeating the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance, which remained its closest rival. Congress itself won 206 of 543 lower-house seats, compared with 116 for the BJP, and the UPA won 260 seats overall. Moreover, the coalition made alliances with several independent parties, eventually giving it a majority of 322 seats.

Congress's electoral victory led to a more stable government, and India's success in weathering the global financial crisis that began in late 2008 weakened calls for additional free-market economic reforms. In 2010, the government focused on measures designed to bolster existing legal protections and benefits for the poor and other vulnerable groups. In April 2010, the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act took effect, making education a fundamental right for every child in India between the ages of 6 and 14. The act also reserved 25 percent of the seats in private schools for disadvantaged children. Lawmakers also drafted a National Food Security Bill, which seeks to ensure that poor families receive monthly quotas of wheat and rice grains, as well as other benefits related to food access. At year's end, the government was in consultations with civil society groups to agree on the bill's final provisions.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: India is an electoral democracy. Members of the lower house of Parliament, the 545-seat Lok Sabha (House of the People), are directly elected for five-year terms (except for two appointed members representing Indians of European descent). The Lok Sabha determines the leadership and composition of the government. Most members of the less powerful 250-seat upper house, the Rajya Sabha (Council of States), are elected by the state legislatures using a proportional representation system to serve staggered six-year terms; up to 12 members are appointed. Executive power is vested in a prime minister and cabinet. The president, who plays a largely symbolic role as head of state, is chosen for a five-year term by state and national lawmakers.

Under the supervision of the Election Commission of India (ECI), elections in India have generally been free and fair. The 2009 national polls were mostly peaceful, though Maoist militant attacks in parts of the country led to 17 deaths during the first phase of voting. Electronic voting machines, also used in 2004, have helped reduce election day irregularities. Violence has also declined during state-level elections, which were held in Andhra Pradesh, Orissa, Sikkim, Arunachal Pradesh, Maharashtra, and Haryana in 2009, and Bihar in 2010. Incumbents retained power in all of the votes. Badly maintained voter lists and the intimidation of voters in some areas continue to be matters of concern, although the ECI has made efforts to make voter lists available online. A wide range of political parties operate freely. Due to the rising popularity of parties based in a single state, coalition governments have become the norm at the national level.

Political corruption continues to plague government efficiency in India. Transparency International's 2010 Corruption Perceptions Index ranked India 87 out of 178 countries surveyed, while the latest survey by Political and Economic Risk

Consultancy ranked India's bureaucracy as the worst in Asia. Legal limits on electoral spending are invariably exceeded, with campaigns drawing on large amounts of "black money" obtained through tax evasion and other means. Misdirection of funds meant for public goods and social programs has undermined overall progress on development. Though politicians and civil servants are regularly caught accepting such bribes or engaging in other corrupt behavior, a great deal of corruption goes unnoticed and unpunished. The federal government has introduced a number of initiatives to address the problem, such as the 2005 Right to Information Act, internet-based government services and information, and accountability and transparency agreements between organizations and individuals, known as citizen charters. The Right to Information Act has reportedly been used heavily and successfully to improve transparency, although many information requests are still denied because of poor record keeping by government agencies, and broad restrictions on the release of information remain in place. In January 2010, a right to information activist responsible for exposing several corrupt land deals was attacked and killed by unidentified assailants. A system of "social audits" was intended to allow individuals and independent monitors to assess the public utility of government programs, but many reports indicate that local government officials distrust the program and attempt to thwart the inquiries.

India's private media are vigorous and diverse. Investigations and scrutiny of politicians in print, online, and television outlets—as well as linkages with human rights groups, other civil society organizations, and government bodies tasked with responding to problems through the political process—make the news media one of the most important components of India's democracy. While radio remains dominated by the state and private stations are not allowed to air news content, the television and print sectors have expanded considerably in recent years, with many of the new outlets targeting specific regional or linguistic audiences. Despite this vibrant media landscape, journalists, creative writers, and human rights defenders continue to face a number of constraints. The government sometimes uses its power under the Official Secrets Act to censor security-related articles. Authorities have also on occasion used other security laws, criminal defamation legislation, hate-speech laws, and contempt of court charges to curb critical voices.

Journalists remain subject to physical intimidation. On a number of occasions during 2010, reporters were attacked, threatened, or detained by police, local authorities, insurgents, or right-wing groups. Members of the press are particularly vulnerable in rural areas and insurgency-racked states such as Chhattisgarh, Kashmir, Assam, and Manipur. In May, for instance, newspaper journalist Biranjan Mallick was beaten in Orissa by a local elected leader and his supporters for publishing an article alleging financial irregularities in the area's implementation of the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA). Incidents of attacks or harassment aimed at journalists in Orissa reportedly increased during the year. Perpetrators of violence against journalists in India are rarely punished in practice.

Internet access is largely unrestricted, although some states have passed legislation that requires internet cafes to register with the state government and maintain user registries. Under Indian internet crime law, the burden is on website operators to demonstrate their innocence. Potentially inflammatory books, films, and internet sites are occasionally banned or censored.

Freedom of religion is constitutionally guaranteed in India and is generally respected. However, legislation in several states criminalizes religious conversions that take place as a result of "force" or "allurement," and impunity for violence against religious minorities is not uncommon. Hindus of various ethnicities make up over 80 percent of the population, but the state is secular. An array of Hindu nationalist organizations and some local media outlets promote antiminority views. In September 2010, the Allahabad High Court issued a decision in a high-profile case stemming from the 1992 destruction of a 16th-century mosque in Ayodhya by Hindus who claimed it was built on a Hindu holy site. The court ruled that the land should be divided, with one-third going to a Muslim organization and two-thirds set aside for use by Hindus. Reactions to the decision were notably muted, and it did not trigger religious violence, but lawyers for both sides filed appeals.

Academic freedom is generally quite robust, though intimidation of professors and institutions over political and religious issues sometimes occurs. Scholars and activists accused of sympathizing with Maoist insurgents have reportedly faced increased pressure from the authorities.

There are some restrictions on freedoms of assembly and association. Section 144 of the criminal procedure code empowers the authorities to restrict free assembly and impose curfews; officials occasionally use it to prevent demonstrations. Police and hired thugs sometimes beat, arbitrarily detain, or otherwise harass villagers and members of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) who protest forced relocation from the sites of development projects. In May 2010, police officers injured more than a hundred villagers in Baliththa, Orissa, who had been protesting since January against the government's decision to allow a South Korean company to set up factories in the area, which would displace local residents.

Human rights organizations generally operate freely. However, they have expressed concern about threats, legal harassment, the use of excessive force by police, and occasionally lethal violence. In July 2010, activist and lawyer Amit Jethwa was shot and killed in Gujarat, after filing a lawsuit that implicated local political figures in illegal mining; one of those he accused was later arrested and charged with organizing the murder. In December, civil liberties activist Binayak Sen was convicted of sedition and sentenced to life in prison for his peaceful opposition to government counterinsurgency tactics used against Maoist rebels. Foreign monitors are occasionally denied visas to conduct research trips to India on human rights issues.

Workers in the formal economy regularly exercise their rights to bargain collectively and strike. However, the Essential Services Maintenance Act enables the government to ban strikes in certain industries and limits public servants' right to strike. Article 23 of the Indian constitution bans human trafficking, and bonded labor is illegal, but the practice is fairly common across the country. Estimates of the number of affected workers range from 20 to 50 million. Children younger than 14 are banned from working in potentially hazardous industries, including domestic servitude and positions at hotels, restaurants, or roadside food stalls, though in practice the law is routinely flouted. In July 2010, the Ministry of Labor initiated a five-year program aimed at eliminating child labor and trafficking.

The judiciary is independent of the executive branch. Judges have displayed considerable activism in response to public-interest litigation on official corruption,

environmental issues, and other matters. However, in recent years, judges have initiated several contempt of court cases against activists and journalists who expose judicial corruption or question verdicts. Contempt of court laws were reformed in 2006 to make truth a defense with respect to allegations against judges, provided the information is in the public and national interest.

At the end of 2010, lawyer Prashant Bhushan was facing contempt-of-court proceedings for asserting in September that many of India's recent Supreme Court judges have been corrupt. Rejecting offers to resolve the case with an apology, he indicated that he would test his claims in court. In 2009, following a public debate over judicial accountability, India's 29 Supreme Court justices announced that they would disclose their assets publicly on the court's website.

The lower levels of the judiciary in particular are reportedly rife with corruption, and most citizens have great difficulty securing justice through the courts. The system is severely backlogged and understaffed, with millions of civil and criminal cases pending. This leads to lengthy pretrial detention for a large number of suspects, many of whom remain in jail beyond the duration of any sentence they might receive if convicted. To help address the problem, the government has proposed establishing thousands of village courts to hear cases in rural areas.

Despite legal reforms in recent years, the criminal justice system still generally fails to provide equal protection to minorities, lower castes, and tribal members. Muslims, who make up some 14 percent of the population, are underrepresented in the security forces as well as in the foreign and intelligence services.

Particularly in rural India, informal caste councils or Muslim religious leaders often issue edicts concerning marriage, divorce, and other social customs. While these bodies play a role in relieving the overburdened official courts, their edicts sometimes result in violence or persecution aimed at those perceived to have transgressed social norms, especially women and members of the lower castes.

Police often torture or abuse suspects to extract confessions or bribes. The police also suffer from understaffing; according to a 2009 Human Rights Watch report, there is one officer for every 1,037 civilians—half of Asia's average and less than a third of the global average of one officer for every 333 civilians. Custodial rape of female detainees continues to be a problem, as does routine abuse of ordinary prisoners, particularly minorities and members of the lower castes. Between 2001 and March 2009, there were 1,184 reported deaths in police custody, nearly all of which were caused by torture, according to the Asian Centre for Human Rights. The group estimated that the actual number of deaths is far greater. The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) is headed by a retired Supreme Court judge and handles roughly 80,000 complaints each year. However, while it monitors abuses, initiates investigations, makes independent assessments, and conducts training sessions for the police and others, its recommendations are often not implemented, and it has few enforcement powers. The commission also lacks jurisdiction over the armed forces, which severely hampers its effectiveness.

Security forces operating in the context of regional insurgencies continue to be implicated in extrajudicial killings, rape, torture, arbitrary detention, kidnappings, and destruction of homes. The criminal procedure code requires the federal or relevant state government to approve prosecution of security force members, but such approval is rarely granted, leading to impunity for personnel implicated

in human rights abuses. The Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA) grants security forces broad authority to arrest, detain, and use force against suspects in restive areas; civil society organizations and multiple UN human rights bodies have called for the act to be repealed. Security forces also continue to hold suspects under the National Security Act, which authorizes detention without charge for up to one year, as well as the Unlawful Activities Prevention Act. In response to spiraling Maoist-related violence, the Chhattisgarh state government passed the Special Public Protection Act in 2006, with broad language allowing three-year detentions for "unlawful activities" and criminalizing the provision of support to the rebels, even if under duress.

The spread and growth of the Maoist insurgency in recent years has been of serious concern to the government. There were 1,180 Maoist-related deaths across nine states in 2010, including those of over 600 civilians, according to the South Asia Terrorism Portal (SATP). In an April 2010 raid in Chhattisgarh, Maoist fighters killed some 75 policemen, making it one of their deadliest attacks to date. Among other abuses, the rebels have allegedly imposed illegal taxes, seized food and shelter, and engaged in abduction and forced recruitment of children and adults. Local civilians who are perceived to be progovernment have been targeted by the Maoists. Tens of thousands of civilians have been displaced by the violence and live in government-run camps.

Separately, in India's seven northeastern states, more than 40 insurgent factions—seeking either greater autonomy or complete independence for their ethnic or tribal groups—attacked security forces and engaged in intertribal violence. Such fighters have been implicated in numerous bombings, killings, abductions, and rapes of civilians, and they also operate extensive extortion networks. However, the number of killings of civilians, security personnel, and militants in the northeastern insurgencies fell sharply to 322 in 2010, compared with 852 in 2009, according to the SATP.

The constitution bars discrimination based on caste, and laws set aside quotas in education and government jobs for the so-called scheduled tribes, scheduled castes (Dalits), and other backward classes (OBCs). Women and religious and ethnic minorities are represented in national and local government; as of 2010, the president was a woman, the vice president was a Muslim, the prime minister was a Sikh, and the Speaker of the Lok Sabha was a Dalit woman. However, members of the lower castes and minorities continue to face routine unofficial discrimination and violence. The worst abuse is experienced by the country's 160 million Dalits, who are often denied access to land and other public amenities, abused by landlords and police, punished by village councils or members of the upper castes for alleged social transgressions, and forced to work in miserable conditions. A government proposal to reserve an extra 27 percent of places in universities and technical institutes for OBCs—taking the total portion of reserved slots to 49.5 percent—was approved in 2008. Indian Muslims are disproportionately more likely to be poor and illiterate, and less likely to have access to government employment, medical care, or loans.

Property rights are somewhat tenuous for tribal groups and other marginalized communities, and members of these groups are often denied adequate resettlement opportunities and compensation when their lands are seized for development proj-

ects. While many states have laws to prevent land transfers to nontribal groups, the practice is widespread, according to a 2008 Asian Indigenous and Tribal People's Network report. The 2006 Forest Rights Act gave tribal groups ownership rights over forestland they farmed, though some reports have suggested that the law has not been effectively implemented.

Each year, several thousand women are killed or driven to suicide, and countless others are abused or deserted by husbands, in the context of domestic disputes. Rape and other violence against women are serious problems, and lower-caste and tribal women are particularly vulnerable. Despite the criminalization of dowry demands and hundreds of convictions each year, the practice continues. A 2006 law banned dowry-related harassment, widened the definition of domestic violence to include emotional or verbal abuse, and criminalized spousal rape. However, reports released in 2009 by the Delhi-based Lawyers' Collective indicated that enforcement of the law was poor in many states. So-called honor killings, in which women are murdered by relatives for perceived sexual or moral transgressions, remain a problem, especially in the northwestern states of Punjab and Haryana.

Muslim personal-status laws and traditional Hindu practices discriminate against women in terms of inheritance, adoption, and property rights. The malign neglect of female children after birth remains a concern, as does the banned but growing use of prenatal sex-determination tests to selectively abort female fetuses. These trends have contributed to a significant imbalance in the male-female birth ratios in a number of states. In 2008, the government announced an award of nearly \$3,000 for families that raise female children. The trafficking of women and children to, from, and within India—primarily for prostitution and forced labor—remains a significant problem.

In a landmark decision in July 2009, a court scrapped colonial-era laws that banned homosexual behavior. The laws had contributed to the harassment of gay men and the NGOs that work with them, according to Human Rights Watch, and the court ruling came after a protracted campaign against the statutes by rights groups. Gay activist groups organize openly, despite harassment and occasional violence.

Indonesia

Political Rights: 2

Population: 235,500,000

Civil Liberties: 3

Capital: Jakarta

Status: Free

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline For Year Under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

2001 3,4PF	2002 3,4PF	2003 3,4PF	2004 3,4PF	2005 2,3PF	2006 2,3F	2007 2,3F	2008 2,3F	2009 2,3F	2010 2,3F
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Overview: President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono's parliamentary support weakened in 2010, with a majority voting in March that there were significant irregularities surrounding a controversial 2008 bank bailout. The subsequent resignation of Finance Minister Sri Muly-

ani, a target of the parliamentary inquiry, was an apparent attempt to avoid an impeachment effort against Vice President Boediono. Security forces in February raided a jihadi training camp in Aceh, and in March killed terrorism suspect Dulmatin, who was wanted for his alleged involvement in a 2002 Bali bombing that killed 202 people. A case against two deputy chairmen of the country's anticorruption commission, which had been dropped in 2009 after the exposure of an apparent conspiracy by police and prosecutors to undermine the commission, was revived during the year. However, the attorney general's office announced its intention to legally drop the case for the "sake of public interest" in late October. Violence against the Ahmadiyya minority sect continued in 2010, and there were several attacks on Christian churches. Separately, a Malukan political activist died in jail, allegedly due to torture and denial of treatment.

Indonesia declared independence from its Dutch colonial rulers in 1945, though the Netherlands did not recognize its sovereignty until 1949. The republic's first president, Sukarno, assumed authoritarian powers in 1957. The army, led by General Suharto, crushed an apparent Communist Party of Indonesia (PKI) coup attempt in 1965. Mass acts of violence followed, ostensibly against suspected PKI members, resulting in an estimated 500,000 deaths. With military backing, Suharto formally became president in 1968.

Suharto's regime created Golkar, a progovernment party based on bureaucratic and military interests, and embarked on a development program that helped the economy grow by an annual average of 7 percent for three decades. By the 1990s, Suharto's children and cronies were the major beneficiaries of state privatization schemes and, in many cases, ran business monopolies with little oversight. Soaring inflation and unemployment following the Asian financial crisis of 1997 prompted urban riots in 1998, and Suharto was forced to resign. He was succeeded by then vice president B. J. Habibie, who removed legal constraints on the press, labor unions, and political parties. Under Habibie, the province of East Timor voted to separate from Indonesia in a 1999 referendum and gained independence in 2002.

Also in 1999, Indonesia held its first free legislative elections since 1955. The Indonesian Democratic Party-Struggle (PDI-P), led by Sukarno's daughter, Megawati Sukarnoputri, won the largest number of seats, followed by Golkar. The People's Consultative Assembly, made up of elected lawmakers and appointed officials, chose Muslim leader Abdurrahman Wahid as president and Megawati as vice president that year, but Megawati rose to the presidency in 2001 after Wahid was impeached over corruption allegations. Support for the PDI-P dropped in the 2004 legislative elections, and Golkar once again became the largest party. Later that year, Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono (SBY) of the new Democratic Party and his running mate, Jusuf Kalla of Golkar, won the presidency and vice presidency in the country's first direct presidential election.

The Democratic Party won the April 2009 parliamentary elections, raising its share of seats to 148, from 55 in 2004. Golkar garnered 106 seats, and the PDI-P took 94. Religious parties generally fared poorly, though the Prosperous Justice Party (PKS), with its strong anticorruption platform, captured 57 seats. SBY easily secured a second five-year term in the July presidential election, defeating Megawati

and Kalla with 61 percent of the vote in the first round. SBY's new running mate, former central bank governor Boediono, became vice president.

Public awareness of the extent of corruption in the legal system and attempts to weaken anticorruption efforts grew in 2010 and diluted SBY's reformist credentials. In 2009, two deputy chairmen of the Corruption Eradication Commission (KPK) were arrested for extortion based on the accusations of businessman Anggodo Widjojo. However, wiretap recordings revealed an apparent conspiracy in the national police and the attorney general's office to frame the two commissioners and discredit the KPK, and the case was dropped. In August 2010, Widjojo was convicted of attempting to bribe the two deputy chairmen. Despite Widjojo's conviction, the Supreme Court in October overturned the 2009 decision to drop the extortion case against the deputies—citing insufficient justification for the original decision—and allowed the case to be reopened. Later in October, in a move widely seen as an attempt to fix its reputation, the attorney general's office announced it would not reopen the case despite the Supreme Court ruling and instead announced its intention to legally drop the case for the "sake of public interest." At year's end, the decision had not yet been formally signed by the incoming attorney general, who will require support from the DPR to implement the decision.

SBY's control over his parliamentary coalition weakened in 2010. Lawmakers voted in March to find that irregularities had occurred in the 2008 bailout of Bank Century, and recommended that law enforcement agencies investigate the matter. The case was widely seen as an attempt to undermine the administration by targeting the reformist finance minister, Sri Mulyani, and the vice president, who was governor of the central bank at the time of the bailout. Sri Mulyani resigned, apparently to head off an impeachment bid against Boediono, and took a position at the World Bank in June. Soon after her resignation, Golkar leader Aburizal Bakrie was appointed chairwoman of the progovernment coalition, and senior Golkar officials announced that they would not press for investigations into the bailout.

In February, police discovered a jihadi training camp in the northwestern province of Aceh that was allegedly headed by Dulmatin, a suspected terrorist leader wanted in connection with a 2002 Bali nightclub bombing that killed 202 people. Dulmatin was killed in a March raid by security forces, and more than 50 suspected members of his group were arrested in related operations. In August, radical cleric Abu Bakar Bashir was arrested for allegedly advising and funding the Aceh group. In December, six men were sentenced to seven to nine years for their involvement in the Aceh camp.

In the eastern region of Papua, where the central government's exploitation of natural resources has stirred resentment, prominent intellectuals, theologians, and tribal leaders from the Papuan People's Assembly (MRP) agreed in March to reject special autonomy status and call for a referendum on independence. The move came after the central government rejected out of hand an affirmative-action resolution by the MRP. Special autonomy had been introduced in 2001 to undercut separatist agitation; it provided for increased economic but not political autonomy. The Free Papua Movement (OPM) has waged a low-grade insurgency in the region since the early 1950s.

In July, the United States announced that it would resume relations with the Indonesian army's elite forces (KOPASSUS), which had been suspended since 1998.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Indonesia is an electoral democracy. In 2004, for the first time, Indonesians directly elected their president and all members of the House of Representatives (DPR), as well as members of a new legislative body, the House of Regional Representatives (DPD). Previously, presidents had been elected by the People's Consultative Assembly (MPR), then made up of elected lawmakers and appointed officials. The MPR now performs tasks involving the swearing in and dismissal of presidents and the amendment of the constitution, and consists of elected DPR and DPD members. The DPR, which expanded from 550 seats in 2004 to 560 in 2009, is the main parliamentary chamber. The 132-member DPD is responsible for proposing and monitoring laws related to regional autonomy. Presidents and vice presidents can serve up to two five-year terms, and all legislators also serve five-year terms.

Parties or coalitions must attain 25 percent of the popular vote or 20 percent of the seats in the DPR to nominate candidates for president. Voters for the DPR can select either a party list or an individual candidate, but candidates are seated based on the number of direct votes they receive. The changes, introduced in 2008, were designed to increase lawmakers' accountability to voters and reduce the power of party bosses. The 2009 elections yielded a significant turnover in the DPR's membership, with approximately 75 percent of the chamber consisting of new lawmakers. Several parties protested against the revised Law on Political Parties (Law No. 2/2008), passed in December 2010, charging that it is biased against smaller parties.

Staggered, direct elections for regional leaders began in 2005 and have generally been considered free and fair. Independent candidates were allowed to contest local elections for the first time in 2008, although Aceh's 2006 governance law had already allowed independent candidates there as part of an effort to cement a 2005 peace agreement with the separatist Free Aceh Movement (GAM) militant group by integrating former GAM members into the political process.

Corruption remains endemic, including in the parliament and other key institutions. Indonesia was ranked 110 out of 178 countries surveyed in Transparency International's 2010 Corruption Perceptions Index. The KPK's success in a series of high-profile cases has raised public expectations that acts of corruption, even by senior officials, will be punished. In May 2010, four members of parliament were convicted of receiving bribes related to the 2004 election of a senior deputy governor of the central bank; 26 other lawmakers remained suspects. In June, former justice minister Yusril Ihza Mahendra was named as a suspect in a \$46 million embezzlement case involving the ministry's website.

Critics have accused entrenched elites of attempting to weaken anticorruption bodies, citing the alleged conspiracy against the KPK that was revealed in 2009, as well as a 2009 anticorruption law that diluted the authority and independence of the KPK and the Anticorruption Court (Tipikor), where cases brought by the KPK are tried. In addition, those convicted often receive weak sentences or benefit from mass pardons on certain holidays.

Pervasive corruption in the legal system was highlighted again in 2010, when former chief detective Susno Duadji turned whistle-blower and accused the national police of large-scale case-brokering activities. Soon after the revelations, Susno Duadji himself was named as a graft suspect. In July, an anticorruption activist involved in a report on suspiciously large bank accounts belonging to police generals

was brutally beaten. The assailants had not been identified by year's end. However, in a move that was expected to strengthen antigraft efforts, the DPR in October passed a law on money laundering that allows the KPK to receive graft allegations directly from the Financial Transaction Report and Analysis Center (PPATK) rather than through the police. Separately, in February, former KPK chairman Antasari Azhar was found guilty of planning the murder of a businessman and received an 18-year prison sentence.

Indonesia is home to a vibrant and diverse media environment, though press freedom remains hampered by a number of legal and regulatory restrictions. There is a large independent media sector, but strict licensing rules mean that thousands of television and radio stations operate illegally. Foreign journalists are not authorized to travel to the restive provinces of Papua and West Papua without special permission. Reporters often practice self-censorship to avoid running afoul of civil and criminal libel laws. In addition to legal obstacles, reporters sometimes face violence and intimidation, which in many cases goes unpunished. In July 2010, three Molotov cocktails were thrown at the offices of *Tempo* magazine, which had recently reported on corruption within the national police. In August, an Ambon-based reporter was killed while covering a clash between two villages. The Alliance of Independent Journalists reported that it had documented over 40 cases of violence against journalists between August 2009 and August 2010.

The 2008 Law on Electronic Information and Transactions (ITE) extended libel and other restrictions to the internet and online media, criminalizing the distribution or accessibility of information or documents that are, "contrary to the moral norms of Indonesia," or related to gambling, blackmail, or defamation. Violators face a possible six-year prison sentence. In October 2010, the Supreme Court overturned a 2009 civil defamation ruling against Prita Mulyasari, who had complained to friends via e-mail about a hospital where she had been a patient. She had also faced criminal charges under the ITE law, but was acquitted in late 2009.

Indonesia officially recognizes Islam, Protestantism, Roman Catholicism, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Confucianism. Members of unrecognized religions have difficulty obtaining national identity cards. Atheism is not accepted, and the criminal code contains provisions against blasphemy, penalizing those who "distort" or "misrepresent" official faiths. The national government has often failed to respond to religious intolerance in recent years, and societal discrimination has increased. An October 2010 report by the Indonesian Survey Institute (LSI) found that 57.8 percent of survey respondents opposed the construction of non-Muslim places of worship. A 2006 joint ministerial decree requires religious groups seeking to build houses of worship to obtain the written approval of 60 immediate neighbors.

The LSI report also showed that 30.2 percent of respondents—up from 13.9 percent in 2005—were in favor of violence against Ahmadiyya, a heterodox Islamic sect with 400,000 Indonesian followers. In July, protesters who included members of militant Islamist organizations attempted to forcibly close a West Java Ahmadiyya mosque and clashed with local Ahmadis. In October, a Lombok district head announced that Ahmadis displaced following the communal conflict in 2006 would be relocated to a deserted island to pacify local unrest. Also that month, two separate attacks on Ahmadiyya mosques and homes took place in Ciampea and Cisalada. Discrimination and violence against Ahmadiyya have increased since 2008, when

the Religious Affairs Department recommended that the group be banned, and the government, seeking a compromise, instead barred Ahmadis from proselytizing. In August 2010 and again in September, the religious affairs minister announced his intention to ban Ahmadiyya outright. Separately, violence between Christians and Muslims in Poso continued to decrease in 2010, though underlying grievances and low public confidence in the government remained unaddressed. Several attacks against churches took place during 2010. In September, two church leaders were injured during a confrontation between Protestants and Muslims in Bekasi; a leader of the Islamic Defenders Front and 12 others awaited trial at year's end. A report released in November by the International Crisis Group noted that growing religious intolerance and fears of "Christianization" have been the cause of recent violent disputes.

Academic freedom in Indonesia is generally respected. In October 2010, the Constitutional Court ruled that the authority of the attorney general's office to ban books under a 1963 law was unconstitutional. However, book banning and other censorship can still take place after due process of law. Censorship is fairly common. In August, a Jakarta court declined to lift a 2009 ban on a film about the 1975 deaths of five Australian reporters in East Timor at the hands of the Indonesian military. In October, a television documentary on the sex trade in prisons was pulled before broadcast, allegedly on orders from the Ministry of Justice and Human Rights.

Freedom of assembly is usually upheld, and peaceful protests are commonplace in the capital. However, two separate riots resulted in several deaths in April 2010, and police used live fire against crowds on at least two occasions during the year. Authorities have restricted the right to assembly in conflict areas. Flag-raising ceremonies and independence rallies in Papua are routinely disbanded, and participants have been prosecuted.

Indonesia hosts a strong and active array of civil society organizations, though some human rights groups are subject to monitoring and interference by the government. Moreover, independence activists in Papua and the Maluku Islands, and labor and political activists in Java and Sulawesi, remain targets for human rights abuses. In September 2010, a Malukan political activist who was jailed in 2007 for raising a separatist flag died after allegedly suffering beatings and denial of medical treatment in prison. The chairman of the Commission for Missing Persons and Victims of Violence noted in October that jailed members of a separatist group in Maluku had been tortured, and that many had been jailed without a warrant. No high-level official has been convicted in the assassination of Munir Said Thalib, a prominent rights activist who died of arsenic poisoning in 2004, or for any serious human rights violation since the fall of Suharto.

Workers can join independent unions, bargain collectively, and with the exception of civil servants, stage strikes. The labor movement is generally fragmented and government enforcement of minimum wage and other labor standards is weak. However, relatively rigid labor laws—originally introduced in 2003—include generous severance pay and strike provisions. The government plans to amend the laws to promote investor confidence, but proposed revisions were not prioritized by parliament in time for the 2011 session. Domestic workers are currently excluded from labor law protections. An April 2010 report by Amnesty International estimated that 2.6 million female domestic workers are not protected under existing laws.

The judiciary, particularly the Constitutional Court, has demonstrated its independence in some cases, but the court system remains plagued by corruption and other weaknesses. The Supreme Court has been the slowest to reform among the country's judicial institutions. Low salaries for judicial officials and impunity for illegal activity perpetuate the problems of bribery, forced confessions, and interference in court proceedings by military personnel and government officials at all levels.

A number of districts began issuing local ordinances based on Sharia (Islamic law) in 2006. Many are unconstitutional, contradict international treaties to which Indonesia is a signatory, or are unclear, leading to enforcement problems. Rights violations by Sharia police, predominantly against women and minorities, have highlighted the problems of enforcement, particularly in Aceh. The national government and various parties have failed to take decisive action on the issue, apparently for political reasons. Many of the ordinances seek to enforce an Islamic dress code, Koranic literacy requirements, and bans on prostitution. For example, a bylaw passed in 2009 by the West Aceh legislature prohibits women from wearing trousers. Other measures are more extreme: in 2009, the Aceh provincial parliament passed legislation that, among other provisions, allows stoning for adultery and public lashing for homosexual acts. Other local regulations that are unrelated to Sharia have also been criticized for violating constitutional protections.

Members of the security forces regularly go unpunished for human rights violations. These include ongoing abuses in conflict zones like Papua, but they are largely related to land disputes and military involvement in illegal activities such as logging and mining. In 2009, the outgoing DPR dropped deliberations on a military justice bill that would have required soldiers to be tried in civilian courts for criminal offenses. Currently, information garnered through torture is permissible in Indonesian courts, and torture carried out by law enforcement is not a criminal offense. A graphic video released on the internet in October 2010 captured the abuse and torture of two Papuan villagers. The military confirmed that the men committing the torture were soldiers, but no arrests had been made by year's end. Separately, four soldiers were sentenced to several months in jail in November for another video filmed in March that showed the abuse of Papuan detainees. The military and government have been accused of using this so-called "red herring" trial to deflect attention from the October torture video, which was much more serious in nature than the March recording.

Effective police work has proven critical to Indonesia's recent successes in fighting terrorism, but the police force remains rife with corruption and other abuses, and officers have generally avoided criminal penalties. The Indonesian Legal Aid Institute found in 2010 that up to 80 percent of detainees suffered from acts of violence in police custody. The head of the national police's legal division revealed in 2009 that approximately 350 officers are dismissed annually for rights violations. In October 2010, outgoing national police chief Bambang Hendarso Danuri issued a regulation allowing officers to use live ammunition to quell anarchic violence. Soon after the regulation was issued, police fired shots into a crowd in Jakarta during an antigovernment protest. Separately, five people were killed and 23 wounded in September, after police fired shots into a crowd of protesters in Central Sulawesi. The new police chief, who took office in October, was criticized

for his alleged role in the fatal shootings of students in 1998, and for his suspected sympathies with the thuggish Islamic Defenders Front.

Detention laws are generally respected, but there are many reports of abuse aimed at female and minority detainees. Student activists are the most prone to arbitrary arrest, followed by farmers and journalists. Prisons have reportedly been significant recruiting sites for radical groups, primarily due to corruption and lax controls that allow the circulation of extremist media material. Members of the jihadi group that was broken up in Aceh in early 2010 allegedly met in prison or through prison contacts. Poor prison governance is compounded by overcrowding; in July, the justice minister reported that the prison population exceeded capacity by 55,000 inmates.

Members of Indonesia's ethnic minority groups face considerable discrimination. The problems of mining and logging on communal land and state appropriation of land claimed by indigenous groups are most acute in Kalimantan. Ethnic Chinese, who make up less than 3 percent of the population but are resented for reputedly holding the lion's share of the country's wealth, continue to face harassment and occasional violence. Sexual minorities also suffer discrimination, and gay-themed events have encountered resistance from local officials and open hostility from groups like the Islamic Defenders Front.

Discrimination against women persists, particularly in the workplace. In the political sphere, a 2008 law states that 30 percent of a political party's candidates and board members must be women. While only 101 women were elected to the 560-seat DPR in 2009, this was an increase over the 63 who served during the previous term. Trafficking of women and children for prostitution, forced labor, and debt bondage continues, despite the passage of new laws and stricter penalties. Abortion is illegal, except to save a woman's life. Sharia-based ordinances in a number of districts infringe on women's constitutional rights; it is estimated that over 150 bylaws discriminate against women and minorities.

A 2008 antipornography law applies not just to published images but to speech and gestures that "incite sexual desire," drawing concerns that it would be used to persecute women. Significantly, the law invites the "public" to participate in the discouragement of pornographic acts, which has led to extrajudicial enforcement. A Constitutional Court ruling in March 2010 upheld the law, rejecting an appeal by 28 cultural, arts, and rights organizations. In June, the lead singer of a popular band was arrested and charged under the antipornography law and the ITE law for appearing in three explicit videos in May. In August, the Supreme Court revealed that it had found the editor of the relatively mild Indonesian version of *Playboy* magazine guilty of public indecency, overturning a 2007 decision by a lower court and forcing the editor to serve a two-year jail term.

Iran

Political Rights: 6

Population: 75,100,000

Civil Liberties: 6

Capital: Tehran

Status: Not Free

Trend Arrow: Iran received a downward trend arrow due to the rising economic and political clout of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, extensive efforts by the government to restrict freedom of assembly, and the sentencing of the entire leadership of the Baha'i community to lengthy prison terms.

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline For Year Under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
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Overview: Intense government repression at both the street and elite levels ensured that opposition protests stemming from the flawed 2009 presidential election were significantly reduced after February 2010. Throughout the year, members of the public, journalists, political activists, ethnic and religious minorities, and high-profile politicians and their families were subjected to intimidation, arrests, and violent attacks. As the regime relied more heavily on the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps to maintain power, the organization continued to acquire economic concessions and political influence at the expense of civilians.

A popular revolution ousted Iran's monarchy in 1979, bringing together diverse political interests that opposed the regime's widespread corruption and misguided modernization efforts. However, the revolution's democratic and secular elements were largely subsumed under the leadership of the previously exiled Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini. Although the new constitution drafted by Khomeini's disciples provided for an elected president and parliament, an unelected Council of Guardians was empowered to approve candidates and certify that the decisions of elected officials were in accord with Sharia (Islamic law). Khomeini was named supreme leader and vested with control over the security and intelligence services, the armed forces, and the judiciary. Soon after the establishment of the Islamic Republic, Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein launched an invasion to settle a long-running border dispute. The ensuing war, which lasted from 1980 to 1988, cost over a million lives.

After Khomeini's death in 1989, the title of supreme leader passed to Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, a compromise candidate who lacked the religious credentials and popularity of his predecessor. The constitution was changed to consolidate his power and give him final authority on all matters of foreign and domestic policy. Beneath its veneer of religious probity, the Islamic Republic gave rise to a new elite that accumulated wealth through opaque and unaccountable means. Basic freedoms were revoked, and women in particular experienced a severe regression in their status and rights. By the mid-1990s, dismal economic conditions and a demographic trend

toward a younger population had contributed to significant public dissatisfaction with the regime. A coalition of reformists began to emerge within the leadership, advocating a gradual process of political change, economic liberalization, and normalization of relations with the outside world that was designed to legitimize, but not radically alter, the existing political system.

Representing this coalition, former culture minister Mohammad Khatami was elected president in 1997 with nearly 70 percent of the vote. Under his administration, more than 200 independent newspapers and magazines with a diverse array of viewpoints were established, and the authorities relaxed the enforcement of restrictions on social interaction between the sexes. Reformists won 80 percent of the seats in the country's first nationwide municipal elections in 1999 and took the vast majority of seats in parliamentary elections the following year, with student activists playing a major role in their success.

The 2000 parliamentary elections prompted a backlash by hard-line clerics. Over the four years after the polls, the conservative judiciary closed more than 100 reformist newspapers and jailed hundreds of liberal journalists and activists, while security forces cracked down on the ensuing student protests. Khatami was reelected with 78 percent of the vote in 2001, but popular disaffection stemming from the reformists' limited accomplishments, coupled with the Council of Guardians' rejection of the candidacies of most reformist politicians, allowed hard-liners to triumph in the 2003 municipal and 2004 parliamentary elections.

The Council of Guardians similarly rejected the candidacies of popular reformists ahead of the 2005 presidential election, though the victory of Tehran mayor Mahmoud Ahmadinejad over other approved candidates reflected the public's desire for change. He became Iran's first nonclerical president in more than two decades, having campaigned on promises to fight elite corruption and redistribute Iran's oil wealth to the poor and middle class. Nevertheless, his hard-line administration oversaw a crackdown on civil liberties and human rights, and stricter enforcement of the regime's morality laws.

The new government also adopted a more confrontational tone on foreign policy matters, feeding suspicions that its expanding uranium-enrichment activity, ostensibly devoted to generating electricity, was in fact aimed at weapons production. In an effort to compel Iran to halt the uranium enrichment, the UN Security Council imposed trade sanctions on the regime in December 2006, and expanded them over the subsequent four years, as negotiations failed to make progress.

In the December 2006 municipal and Assembly of Experts elections, voters signaled their disapproval of the government's performance by supporting far more moderate officials. Carefully vetted conservative candidates won nearly 70 percent of the seats in the March 2008 parliamentary elections, but many were considered critics of Ahmadinejad, and particularly of his economic policies.

Despite crackdowns on human and women's rights activists and restrictions on internet freedom in the months prior to the June 2009 presidential election, supporters of all candidates seemed to enjoy a relatively relaxed and politically vibrant atmosphere. The Council of Guardians approved only 3 of 475 potential candidates to compete against Ahmadinejad, but all 3 were well-known and potentially formidable figures: Mir Hussein Mousavi, a reformist former prime minister; Mohsen Rezai, a conservative former head of the Iranian Revolutionary

Guard Corps (IRGC); and Mehdi Karroubi, a reformist former speaker of parliament and the only cleric approved. Mousavi emerged as the main challenger, confronting Ahmadinejad in unprecedented televised debates.

Polls indicated a close race, but Ahmadinejad was declared the winner soon after the election, credited with over 63 percent of the vote. Mousavi officially received only 33.75 percent, while Rezaei and Karroubi reportedly garnered 1.73 percent and 0.85 percent, respectively. All three challengers lodged claims of fraud, and subsequent findings by independent analysts reinforced suspicions that irregularities had occurred. According to official data, the conservative vote increased by 113 percent compared with the 2005 election, and several provinces registered more votes than the number of eligible voters. In 10 provinces won by Ahmadinejad, his victory was only possible if he had secured the votes of all former nonvoters and all those who had voted for his main conservative opponent in 2005, as well as up to 44 percent of those who had previously voted for reformist candidates.

Protests broke out on a massive scale, as voters rejected the official results. In a rare show of defiance, high-profile political figures publicly broke with Khamenei's validation of the election, with Khatami going so far as to call publicly for a referendum on the government's legitimacy. The security forces violently cracked down on all public expressions of dissent and tightened government control of both online and traditional media, but protesters continued to mount periodic demonstrations for the rest of the year, using mobile-telephone cameras and the internet to document abuses and communicate with the outside world. Opposition street protests on February 11, 2010, which coincided with government-sponsored rallies to celebrate the 31st anniversary of the revolution, were met with rigorous security measures and represented a turning point in the protest movement. Backed by a sophisticated security and surveillance infrastructure, the government effectively crippled the opposition's ability to mount large-scale demonstrations for the rest of the year.

The postelection confrontations created a new political landscape, in which a loosely knit alliance of Revolutionary Guards and other hard-liners faced off against an increasingly frustrated Shiite clergy and politicians ranging from reformists to mainstream conservatives. The shift also included a deterioration of basic freedoms and a growing militarization of political affairs. In a sign of the hard-line leadership's concerns about dwindling popular and elite support, the parliament passed legislation in July 2010 that postponed local elections scheduled for the end of 2010 until 2013.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Iran is not an electoral democracy. The most powerful figure in the government is the supreme leader (*Vali-e-Faghih*), currently Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. He is chosen by the Assembly of Experts, a body of 86 clerics who are elected to eight-year terms by popular vote, from a vetted list of candidates. The supreme leader, who has no fixed term, is head of the armed forces and appoints the leaders of the judiciary, the chiefs of state broadcast media, the commander of the IRGC, the Expediency Council, and half of the Council of Guardians. Although the president and the parliament, both with four-year terms, are responsible for designating cabinet ministers, the supreme leader exercises de facto control over appointments to the Ministries of Defense, the Interior, and Intelligence.

All candidates for the presidency and the 290-seat, unicameral parliament are vetted by the Council of Guardians, which consists of six clergymen appointed by the supreme leader and six civil law experts selected by the head of the judiciary, all for six-year terms (the latter are nominally subject to parliamentary approval). The Council of Guardians also has the power to reject legislation approved by the parliament; disputes between the two are arbitrated by the Expediency Council, another unelected, conservative-dominated body. Both it and the Assembly of Experts are currently headed by former president Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, who has, at times, sided with the reformist camp to curb the influence of his rival, current president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad.

Opposition politicians and party groupings have faced especially harsh repression since the 2009 presidential election, with many leaders—including former lawmakers and cabinet ministers—facing arrest, prison sentences, and lengthy bans on political activity. In April 2010, a court banned two major reformist parties, the Islamic Action Participation Front and the Islamic Revolution Mujahedeen Organization, for violating Article 16 of the Parties Law, whose vague language bars collusion with foreign powers.

The IRGC's influence within Iran continues to grow, as it now wields military, political, and economic power. Former members of the IRGC, including Ahmadinejad, hold key positions within the government, and its commercial arms have been awarded the right of first refusal for government contracts, some of which have been extremely lucrative.

Corruption is pervasive. The hard-line clerical establishment has grown immensely wealthy through its control of tax-exempt foundations that monopolize many sectors of the economy, such as cement and sugar production. In 2008, Abbas Palizdar, a member of the parliament's Investigative Committee, accused high-ranking officials and senior clerics of corruption and nepotism, but he and his staff were subsequently arrested and charged by a court in 2009 with, "spreading falsehoods, disclosing government secrets, and endangering national security." In May 2010, Palizdar's jail sentence was commuted from 10 to 6 years in prison. Meanwhile, the Ahmadinejad government's wealth-redistribution projects have effectively catered almost exclusively to military and paramilitary groups. The administration has also reduced the independence of state financial watchdogs and the Central Bank, further damaging fiscal transparency. Iran was ranked 146 out of 178 countries surveyed in Transparency International's 2010 Corruption Perceptions Index.

Freedom of expression is severely limited. The government directly controls all television and radio broadcasting. Satellite dishes are illegal, and while they are generally tolerated, there have been increasing reports of dish confiscation and steep fines. The authorities have had some success in jamming broadcasts by dissident satellite stations based overseas, and cooperation with Persian-language satellite channels is banned. Even the purchase of satellite images from abroad is illegal. The Ministry of Culture must approve publication of all books and inspects foreign books prior to domestic distribution.

The authorities frequently issue ad hoc orders banning media coverage of specific topics and events. The foreign media were banned from covering the postelection demonstrations in 2009, and reporters from a number of countries were arrested and

temporarily detained during the year. Five foreign journalists were arrested during demonstrations in February 2010 and later released. At least one Iranian reporter was jailed in 2010 for giving an interview to a foreign news outlet. Two German journalists remained in prison at year's end, having been arrested in October after interviewing the son and lawyer of Sakineh Mohammadi Ashtiani, a woman who had been sentenced to death by stoning for adultery.

Iranian filmmakers are subject to tight restrictions, and many have been arrested or harassed since the 2009 election. In 2010, the Culture Ministry prescribed one-year bans for filmmakers involved in the production of unlicensed films, including those screened abroad.

The Press Court has extensive power to prosecute journalists for such vaguely worded offenses as "insulting Islam" and "damaging the foundations of the Islamic Republic." The use of "suspicious sources" or sources that criticize the government is also forbidden. Numerous periodicals were closed for morality or security offenses during 2010, including *Etemad*, which was edited by a former lawmaker and had called for the investigation of brutality by the IRGC-led Basij militia on university campuses, and *Iran Dokht*, which was managed by the son of opposition leader Mehdi Karroubi and had previously been raided by militia members.

Iran leads the world in the number of jailed journalists, with 37 behind bars at the close of 2010 and many serving lengthy prison sentences. Several dozen other journalists were arrested and released on bail during the year, often after they issued coerced confessions on television.

Internet penetration has skyrocketed in recent years, and individuals used mobile-telephone cameras and social-networking websites to provide some of the only independent coverage of the postelection crackdown in 2009. However, recognizing the internet's growing influence, the government has forced service providers to block a growing list of "immoral" or politically sensitive sites, and the country has developed one of the most expansive and sophisticated internet surveillance and filtering frameworks in the world. Key international social-media websites like Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube were blocked after the 2009 election, and the list of disabled political sites continued to grow in 2010, hampering the opposition's ability to communicate and organize. Former president Mohammad Khatami's website was blocked in October, and Iranian-Canadian blogger Hossein Derakhshan was sentenced in September to over 19 years in prison for alleged "cooperation with hostile states" and other charges.

Religious freedom is limited in Iran, whose population is largely Shiite Muslim but includes Sunni Muslim, Baha'i, Christian, Jewish, and Zoroastrian minorities. The Special Court for the Clergy investigates religious figures for alleged crimes and has generally been used to persecute clerics who stray from the official interpretation of Islam. Ayatollah Seyd Hussain Kazemeini Boroujerdi, a cleric who advocates the separation of religion and politics, is currently serving 11 years in prison for his beliefs. Notwithstanding the court's deterrent effect, senior clerics of many political persuasions have refused to endorse Ahmadinejad or side with Khamenei on the postelection crackdown. Grand Ayatollah Ali-Mohammad Dastgheib went so far as to challenge the authority of the supreme leader in September 2010.

Sunnis enjoy equal rights under the law but face discrimination in practice; there is no Sunni mosque in Tehran, and few Sunnis hold senior government posts.

The Sunni militant group Jundallah, associated with the ethnic Baluchi minority, has waged a campaign of bombings and other attacks on the government in recent years. In 2010, Jundallah leader Abdolmalek Rig and his brother were arrested and executed. The group vowed revenge, and government forces maintained a heavy security presence in the Baluchi region.

Sufi Muslims have also faced persecution by the authorities. The constitution recognizes Zoroastrians, Jews, and Christians as religious minorities, and they are generally allowed to worship without interference, so long as they do not proselytize. Conversion by Muslims to a non-Muslim religion is punishable by death. The non-Muslim minorities are barred from election to representative bodies (though a set number of parliamentary seats are reserved for them), cannot hold senior government or military positions, and face restrictions in employment, education, and property ownership.

Some 300,000 Baha'is, Iran's largest non-Muslim minority, are not recognized in the constitution, enjoy virtually no rights under the law, and are banned from practicing their faith. Baha'i students are barred from attending university and prevented from obtaining their educational records. Under Ahmadinejad, concerted efforts to intimidate, imprison, and physically attack Baha'is have been carried out by security forces, paramilitary groups, and ordinary citizens with impunity. Hundreds of Baha'is have been executed since the Islamic Revolution in 1979, and at least 60 were in prison in 2010 because of their beliefs. In August 2010, seven Baha'i leaders—which constituted the group's entire leadership—were sentenced to 20 years in prison, later reduced to 10 years, on charges of espionage and, "engaging in propaganda against Islam." Since October 2010, numerous arson attacks against Baha'i homes and businesses in the city of Rafsanjan have been carried out in order to force them out of their communities.

Academic freedom is limited. Scholars are frequently detained, threatened, and forced to retire for expressing political views, and students involved in organizing protests face suspension or expulsion in addition to criminal punishments. Since the 2009 presidential election, Basij units have increased their presence on campuses. Khamenei demanded in September 2010 that all disciplines in the humanities and social sciences be terminated. In October, the government stated that it was scrutinizing degree programs in law, women's studies, human rights, management, sociology, philosophy, psychology, education, political science, art, and culture to ensure their commitment to Islamic principles. While students were still being accepted for these programs, no further funding for liberal arts and humanities would be made available.

The constitution prohibits public demonstrations that "violate the principles of Islam," a vague provision that was regularly invoked in 2009 and 2010 to deny permit requests. Vigilante and paramilitary organizations that are officially or tacitly sanctioned by the government—most notably the Basij and Ansar-i Hezbollah—regularly play a major role in breaking up demonstrations. Heavy mobilizations of these forces helped to prevent large-scale opposition rallies during 2010. The effort included intimidation, physical attacks, and severe restrictions on freedom of movement targeting opposition leaders and their families.

Under the pretense of, "countering immoral behavior," the government also disrupts private gatherings. The Basij carried out thousands of home raids in 2007,

arresting more than 150,000 people and forcing them to sign letters promising to observe official dress codes and adhere to moral standards.

The constitution permits the establishment of political parties, professional syndicates, and other civic organizations, provided that they do not violate the principles of "freedom, sovereignty, and national unity" or question the Islamic basis of the republic. Human rights discourse and grassroots activism are integral parts of Iranian society. However, the security services routinely arrest and harass secular activists as part of a wider effort to control nongovernmental organizations (NGOs). Although permits are not required by law, the Ministry of the Interior has been imposing them and shutting down organizations that do not seek or qualify for them. In March 2010, the judiciary stated that it had arrested 30 human rights defenders, who it claimed were collaborating with foreign intelligence services.

Iranian law does not allow independent labor unions, though workers' councils are represented in the Workers' House, the only legal labor federation. In 2009, union members throughout the country were attacked and arrested by security forces for participating in May Day celebrations, and many others were targeted after the presidential election. In 2010, a large-scale strike over tax increases by Iran's influential bazaar merchants initially led to confrontations between the traders and Basij units that attempted to forcibly open bazaars, but Ahmadinejad ultimately offered concessions to calm the dispute.

The judicial system is not independent, as the supreme leader directly appoints the head of the judiciary, who in turn appoints senior judges. General Courts ostensibly safeguard the rights of defendants, but in practice, suspects are frequently tried in closed sessions without access to legal counsel. Dissident clerics are tried before the Special Court for the Clergy. Political and other sensitive cases are tried before Revolutionary Courts, where due process protections are routinely disregarded, and trials are often summary. Since the summer of 2009, hundreds of journalists and dissidents have been convicted of national security crimes in televised mass trials and secret Revolutionary Court proceedings, none of which met international human rights standards. Televised denunciations and confessions, which are generally believed to have been coerced, continued during 2010. In the most prominent example, the husband of human rights activist and 2003 Nobel Peace Prize laureate Shirin Ebadi denounced his wife on state television in June 2010. Judges commonly accept coerced confessions and disregard torture or abuse during detention.

The country's penal code is based on Sharia and provides for flogging, amputation, and execution by stoning or hanging for a range of social and political offenses; these punishments are carried out in practice. Ashtiani, the woman sentenced to death by stoning in August 2010, had not be executed by year's end amid international condemnation of the case. Iran's overall execution rate has increased significantly under Ahmadinejad, with up to 399 people put to death in 2009 and 337 in 2010. While the majority were executed for drug-related offenses, a number of prisoners have received the death sentence for their involvement in protests. Throughout the year, government, judicial, and parliamentary officials publicly called for detained protesters to be executed as rebels and saboteurs. Contrary to Iran's obligations under the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the judiciary continues to execute juvenile offenders. In 2010, at least 1 such inmate was executed, and 141 others

remained on death row. The government had announced in 2008 that it would no longer execute juveniles, but it later clarified that the death penalty remained an option under the parallel "retribution" system, in which the sentence is imposed by the victim's family rather than the state. This would be allowed for male offenders over the age of 15 and female offenders as young as 9.

Although the constitution prohibits arbitrary arrest and detention, such abuses are increasingly routine, and family members of detainees are often not notified for days or weeks. Suspected dissidents are frequently held in unofficial, illegal detention centers. Prison conditions in general are notoriously poor, and there are regular allegations of abuse, torture, and death in custody. Male and female detainees alleged rape by security forces in the second half of 2009; after Karroubi released a detainee's firsthand account of rape on his website that year, prosecutors initiated a case against him. The rape claims were reinforced when a former member of the Basij confessed that security personnel were permitted to rape detainees as a "reward" for their work. Tehran prosecutor Saeed Mortazavi and two other judicial officials were suspended in August 2010 for their roles in the torture of detainees and the deaths of three opposition activists, but they were not arrested or charged with a crime. Twelve correctional officers accused of torture and the deaths of the three prisoners were brought before a court in March, but information on the proceedings was not disclosed, and it was unclear whether they were ever sentenced.

The constitution and laws call for equal rights for all ethnic groups, but in practice, these rights are restricted by the authorities. Ethnic Kurds, Arabs, Baluchis, and Azeris complain of political and economic discrimination. Kurdish opposition groups suspected of separatist aspirations, such as the Democratic Party of Iranian Kurdistan (KDPI), are brutally suppressed. The Free Life Party of Kurdistan (PJAK), a separatist militant group linked to the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) of Turkey, has conducted a number of guerrilla attacks in recent years and was declared a terrorist organization by the United States in 2009. Iranian efforts to combat the PJAK have included raids into Kurdish territory in neighboring Iraq. In May 2010, Iranian authorities executed four Kurdish prisoners who were accused of belonging to separatist groups, a charge their lawyer denied. Their bodies were not released to their families, bolstering claims that their confessions had been coerced through torture and sexual violence.

Freedom of movement is routinely restricted in Iran. Political activists are often banned from leaving the country after release from detention, and security services have been known to confiscate passports or interrogate travelers on their return from conferences abroad. In April 2010, Khatami was refused permission to leave the country to attend a conference in Japan.

Women are widely educated; a majority of university students are female, and 94 percent of secondary-school-aged girls attend school, compared with only 80 percent of boys. Women currently hold seats in the parliament, though they are routinely excluded from running for higher offices. Twice-elected parliament member Marzieh Vahid-Dastjerdi became Iran's first female cabinet minister in September 2009, when she was appointed to head the Health Ministry. However, female judges may not issue final verdicts, and a woman cannot obtain a passport without the permission of her husband or a male relative. Women do not enjoy equal rights under Sharia-based statutes governing divorce, inheritance, and child

322 Freedom in the World—2011

custody, though some of these inequalities are accompanied by greater familial and financial obligations for men. A woman's testimony in court is given only half the weight of a man's, and the monetary damages awarded to a female victim's family upon her death is half that owed to the family of a male victim. Women must conform to strict dress codes and are segregated from men in some public places, and there has been a crackdown in recent years on women deemed to be dressed immodestly.

Iraq

Political Rights: 5
Civil Liberties: 6
Status: Not Free

Population: 31,500,000
Capital: Baghdad

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline For Year Under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
7,7NF	7,7NF	7,5NF	7,5NF	6,5NF	6,6NF	6,6NF	6,6NF	5,6NF	5,6NF

Overview: Iraq held parliamentary elections in March 2010 that both international and domestic monitoring groups described as free and fair. However, rival political groupings were unable to form a governing coalition until December. Insurgents took advantage of the prolonged political limbo to pursue a campaign of violence against national institutions and sectarian targets. Government statistics suggested that violence during the summer reached levels not seen in two years. Meanwhile, the U.S. military formally declared an end to combat operations in Iraq, but some 50,000 U.S. troops remained in the country under a mandate to "advise and assist" their Iraqi counterparts. In the Kurdish region, political elites launched a series of attacks on opposition journalists during the year.

The modern state of Iraq was established after World War I as a League of Nations mandate administered by Britain. The British installed a constitutional monarchy that privileged the Sunni Arab minority at the expense of Kurds and Shiite Arabs. Sunni Arab political dominance continued after independence in 1932 and a military coup that toppled the monarchy in 1958. The Arab nationalist Baath party seized power in 1968, and the new regime's de facto strongman, Saddam Hussein, assumed the presidency in 1979. Over the next two decades, Iraq endured brutal political repression, a destructive war with Iran from 1980 to 1988, military defeat by a U.S.-led coalition following Hussein's 1990 invasion of Kuwait, and years of onerous postwar trade sanctions.

After the establishment of a U.S.-enforced no-fly zone north of the 36th parallel in 1991, most of the three northern provinces of Erbil, Duhok, and Sulimaniyah came under the control of the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) and the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK). The two factions fought openly in the mid-1990s, but they eventually reconciled and formed an autonomous Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG).

A U.S.-led coalition invaded Iraq in March 2003 and established a Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) to administer the country. It disbanded the Iraqi military and prevented members of the Baath party from serving in government or the new security forces. The resulting security vacuum led to widespread looting, damage to infrastructure, and acute electricity and water shortages.

Exploiting Sunni Arab frustrations with the de-Baathification policy and the impending shift of political power toward the Shiite majority, loose networks of former Baathist officials, Sunni Arab tribe members, and Islamist militants associated with Al-Qaeda began organizing and funding an insurgency that rapidly gained strength in late 2003 and 2004.

Intimidation by insurgents ensured that Sunni Arabs boycotted the 2005 elections for a Transitional National Assembly (TNA) and provincial governments, resulting in a landslide victory for Shiite and Kurdish parties. A new constitution was approved by referendum in October 2005, though more than two-thirds of voters in two largely Sunni Arab provinces rejected it.

Meanwhile, Shiite party militias were able to infiltrate the Interior Ministry's police and counterinsurgency forces, and extrajudicial detentions and killings by both the militias and militia-dominated police units became common during 2005 and 2006. Sunni militias responded in kind, and an intense cycle of sectarian conflict ensued. Ethnically cleansed or segregated neighborhoods soon became a fixture in Baghdad and other multiethnic or religiously diverse provinces.

Sunni Arabs participated in the December 2005 elections for a full-term parliament, increasing their political representation. Nouri al-Maliki of the Shiite Da'wa party was chosen as prime minister. However, further political progress remained elusive; the main Sunni Arab bloc in parliament and a Shiite faction loyal to populist cleric and militia leader Moqtada al-Sadr both began a boycott of the legislature in 2007.

The parliament adopted several symbolic measures in 2008 to bring Sunni Arabs back into the political process. In January, many former Baathists were permitted to return to jobs they lost, and in February, the government granted amnesty to thousands of mainly Sunni Arab prisoners. The largest Sunni bloc returned to government in April after a boycott of almost a year, and six Sunni ministers joined al-Maliki's cabinet. Also in 2008, Iraqi security forces cracked down on al-Sadr's militia network.

Under electoral legislation passed in late 2008, voters in the January 2009 provincial elections could choose candidates rather than party lists, the use of religious symbols in campaigning was restricted, a 25 percent quota was set for female council members, and just 6 seats—down from 15 in an earlier draft—were set aside for Christians and other small minorities out of a total of 440 provincial council seats. The voting was largely peaceful, and turnout in most provinces ranged from 50 percent to 75 percent. On the whole, al-Maliki's Da'wa party emerged as the winner, though it needed to form coalitions to govern in most provinces.

The 2009 provincial elections did not include the autonomous Kurdish region or the contested province of Kirkuk. Separate elections in July 2009 for the Kurdish regional parliament and presidency featured high turnout and a fairly strong showing by a new opposition bloc called Gorran (Change), which took about a quarter of the parliamentary vote. A referendum to determine whether Kirkuk would join the

Kurdish region remained delayed through 2010, despite a constitutional provision that had required it before the end of 2007.

Parliamentary elections were held in March 2010, despite having been constitutionally mandated for January. They were governed by a 2009 election law that called for an open-list, proportional representation voting system, with multimember districts corresponding to the 18 provinces. A total of eight seats were reserved for Christians and other religious minorities. The campaign generally struck a more secular tone than in previous national elections. In January, a parliamentary commission with questionable legitimacy and a largely Shiite membership attempted to disqualify more than 500 of the 6,000 candidates on the grounds that they had been too close to the Baath regime. Ultimately, most of the candidates were reinstated.

Although 38 people were killed on election day, the polling was generally seen as free and fair. The electoral commission took candidates' complaints seriously and conducted a partial recount, but found no evidence of significant fraud. Voters clearly demonstrated their frustration with the government by returning only 62 of the previous parliament's 275 members. Nevertheless, the elections resulted in political deadlock. Former interim prime minister Ayad Allawi's *Iraqiya* bloc, which won most Sunni votes, led with 91 seats, followed by al-Maliki's State of Law coalition with 89. Despite a constitutional requirement to form a government within 30 days of the election results' announcement, neither of the rival blocs was able to organize a majority, with foreign powers including Iran, Saudi Arabia, and the United States reportedly playing a role in the lengthy negotiations. The new parliament reelected Kurdish leader Jalal Talabani as president in November, and in December, al-Maliki finally secured parliamentary approval for a unity government that encompassed all major factions, including *Iraqiya* and al-Sadr's Shiite movement.

The long postelection interregnum featured an escalation in sectarian and antigovernment violence. Insurgents began targeting national institutions, especially the security services, and sites with sectarian significance, including the Iranian embassy and a Chaldean church in Baghdad, with increasing frequency during the spring. By summer, violence had reached heights not seen in years. Official Iraqi figures suggested that July 2010 was the deadliest month for civilians since May 2008, with 535 killed and over 1,000 injured, though U.S. figures for the same month showed only 222 deaths.

Under a 2008 security agreement between Iraq and the United States, U.S. troops in 2009 completed a withdrawal from Iraqi cities and transferred authority over security and combat operations to Iraqi forces. Iraqi officials also obtained authority over prisoners and the power to prosecute U.S. personnel in some circumstances. U.S. troops officially ended combat operations in Iraq on August 31, 2010. However, 50,000 U.S. military personnel remained in "advise and assist" roles that, in some cases, did not differ significantly from their previous work. They were set to be withdrawn by the end of 2011. Despite the Iraqi government's increased autonomy, it remained unable to provide basic services. While electricity provision, for example, has increased significantly in recent years, it has not kept pace with growing demand, and most Iraqis lack a reliable source of power. Unemployment hovers above 45 percent nationally, and reaches as high as 80 percent in some rural areas.

Tensions remained along the de facto border separating land controlled by the KRG from the rest of Iraq. The ethnically, religiously, and politically contested city of Mosul continued to suffer from frequent violence in 2010, especially against minorities. Christians in the city faced deadly attacks and displacement in February and March, and UN estimates suggest that half of Iraq's Christian population has left the country since 2003. These refugees are among the five million displaced since the war began. While about half of those who fled to Jordan and Syria had returned by 2010, extremely high rates of internal displacement persisted.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Iraq is not an electoral democracy. Although it has conducted meaningful elections, political participation and decision making in the country remain seriously impaired by sectarian and insurgent violence, widespread corruption, and the influence of foreign powers. Under the constitution, the president and two vice presidents are elected by the parliament and appoint the prime minister, who is nominated by the largest parliamentary bloc. Elections are held every four years. The prime minister forms a cabinet and runs the executive functions of the state. The parliament consists of a 325-seat lower house, the Council of Representatives, and a still-unformed upper house, the Federal Council, which would represent provincial interests. Political parties representing a wide range of viewpoints operate without legal restrictions, but the Baath party is officially banned. The Independent Electoral Commission of Iraq (IECI), whose nine-member board was selected by a UN advisory committee, has sole responsibility for administering elections.

Home to one-fifth of the country's population, the autonomous Kurdish region constitutes a distinct polity within Iraq, with its own flag, military units, and language. The 111-seat regional legislature remains dominated by the allied PUK and KDP, despite the presence of the new Gorran opposition bloc following 2009 elections. The Kurdish region's political leaders profess their commitment to remaining part of a federal Iraqi state, but Kurdish security forces maintain a de facto border with the rest of Iraq, Iraqi Arabs are often treated as foreigners, and the regional government frequently acts in its own interest over Baghdad's objections.

Iraq is plagued by pervasive corruption at all levels of government. A national Integrity Commission is tasked with fighting corruption, but it conducts its investigations in secret and does not publish its findings until the courts have issued final decisions. It issued 433 warrants in the first two months of 2010 alone, well outpacing the 972 issued in all of 2009. In March, another 356 defendants were charged with stealing a total of \$40 billion. However, the overwhelming majority of offenders enjoy impunity, largely because of an amnesty law allowing ministers to intervene to dismiss charges. As a result, cases are generally brought against low- and mid-ranking officials; the Commission lost its most high-profile case against the former trade minister this year. However, the Commission's work has recently gained momentum, as it led to 982 convictions in the first half of 2010, compared with only 257 in 2009. In July 2010, officials at the Central Bank allegedly burned the records of their own inspector general's office—and blamed the destruction on a terrorist attack—to destroy evidence in a sensitive corruption case. Also in July, Kurdish officials were accused of receiving large kickbacks to sell oil to Iran in violation of both international sanctions and the Iraqi constitution. Several U.S.

military officials were convicted during 2010 for corruption in Iraq, including taking bribes from defense contractors and embezzlement. Recruits allegedly pay bribes as high as \$5,000 to enter the Iraqi security forces, and reports suggest that ordinary citizens must resort to bribery to accomplish simple bureaucratic tasks like obtaining vehicle license plates. Iraq was ranked 175 out of 178 countries surveyed in Transparency International's 2010 Corruption Perceptions Index.

Freedom of expression is protected by the constitution and generally respected by the authorities. However, it has been seriously impeded by sectarian tensions and fear of violent reprisals. Over a dozen private television stations are in operation, and major Arab satellite stations are easily accessible. More than 150 print publications have been established since 2003 and are allowed to function without significant government interference. Internet access is not currently restricted. Legislation passed in 2006 criminalized the ridicule of public officials, who often file suits when journalists report on corruption allegations. Iraq's media regulatory body, the Communication and Media Commission, cracked down on journalists in the run-up to the 2010 parliamentary elections by denying journalists accreditation and suing media that criticized government officials. Journalists regularly face intimidation and harassment from security forces at checkpoints and as they report from the field.

Violent retribution against journalists has hindered their ability to report widely and objectively. Offices of the Dubai-based satellite television station Al-Arabiya were bombed in July 2010, killing 6 people and injuring 16. In August, police allegedly fired on the home of the head of the Iraqi Press Agency and then searched his house without a warrant. Also in August, a magazine editor was kidnapped and killed. Two television presenters were killed in as many days in September. The Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) estimates that over 140 journalists have been killed since the beginning of the war, while Reporters Without Borders (RSF) puts the number closer to 230. Media outlets must give the government a list of all their employees, putting them in greater danger.

Journalists previously operated more freely in the Kurdish region, but conditions there deteriorated in 2010. A 2008 press law imposes fines for creating instability, spreading fear or intimidation, causing harm to people, or violating religious beliefs. Journalists who offend local officials and top party leaders or expose high-level corruption remain subject to physical attacks, arbitrary detention, and harassment. Critical or opposition journalists were the targets of several bomb attacks in March, April, and May, and faced nearly constant violence, harassment, and intimidation by Kurdish security forces throughout the year. In August, the KDP brought a billion-dollar lawsuit against a newspaper that reported on Kurdish officials' alleged oil smuggling to Iran.

Freedom of religion is guaranteed by the constitution, and religious institutions are allowed to operate with little formal oversight. However, all religious communities in Iraq have been threatened by sectarian violence. Estimates of the Christian population that has sought safety abroad since 2003 range from 250,000 to 500,000. Religious and ethnic minorities in northern Iraq—including Turkmens, Arabs, Christians, and Shabaks—have reported instances of discrimination and harassment by Kurdish authorities, though a number have fled to the Kurdish-controlled region due to its relative security. Formerly mixed areas are now much

more homogeneous, and terrorist attacks continue to be directed toward sectarian targets.

Academic institutions operate in a highly politicized and insecure environment. Hundreds of professors were killed during the peak of sectarian and insurgent violence, and many more stopped working or fled the country, though there have been some reports of scholars returning to their jobs following security improvements in the last several years.

Rights to freedom of assembly and association are recognized by the constitution and generally respected in practice. The constitution guarantees these rights, "in a way that does not violate public order and morality." Domestic and international nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) are able to operate without legal restrictions, although safety concerns severely limit their activities in many areas. A law passed in January 2010 allows NGOs to seek funding without government approval, requires the government to provide specific cause for denying an NGO's registration, removes criminal penalties for being a member of an improperly registered NGO, and requires a court order to suspend NGO activities.

The constitution provides for the right to form and join trade unions. Union activity has flourished in nearly all industries since 2003, and strikes have not been uncommon. However, Iraq's 1987 labor law remains in effect, prohibiting unionization in the public sector, and a 2005 decree gave authorities the power to seize all union funds and prevent their disbursal. Labor groups reported that a union at a public electricity plant in Basra was forcibly shut down by the police in July 2010.

Judicial independence is guaranteed in the constitution. The Higher Judicial Council—headed by the chief judge of the Federal Supreme Court and composed of Iraq's 17 chief appellate judges and several judges from the Federal Court of Cassation—has administrative authority over the court system. In practice, however, judges have come under immense political and sectarian pressure and have been largely unable to pursue cases involving organized crime, corruption, and militia activity, even when presented with overwhelming evidence. Iraqi citizens often turn to local militias and religious groups to dispense justice rather than seeking redress with official law enforcement bodies that are seen as corrupt or ineffective.

The criminal procedure code and the constitution prohibit arbitrary arrest and detention, though both practices are common in security-related cases. The constitution also prohibits all forms of torture and inhumane treatment and affords victims the right to compensation, but there are few effective safeguards in place. A previously unknown detention facility under the direct control of the prime minister's office was uncovered by a U.S. newspaper in 2010, and 430 prisoners—mostly Sunnis accused of terrorism—were reportedly being held there without any legal rights. The detainees, who were subsequently transferred to legitimate facilities, made credible allegations of systematic sexual, physical, and psychological abuse. While KRG laws also prohibit inhumane treatment, it is widely acknowledged that Kurdish security forces practice illegal detention and questionable interrogation tactics. Detainees in U.S. custody have also experienced torture and mistreatment, though by 2010 U.S. forces no longer directly held detainees in Iraq.

The constitution promises women equal rights under the law, though in practice they face various forms of legal and societal discrimination. Women are guaranteed

328 Freedom in the World—2011

25 percent of the seats in the legislature, and their participation in public life has increased in recent years. While they still face serious social pressure and restrictions, women have also returned in larger numbers to jobs and universities. Women enjoy somewhat greater legal protections and social freedoms in the Kurdish region, but their political power is limited. Moreover, domestic abuse and so-called honor killings remain serious problems both in the Kurdish region and across the country. The laws applicable outside the Kurdish region offer leniency to the perpetrators of honor killings. In July 2010, Kurdish religious leaders formally declared that female genital mutilation (FGM) was un-Islamic, but they stopped short of calling for a ban. Advocacy groups claim that more than 50 percent of Kurdish teenage girls are victims of FGM. The U.S. State Department placed Iraq on the Tier 2 Watch List in its 2010 Trafficking in Persons Report, noting problems including the trafficking and sexual exploitation of women from impoverished and displaced Iraqi families, and the abuse of foreign men and women who are recruited to work in Iraq.

Ireland

Political Rights: 1

Population: 4,500,000

Civil Liberties: 1

Capital: Dublin

Status: Free

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline For Year Under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
1,1F									

Overview: Economic concerns largely overshadowed politics in 2010, as hefty bank bailouts caused Ireland's budget deficit to rise to approximately 30 percent of its gross domestic product (GDP). Amid financial austerity measures, the coalition government faced decreasing popularity and difficult decisions regarding the nature of necessary cutbacks. In March, the government announced that a referendum would be held on the controversial blasphemy law that came into effect in January, though the referendum had not taken place by year's end.

The Irish Free State emerged from the United Kingdom under the Anglo-Irish Treaty of 1921, though six counties in the province of Ulster remained within the United Kingdom. A brief civil war followed, ending in 1923. In 1937, the Irish Free State adopted a new constitution and a new name—Ireland, or Eire.

Ireland joined the European Community (now the European Union, or EU) along with Britain and Denmark in 1973. Thanks in part to large subsidies from the EU, Ireland enjoyed high rates of economic growth for many years, transforming from one of the poorest countries in Europe into one of the richest. It adopted the euro on its launch as an electronic currency in 1999 and introduced euro notes and coins in 2001.

The country achieved outstanding economic growth from 1998 through 2002, which slowed to a still-impressive 5.7 percent in 2006. With slower growth, budget tightening fueled voter disillusionment. However, a strong debate performance by Prime Minister Patrick Bartholomew "Bertie" Ahern, combined with voter comfort after 10 years of economic growth, helped Fianna Fáil win the May 2007 general elections. Fianna Fáil captured 78 of 166 seats in the lower house of Parliament, compared with opposition Fine Gael's 51. However, the poor performance by the Progressive Democrats forced Fianna Fáil to take the Green Party into the governing coalition for the first time in that party's history. The remaining seats were held by the Labour Party, Sinn Féin, and independents. Ahern was given a third consecutive term as prime minister in June.

In September 2007, Ahern narrowly won a vote of confidence over long-standing questions about his personal financial dealings while finance minister in the 1990s. He denied all allegations of corruption but later stepped down when evidence emerged to the contrary, and Finance Minister Brian Cowen became prime minister in May 2008.

Soon after Cowen's installation, Irish voters rejected the EU's Lisbon Treaty, designed to replace a draft EU constitution that had failed to pass in 2005. They then reversed their decision in September 2009, strongly supporting the treaty in a second vote.

While the ruling Fianna Fáil and Green parties saw a significant decline in support in local elections in June 2009, the coalition subsequently won a motion of confidence in Parliament. As a result of a series of resignations and defections, the number of coalition backers had dropped to equal that of the opposition. However, Fianna

Fáil and the Green Party remained in power after agreeing on a governmental program in October 2009 that provided for electoral reform, such as the establishment of an independent electoral commission and changes to rules for political donations.

Ireland has faced severe economic problems in conjunction with the global economic crisis, driven by a rapid decline in property prices. The economy entered a technical depression in 2009; public finances fell into deep crisis, and the Irish banking system became extremely fragile, despite government intervention. By September 2010, the budget deficit hit 50 billion euros (\$74 billion), or approximately 32 percent of Ireland's GDP. Much of the deficit's ballooning growth was attributable to expensive government bailouts for the banking system. After three years of austerity measures, during which time household wealth fell by almost a third, the government continued to make painful cuts, resulting in a pessimistic political and economic climate.

Political Rights

and Civil Liberties:

Ireland is an electoral democracy. The Parliament (Oireachtas) consists of a lower house (the Dáil), whose 166 members are elected by proportional representation for five-year terms, and an upper house (the Seanad, or Senate) with 60 members, 11 appointed and 49 elected by representatives of various interest groups. The Senate is mainly a consultative body. The president, whose functions are largely ceremonial, is directly elected for a seven-year term. The prime minister, or taoiseach, is chosen by Parliament.

The political party system is open to the rise and fall of competing groupings.

The two largest parties—Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael—do not differ widely in ideological orientation but represent the opposing sides of the 1920s civil war. The smaller parties are the Labour Party, Sinn Féin, and the Greens. The Progressive Democrats disbanded in 2009.

Corruption has been a recurring problem, with many scandals involving members of Fianna Fáil. A 2009 report by Transparency International Ireland stated that the greatest concern was so-called legal corruption in the form of undue political influence through cronyism, political patronage and favors, donations, and other contacts that influence political decisions and behavior. Likely due to the low levels of petty corruption, Ireland was ranked 14 out of 178 countries surveyed in Transparency International's 2010 Corruption Perceptions Index.

The media are free and independent, and internet access is unrestricted. The print media present a variety of viewpoints. Television and radio are dominated by the state broadcaster, but the growth of cable and satellite television is weakening its influence. The state maintains the right to censor pornographic and violent material, which critics charge is an anachronistic practice and possibly a violation of the European Convention on Human Rights. Reforms to Ireland's defamation legislation passed in 2009 introduced the offense of blasphemous libel, with penalties of up to 25,000 euros (\$33,500). The new legislation, which came in effect in January 2010, stirred public outrage, prompting the government to suggest that the law be put to a referendum. However, a referendum had not been held by year's end.

Freedom of religion is provided in the constitution, and discrimination on the basis of religion is illegal. Although the country is overwhelmingly Roman Catholic, there is no state religion, and adherents of other faiths face few impediments to religious expression. Religious education is provided in most primary and secondary schools, whose boards include officials of the Catholic Church. However, parents may exempt their children from religious instruction, and the constitution requires equal funding for students wishing instruction in other faiths. Academic freedom is respected.

The right of public assembly and demonstration is not legally infringed. Freedom of association is upheld, and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) can operate freely. Collective bargaining is legal and unrestricted, and labor unions operate without hindrance.

The legal system is based on common law, and the judiciary is independent. While prison conditions have improved in recent years, overcrowding remains a problem. Despite equal protection for all under the law, the Irish Travellers, a traditionally nomadic group of about 25,000 people, face social discrimination in housing, hiring, and other areas. Ireland, which had been remarkably tolerant of a large influx of immigrants into its relatively homogenous population during the boom years, has seen public opinion move against immigration as the economy has worsened.

Inequality persists in pay rates for men and women, but discrimination in employment on the basis of sex or sexual orientation is forbidden under national and EU law. Although the past two presidents have been women—Mary Robinson (1990–97) and Mary McAleese (elected in 1997 and reelected in 2004)—women are underrepresented politically, with just 20 elected to Parliament in 2007. Abortion is legal only when the life of the mother is in danger, and women seeking abortions frequently travel to Britain to have them performed. An Irish NGO that works with

women in the sex trade has reported an increase in prostitution as well as human trafficking in Ireland.

A 2009 bill gives same-sex couples the right to civil partnership, but denies equal access to the protections received by families with married parents. The much-publicized Commission to Inquire into Child Abuse, investigating claims of abuse in state schools and orphanages since the 1940s, submitted two reports in 2009 that exposed widespread physical and emotional abuse against children in state institutions as well as by Catholic priests. Allegations of sexual abuse continued in 2010, prompting a letter from Pope Benedict XVI to the Catholic people of Ireland apologizing to the victims.

Israel

Political Rights: 1 **Population:** 7,600,000 [Note: There are an estimated
Civil Liberties: 2 297,000 Israeli settlers in the West Bank, about 19,000
Status: Free in Golan Heights, and nearly 193,000 in East Jerusalem.]
Capital: Jerusalem

Note: The numerical ratings and status above reflect conditions within Israel itself. Separate reports examine the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline For Year Under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
1,3F	1,3F	1,3F	1,3F	1,2F	1,2F	1,2F	1,2F	1,2F	1,2F

Overview: Israel's right-leaning government made little progress in fragile peace talks with the Palestinian Authority during 2010, and lawmakers attempted to advance several controversial bills that appeared to discriminate against the country's Arab minority. In May, Israel drew international scrutiny after its naval interception of a Turkish flotilla attempting to bring goods to the Gaza Strip resulted in several civilian deaths.

Israel was formed in 1948 from part of the British-ruled mandate of Palestine, which had been created by the League of Nations following World War I. A 1947 UN partition plan dividing Palestine into two states, Jewish and Arab, was rejected by the Arab Higher Committee and the Arab League, and Israel's 1948 declaration of independence led to war with a coalition of Arab countries. While Israel maintained its sovereignty and expanded its borders, Jordan (then known as Transjordan) seized East Jerusalem and the West Bank, and Egypt took control of the Gaza Strip.

As a result of its 1967 war with Egypt, Jordan, and Syria, Israel occupied the Sinai Peninsula, the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, East Jerusalem, and the Golan Heights. Israel annexed East Jerusalem in 1967 and extended Israeli law to the Golan Heights in 1981. It returned the Sinai to Egypt in 1982 as part of a peace agreement between the two countries.

In 1993, Israel secured an agreement with the Palestine Liberation Organization

(PLO) that provided for a phased Israeli withdrawal from the West Bank and Gaza Strip and limited Palestinian autonomy in those areas, in exchange for Palestinian recognition of Israel and a renunciation of terrorism. In 1994, Israel and Jordan agreed to a U.S.-brokered peace agreement. However, Israeli-Palestinian negotiations on a future Palestinian state broke down in 2000, and Palestinian militant violence resumed.

In 2002, the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) reoccupied many of the West Bank areas that had been ceded to the Palestinian Authority (PA) in the 1990s. Israel also began construction of a security barrier in the West Bank that roughly followed the 1949 armistice line. Critics accused the Israelis of confiscating Palestinian property and impeding access to land, jobs, and services for those living in the barrier's vicinity. As a result, the barrier—which was about 70 percent complete by the end of 2010—has been rerouted six times by order of the Israeli Supreme Court; half of these orders have yet to be implemented.

After the death of Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat, Mahmoud Abbas was elected president of the PA in January 2005. A verbal ceasefire agreement between Abbas and Israeli prime minister Ariel Sharon led to a general decline, but not a halt, in violence. In September 2005, Sharon's government completed a unilateral withdrawal of Jewish settlers from the Gaza Strip, overcoming fierce right-wing opposition. Sharon subsequently left the right-wing Likud party and founded the centrist Kadima party. In January 2006, he suffered a stroke that left him in a coma, and then deputy prime minister Ehud Olmert succeeded him as prime minister and Kadima chairman. After the 2006 parliamentary elections, Olmert and Kadima headed a new coalition government that included the Labor Party, the religious Shas party, and other factions.

Israeli-Palestinian violence picked up after the Islamist group Hamas won elections to the Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC) in January 2006, outpolling Abbas's Fatah party. Over the next two years, Israel experienced a decreasing number of terrorist attacks and regular rocket and mortar fire from the Gaza Strip, while the IDF continued to stage air strikes against militant leaders and destructive incursions into Palestinian territory, including an invasion of the Gaza Strip in the summer of 2006.

Also that summer, Israel went to war against the Lebanese Islamist militia Hezbollah after the group staged a cross-border attack. By the time a UN-brokered ceasefire took effect in mid-August, about 1,200 Lebanese, including many civilians, had been killed; 116 IDF soldiers and 43 Israeli civilians were also killed. A 2007 report by Israel's state comptroller described the government's efforts to protect civilian life during the conflict as "a grave failure."

Olmert resigned in September 2008 after being charged in a corruption case. Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni replaced him, but she was unable to form a new majority coalition in the Knesset (parliament), prompting early elections in February 2009. While Kadima led with 28 seats, Likud (27 seats) ultimately formed a mostly right-wing government with the secular nationalist Yisrael Beiteinu (15 seats), Shas (11 seats), and other parties. The center-left Labor Party (13 seats) also joined the coalition, leaving Kadima in opposition. The new government, headed by Likud leader Benjamin Netanyahu, took office in April 2009.

Meanwhile, unilateral ceasefires in January 2009 ended a brief but intense

conflict between Israel and Hamas, which had ruled the Gaza Strip since driving out Fatah in a 2007 PA schism. During the conflict, Israeli forces damaged or destroyed large portions of Gaza's military, government, and civilian infrastructure, while Hamas launched hundreds of rockets and mortars into Israeli civilian areas. The death toll remained in dispute: while the Palestinian Centre for Human Rights reported 1,434 Palestinians killed, including 960 noncombatants, the IDF reported 1,166 Palestinians killed, including 295 to 460 noncombatants. Thirteen Israelis were killed, including three civilians.

In September 2009, a UN-commissioned investigation into the war led by South African jurist Richard Goldstone accused Israel and Hamas of war crimes, charges that were echoed by an array of international human rights organizations. Israel subsequently announced investigations into 150 allegations from the report: 36 were transferred to criminal investigations, 48 were closed, and the rest were pending at the end of 2010. In February 2010, two IDF officers were reprimanded for an artillery attack on a UN compound in Gaza that included white phosphorus munitions, and Israel agreed to pay the United Nations \$ 10 million in compensation for destroyed property. In October, an IDF military court found two soldiers guilty of using a young boy as a human shield to check for booby traps in Tel al-Hawa. The UN Human Rights Council and nongovernmental human rights organizations accused Israel of investigating only a portion of the allegations, with a focus on low-ranking officers.

Also in 2010, a series of private ships carrying food and goods attempted to break Israel's economic blockade of Gaza, which had been in place to varying degrees since Hamas seized control of the territory in 2007. In May, Israeli forces intercepted a six-ship flotilla from Turkey and killed nine activists on board one of the vessels—the *Mavi Marmara*—in an ensuing confrontation; a total of 632 activists were arrested and detained in Israel. The Israeli government was widely condemned internationally for the incident, but claimed its soldiers were acting in self-defense. Israel later eased the Gaza blockade substantially.

A U.S.-brokered freeze on Israeli settlement construction in the West Bank led to the resumption of direct peace talks between Israel and the Fatah-led PA in September 2010. However, the PA soon broke off the talks after Israel did not extend the freeze beyond that month.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Israel is an electoral democracy. A largely ceremonial president is elected by the 120-seat Knesset for seven-year terms. The prime minister is usually the leader of the largest party or coalition in the Knesset, members of which are elected by party-list proportional representation for four-year terms. At under 3 percent, Israel's vote threshold for a party to win parliamentary representation is the world's lowest, leading to the regular formation of niche parties and unstable coalitions.

Parties or candidates that deny the existence of Israel as a Jewish state, oppose the democratic system, or incite racism are prohibited. In 2009, the Knesset's central election committee voted to ban two Arab parties—Balad and the United Arab List (UAL)-Ta'al—from that year's elections, citing their alleged support for Hamas in the Gaza conflict. The ban was rapidly overturned by the Supreme Court, and the parties were allowed to run; UAL-Ta'al won four seats, and Balad won three.

In July 2010, a Knesset plenum voted to strip Balad member Haneen Zoabi of some parliamentary privileges—including the right to hold a diplomatic passport and to subsidized legal counsel in the event of criminal proceedings—following her participation in the *Mavi Marmara* flotilla. Zoabi appealed the decision to the High Court in November; the case had not been heard by year's end.

Thirteen members of the current Knesset are Arab Israelis. While the Arab population votes heavily for Arab-oriented parties, the left-leaning and centrist Zionist parties also draw strong support from the Arab community. No independent Arab party has been formally included in a governing coalition.

After Israel annexed East Jerusalem in 1967, Arab residents were issued Israeli identity cards and given the option of obtaining Israeli citizenship, though most choose not to seek citizenship for political reasons. The noncitizens have the same rights as Israeli citizens, except the right to vote in national elections. They can vote in municipal as well as PA elections, and remain eligible to apply for Israeli citizenship. However, Israeli law strips such Arabs of their Jerusalem residency if they stay outside the city for more than three months; in 2009, the Interior Ministry revoked the residency rights of 4,570 Palestinians, representing more than a third of all such revocations since 1967. The city's Arab population does not receive a share of municipal services proportionate to its numbers.

Under the 1948 Law of Return, Jewish immigrants and their immediate families are granted Israeli citizenship and residence rights; other immigrants must apply for these rights. In 2010, the cabinet endorsed a Yisrael Beiteinu-sponsored amendment to Israel's citizenship law that would require new citizens to swear loyalty to Israel, "as a Jewish and democratic state." Some cabinet members, many opposition parties, and nearly all Israeli human rights organizations condemned the move as unnecessary, dangerously vague, and discriminatory against non-Jews, and the bill was ultimately rejected by the government.

A 2003 law temporarily denied citizenship and residency status to West Bank or Gaza residents married to Israeli citizens. While the measure was criticized as blatantly discriminatory, supporters cited evidence that 14 percent of suicide bombers acquired Israeli identity cards via family reunification laws. The Supreme Court in 2006 upheld the legislation, which affects about 15,000 couples, but new hearings at the court were ongoing in 2010.

Israel was ranked 30 out of 178 countries surveyed in Transparency International's 2010 Corruption Perceptions Index. Corruption scandals in recent years have implicated senior officials including a prime minister, a foreign minister, a finance minister, and the heads of the tax authority and the police. Ehud Olmert resigned as prime minister in 2008 amid an investigation into donations and other gifts he had reportedly received from a U.S. businessman over many years, as well as several other alleged misdeeds dating to his previous posts in the cabinet and as mayor of Jerusalem. In 2009, Olmert was indicted in three of these scandals, and one trial began in 2010. Also in 2010, Olmert's former deputy mayor, Uri Lupoliansky, was arrested and charged with a series of corruption offenses. Separately, Yisrael Beiteinu leader and current foreign minister Avigdor Lieberman was under investigation for money laundering, fraud, and breach of trust; in May, police recommended that the attorney general file charges against him.

Press freedom is respected in Israel, and the media are vibrant and independent.

All Israeli newspapers are privately owned and freely criticize government policy. The Israel Broadcasting Authority operates public radio and television services, and commercial broadcasts are widely available. Most Israelis subscribe to cable or satellite television. Internet access is widespread and unrestricted. While print articles on security matters are subject to a military censor, the scope of permissible reporting is broad. In April 2010, a widely condemned gag order on the case of journalist Anat Kam was lifted, revealing that she had been charged with "serious espionage" for giving *Haaretz* newspaper reporter Uri Blau over 2,000 classified military documents. Kam, who allegedly leaked the documents during her military service, had reportedly been under house arrest since December 2009. Blau returned to Israel for questioning by the Shin Bet domestic security agency in October. The Government Press Office (GPO) has occasionally refused to provide press cards to journalists, especially Palestinians, to restrict them from entering Israel, claiming security considerations. In January 2010, Jared Maslin, an editor for the Palestinian news agency Ma'an, was denied entry to Israel and detained at an airport for a week for, "failing to cooperate under questioning."

While Israel's founding documents define it as a, "Jewish and democratic state," freedom of religion is respected. Christian, Muslim, and Baha'i communities have jurisdiction over their own members in matters of marriage, divorce, and burial. Since the Orthodox establishment generally handles these matters among Jews, marriages between Jews and non-Jews are not recognized by the state unless conducted abroad. In July 2010, proposed legislation to give the Chief Rabbinate exclusive control over the conversion process drew significant opposition from non-Orthodox denominations, as the move would effectively annul non-Orthodox conversions to Judaism. By contrast, another conversion bill giving the chief rabbi of the IDF—and not the Chief Rabbinate—ultimate control over soldiers' conversions passed a preliminary reading in the Knesset in December.

Muslim and Christian religious authorities are occasionally discriminated against in resource allocation and upkeep of religious sites, though the state budget officially assigns funds according to need. Citing security concerns, Israel occasionally restricts Muslim worshippers' access to the Temple Mount, or Haram al-Sharif, in Jerusalem, and did so in February and March 2010. In October, police arrested two Muslim clerics from Nazareth on charges of supporting terrorism; the clerics allegedly called on supporters to join militant Islamist groups pledged to Israel's destruction.

Primary and secondary education are universal, with instruction for the Arab minority based on the common curriculum used by the Jewish majority, but conducted in Arabic. In August 2010, the government mandated the teaching of Arabic in all state schools, starting with 170 schools in the north. School quality is generally worse in mostly Arab municipalities, and Arab children have reportedly had difficulty registering at mostly Jewish schools. Israel's universities are open to all students based on merit, and have long been centers for dissent. In 2010, a number of civic organizations exerted pressure on university administrators to censure or fire faculty for allegedly enforcing "anti-Zionist" curriculums and political attitudes in the classroom, a charge echoed by Education Minister Gideon Sa'ar. Administrators generally rejected the accusations, and no censuring or firing took place. Periodic road closures and other security measures in recent years have made it difficult for West Bank and Gaza residents to reach Israeli universities.

Freedoms of assembly and association are respected. Israel hosts an active civil society, and demonstrations are widely permitted. Groups committed to the destruction of Israel are not allowed to demonstrate. In 2009, the cabinet approved a bill that would prohibit state funding for activities by local authorities that mark the Nakba, considered a day of mourning by many Arab Israelis and commemorated on Israeli independence day. The measure—which had yet to win the second of three required approvals from the Knesset by the end of 2010—also bars state funding for any activities that reject Israel's existence as a Jewish and democratic state, or that fall within the official definition of armed struggle or terrorist activities against Israel. In 2010, a bill requiring nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) to disclose all foreign donors passed through the Knesset's Constitution, Law, and Justice Committee, though it had not yet been presented to the full chamber at year's end.

Although most public protests against the IDF's 2009 campaign in Gaza were allowed to proceed that year, human rights organizations alleged that permits were more difficult to obtain in Arab-majority towns in the north, that there were instances of physical violence by police, and that detained Arab Israeli protesters were more likely to be kept in custody during legal proceedings than their non-Arab counterparts. In June 2010, some 120,000 ultra-Orthodox Jews protested in Jerusalem and Bnei Barak over government efforts to reform their education system. In July, a similar number of demonstrators staged a 12-day, nearly countrywide march urging the government to secure the release of Gilad Shalit, a soldier held captive in Gaza since 2006.

Workers may join unions of their choice and have the right to strike and bargain collectively. Three-quarters of the workforce either belong to Histadrut, the national labor federation, or are covered by its social programs and bargaining agreements. Both sector-specific and general strikes are common, but typically last less than 24 hours. About 100,000 legal foreign workers enjoy wage protections, medical insurance, and guarantees against employer exploitation. However, those who leave their original employers are stripped of such rights and face deportation. Advocacy groups claim that there are at least 100,000 illegal workers in Israel, many of whom are exploited. In 2009, a new immigration enforcement unit announced plans to deport nearly 300,000 illegal migrants and visa violators. Following public opposition to a 2009 Interior Ministry decision to deport 250 migrant families, including 1,200 children, the government altered the plan in August 2010 to grant legal status to 800 of the children (and their families), specifically those who were enrolled in school, had been in the country for five years, and were fluent in Hebrew. In November, Israel began construction of a barrier along its border with Egypt to try to prevent undocumented African migrants from crossing into Israel. According to the Interior Ministry, over 30,000 illegal migrants have entered the country from Egypt in the past five years.

The judiciary is independent and regularly rules against the government. The Supreme Court hears direct petitions from citizens and Palestinian residents of the West Bank and Gaza Strip. The state generally adheres to court rulings, but the Association for Civil Rights in Israel (ACRI) reported in 2009 that the state was in contempt of eight rulings handed down by the Supreme Court since 2006, including a 2006 rerouting of the West Bank security barrier.

The Emergency Powers (Detention) Law of 1979 provides for indefinite administrative detention without trial. According to the human rights group B'Tselem, by year's end there were 5,705 Palestinians in Israeli jails: 4,662 serving sentences, 153 detainees, 683 being detained until the conclusion of legal proceedings, 204 administrative detainees, and 3 being detained under the Illegal Combatants Law. A temporary order in effect since 2006 permits the detention of suspects accused of security offenses for 96 hours without judicial oversight, compared with 24 hours for other detainees. Israel outlawed the use of torture to extract security information in 2000, but milder forms of coercion are permissible when the prisoner is believed to have vital information about impending terrorist attacks. Human rights groups criticize Israel for continuing to engage in what they consider torture. Interrogation methods include binding detainees to a chair in painful positions, slapping, kicking, and threatening violence against detainees and their relatives. In 2010, B'Tselem reported that, of the 645 interrogee complaints it has made to the Ministry of Justice concerning Israel Security Agency interrogators since 2001, none have led to a criminal investigation.

Personal security in Israel improved significantly in 2010. Rocket and mortar fire from Gaza continued, but far more sporadically than in previous years. According to B'Tselem, about 500 Israeli civilians have been killed by Palestinian militants since September 2000.

Although they have full political rights, the roughly one million Arab citizens of Israel (about 19 percent of the population) receive inferior education, housing, and social services relative to the Jewish population. According to a 2010 report by the NGO Mosawa, Arab Israelis own only 3.5 percent of the land in Israel and receive 3 to 5 percent of government spending, figures that were challenged by the government. Arab Israelis, except for the Druze minority, are not subject to the military draft, though they may volunteer. Those who do not serve are ineligible for the associated benefits, including scholarships and housing loans. In March 2010, the cabinet backed a \$214 million investment plan to improve housing, transportation, and economic infrastructure in 12 Arab communities. In April and May, three Arab Israelis were arrested and charged with spying for Hezbollah, including the prominent Arab rights activist Amir Makhoul; Makhoul confessed and was convicted in October.

In 2008 and 2009, a number of semicommunal Jewish towns in the north began insisting that prospective property buyers accept Israel's existence as a Jewish and democratic state as well as the towns' "Zionist ethos." While these restrictions—widely perceived as attempts to exclude Arabs—were being challenged in court in 2010, the Knesset's Constitutional, Law, and Justice Committee approved a bill allowing communal settlements to turn down prospective residents who, "fail to meet the fundamental views of the settlement." The bill appeared highly unlikely to win final passage at year's end. In October, a group of prominent rabbis—led by the chief rabbi of the city of Tzvat Shmuel Eliyahu—published a religious ruling urging Jews not to rent or sell property to non-Jews, especially Arabs; in December, dozens of other municipal rabbis signed the ruling. That same month, the government initiated an investigation against Eliyahu on charges of incitement to racism.

International and domestic human rights groups have accused the government

of pervasive land and housing discrimination against the Bedouin, and have urged authorities to stop demolishing unlicensed Bedouin homes. In May 2010, the civil rights groups Adalah and ACRI accused the Interior Ministry of delaying elections to the Abu Basma regional council of Bedouin villages in order to keep it under the control of a ministry appointee. The state's Israeli Lands Administration owns 93 percent of the land in Israel; 13 percent of that is owned by the Jewish National Fund (JNF). In 2005, the Supreme Court and attorney general ruled that the JNF could no longer market property only to Jews. The Knesset made several unsuccessful attempts to override those rulings.

Security measures can lead to delays at checkpoints and in public places. By law, all citizens must carry national identification cards. The West Bank security barrier restricts the movements of some East Jerusalem residents. Formal and informal local rules that prevent driving on Jewish holidays can also hamper freedom of movement.

Women have achieved substantial parity at almost all levels of Israeli society. However, Arab women and religious Jewish women face some discrimination and societal pressures that negatively affect their professional, political, and social lives. The trafficking of women for prostitution has become a problem in recent years; both the United Nations and the U.S. State Department have identified Israel as a top destination for trafficked women. The government has opened shelters for victims, and a 2006 law mandates prison terms of up to 20 years for perpetrators. In December 2010, former president Moshe Katsav was convicted of rape by a Tel Aviv court; Katsav had resigned in 2007 amid allegations of rape while he was tourism minister in the 1990s and sexual harassment during his tenure as president. A 2005 Supreme Court decision granted guardianship rights to nonbiological parents in same-sex partnerships, and two lesbians were granted permission to legally adopt each other's biological children in 2006. Openly gay Israelis are permitted to serve in the armed forces. In 2009, however, a gunman killed 2 people and wounded 15 at a gay, lesbian, and transgender support center in Tel Aviv.

Italy

Political Rights: 1

Population: 60,500,000

Civil Liberties: 2

Capital: Rome

Status: Free

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline For Year Under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
1,2F	1,1F	1,1F	1,1F	1,1F	1,1F	1,1F	1,2F	1,2F	1,2F

Overview: Scandals involving underage women and escorts continued to plague Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi in 2010, causing many to question his ability to govern. In July, Berlusconi split from longtime ally Gianfranco Fini, who left the governing coalition and formed his own party.

Italy was unified under the constitutional monarchy of Piedmont and Sardinia in the 19th century. Its liberal period ended in 1922 with the rise Benito Mussolini and his Fascist Party, which eventually led the country to defeat in World War II. A referendum in 1946 replaced the monarchy with a republican form of government.

The "clean hands" corruption trials of the early 1990s prompted the collapse of the major political factions that had dominated postwar Italian politics—the Christian Democrats, the Communists, and the Socialists. Since that time, many new parties and coalitions have emerged.

Parliamentary elections in 2006 ushered in a new center-left coalition government led by Romano Prodi, leaving Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi's center-right bloc in opposition for the first time since 2001. Berlusconi's premiership had been marred by abortive attempts to prosecute him on money laundering, fraud, and tax evasion charges, and by his personal domination of the national media, including state outlets and his extensive private holdings. However, Prodi's new government proved unstable; in 2007, it lost key votes in Parliament over Italy's troop presence in Afghanistan, and it finally collapsed after a no-confidence vote in January 2008.

Berlusconi's rightist coalition, People of Freedom, handily won early parliamentary elections in April 2008, capturing a total of 344 seats in the lower house and 174 in the Senate in combination with two smaller allies. A center-left coalition led by Rome mayor Walter Veltroni's new Democratic Party placed second, with 246 seats in the lower house and 132 seats in the Senate. Berlusconi ran on pledges to crack down on crime and illegal immigration, and the new Parliament passed a number of measures on those issues in 2008 and 2009.

In the March 2010 regional elections, the opposition center-left lost a number of key regions that it had dominated in previous years, including Piedmont and Lazio, where Rome is located. The regionalist and anti-immigration Northern League party made gains, increasing its support in the longtime strongholds of Lombardy and the Veneto, as well as in the traditionally leftist region of Emilia Romagna.

The board of governors of the state-owned RAI television network had suspended political discussion on its three channels for a month in the lead-up to the elections. The move—which was viewed by some as a politically motivated attempt by Berlusconi's government to limit potentially critical commentary—was officially attributed to the difficulty of ensuring "equality of treatment" for all parties.

In June 2010, the Senate passed a bill that would limit the use of wiretaps and punish journalists with fines or up to 30 days in jail if they are found guilty of publishing content from such recordings before the defendant in question goes to trial. The bill, which was seen primarily as an effort to keep embarrassing information about politicians out of the news, was opposed by all of the major newspapers in Italy. Journalists responded with a national strike in July. The bill remained stalled in the lower house at year's end.

Also in June, the country's major trade unions called a national strike to protest fiscal austerity measures taken by the government in response to the global economic downturn. The measures included cuts in funding for local governments and a freeze on public sector salaries.

Scandals involving Berlusconi and underage women and escorts continued to emerge in 2010, leading many to question his ability to govern. In October, the media reported that the prime minister had personally intervened on behalf of a

17-year-old Moroccan girl who was detained in May by police on suspicion of theft. Berlusconi allegedly told investigators that the girl was the granddaughter of Egyptian president Hosni Mubarak, when in fact she was the daughter of immigrants, resided in Italy illegally, and had attended at least one party at Berlusconi's house. The incident, along with accusations that Berlusconi routinely hosted sexually explicit parties, led to calls for his resignation, but he remained in office at year's end.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Italy is an electoral democracy. The president, whose role is largely ceremonial but sometimes politically influential, is elected for a seven-year term by Parliament and representatives of the regions. Giorgio Napolitano, a former Communist, was selected for the post in 2006. The president chooses the prime minister, who is often, but not always, the leader of the largest party in the 630-seat lower house, the Chamber of Deputies. The upper house is the Senate, with 315 seats. Members of both chambers serve five-year terms.

A 1993 electoral law replaced the existing system of proportional representation with single-member districts for most of the seats in Parliament. The move was designed to reduce the number of political parties that could obtain seats and ensure a more stable majority for the parties in power; Italians had seen more than 50 governments since 1945. However, in 2005, proportional representation was restored, with a provision awarding at least 54 percent of the seats in the lower house to the winning party or coalition, no matter how small its margin of victory. For the Senate, victory in a given region assures the winning party or coalition a 55 percent majority of that region's allotment of seats. Just six parties won seats in the lower house in the 2008 elections, down from 26 in the previous elections.

The opposition Democratic Party has been the main party of the left since it was formed through a merger of multiple smaller parties in 2007. Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi's right-leaning PDL first emerged as a multiparty electoral alliance in 2008. In 2009, it became a single party following a formal merger between Berlusconi's Forza Italia party and the formerly neofascist National Alliance party. The Northern League, though still part of the ruling coalition, decided to remain an independent party. The PDL fractured in July 2010, after Gianfranco Fini—former leader of the National Alliance and the Speaker of the Chamber of Deputies—split with Berlusconi over the prime minister's handling of corruption allegations leveled against him. However, at the end of September 2010, Berlusconi survived a no-confidence vote with the support of the Northern League and Fini's new center-right Future and Freedom for Italy party. After weeks of scandal surrounding Berlusconi's personal life, four members of the government resigned in November, and the premier survived another vote of no confidence in December by a margin of just three votes.

Corruption remains an issue in politics despite the changes in government over the past decade. Italy was ranked 67 out of 178 countries surveyed in Transparency International's 2010 Corruption Perceptions Index, the second-lowest ranking in Western Europe. Berlusconi has faced numerous corruption charges over the years, but has never been convicted. In October 2009, the Constitutional Court overturned a law granting Berlusconi immunity from prosecution while still in office. The rul-

ing allowed for a number of pending court cases against him to proceed, the first of which began in November 2009. The trial—which related to tax fraud accusations involving his Mediaset media company—was eventually adjourned, as the prime minister could not attend due to state business. In March 2010, Parliament passed another "legitimate impediment" law that allows the prime minister to postpone any trial for up to 18 months. Berlusconi has insisted that he cannot be called to trial while serving as prime minister because of his government duties.

Freedoms of speech and of the press are constitutionally guaranteed. However, Berlusconi controls up to 90 percent of the country's broadcast media through state-owned outlets and his own private media holdings. There are many newspapers and news magazines, most with regional bases. Newspapers are primarily run by political parties or owned by large media groups. Internet access is generally unrestricted.

Religious freedom is constitutionally guaranteed and respected in practice. Although Roman Catholicism is the dominant faith and the state grants some privileges to the Catholic Church, there is no official religion. The state provides support, if requested, to other sects represented in the country. Agreements between the government and a number of religious groups have been signed, but an omnibus religious freedom law has yet to be passed. In May 2010, a Muslim woman was fined approximately \$650 for wearing a niqab (facial veil) to a mosque in Novara. A bylaw in the city makes it illegal for anyone to wear garments that cover the face and hinder identification by police. Academic freedom is respected.

Italians are free to assemble and form social and political associations, and around 35 percent of the workforce is unionized. The constitution recognizes the right to strike, with the exception of those employed in essential services and a number of self-employed professions, such as lawyers, doctors, and truck drivers. There were several strikes during 2010 to protest the government's austerity measures. In December, thousands of students protested proposed cuts to the education budget.

The judicial system is undermined by long trial delays and the influence of organized crime. Despite legal prohibitions against torture, there have been reports of excessive use of force by police, particularly against illegal immigrants. In March 2010, a Genoa court confirmed the convictions of 15 police officers, prison guards, and doctors who had been found guilty of mistreating protesters detained during the 2001 Group of Eight summit. The court also overturned the initial acquittals of 29 others involved in mistreating the detainees. Some prisons continue to suffer from overcrowding.

The country made some gains against organized crime in 2010. In July, over 300 people were arrested and millions of dollars in weapons, drugs, and property were confiscated during police raids across Italy against the 'Ndrangheta, an organized crime group based in Calabria. In September, Italian police seized over 1.5 billion euros (\$1.9 billion) worth of assets—including over 40 wind and solar companies—from a Sicilian businessman accused of working with the Mafia. In addition, a major Sicilian Mafia boss, Giuseppe Falsone, was arrested in France in June.

Italy is a major entry point for undocumented immigrants trying to reach Europe, and the government has been criticized for holding illegal immigrants in overcrowded and unhygienic conditions and denying them access to lawyers and

other experts. A government crackdown on illegal immigration that began in 2008 has led to the arrest of hundreds of suspected illegal immigrants. A 2009 immigration law imposes fines on illegal immigrants and grants authorities the power to detain them for up to six months without charge. Under a 2009 agreement with Libya, Italy in 2010 continued to provide the North African country with patrol boats to intercept ships carrying illegal immigrants from Africa. The policy has been credited with sharply reducing the number of migrants reaching Italy, but criticized for failing to protect the rights of migrants. In January 2010, race riots engulfed a small town in Calabria. Local organized crime groups were accused of igniting the riots by throwing rocks and burning cars, provoking the African immigrants who live in the area and work as fruit pickers.

Women benefit from generous maternity leave provisions, equality in the workforce, and considerable educational opportunities. However, violence against women continues to be a problem, and female political representation is low for the region. Women hold 21 percent of the seats in the Chamber of Deputies. In July 2009, Italy became the last European country to approve the use of the abortion-inducing medication mifepristone. However, unlike in the United States and other European countries, the pill can only be administered in hospitals, where the patient must remain until it has taken effect.

Italy is a destination country for the trafficking of women and children for sexual and labor exploitation. The Italian government has made efforts to tackle the problem by increasing its prosecution of traffickers; it also finances nongovernmental organizations that work to raise awareness of the problem and support trafficking victims.

Jamaica

Political Rights: 2

Population: 2,700,000

Civil Liberties: 3

Capital: Kingston

Status: Free

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline For Year Under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
2,3F	2,3 F	2,3F							

Overview: In May and June 2010, Jamaican security forces conducted a manhunt aimed at arresting alleged drug lord Christopher "Dudus" Coke and extraditing him to the United States. The operation included gun battles that resulted in over 70 civilian deaths. Reports that the government had initially used public funds in a bid to block the extradition request led to a public inquiry, highlighting continued links between politicians and organized crime.

Jamaica achieved independence from Britain in 1962. Since then, power has alternated between the social democratic People's National Party (PNP) and the more conservative Jamaica Labour Party (JLP).

In the 2002 elections, Percival James Patterson of the PNP was elected to a third consecutive term as prime minister, as the PNP maintained control of Parliament. Following Patterson's resignation in 2006, Minister for Local Government Portia Simpson-Miller won the right to serve out Patterson's term for the ruling party. Poor economic growth and fallout from Hurricane Dean, which struck the country in August 2007, contributed to the PNP's defeat in the September 2007 parliamentary elections. The JLP won 33 seats in the House of Representatives, ending 18 years in power for the PNP, which took 27 seats. Opposition leader Bruce Golding became the new prime minister.

Under Golding, Jamaica has struggled with high levels of crime, sluggish economic growth, and a public sector in need of major reform. In 2009, an all-time high of 1,682 homicides were reported. Over half of these were gang related, and only 21 percent were solved in court. The situation improved somewhat in 2010, with 1,428 murders reported during the year. However, according to human rights organizations, extrajudicial killings and other abuses by the security forces increased. More than 400 civilians were killed in security operations in 2010, compared with 253 in 2009.

Long-standing relationships between elected representatives and organized crime, in which criminal gangs guaranteed voter turnout in certain neighborhoods in exchange for political favors and protection, received special scrutiny in 2009 and 2010, as the U.S. government pressed for the extradition of alleged drug trafficker Christopher "Dudus" Coke. The gang Coke reputedly led, the Shower Posse, was based in Tivoli Gardens, an area of Kingston that Golding represented in Parliament. In April 2010, the *Washington Post* reported that a JLP government official had signed a \$400,000 contract with a U.S. lobbying firm to fight Coke's extradition. The public outcry in the United States and Jamaica forced Golding in May to order Jamaican security forces into Tivoli Gardens to arrest Coke, leading to days of violence in which over 70 civilians and several police personnel were killed. Coke was finally apprehended in late June, reportedly on his way to surrender at the U.S. Embassy. He agreed to extradition and was set to face trial in 2011. In Jamaica, a public investigation into the Coke affair was pending at year's end.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Jamaica is an electoral democracy. The British monarch is represented as head of state by a governor general, who is nominated by the prime minister and approved by the monarch. Following legislative elections, the leader of the party or coalition holding a majority in the lower house is appointed as prime minister by the governor general. The bicameral Parliament consists of the 60-member House of Representatives, elected for five years, and the 21-member Senate, with 13 senators appointed on the advice of the prime minister and 8 on the advice of the opposition leader.

In recent years, the ideological gulf between the two main political parties—the center-left PNP and the more conservative JLP—has narrowed considerably due to the retirement of their respective veteran leaders. Powerful criminal gangs in some urban neighborhoods maintain influence over voter turnout in return for political favors, which has called into question the legitimacy of election results in those areas.

Corruption remains a serious problem in Jamaica. Government whistle-blowers

who object to official acts of waste, fraud, or abuse of power are not well protected by Jamaican law, as is required under the Inter-American Convention against Corruption. The Corruption Prevention Act of 2002 requires that some government officials make their financial assets public, but implementation of this law has been problematic. Jamaica was ranked 87 out of 178 countries surveyed in Transparency International's 2010 Corruption Perceptions Index.

The constitutional right to free expression is generally respected. While newspapers are independent and free of government control, circulation is generally low. Broadcast media are largely state owned but are open to pluralistic points of view. Journalists occasionally face intimidation in the run-up to elections. The country enacted an access to information law in 2002.

Freedom of religion is constitutionally protected and generally respected in practice. While laws banning Obeah—an Afro-Caribbean shamanistic religion—remain on the books, they are not actively enforced. The government does not hinder academic freedom.

Freedoms of association and assembly are generally respected. Jamaica has a small but robust civil society and active community groups. Approximately 20 percent of the workforce is unionized. Labor unions are politically influential and have the right to strike.

The judicial system is headed by the Supreme Court and includes a court of appeals and several magistrates' courts. The Trinidad-based Caribbean Court of Justice became the highest appellate court for Jamaica in 2005. A growing backlog of cases and a shortage of court staff at all levels continue to undermine the justice system.

In 2010, Human Rights Watch reported that security forces had carried out extrajudicial killings during the search operation for alleged drug trafficker Christopher "Dudus" Coke in Tivoli Gardens, though such claims could not be substantiated. Unreliable witnesses, lack of evidence, and the chaotic nature of the circumstances prevented prosecutors from building a case, a common problem in the country. Separately, the public prosecutor in October declined to file charges against army and police officers recommended for trial in the killing of five men in a 2008 operation in Tivoli Gardens. The decision was widely criticized by Jamaican human rights groups. Despite frequent complaints involving the use of lethal force by police, legal proceedings in such cases are rare, raising serious questions about the ability and willingness of the authorities to investigate accusations of abuse. Ill-treatment by prison guards has also been reported, and conditions in detention centers and prisons are abysmal.

Kingston's insular "garrison" communities remain the epicenter of most violence and serve as safe havens for gangs. Jamaica is a transit point for cocaine shipped from Colombia to U.S. markets, and much of the island's violence is the result of warfare between drug gangs known as posses. Contributing factors include the deportation of Jamaican-born criminals from the United States and an illegal weapons trade.

Violence against gay, lesbian, and transgendered individuals remains a major concern. Amnesty International has identified homosexuals in Jamaica as a marginalized group, openly targeted for extreme harassment and violence. Same-sex intercourse is punishable by 10 years in prison with hard labor. In recent years,

Jamaicans have been granted asylum in Britain and Canada on the grounds that they were in danger because of their sexual orientation. Prime Minister Bruce Golding has confirmed the illegality of homosexual acts, vowing never to allow gays in his cabinet. The antigay lyrics of Jamaican entertainers, particularly dancehall singers, remain a source of contention.

Legal protections for women are poorly enforced, and violence and discrimination remain widespread. Women are underrepresented in government, holding just eight seats in the House of Representatives.

Japan

Political Rights: 1

Population: 127,400,000

Civil Liberties: 2

Capital: Tokyo

Status: Free

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline For Year Under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
1,2F									

Overview: Tainted by scandals and an inability to deliver on some of his campaign promises, Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama resigned in June 2010 after less than a year in office. Former finance minister Naoto Kan, who succeeded Hatoyama, saw his approval ratings drop over a proposed tax increase, which contributed to the ruling Democratic Party of Japan's disappointing results in July legislative elections. Meanwhile, the Kan government faced challenges over the continuing economic recession and a worsening in Sino-Japanese relations following a collision between Japanese and Chinese vessels near the disputed Senkaku/Diayu Islands.

Japan has operated as a parliamentary democracy with a largely symbolic monarchy since its defeat in World War II. The Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) presided over Japan's economic ascent while maintaining close security ties with the United States during the Cold War. The so-called iron triangle—the close relationship between the LDP, the banks, and big-business representatives—was a key factor behind Japan's economic success. The LDP government mandated that corporations, specifically construction firms in charge of major public-works projects, rely on banks for capital, and the banks, in turn, took large equity stakes in the companies. Over time, companies engaged in politically expedient but financially unviable projects in order to reap government rewards. The iron triangle became a major source of corruption in the government. The economy ran into trouble in the early 1990s, following a collapse in the stock and real-estate markets, but slowly returned to a healthy state in 2002.

Shinzo Abe became prime minister in 2006, though his tenure was marred by repeated scandals and political gaffes. Five of his ministers resigned in disgrace, and his agriculture minister committed suicide following revelations about ques-

tionable expenses. Abe stepped down in September 2007, after losing control of the legislature's upper chamber in the July elections to the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ).

Yasuo Fukuda, who succeeded Abe as the head of the LDP and prime minister, failed to rally support and govern effectively, and he resigned in September 2008. Former foreign minister Taro Aso, the LDP secretary general, succeeded him later that month. The Aso government focused on rejuvenating the faltering economy, which remained burdened with a government debt equal to almost 200 percent of the country's gross domestic product.

The LDP's nearly 55-year dominance in the legislature's lower chamber ended when the DPJ captured 308 seats in the August 2009 elections. The DPJ formed a coalition with two smaller parties, the Social Democratic Party and the People's New Party, and Yukio Hatoyama became prime minister. The DPJ's platform challenged many of the LDP's long-standing policies, including greater independence from U.S. influence, improved relations with neighboring Asian countries, and a more decentralized and accountable government concerned with social welfare and environmental issues.

However, Hatoyama was unable to implement some of his campaign promises, in part due to the country's economic recession. In addition, increased regional tensions following the sinking of a South Korean naval vessel in March 2010, allegedly by a North Korean torpedo, led Hatoyama to shift his foreign policy focus back to the United States for security guarantees. Hatoyama announced his resignation on June 2, citing a financial scandal involving DPJ secretary general Ichiro Ozawa, as well as a broken promise to close the controversial U.S. military base on the island of Okinawa. Hatoyama's entire cabinet stepped down two days later.

On June 4, Finance Minister Naoto Kan was chosen prime minister, though his approval ratings plummeted after he proposed raising the country's sales tax from 5 percent to 10 percent. Following this unpopular move, the DPJ captured only 44 of the 121 seats at stake in the July elections to the legislature's upper chamber, while a coalition of the LDP and two smaller parties took 61 seats.

Despite predictions of another power transition, Kan defeated Ozawa in a September contest for leadership of the DPJ. However, Kan faced significant domestic and international challenges throughout the rest of the year. Although the Kan government intervened in the country's currency market in mid-September to curb appreciation of the yen, the value of the yen continued to rise, halting Japan's economic recovery. Meanwhile, Sino-Japanese relations were strained following the arrest and detention of the captain of a Chinese fishing trawler that had collided with two Japanese coast guard boats in disputed waters near the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands. The captain was held in custody for 17 days, despite intense protests from the Chinese government, which retaliated by halting exports of rare earth minerals to Japan.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Japan is an electoral democracy. The prime minister—the leader of the majority party or coalition in the bicameral legislature's (Diet's) lower chamber, the House of Representatives—serves as head of government. Members of the 480-seat House of Representatives serve four-year terms; 300 are elected in single-member constituen-

cies, and 180 are elected by party list in 11 regional districts. The 242-seat upper chamber, the House of Councilors, consists of 146 members elected in multiseat constituencies and 96 elected by national party list; members serve six-year terms, with half facing election every three years. Emperor Akihito serves as the ceremonial head of state.

Although several political parties compete for power, the center-right LDP dominated for almost 55 years. The DPJ's victory in the August 2009 elections to the House of Representatives opened the way for the development of a two-party system.

Significant reform efforts have focused on battling corruption stemming from the iron triangle system, mostly by loosening ties between the government and big business. Although Japan is a signatory of the U.N. Convention against Corruption, the Diet has not yet ratified it into law. Japan was ranked 17 out of 178 countries surveyed in Transparency International's 2010 Corruption Perceptions Index.

Japan's press is private and independent, but the presence of press clubs, or *kisha kurabu*, even under the more liberal DPJ, continues to be an obstacle to press freedom. Press clubs ensure homogeneity of news coverage by fostering close relationships between the major media and bureaucrats and politicians. Government officials often give club members exclusive access to political information, leading journalists to avoid writing critical stories about the government and reducing the media's ability to pressure politicians for greater transparency and accountability. In August 2010, the Justice Ministry granted Japanese media access to an execution chamber in a Tokyo jail for the first time. Justice Minister Keiko Chiba had authorized the visit in an effort to stir public debate on capital punishment, which continues to be widely supported across the country. Internet access is not restricted.

Japanese of all faiths can worship freely. Religious groups are not required to be licensed, but registering with government authorities as a "religious corporation" brings tax benefits and other advantages. There are no restrictions on academic freedom.

The constitution guarantees freedoms of assembly and association. The political culture in Japan is strong, and there are active civic, human rights, social welfare, and environmental groups. In April 2010, nearly 6,000 people gathered to protest relocating the Futenma U.S. Marine Corps Air Station in Okinawa. Later that same month, a second protest over the possible relocation attracted more than 90,000 people, ultimately contributing to Yukio Hatoyama's resignation. Trade unions are independent, and with the exception of police and firefighters, all unionized workers have the right to strike.

Japan's judiciary is independent. There are several levels of courts, and suspects are generally given fair public trials by an impartial tribunal (there are no juries) within three months of being detained. The National Police Agency is under civilian control and is highly disciplined, though reports of human rights abuses committed by police persist. While arbitrary arrest and imprisonment are not practiced, there is potential for abuse due to a law that allows the police to detain suspects for up to 23 days without charge in order to extract confessions. Prison conditions comply with international standards, although prison officials have been known to use physical and psychological intimidation to enforce discipline or elicit confessions. The Penal Facilities and Treatment of Prisoners Law provides for a monitoring

body to inspect prisons, access to the outside world for prisoners, and human rights education for prison staff.

Although the constitution prohibits discrimination based on race, creed, sex, or social status, certain groups continue to face unofficial discrimination. Japan's three million burakumin—descendants of feudal-era outcasts—and the indigenous Ainu minority suffer from entrenched societal discrimination that prevents them from gaining equal access to housing and employment opportunities. Foreigners generally, and Koreans in particular, suffer similar disadvantages. The exploitation of foreign workers gained attention in July 2010, when a Japanese court ruled that the 2008 death of Chinese industrial trainee Jiang Xiaodong was due to *karoshi* (death from overwork). Amendments to the Immigration Control Act to improve protections for foreign workers were subsequently adopted.

Although women in Japan enjoy legal equality, discrimination in employment and sexual harassment on the job are common. Violence against women often goes unreported due to concerns about family reputation and other social mores. While prostitution remains illegal, it is widespread. Japanese courts continue to hold a no-compensation policy towards comfort women—World War II-era sex slaves—despite international pressure to provide reparations. Japan is primarily a destination country for people trafficked for forced labor and sexual exploitation.

Jordan

Political Rights: 6

Population: 6,500,000

Civil Liberties: 5

Capital: Amman

Status: Not Free

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline For Year Under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
5,5PF	6,5PF	5,5PF	5,4PF	5,4PF	5,4PF	5,4PF	5,5PF	6,5NF	6,5NF

Overview: Jordan's royally appointed government ruled by decree for most of 2010, after the king dissolved the parliament in November 2009. During this period, several controversial measures were enacted, including a new election law that retained major structural flaws in the electoral system, and an information law regulating online outlets. The main Islamist opposition group boycotted parliamentary elections held under the new law in November 2010, resulting in an overwhelming victory for government supporters.

The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, then known as Transjordan, was established as a League of Nations mandate under British control in 1921 and won full independence in 1946. The turbulent 46-year reign of King Hussein, which began in 1953, featured a massive influx of Palestinian refugees, the occupation of the West Bank by Israel in 1967, and numerous assassinations and coup attempts. Nevertheless, with political and civil liberties tightly restricted, Hussein proved adept at co-opting his political opponents.

By the time Crown Prince Abdullah succeeded his father as king in 1999, the kingdom faced severe economic problems. The expected "peace dividend" from Jordan's 1994 peace treaty with Israel had failed to improve conditions for most of the population, and Abdullah began major economic reforms. Meanwhile, additional restrictions on the media, public protests, and civil society activity were imposed after groups including Islamists, leftists, and Jordanians of Palestinian descent staged demonstrations to demand the annulment of the 1994 treaty and express support for the Palestinian uprising (intifada) against Israel that began in 2000.

In 2001, Abdullah dissolved the parliament, postponed elections scheduled for November, and replaced elected municipal councils with state-appointed local committees. He ruled by decree for over two years, issuing more than 200 "temporary laws" that weakened due process and restricted freedoms of expression and assembly.

The king allowed reasonably free and transparent—though not fair—parliamentary and municipal elections in 2003. In an informal understanding with the palace, dissident leftist and Islamist groups gained limited freedom of expression and political participation, and agreed to curtail their agitation against Jordan's pro-U.S. foreign policy.

The relationship between the government and political parties remained strained, however. In 2007, security forces arrested nine members of the Islamic Action Front (IAF), the main opposition party, for "threatening national security" ahead of that year's municipal and parliamentary elections. Only a handful of IAF candidates won seats in the polls, which were marred by irregularities. A new political party law in 2008 required parties to have broader membership bases, and the number of registered parties consequently fell to 14, from 37.

The king unexpectedly dismissed parliament in November 2009. While new elections would ordinarily be held within four months, the government postponed polls until November 2010, allowing it to rule by decree for a year. By August 2010, the government had promulgated 34 laws, including a new election law. The resulting elections were monitored by international observers and deemed to have been well conducted on a technical level, but the IAF boycotted them, citing structural biases that guaranteed the success of the king's traditional supporters.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Jordan is not an electoral democracy. King Abdullah II holds broad executive powers, appoints and dismisses the prime minister and cabinet, and may dissolve the National Assembly at his discretion. The lower house of the National Assembly, the Chamber of Deputies, is elected through universal adult suffrage. It may approve, reject, or amend legislation proposed by the cabinet, but its ability to initiate legislation is limited. It cannot enact laws without the assent of the 55-seat upper house, the Senate, whose members are appointed by the king. Members of both houses serve four-year terms. Regional governors are appointed by the central government.

The 2010 election law added 10 seats to the Chamber of Deputies, for a new total of 120. Four of the new seats represent urban districts, where most Jordanians of Palestinian origin reside. Nevertheless, the parliament remains heavily imbalanced in favor of rural districts, whose residents are generally of Transjordanian origin. The six other new seats are reserved for women, bringing the number set aside for women to 12. The Christian and Circassian minorities are guaranteed nine and three seats, respectively.

The new election law retains a voting system in which voters must choose a single candidate in what are generally multiseat districts. Reformers have long called for a move toward proportional representation, arguing that the existing system encourages voting based on tribal ties rather than political and ideological affiliation. The new election law reinforced these traditional allegiances by creating large electoral zones, each with several subdistricts. Both voters and candidates can choose to vote or run in any subdistrict within their zone, effectively making it easier for well-connected individual candidates to engineer victories for themselves and their allies. As noncitizen residents, Jordan's roughly 600,000 refugees, overwhelmingly Palestinian, remain unable to vote.

The security forces, whose leadership generally excludes Jordanians of Palestinian descent, continue to exercise significant influence over Jordanian political life by limiting citizens' freedoms of speech and assembly.

Efforts to combat corruption in recent years have yielded mixed results. While officials have announced several investigations and arrests since an independent Anticorruption Commission (ACC) was established in 2007, these rarely lead to any serious punishment. The prime minister announced in January 2010 that the state would crack down on corruption, and in March, police arrested four high-profile officials, including a former cabinet minister, on corruption charges. However, judicial authorities issued an order that month instructing the media not to report on the case without permission. Jordan was ranked 50 out of 178 countries surveyed in Transparency International's 2010 Corruption Perceptions Index.

Freedom of expression is restricted, and those who violate redlines regarding the royal family and certain societal taboos face arrest, causing widespread self-censorship. As in previous years, private citizens were arrested in 2010 for criticizing the monarch. A student was arrested in July for criticizing the king in an online chat with a friend, suggesting that the security services monitor such communications. Another student was arrested the same month for writing a poem that criticized the king, though he claimed not to have written it; authorities later confiscated his computer.

While imprisonment was abolished as a penalty for press offenses in 2007, journalists can still be jailed under the penal code. A study released in 2009 by the Amman-based Center for Defending Freedom of Journalists found that 43 percent of journalists admitted receiving some form of "incentive" from the government, while 94 percent said they practiced self-censorship. In February 2010, four journalists were referred to the state security court, three for electronic offenses. Two other journalists were held for 15 days each in February for criticizing the Jordanian intelligence service's cooperation with the CIA. In June, management changes at one of Jordan's independent newspapers were widely attributed to political pressure from the government.

Most broadcast news outlets remain under state control, but satellite dishes give residents access to foreign media. While there are dozens of private newspapers and magazines, the government has broad powers to close them. Jordan's only independent satellite television channel, which was often under political pressure, declared bankruptcy in August 2010. Authorities are routinely tipped off about potentially offensive articles by informers at printing presses, editors are urged to remove such material, and intelligence agents often call journalists with warnings about their writing.

In January 2010, a court ruled that websites were subject to the press and publications law. Ambiguities in the court's ruling led the government to promulgate a new law governing websites in August. The measure was amended to delete the most egregious features several weeks after its initial approval, due to sustained criticism from local and international advocates for press and internet rights. The final version requires that police obtain a court order to search websites' offices. However, several vague provisions give considerable discretion to police, and the effects of the law will ultimately depend on how it is applied in practice.

Islam is the state religion. Christians are recognized as religious minorities and can worship freely, and while Baha'is and Druze are not officially recognized, they are allowed to practice their faiths. The government monitors sermons at mosques, where political activity is banned. Preachers must obtain written government permission to lead services or teach the Koran. Only state-appointed councils may issue religious edicts, and it is illegal to criticize these rulings.

Academic freedom is generally respected, and Jordanians openly discuss political and societal developments. However, certain limits remain in place, and there have been reports of a heavy intelligence presence on some university campuses. Islamist students were prevented from running in university elections at Hashemite University in April 2010, despite having met the necessary requirements.

Freedom of assembly is heavily restricted. Provincial governors often deny permission to hold demonstrations, particularly when organizers seek to criticize Jordanian-Israeli relations.

Freedom of association is limited. While many nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) are able to operate without running afoul of the authorities, the government is considering new rules that would severely limit their independence. The most controversial of these measures would allow the government to supervise NGO budgets, reject foreign funding, and veto individual programs. Though proposed in 2009, the regulations remain stalled at the Ministry of Social Development. The government currently puts occasional pressure on NGOs' activities. In 2010, the state-sponsored National Center for Human Rights changed its official position on both the election law and the new information law after first announcing critical opinions.

Workers have the right to bargain collectively but must receive government permission to strike. More than 30 percent of the workforce is organized into 17 unions. In March 2010, teachers in a rural area struck unsuccessfully for the right to organize and were consequently subject to disciplinary measures. Day laborers in the public sector were arrested in May after they protested their dismissal. Labor rights organizations have raised concerns about poor working conditions in so-called Qualifying Industrial Zones (QIZs), where mostly female and foreign factory workers process goods for export.

The judiciary is subject to executive influence through the Justice Ministry and the Higher Judiciary Council, most of whose members are appointed by the king. While most trials in civilian courts are open and procedurally sound, the State Security Court (SSC) may close its proceedings to the public. A 2001 decree allows the prime minister to refer any case to the SSC and denies the right of appeal to people convicted of misdemeanors by the SSC.

Suspects may be detained for up to 48 hours without a warrant and up to 10 days without formal charges being filed; courts routinely grant prosecutors 15-day

extensions of this deadline. Even these protections are denied to suspects referred to the SSC, who are often held in lengthy pretrial detention and refused access to legal counsel until just before trial. Provincial governors can also order indefinite administrative detention, and about a fifth of all Jordanian prisoners are held under this provision; there are approximately 10,000 new cases of administrative detention each year. The UN special rapporteur on torture found in 2006 that "torture is systematically practiced" by the General Intelligence Department (GID), which interrogates suspects to obtain confessions in SSC cases. There is no independent complaint or monitoring mechanism for abuse in custody. Prison conditions are poor, and inmates are reportedly subject to severe beatings and other abuse by guards.

Freedom of movement and travel is generally respected. The size of the Iraqi refugee community, whose entry into Jordan is strictly limited, has decreased significantly in recent years.

Women enjoy equal political rights but face legal discrimination in matters involving inheritance, divorce, and child custody, which fall under the jurisdiction of Sharia (Islamic law) courts. Government pensions and social security benefits also favor men. Although women constitute only about 14 percent of the workforce, the government has made efforts to increase the number of women in the civil service. Women are guaranteed a quota of 12 seats in the lower house of parliament and, under the 2007 municipalities law, 20 percent of the seats in municipal councils. In November 2010, nine female senators were appointed to the upper house. Article 98 of the penal code allows for lenient treatment of those who commit a crime in a "state of fit or fury" resulting from an unlawful or dangerous act on the part of the victim. In practice, this provision is often applied to benefit men who commit "honor crimes" against women. In February 2010, a man was sentenced to 10 years in prison for murdering his sister in 2007; the court had originally ordered the death penalty but reduced its sentence when the victim's family dropped charges. In June, a man was arrested for allegedly shooting his 16-year-old niece 30 times after she was sexually assaulted. Between 15 and 20 such crimes occur in Jordan each year.

Kazakhstan

Political Rights: 6

Population: 16,300,000

Civil Liberties: 5

Capital: Astana

Status: Not Free

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline For Year Under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
6,5NF									

Overview: President Nursultan Nazarbayev inched closer to becoming Kazakhstan's leader for life in 2010, a year in which his country held the rotating chairmanship of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). Parliament granted Nazarbayev, his

family, and their property virtual legal inviolability and cleared the way for a referendum to extend his term to 2020. Meanwhile, the government continued to impose authoritarian media controls and stepped up its suppression of the political opposition through dubious prosecutions and incarcerations, among other means.

Kazakh Communist Party leader Nursultan Nazarbayev won an uncontested presidential election in December 1991, two weeks before Kazakhstan gained its independence from the Soviet Union. In April 1995, Nazarbayev called a referendum on extending his five-year term, due to expire in 1996, until December 2000. A reported 95 percent of voters endorsed the move. An August 1995 referendum, which was boycotted by the opposition, approved a new constitution designed to strengthen the presidency. Nazarbayev's supporters captured most of the seats in December 1995 elections for a new bicameral Parliament.

In October 1998, Parliament amended the constitution to increase the presidential term from five to seven years and moved the presidential election forward from December 2000 to January 1999. The main challenger was disqualified on a technicality, and Nazarbayev was reelected with a reported 80 percent of the vote. Progovernment parties captured all but one seat in 2004 elections for the lower house of Parliament. International monitors from the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) found some improvements over previous polls, but criticized the lack of political balance on election commissions, media bias in favor of pro-presidential candidates, and the politically motivated exclusion of other candidates.

The president again secured reelection in 2005 with 91 percent of the vote amid opposition allegations of fraud. An international monitoring report found intimidation and media bias in favor of the incumbent.

Political violence flared in 2005-06, with the suspicious suicide of opposition leader Zamanbek Nurkadilov in December 2005 and the murder of Altynbek Sarsenbayev, a leading member of the opposition coalition For a Just Kazakhstan, in February 2006. The investigation of Sarsenbayev's killing pointed to the involvement of state security officers but left many questions unanswered.

Constitutional changes in May 2007 removed term limits for Nazarbayev and eliminated individual district races for the lower house of Parliament, leaving only party-slate seats filled by nationwide proportional representation. Elections under the new rules in August produced a one-party legislature, with the pro-presidential Nur Otan party taking 88 percent of the vote and no opposition parties clearing the 7 percent threshold for representation. Opposition protests foundered, and the government ignored a critical OSCE report. No opposition candidates participated in the October 2008 indirect elections for the upper house of Parliament.

In 2009, some Nur Otan legislators proposed a lifetime presidency for Nazarbayev, but the president averred that his existing access to unlimited seven-year terms was sufficient. In 2010, a constitutional amendment gave Nazarbayev immunity from prosecution and made his family's property effectively inviolable. Later in the year, Parliament laid the groundwork for a 2011 referendum that would extend Nazarbayev's current term to 2020.

Kazakhstan held the rotating chairmanship of the OSCE in 2010, and its tenure

culminated in a summit in Astana in December that was formally successful but largely devoid of content. The government showed little leadership during ethnic violence in neighboring Kyrgyzstan in June, responding only by closing the border between the two countries. Meanwhile, Astana maintained good relations with China, Russia, and the United States, which continued to ship supplies for its operations in Afghanistan through Kazakh territory.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Kazakhstan is not an electoral democracy. The constitution grants the president considerable control over the legislature, the judiciary, and local governments. The removal of term limits for the country's "first president" in May 2007 cleared the way for President Nursultan Nazarbayev to seek reelection at the end of his current seven-year term in 2012. A referendum initiative approved by Parliament in December 2010 and slated for 2011 could extend Nazarbayev's term to 2020.

The upper house of the bicameral Parliament is the 47-member Senate, with 32 members chosen by directly elected regional councils and 15 appointed by the president. The senators serve six-year terms, with half of the 32 elected members up for election every three years. The lower house (Mazhilis) has 107 deputies, with 98 elected by proportional representation on party slates and 9 appointed by the Assembly of Peoples of Kazakhstan, which represents the country's various ethnic groups. Members serve five-year terms. Parties must clear a 7 percent vote threshold to enter the Mazhilis, and once elected, deputies must vote with their party. A June 2007 law prohibited parties from forming electoral blocs. These rules effectively prevented opposition parties from winning seats in August 2007 parliamentary elections and 2008 Senate elections, producing a legislature with no opposition representation. The ruling party, Nur Otan, is headed by the president, and his nephew was named party secretary in May 2010.

The country's broader law on political parties prohibits parties based on ethnic origin, religion, or gender. A 2002 law raised from 3,000 to 50,000 the number of members that a party must have to register.

Corruption is widespread at all levels. Rakhat Aliyev, Nazarbayev's former son-in-law, issued allegations of corruption among top officials after falling out of favor with the regime in 2007. His claims were accompanied by some documentary evidence and matched reports from numerous other sources. Kazakhstan was ranked 105 out of 178 countries surveyed in Transparency International's 2010 Corruption Perceptions Index.

While the constitution provides for freedom of the press, the government has repeatedly harassed or shut down independent media outlets. Libel is a criminal offense, and the criminal code prohibits insulting the president; self-censorship is widespread. Most media outlets, including publishing houses, are controlled or influenced by members of the president's family and other powerful groups.

As in previous years, independent media suffered attacks, arrests, and libel judgments in 2010. In November, Luqpan Akhmedyarov, a journalist for the independent weekly *Uralskaya Nedelya*, was compelled to pay the equivalent of \$133,500 to an oil company for libel in an article about alleged bid-rigging. Ramazan Yesergepov, editor of the weekly *Alma-Ata Info*, remained in prison after receiving a three-year sentence in 2009 for revealing state secrets while reporting on a corruption investi-

gation. He lost an appeal to Kazakhstan's Supreme Court in May 2010. In March, cameraman Abzal Aghaliyev was assaulted while trying to film at a meatpacking plant.

The government has a record of blocking websites that are critical of the regime, and legislation signed in 2009 classifies all websites in the ".kz" domain as media outlets and imposes stringent regulations. In March 2010, journalists voiced concern at government attempts to identify websites with supposedly "destructive" content. The Kazakh nongovernmental organization (NGO) For The Free Internet listed 14 websites as blocked in Kazakhstan as of January. The websites of the independent media outlets Respublika and Uralskaya Nedelya were reportedly inaccessible at various times during 2010.

The constitution guarantees freedom of worship, and many religious communities practice without state interference. However, laws passed in 2005 banned all activities by unregistered religious groups and gave the government great discretion in outlawing organizations it designated as "extremist." Local officials have harassed groups defined as "nontraditional," such as Hare Krishnas, Baptists, and Jehovah's Witnesses.

The government reportedly permits academic freedom, except with respect to criticism of the president and his family. Corruption in the education system is widespread, and students frequently bribe professors for passing grades.

Despite constitutional guarantees, the government imposes restrictions on freedom of association and assembly. A number of unsanctioned opposition gatherings were broken up by police during 2010, with leading participants facing jail sentences or fines. Yermek Narymbayev, leader of the Arman opposition movement, was sentenced to four years in prison in June after being arrested at an unsanctioned May Day rally; he maintained a hunger strike in custody and was transferred to a prison hospital later in the year. Separately, opposition activist Aidos Sadykov was sentenced in July to two years in prison for "hooliganism," and his wife subsequently reported receiving threatening telephone calls. Members of the Communist Party and the unregistered opposition party Algha, both of which had also participated in the May Day event, were pelted with eggs and other objects in October, shortly after Algha leader Vladimir Kozlov announced his intention to run for president. The attackers identified themselves as members of a Kazakh nationalist group; Kozlov is an ethnic Russian. The day after the assault, tax officials launched an investigation against Kozlov.

NGOs continue to operate despite government harassment surrounding politically sensitive issues. Workers can form and join trade unions and participate in collective bargaining, although co-opted unions and close links between the authorities and big business make for an uneven playing field. Oil workers in Zhanaozen held a successful two-week strike in March 2010 to protest a new pay scale.

The constitution makes the judiciary subservient to the executive branch. Judges are subject to political bias, and corruption is evident throughout the judicial system. Conditions in pretrial facilities and prisons are harsh. Police at times abuse detainees and threaten their families, often to obtain confessions, and arbitrary arrest and detention remain problems. Mukhtar Dzhakishev, the former head of the atomic energy agency, was sentenced in March 2010 to 14 years in prison on embezzlement charges that may have been politically motivated. In April, the

Supreme Court upheld the vehicular manslaughter conviction of rights activist Yevgeniy Zhovtis, who was sentenced to four years in prison in 2009 after a flawed trial. Inmates in Kazakh prisons injured themselves on several occasions in 2010 to protest abysmal conditions, and activist Vadim Kuramshin, who exposed prison abuses, was sentenced to 10 days in jail in August on dubious charges.

Members of the sizable Russian-speaking minority have complained of discrimination in employment and education. However, in 2007 the Constitutional Court affirmed the equality of the Russian and Kazakh languages. In January 2009, Kazakhstan decided to continue the practice of indicating ethnicity in citizens' passports.

While the rights of entrepreneurship and private property are formally protected, equality of opportunity is limited by bureaucratic hurdles and the control of large segments of the economy by clannish elites and government officials. A 2003 land code provides for private ownership, but critics have charged that the law primarily benefits wealthy individuals with close government ties. Astana residents whose homes have been demolished to make way for large construction projects have said they were denied legally guaranteed compensation.

Traditional cultural practices and the country's economic imbalances limit professional opportunities for women. The current 107-member lower house of Parliament includes only 17 female deputies. Domestic violence often goes unpunished, as police are reluctant to intervene in what are regarded as internal family matters. Despite legal prohibitions, the trafficking of women for the purpose of prostitution remains a serious problem. The country's relative prosperity has drawn migrant workers from neighboring countries, who often face poor working conditions and a lack of legal protections. A 2010 Human Rights Watch report detailed the exploitation of migrant workers and the use of child labor in the Kazakh tobacco industry.

Kenya

Political Rights: 4

Population: 40,100,000

Civil Liberties: 3 *

Capital: Nairobi

Status: Partly Free

Ratings Change: Kenya's civil liberties rating improved from 4 to 3 due to the reduced threat of ethnic and political violence demonstrated by a peaceful August 2010 constitutional referendum.

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline For Year Under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
6,5NF	4,4PF	3,3PF	3,3PF	3,3PF	3,3PF	4,3PF	4,3PF	4,4PF	4,4PF

Overview: Kenyan voters in August 2010 approved a constitution that imposed new checks on the authority of the president and central government. The power-sharing arrangement between President Mwai Kibaki and Prime Minister Raila Odinga remained in place

during the year, though political jockeying in advance of 2012 national elections limited the hybrid government's effectiveness.

Kenya achieved independence from Britain in 1963. Nationalist leader Jomo Kenyatta served as president until his death in 1978, when Vice President Daniel arap Moi succeeded him. While the Kenyan African National Union (KANU) party remained in power, Moi diminished the influence of the previously dominant Kikuyu ethnic group, favoring his own Kalenjin group.

In 1992, after a lengthy period of single-party rule, domestic unrest and pressure from international donors forced Moi to hold multiparty elections. However, he and KANU continued to win elections by using political repression, state patronage, media control, and dubious electoral procedures. Government corruption remained common, as did police abuses, political influence in the judiciary, and state efforts to undermine independent civil society activity. Political polarization increased amid government-sponsored ethnic violence, perpetrated in most cases by Kalenjin or Maasai KANU supporters against members of the Kikuyu and Luhya ethnic groups, who were believed to support opposition parties. Despite these problems, political space for opposition views continued to open, and many of the core elements necessary for a democratic political system developed.

The opposition united to contest the 2002 elections as the National Rainbow Coalition (NARC). The bloc won a majority in the National Assembly, and its presidential candidate, Mwai Kibaki, emerged victorious. The new leadership's ambitious reform program achieved some successes, but the effort was blunted by factors including the fragility of the governing coalition, a complex bid to overhaul the constitution, significant fiscal constraints, and the threat of terrorism.

The lively press and public investigative commissions became increasingly critical of the substance and slow pace of the government's reform agenda, and in November 2005 referendum voters soundly rejected a draft constitution that failed to shift power away from the presidency. In January 2006, John Githongo, formerly Kibaki's anticorruption chief, issued an authoritative report indicating that corruption had reached the highest ranks of the government. The findings implicated the vice president and prompted the resignation of several cabinet ministers.

Kenya's democratic and economic development suffered a sharp reversal as a result of apparent manipulation of the December 2007 presidential election. While the concurrent parliamentary polls showed major gains for the opposition Orange Democratic Movement (ODM), Kibaki was declared the winner of the presidential vote amid credible allegations of fraud. He had long been accused of favoring his Kikuyu ethnic group, and the presidential results sparked weeks of violence between the Kikuyu, the Luo, and other groups. More than 1,500 people were killed, and over 300,000 were displaced, though many eventually returned or were resettled by the government. In late February 2008, Kibaki and ODM presidential candidate Raila Odinga, a Luo, negotiated a compromise agreement in which Odinga received the newly created post of prime minister and the ODM joined Kibaki's Party of National Unity (PNU) in a coalition cabinet.

A Commission of Inquiry into Post-Election Violence, also known as the Waki Commission, issued a report in October 2008 that identified systemic failures in Kenya's security institutions, governmental impunity, and popular anger as the

primary instigating factors in the crisis. The report called for the creation of a special tribunal to prosecute crimes committed during the postelection violence, and stated that in the absence of such a tribunal, the names of organizers of the violence should be sent to the International Criminal Court (ICC) for possible prosecution.

In 2009, the government and legislature made little progress in addressing the postelection violence, which prompted former UN secretary general Kofi Annan, who had overseen negotiations for the 2008 power-sharing deal, to provide the ICC with a list of alleged perpetrators, though the names were not made public. Also during the year, the parliament rejected Kibaki's bid to reappoint the ineffective head of the anticorruption commission, and General Mohammed Hussein Ali was fired as chief of the police force in the wake of a highly critical UN report on police brutality. However, structural reforms to address the root of the brutality problem were not implemented.

In March 2010, having determined that Kenya was unable to bring perpetrators of the postelection violence to justice, the ICC initiated an investigation into crimes against humanity. In August, Kenyan referendum voters overwhelmingly approved a new constitution that delineated and checked the roles and powers of the executive, legislative, and judicial branches of government. The new arrangement particularly limited previously expansive presidential and other executive powers, and shifted some authority from the central government to local officials. Friction between the two sides of the power-sharing government increased as the 2012 national elections drew nearer, hampering its ability to function.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Kenya is not an electoral democracy. While there were few claims of irregularities in the December 2007 parliamentary vote, the flawed presidential poll featured apparent vote rigging and other administrative manipulations that favored the incumbent, Mwai Kibaki. In September 2008, an international commission found that the legitimacy of the election results had been undermined by several factors, including a defective voter registry and widespread fraud. The panel's recommended electoral reforms have yet to be fully implemented. However, the conduct of the constitutional referendum held in August 2010 was considered legitimate and competitive, indicating an improvement in electoral transparency.

Under the new constitution, which entered into force in August, the president is still elected for up to two five-year terms. However, following the 2012 elections, the post of prime minister—created as part of the 2008 compromise—will be abolished, and a new position of deputy president will be established. The unicameral National Assembly, which consists of 210 members elected for five-year terms and 12 members appointed by the president based on each party's share of the popular vote, is set to be replaced by a bicameral legislature. The upper house, the Senate, will have 60 members, while the lower house is expected to number about 290 members. Ministers may not serve in the parliament, which will have the authority to approve or reject cabinet appointments. Local authorities are to be granted heightened powers. The country will be divided into 47 counties, each of which will have a directly elected governor and assembly.

Political parties representing a range of ideological, regional, and ethnic interests are active and vocal, and there are no significant impediments to party formation.

Corruption remains a very serious problem. Political parties, nongovernmental organizations, and the press, as well as some official bodies, have exposed many examples of government corruption and malfeasance. However, official probes and prosecutions have yielded meager results. The efforts of the Kenya Anti-Corruption Commission, established in 2003, have failed to produce the conviction of any senior officials. Transparency International's 2010 Corruption Perceptions Index ranked Kenya 154 out of 178 countries surveyed. National and international watchdog bodies have identified the police, the judiciary, and the Ministry of Defence as some of the most corrupt institutions in the country.

The constitution provides for freedom of speech and a free press, and these rights are generally respected in practice. However, there have been intermittent restrictions on media freedom. Amid the violence that followed the December 2007 elections, the authorities imposed a temporary ban on live broadcasts. Most Kenyans rely on the broadcast media, particularly radio, for news. A number of private television and radio stations operate, though their reach is limited. The government-owned Kenya Broadcasting Corporation continues to dominate the broadcast sector, particularly outside urban centers. The government does not restrict access to the internet.

The authorities generally uphold freedom of religion. The new constitution established an Islamic (Kadhi) court as a subordinate body to the superior courts of Kenya. The Kadhi court system adjudicates cases related to personal status, marriage, divorce, or inheritance for people who profess the Muslim religion and who voluntarily submit to the Kadhi courts' jurisdiction authority. Religious groups are required to register with the government, which permits them to apply for tax-exempt status. Religious tension has risen since terrorist attacks in Kenya in 1998 and 2002 that were associated with Islamic extremism, but religion was not a major factor in the political and ethnic unrest of early 2008.

Academic freedom is the norm in Kenya, though the education system suffers from structural, funding, and other problems. Kibaki suspended the education minister in 2010 over allegations of corruption. The 2008 postelection violence had at least a temporary chilling effect on freedom of private discussion, as many individuals became hesitant to openly discuss ethnic issues. This effect had eased significantly by the end of 2010.

The constitution guarantees freedom of assembly. This right is generally respected, but there have been cases of unnecessary use of force at demonstrations, and public gatherings were curtailed during the 2008 postelection violence. Kenya's civil society sector has remained robust even in recent periods of political polarization. However, two leading human rights activists who had been investigating police abuses involving the deaths of individuals linked to the Mungiki criminal sect were murdered in 2009. A police whistleblower who provided information to the national human rights body was also murdered that year, and the police were unable to identify the perpetrators. No similar deaths were reported in 2010.

There are some 40 trade unions in the country, representing about 500,000 workers. Most of the unions are affiliated with the sole approved national federation, the Central Organization of Trade Unions. The 2007 Labour Relations Act establishes broad criteria for union registration, leaving authorities with limited grounds for suspending or refusing to register a union. However, there are restric-

tions on the right to strike, and the relevant government bodies have been accused of failing to enforce adequately labor laws and protections. Historically, much of the trade union movement has been subservient to the authorities.

The judiciary's actions have reflected the primacy of the executive branch for much of the period since independence, and judicial corruption remains an impediment to the rule of law. The courts are understaffed and underfinanced, leading to long trial delays that violate defendants' right to due process. The new constitution includes provisions designed to enhance judicial independence, including the establishment of an Independent Judiciary Service Commission to handle the appointment of judges. A truth, justice, and reconciliation commission pertaining to the 2008 postelection violence was established in 2009, but only started operating in October 2010.

Legal checks on arbitrary arrest are not uniformly respected, and police still use force to extract information from suspects and deny them access to legal representation. Security forces engaged in extrajudicial killings during the 2008 postelection violence. Philip Alston, the UN special rapporteur on extrajudicial executions, visited Kenya in 2009 and found evidence of, "a systematic, widespread and clearly planned strategy to execute individuals carried out on a regular basis by the Kenya police." Such condemnations, however, have not resulted in any prosecutions. In 2010, the inmate population in Kenyan prisons was determined to be more than double the intended capacity.

Kenya's population comprises more than 40 ethnic groups, and friction between them has led to frequent allegations of discrimination and periodic episodes of violence. Land disputes frequently underlie ethnic clashes, and long-awaited land reforms have languished. The Mungiki sect of mainly Kikuyu youth has been linked to postelection and other criminal violence. In addition, the continued presence of refugees from Somalia, and associated criminal activity, have exacerbated the problems faced by Kenya's own Somali minority. Other factors contributing to ethnic tension include widespread firearms possession, the commercialization of traditional cattle herding, poor economic conditions, drought, and ineffective security forces.

The Waki Commission's report cited specific cases of both state- and opposition-sponsored violence and massive internal population displacements during the 2008 postelection crisis. The population movements led in some cases to expropriation of property and belongings. Resettlement of internally displaced people has proceeded slowly. In August 2010, Kibaki ordered that all remaining displaced people be expeditiously resettled, but this had not occurred by year's end.

Women in Kenya continue to face serious obstacles. They are denied equal property rights, putting them at greater risk of poverty, violence, homelessness, and disease. In 2009, HIV prevalence among women was 8 percent—nearly twice as high as the male rate of 4.3 percent. Kenyan women's rights groups have pointed out that 60 percent of the charges stemming from the 2008 postelection violence involved cases of rape, noting evidence that police committed the most abuses against women. Traditional attitudes limit the role of women in politics, though there are no legal restrictions and some progress has been made. The 2007 elections increased the number of women in the National Assembly to 20, or about 8 percent of the total. The new constitution guarantees women at least one-third representation in all elected bodies and state commissions.

Kiribati

Political Rights: 1
Civil Liberties: 1
Status: Free

Population: 100,000
Capital: Tarawa

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline For Year Under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
1/1F									

Overview: A report released in February 2010 by an independent commission from New Zealand found that the Kiribati government did not have sufficient resources to respond adequately to a July 2009 ferry accident that killed 35 people. In November, President Anote Tong hosted an international conference on the rising sea levels that continue to threaten Kiribati's existence.

Kiribati gained independence from Britain in 1979. The country consists of 33 atolls scattered across nearly 1.5 million square miles of the central Pacific Ocean, as well as Banaba Island in the western Pacific.

Chinese military ambitions in the Pacific and competing offers of development assistance from China and Taiwan have been major issues in Kiribati politics. President Teburoro Tito's refusal to release details about a 15-year land lease to China for a satellite-tracking facility led to the collapse of his government in 2003. Opposition leader Anote Tong was elected in 2004 to replace Tito, and he immediately terminated the Chinese lease and restored ties with Taiwan.

In the August 2007 parliamentary elections, independents took 19 seats, followed by Tong's Pillars of Truth party with 18 seats and Tito's Protect the Manéaba party with 7 seats. Tong secured a second four-year term in the October 2007 presidential election.

Tong has vigorously called for international attention to the growing threats his country faces from rising sea levels and dwindling fresh-water supplies. He has warned that relocation of the entire population may be necessary if ongoing climate change makes inundation inevitable. New Zealand has pledged to accept environmental refugees from Kiribati, and some have already moved there. In November 2010, Tong's government hosted the Tarawa Climate Change Conference, which brought together nations threatened by rising sea levels and major economic powers—including China—to jointly call for immediate action at the United Nations.

The government is the main employer, and many residents practice subsistence agriculture. The economy depends considerably on foreign assistance and overseas worker remittances, and the state generates a small sum from selling licenses to foreign fishing fleets. Interest from a trust fund built on royalties from phosphate mining has balanced the national budget and kept the country debt free. Nevertheless, an Asian Development Bank report released in December 2010 warned that Kiribati was facing serious pressure on its national budget due to poor trust fund performance in recent years and a reduction in remittances due to economic troubles abroad.

Government performance fell under scrutiny in February 2010, when New Zea-

land's Transport Accident Investigation Commission released a report into a July 2009 ferry accident off Maiana Island that killed 35 people. The investigation found that the Kiribati government had no search-and-rescue plan in place and lacked sufficient resources to adequately respond to the accident.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Kiribati is an electoral democracy. The president is popularly elected in a two-step process, whereby Parliament nominates candidates from its own ranks and voters then choose one to be president. Forty-four representatives are popularly elected to the unicameral House of Parliament for four-year terms. One additional member is nominated by the Rabi Island Council, and the attorney general holds a seat *ex officio*. (Although Rabi Island is part of Fiji, many residents were originally from Kiribati's Banaba Island. British authorities forced them to move to Rabi when phosphate mining made Banaba uninhabitable.) The president, vested with executive authority by the constitution, is limited to three four-year terms.

Political parties are loosely organized and generally lack fixed ideologies or formal platforms. Geography, tribal ties, and personal loyalties tend to determine political affiliations.

Official corruption and abuse are serious problems, and the government has not shown a commitment to addressing them. The number of businesses owned by mainland Chinese has rapidly increased in recent years, raising concerns over possible corruption in granting immigration status to Chinese investors and other legal wrongdoing in overseeing foreign investments. Kiribati was ranked 91 out of 178 countries surveyed in Transparency International's 2010 Corruption Perceptions Index.

Freedom of speech is generally respected. However, the government occasionally restricts opposition criticism. Newspapers can be prosecuted for criminal offenses but cannot be deregistered by the government. Kiribati has two weekly newspapers: the state-owned *Te Uekara* and the privately owned *Kiribati Newstar*. Churches publish several newsletters and other periodicals. There are also two radio stations and one television channel, all owned by the state. Internet access is limited outside the capital due to costs—the highest in the Pacific—and lack of infrastructure.

There have been no reports of religious oppression or restrictions on academic freedom. The expansion of access to and quality of education at all levels, however, is seriously restricted by a lack of resources. Secondary education is not available on all islands, and there is a shortage of qualified teachers.

Freedoms of assembly and association are generally respected. A number of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) are involved in development assistance, education, health, and advocacy for women and children. Workers have the right to organize unions and bargain collectively, though only about 10 percent of the workforce is unionized. The largest union, the Kiribati Trade Union Congress, has approximately 2,500 members. The law provides for the right to strike, though the most recent strike was in 1980.

The judicial system is modeled on English common law and provides adequate due process rights. It consists of the high court, a court of appeal, and magistrates' courts; final appeals go to the Privy Council in London. The president makes all judicial appointments. Traditional customs permit corporal punishment, which can

be used to discipline boys for criminal activity. Councils on some outer islands are used to adjudicate petty theft and other minor offenses.

A 260-person police force performs law enforcement and paramilitary functions. Kiribati has no military; defense assistance is provided by Australia and New Zealand under bilateral agreements.

Citizens enjoy freedom of movement, though village councils have used exile as a punishment.

Discrimination against women is common in the traditional, male-dominated culture. Sexual harassment is illegal and not reported to be widespread. Spousal abuse and other forms of violence against women and children are often associated with alcohol abuse.

Kosovo

Political Rights: 5

Population: 2,300,000

Civil Liberties: 4

Capital: Pristina

Status: Partly Free

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline For Year Under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
6,6NF	5,5PF	5,5PF	6,5NF	6,5NF	6,5NF	6,5NF	6,5NF	5,4PF	5,4PF

Overview: The International Court of Justice ruled in July 2010 that Kosovo's 2008 declaration of independence did not violate international law, though the number of countries recognizing Kosovo did not increase significantly during the year. President Fatmir Sejdiu resigned in September, after the Constitutional Court ruled that he could not head his party while serving as president, and the ensuing political turmoil caused Prime Minister Hashim Thaçi's government to fall in November, leading to early elections the following month. Also in December, a report by a Council of Europe rapporteur accused Thaçi of having been involved in organized crime during and after the 1999 conflict.

Ethnic Albanians and Serbs competed for control over Kosovo throughout the 20th century. In the late 1980s, the Serbian government began revoking much of Kosovo's provincial autonomy, but the Kosovo Albanians, under longtime leader Ibrahim Rugova, developed their own quasi-governmental institutions during the 1990s.

An ethnic Albanian guerrilla movement, the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA), began attacking Serbs and suspected ethnic Albanian collaborators in late 1997, provoking harsh responses by government forces. In March 1999, after internationally sponsored negotiations failed to halt the violence, NATO launched a 78-day bombing campaign that compelled Serbia to relinquish control over the province. After the fighting ended, hundreds of thousands of ethnic Albanians who had been expelled by government forces returned. NATO and the United Nations took re-

sponsibility for Kosovo's security and civilian administration, though Serbian rule remained legally intact.

After the international takeover, tens of thousands of non-Albanians were forced to flee the province. Currently, ethnic Albanians comprise about 90 percent of the population, with Serbs making up most of the remainder. The largest Serb enclave is north of the Ibar River, anchored by the divided city of Mitrovica, while smaller Serb areas are scattered throughout the province, existing as ethnic ghettos protected by international forces. In March 2004, two days of rioting against non-Albanian ethnic groups left 20 people dead, 800 homes and 30 churches destroyed, and more than 4,000 Serbs and other non-Albanians homeless.

The October 2004 parliamentary elections resulted in a governing coalition between Rugova's Democratic League of Kosovo (LDK) and the Alliance for the Future of Kosovo (AAK), led by former KLA commander Ramush Haradinaj. However, Haradinaj resigned as prime minister to contest war crimes charges in 2005, and Rugova, who had served as Kosovo's president since 2002, died in January 2006. Subsequently, the Democratic Party of Kosovo (PDK), led by former KLA political leader Hashim Thaçi, became the dominant party. The PDK won the 2007 parliamentary elections with 36 of 120 seats, raising Thaçi to the premiership in a governing coalition with the LDK, which took 25 seats. Of the other major parties, the New Kosovo Alliance (AKR) won 13 seats, a union of the Albanian Christian Democratic Party of Kosovo (PShDK) and the Democratic League of Dardania (LDD) won 11, and the AAK captured 10. Smaller factions took the remainder.

The riots in 2004 led to accelerated talks on Kosovo's final status, but ethnic Albanian negotiators demanded full independence, and Serbian officials offered only autonomy. In late 2007, Finnish mediator Martti Ahtisaari recommended that the UN Security Council grant Kosovo a form of internationally supervised independence. Russia continued to support Serbia's position, however, and the international community was unable to reach consensus.

Kosovo's Assembly formally declared independence from Serbia on February 17, 2008, and it was quickly recognized by the United States and most European Union (EU) countries. In June 2008, Kosovo's Serb municipalities formed a separate assembly that refused to recognize Pristina's independence and affirmed its allegiance to Belgrade. The legal situation was further complicated by the ongoing supervision of international entities in Pristina, including the UN Interim Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), an EU mission, known as EULEX, and the NATO peacekeeping force.

In August 2008, Serbia submitted a resolution to the United Nations requesting an advisory opinion from the International Court of Justice (ICJ) on whether Kosovo's declaration of independence violated international law. In July 2010, the ICJ found that it did not, though only a handful of minor states subsequently decided to recognize Kosovo's independence, for a new total of 72 at year's end. While the country became a member of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank in 2009, continued resistance from Russia and China barred it from membership in the United Nations and other international organizations.

In September 2010, Kosovo's Constitutional Court ruled that President Fatmir Sejdiu had violated the constitution by simultaneously serving as Kosovo's president and leader of the LDK. Sejdiu resigned as president, and the LDK withdrew from Thaçi's governing coalition. The weakened government lost a confidence vote in

November, triggering early elections on December 12. Significant fraud in parts of Kosovo—especially in Thagi's stronghold in the Drenica region—necessitated that reruns be held in several municipalities in January 2011. While final results were unavailable at year's end, preliminary tabulations showed that the PDK placed first, with 33.5 percent of the vote, while the LDK finished second, with 23.6 percent. The Vetëvendosje (Self-Determination) movement made a notably strong showing, placing third with 12.2 percent. Vetëvendosje's platform called for the unification of Kosovo and Albania; according to a February 2010 poll, 70 percent of those questioned in Albania and Kosovo believed the two states would merge.

On December 13, the European Network of Election Monitoring Organizations (ENEMO) released a preliminary statement on the conduct of the elections. While voting was generally peaceful and relatively well organized, the report noted widespread fraud and irregularities. Serb nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) in Kosovo reported similar problems, including vote-buying in Serb-populated municipalities.

A December 2010 report issued by Council of Europe rapporteur Dick Marty accused high-level Kosovo officials, including Thagi, of involvement in an organized crime network that was active during and after the 1999 conflict. The most controversial charge centered on the crime group's alleged harvesting of organs, initially from prisoners of the KLA. The report linked those claims to an ongoing EULEX investigation into more recent black-market organ transplants at a clinic in Pristina, arguing that the same perpetrators and networks were involved in both cases.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Kosovo is not an electoral democracy. According to the constitution, the president and the Assembly have governing authority over Kosovo, though the International Civilian Representative (ICR) retains the right to override legislation and decisions deemed to be at odds with the human rights and minority protection provisions of the Ahtisaari Plan. The ICR doubles as the EU representative in Kosovo. Members of the unicameral, 120-seat Assembly are elected to four-year terms, and 20 seats are reserved for ethnic minorities. The Assembly elects the president, who serves a five-year term. The president nominates the prime minister, who must then be approved by the Assembly.

Kosovo's December 2010 parliamentary elections were the most problematic of any held in the post-1999 period. Reported irregularities included family voting (in which the male head of a household casts ballots for the entire family); vote-buying; a lack of freedom of movement for ethnic minorities; and limitations imposed on women in rural, patriarchal social environments. While the elections were largely boycotted by Serbs north of the Ibar River, between 35 and 40 percent of the roughly 55,000 Serbs living in the enclaves south of the Ibar reportedly participated.

Corruption is a serious problem, even by regional standards. Kosovo was ranked 110 of 178 countries rated by Transparency International's 2010 Corruption Perceptions Index. A May 2010 report by the International Crisis Group (ICG) noted that "organised crime and corruption are widespread and growing." A report by Kosovo's auditor general in June revealed significant fraud in the accounts of a number of municipalities. In July, the governor of the central bank was arrested for accepting bribes and tax evasion.

The 2008 constitution protects freedoms of expression and the press, with ex-

ceptions for speech that provokes ethnic hostility. While a wide variety of print and electronic media operate, journalists report frequent harassment and intimidation. Freedom of expression is also limited in practice by a lack of security, especially for ethnic minorities. International officials in Kosovo have been accused of occasionally restricting media independence. In October 2010, representatives of a local media organization complained that leading international officials were unduly intimidating local journalists by threatening legal action if unfavorable media reports were printed. Access to the internet is not restricted.

The constitution guarantees religious freedom, and ethnic Albanians, who are predominantly Muslim, enjoy this right in practice. There have been outbreaks of systematic attacks on Orthodox Christian churches and other sites associated with the Serb population. A number of cases of vandalism at Serbian Orthodox cemeteries were reported in 2010. The Protestant community has also reported discrimination by central and municipal authorities. Overall, however, attacks on minority religious sites have declined since 2004. The Education Ministry has repeatedly instructed school administrators to prohibit the wearing of headscarves by teachers and students, despite findings by the country's human rights ombudsman that such directives have no basis in law. While the ban is not evenly enforced, some students and teachers have reportedly been expelled or fired for wearing headscarves, and a number of protests were mounted in 2010 to oppose the restrictions.

Academic freedom has not been formally restricted, but appointments at the University of Pristina are considered to be politicized. Kosovo's educational system—including higher education—is for the most part ethnically segregated.

Freedom of assembly has occasionally been restricted for security reasons, and the constitution includes safeguards for public order and national security. NGOs generally function freely, though groups that infringe on the constitutional order or encourage ethnic hatred can be banned by the courts. The constitution protects the right to establish and join trade unions. UNMIK regulations recognize the right to collective bargaining, though the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) claims that workers' rights in Kosovo are violated in every sector of the economy.

Kosovo's constitution calls for an independent judiciary, but courts at all levels are subject to political influence and intimidation. A EULEX memo leaked in June 2010 accused the government of interfering with a war crimes investigation, and alleged that Kosovo's judicial and law enforcement institutions were, "culturally and/or mentally not acquainted to the concept of independence of their services." Since 1999, numerous domestic and international watchdog groups have criticized the judicial system's large backlog of cases, insufficient number of qualified judges and prosecutors, failure to implement decisions, and small budget.

Ethnic Albanian officials rarely prosecute cases involving Albanian attacks on non-Albanians. The ICG report released in May 2010 found that problems pertaining to the rule of law were particularly acute in the Serb enclave north of the Ibar River, where the Pristina authorities have no influence. Impunity for war crimes is also a problem. In July 2010, former prime minister Ramush Haradinaj was arrested and transferred to the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) for retrial on war crimes charges. His first trial had ended in an acquittal in 2008, but ICTY officials complained that he and his supporters had intimidated potential prosecution witnesses. Several witnesses in the case died under suspicious

circumstances. Prison conditions in Kosovo are generally in line with international standards, though overcrowding and the abuse of prisoners remain problems. A Deutsche Welle report in 2010 suggested that chronic weaknesses in the judicial system were resulting in a return to traditional blood feuds in Kosovo.

Freedom of movement for ethnic minorities is a significant problem, and returnees to Kosovo still face hostility. For example, in April 2010, tent camps occupied by a group of Serb returnees in Istog municipality were pelted with stones. EULEX and the Kosovo government denounced the attack and restated their commitment to the return of displaced residents. Kosovo's smaller minorities—the Roma, Ashkali, Gorani, and others—also face difficult conditions. The reclamation of property by displaced persons has been complicated by counterfeit deeds and illegal transfers, which remain common.

Kosovo is a principal transit point along the heroin-trafficking route between Central Asia and Western Europe. Organized crime remains a serious problem, with criminal networks extending into various socioeconomic sectors and politics.

Gender inequality is a major concern, especially in rural areas. Patriarchal attitudes often limit a woman's ability to gain an education, choose a marriage partner, or secure employment. Women are also underrepresented in politics, although election rules stipulate that women must occupy every third spot on each party's candidate list. Women in rural areas remain effectively disenfranchised, though family voting, though attitudes toward women's rights and their role in society are becoming more open in more urban areas such as Pristina. Domestic violence is a serious problem, as is discrimination against sexual minorities.

Kosovo serves as a source, transit point, and destination for women and children trafficked for prostitution. The international presence in Kosovo provides a relatively affluent clientele for the trade.

Kuwait

Political Rights: 4

Civil Liberties: 5*

Status: Partly Free

Population: 3,100,000

Capital: Kuwait City

Ratings Change: Kuwait's civil liberties rating declined from 4 to 5 due to restrictions on freedom of expression including the legal harassment of critical journalists, as well as a ban on public rallies in September 2010.

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline For Year Under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
4,5PF	4,5PF	4,5PF	4,5PF	4,5PF	4,4PF	4,4PF	4,4PF	4,4PF	4,5PF

Overview: In April, journalist Muhammad Abd al-Qader al-Jassem was convicted of slander after he criticized the country's prime minister. The conviction was overturned in July on appeal, though he faced additional charges at year's end, including the prospect of an 18-year

prison sentence. The Interior Ministry banned public rallies in September after an escalation of sectarian tensions. That same month, authorities came under criticism for banning more than 30 books at one of the country's largest book fairs. In December, the government shut down the local bureau of the satellite television channel Al-Jazeera for its coverage of a brutal police crackdown on a public demonstration.

For more than 200 years, the al-Sabah dynasty has played a role in ruling Kuwait. A year after the country gained its independence from Britain in 1961, a new constitution gave broad powers to the emir and created the National Assembly. Iraqi forces invaded in August 1990, but a military coalition led by the United States liberated the country in February 1991.

Emirs have suspended the National Assembly two times, from 1976 to 1981 and from 1986 to 1992. After its restoration in 1992, the parliament played an active role in monitoring the emir and the government, often forcing cabinet ministers out of office and blocking legislation proposed by the ruling family. However, the legislature has also served as an impediment to progressive political change by rejecting measures on women's rights and economic reform.

After 28 years of rule, Sheikh Jaber al-Ahmad al-Sabah died in 2006. Despite fears of a contentious succession process, the cabinet and parliament removed his heir for health reasons and elevated Sheikh Sabah al-Ahmad al-Sabah, the half-brother of the previous emir, as the new emir. In parliamentary elections that year, a coalition of liberals, Islamists, and nationalists campaigning against corruption captured a majority of seats.

The emir dissolved parliament in March 2008, leading to early elections in May. In November, members of the Salafi bloc in parliament demanded the right to question Prime Minister Nasser Mohammed al-Ahmed al-Sabah, a nephew of the emir, on corruption allegations. As a result of growing parliamentary anger, the prime minister and cabinet resigned that same month. In December, the emir accepted the cabinet's resignation. However, to demonstrate his displeasure with the parliament, he immediately reappointed his nephew as prime minister.

The prime minister finalized his new cabinet in January 2009, though no significant changes were made to the government. Opposition members of parliament quickly renewed calls to question cabinet members over the misuse of public funds, driving tensions to erupt yet again. The government resigned on March 16, leading the emir to dissolve the parliament two days later. For the third time in three years, parliamentary elections were held in May. Turnout was low, and the results were mixed, with Sunni Islamists, Shiites, liberals, and tribal representatives all winning seats. Following demands to investigate the prime minister on corruption allegations, the prime minister appeared before the parliament in December. His appearance marked the first time a Kuwaiti prime minister had ever been questioned by the legislature, though he won the subsequent vote of confidence.

Relations between the parliament and cabinet remained tense throughout 2010. In March, lawmakers questioned Information Minister Ahmad al Abdullah al Sabah on charges that he failed to restrict satellite television programming deemed insensitive to some Kuwaitis. The minister, who is also a member of the royal family, survived a no-confidence vote by a 23 to 22 margin. In December, several members

of the opposition organized a public protest to voice their disapproval of proposed changes to the constitution. The protest proceeded despite a government ban on public demonstrations. Riot police cracked down violently on the protestors, seriously injuring several people.

Kuwait, which holds about 10 percent of the world's proven oil reserves, suffered an economic slowdown in 2009, following the collapse of oil prices in late 2008. Kuwait's economy rebounded in 2010 thanks to the rise of oil prices in 2009 and their stabilization in 2010. Oil dominates the economy, accounting for nearly 90 percent of public revenues.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Kuwait is not an electoral democracy. The ruling family largely sets the policy agenda and dominates political life. The emir has overriding power in the government system and appoints the prime minister and cabinet. Under the constitution, the emir shares legislative power with the 50-member National Assembly, which is elected to four-year terms by popular vote. The electorate consists of men and women over 21 years of age who have been citizens for at least 20 years; members of most security forces are barred from voting. A 2006 law reduced the number of multimember electoral districts from 25 to 5 in an effort to curb corruption and manipulation. The emir has the authority to dissolve the National Assembly at will but must call elections within 60 days. The parliament can overturn decrees issued by the emir while it was not in session. It can also veto the appointment of the country's prime minister, but then it must choose from three alternates put forward by the emir. The parliament also has the power to remove government ministers with a majority vote.

Formal political parties are banned. While political groupings, such as parliamentary blocs, have been allowed to emerge, the government has impeded their activities through harassment and arrests.

Corruption remains a dominant political issue, and lawmakers continue to pressure the government to address this problem. In July 2010, a Kuwaiti appeals court overturned the conviction of—and three-month prison sentence for—Khalid al-Fadhala, a leader of the National Democratic Alliance, who accused the prime minister of corruption. Kuwait was ranked 54 out of 178 countries surveyed in Transparency International's 2010 Corruption Perceptions Index.

Kuwaiti authorities continue to limit criticism and debate on politics in the press. Press offenses are no longer criminal in nature, but offenders still face steep fines. Kuwaiti law also prohibits and continues to demand jail time for the publication of material that insults God, the prophets, or Islam, and forbids criticism of the emir, disclosing secret or private information, and calling for the regime's overthrow. In April 2010, a Kuwaiti court convicted journalist Muhammad Abd al-Qader al-Jassem to six months in prison for slander. He had criticized the country's prime minister in 2009 by suggesting that Nasser Mohammed al-Ahmed al-Sabah was unfit to lead and should resign from his post. Al-Jassem, who was sentenced in November to three months in prison for his criticism of the prime minister, continued to face more serious charges and a possible 18-year prison sentence for "instigating to overthrow the regime." He remained in prison at year's end.

Kuwait has more than 10 daily and weekly Arabic newspapers and two English-language dailies. The state owns four television stations and nine radio stations,

but there are also a number of private outlets, including the satellite television station Al-Rai. Foreign media outlets have generally operated relatively freely in Kuwait. However, in December, the government shut down the bureau of satellite television channel Al-Jazeera for its coverage of a police crackdown on a political demonstration in the same month. Kuwaitis enjoy access to the internet, though the government has instructed internet service providers to block certain sites for political or moral reasons.

Islam is the state religion, but religious minorities are generally permitted to practice their faiths in private. Shiite Muslims, who make up around a third of the population, enjoy full political rights but are subject to some discrimination and harassment.

Academic freedom is generally respected. Kuwait has a tradition of allowing relatively open and free private discussion, often conducted in traditional gatherings (*diwaniyat*) that typically include only men. In September 2010, the government banned more than 30 books at one of the country's largest annual book fairs.

Freedoms of assembly and association are provided for by law, though the government constrains these rights in practice. Kuwaitis must notify authorities of a public meeting or protest, but do not need a permit. In August 2010, Shiite activist Yasser Abdullah Habib made provocative comments in London, denouncing one of the prophet's wives and prompting some Kuwaiti Sunnis to call for public demonstrations. As sectarian tensions escalated, the Interior Ministry banned public rallies in September. Kuwaiti authorities responded by stripping Habib of his Kuwaiti citizenship. In December, riot police responded violently to protests against proposed changes to the constitution, seriously injuring several people.

The government routinely restricts the registration and licensing of associations and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), forcing dozens of groups to operate without legal standing or state assistance. Representatives of licensed NGOs must obtain government permission to attend foreign conferences on behalf of their organizations. Workers have the right to join labor unions, but the country's labor law mandates that there be only one union per occupational trade. According to a 2010 Human Rights Watch report, migrant workers enjoy limited legal protections against mistreatment or abuse by employers.

Kuwait lacks an independent judiciary. The emir appoints all judges, and the executive branch approves judicial promotions. Authorities may detain suspects for four days without charge. The Interior Ministry supervises the main internal security forces, including the national police, the Criminal Investigation Division, and Kuwait State Security. The government permits visits by human rights activists to prisons, where overcrowding remains a problem. In 2010, Kuwait enacted a disability rights act, ensuring healthcare, education, and employment rights for the disabled.

Stateless residents, known as *bidoon*, are estimated to number 100,000. They are considered illegal residents, do not have full citizenship rights, and often live in wretched conditions. Kuwait is a destination country for human trafficking, generally from South Asia.

The 1962 constitution provides men and women with equal rights. Kuwaiti women have the right to vote and run as candidates in parliamentary and local elections. For the first time in Kuwait's history, four women won seats in the 2009 parliamentary elections. Women also comprise more than 60 percent of the

student body at several leading Kuwaiti universities. Nevertheless, women face discrimination in several areas of law and society and remain underrepresented in the workforce. The country's public schools have remained segregated since 2001. Women are offered some legal protections from abuse and discrimination, but they are only permitted to seek a divorce in cases where they have been deserted or subject to domestic violence. Women must have a male guardian in order to marry and are eligible for only one half of their brother's inheritance. In 2009, Kuwait's Constitutional Court granted married women the right to obtain passports and to travel without their husband's permission. Domestic abuse and sexual harassment are not specifically prohibited by law, and foreign domestic servants remain particularly vulnerable to abuse and sexual assault.

Kyrgyzstan

Political Rights: 5*

Population: 5,300,000

Civil Liberties: 5

Capital: Bishkek

Status: Partly Free

Status Change: Kyrgyzstan's political rights rating improved from 6 to 5 and its status from Not Free to Partly Free due to the adoption of a new constitution designed to dismantle the superpresidential system, and genuinely competitive, multiparty parliamentary elections held in October 2010.

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline For Year Under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties; Status)

2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
6,5NF	6,5NF	6,5NF	6,5NF	5,4PF	5,4PF	5,4PF	5,4PF	6,5NF	5,5PF

Overview: President Kurmanbek Bakiyev, who had grown increasingly authoritarian in recent years, was forced from office in April 2010 amid antigovernment demonstrations. An interim government headed by longtime opposition figure Roza Otunbayeva then oversaw the adoption of a more democratic constitution in late June and genuinely competitive parliamentary elections in October. However, a campaign of violence that largely targeted the ethnic Uzbek population in the south in early June killed hundreds of people and displaced many more. Security forces were negligent, and, by some accounts, may have been complicit in the ethnic violence.

Shortly after Kyrgyzstan gained independence from the Soviet Union in 1991, Askar Akayev, a respected physicist, was elected president. He easily won reelection in 1995, and constitutional amendments the following year substantially increased the powers of the presidency. International observers noted serious irregularities in the 2000 parliamentary and presidential elections, which yielded another term for Akayev.

Long-standing frustrations in the economically depressed and politically marginalized south culminated in public protests in 2002. Six protesters were killed when

police fired into a crowd in the village of Aksy. Four former regional prosecutors and police officials were sentenced to prison in December in connection with the shootings, and additional convictions came five years later, but opposition critics continued to argue that senior officials who authorized the use of force were never brought to justice.

After flawed February 2005 parliamentary elections, thousands of demonstrators protested irregularities and ultimately called for Akayev's resignation. On March 24, protesters and opposition supporters stormed the presidential headquarters in Bishkek. Akayev fled abroad and later resigned.

In the July 2005 presidential poll, former prime minister and opposition leader Kurmanbek Bakiyev captured 89 percent of the vote. His victory was regarded as nearly inevitable after he and Feliks Kulov, his most serious rival, formed a political alliance in May: Kulov withdrew his presidential candidacy in exchange for the post of prime minister. Observers from the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) nevertheless concluded that the election represented an improvement over previous votes.

Kulov joined the opposition in early 2007, and in April, opposition groups organized demonstrations in Bishkek, calling for constitutional reform and Bakiyev's resignation. However, after demonstrators allegedly attacked police, the authorities violently dispersed the protests, dealing the opposition a significant blow.

The government pushed through its own constitutional changes in an October 2007 referendum, expanding the parliament from 75 to 90 seats and introducing party-slate balloting. Civil society groups criticized the government for using administrative resources to ensure a favorable outcome to the vote. Bakiyev quickly called parliamentary elections for December, which resulted in a legislature dominated by the newly formed progovernment party Ak Zhol and devoid of opposition representation. Amendments passed by the new parliament later that month widened the executive's authority.

The president consolidated his power in 2008 and 2009, sidelining the country's remaining well-known opposition figures. Kulov left politics in May 2008, when Bakiyev appointed him as head of an energy development project. In March 2009, Medet Sadyrkulov, Bakiyev's former chief of staff, was found dead in a burned-out car near Bishkek. Opposition representatives charged that he had been assassinated because he was planning to join them. Bakiyev won another five-year term in the July 2009 presidential election, taking 75 percent of the vote. OSCE observers concluded that the poll failed to meet international standards, citing evidence of fraud, intimidation of opposition supporters, and the misuse of administrative resources, among other problems.

In April 2010, Bakiyev fled the country amid antigovernment protests in Bishkek. A reported 86 people were killed in the street confrontations, with most victims apparently shot by security forces. In early June, ethnic rioting swept the southern cities of Osh and Jalalabad, leaving hundreds dead. Most accounts indicated that Uzbeks suffered the brunt of the violence, and local security forces were accused of abetting attacks on Uzbek communities. A June referendum that international observers deemed generally fair confirmed longtime opposition figure Roza Otunbayeva as interim president through December 2011 and approved a new constitution that shifted power from the presidency to the parliament.

Parliamentary elections held in October were deemed an improvement over Bakiyev-era balloting. The new Ata-Jurt party led with 28 of 120 seats, followed by Otunbayeva's Social Democratic Party of Kyrgyzstan (SDPK) with 26, Ar-Namys with 25, Respublika with 23, and Ata-Meken with 18. Ata-Jurt, the SDPK, and Respublika formed a coalition government in December, leaving Ar-Namys and Ata-Meken in opposition. Almazbek Atambayev of the SDPK became prime minister.

Kyrgyzstan's internal turmoil dominated its relations with the outside world in 2010. As ethnic violence engulfed the south in June, Otunbayeva appealed to Russia for help, but the Kremlin declined to intervene. Uzbekistan briefly sheltered several hundred thousand ethnic Uzbek refugees from Kyrgyzstan, but returned most of them within a week. Both Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan responded to the waves of unrest by closing their borders with Kyrgyzstan for extended periods in 2010. The United States continued to operate a military transit base at Manas airport, though the facility's future remained unclear given the fluid political situation.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Kyrgyzstan is not an electoral democracy, though the October 2010 parliamentary elections were considered an improvement over the deeply flawed 2007 parliamentary and 2009 presidential votes. OSCE observers praised the latest campaign's pluralism and other positive features, but the Central Election Commission made a dubious adjustment to the number of eligible voters after the election, reducing the number of parties that cleared the 5 percent barrier for entry into parliament from six to five.

Constitutional changes adopted in the June 2010 referendum expanded the unicameral parliament from 90 to 120 deputies, with no party allowed to hold more than 65 seats. Parliamentary elections are to be held every five years. The president serves a single six-year term with no possibility of reelection, but retains the power to veto legislation. The overall aim of the reforms is to prevent the reemergence of an authoritarian president and a rubber-stamp parliament, where the ruling party enjoys a supermajority. However, it remains to be seen how these checks and balances will function in practice.

Corruption is pervasive in Kyrgyz society. The nepotistic practices of President Kurmanbek Bakiyev, whose sons and brothers were prominent in business and government, were a significant source of popular dissatisfaction. In May 2010, the interim government began charging some members of the Bakiyev regime with corruption, although the results were inconclusive. A November trial of Bakiyev-regime figures over violence in April degenerated into chaos. In a worrying sign, recordings leaked in May purported to reveal members of the interim government discussing lucrative backroom deals; no investigation ensued.

Kyrgyz-language media experienced less politically motivated harassment after the fall of the Bakiyev government, but Uzbek-language media virtually ceased to exist in southern Kyrgyzstan after the June ethnic violence, during which several Uzbek outlets were attacked. Ownership of the Uzbek-language television stations Osh-TV and Mezon-TV changed after the unrest, with the former ending its existence as an Uzbek broadcaster and the latter reemerging as a Kyrgyz-language channel called Basharat-TV. Ulugbek Abdusalamov, editor in chief of the Uzbek-language newspaper *Diydor*, was arrested on dubious charges in June and later suffered

a stroke in detention. Analysis by credible researchers revealed that a number of Kyrgyz-language newspapers published inflammatory material ahead of the ethnic violence. Meanwhile, in April 2010, the interim government transformed the state-run television station into a public broadcaster with an independent oversight board. By year's end, the media landscape was bifurcated along ethnic lines, with significantly improved conditions for Kyrgyz-language media and vastly worse conditions for Uzbek-language media. Economic and infrastructure factors limit internet access in much of Kyrgyzstan, but online media suffered no significant restrictions after the fall of the Bakiyev regime. Clips uploaded to YouTube served as an important source of information about the ethnic violence in June, although several websites also distributed graphic materials intended to inflame ethnic animosity.

The government has generally respected freedom of religion, but all religious organizations must register with the Ministry of Justice, a process that is often cumbersome. A January 2009 law banned proselytizing and private religious education, and the wearing of headscarves in schools was banned two months later. The government monitors and restricts Islamist groups that it regards as a threat to national security, particularly Hizb ut-Tahrir, an ostensibly nonviolent international movement calling for the creation of a caliphate. In May 2010, a group of 18 people previously jailed on "religious extremism" charges were released. However, in September, four ethnic Uzbek imams were found guilty of using mosques as platforms to incite violence despite serious doubts about the prosecution's assertions.

Corruption is widespread in the educational system, and bribes are often required to obtain admission to schools or universities. Teachers have reportedly been forced to subscribe to government newspapers, and authorities in some municipalities require schoolchildren to perform during national holidays and visits by government officials. In June 2010, the People's Friendship University in Jalalabad, founded by an Uzbek businessman, was destroyed during the ethnic violence. In December, teachers went on strike in several locations to protest low wages.

The Bakiyev government had tightened restrictions on freedom of assembly in recent years, and a reported 86 people were killed on April 7—Bakiyev's last day in power—as police opened fire on demonstrators in Bishkek. Restrictions on freedom of assembly eased significantly under the interim government. The heavy presence of security forces in southern Kyrgyzstan after the June ethnic violence seriously impeded freedom of assembly, however, especially for the minority Uzbek community.

Freedom of association is typically upheld, and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) participate actively in social and political life. However, rising nationalism affected both ethnic Kyrgyz and ethnic Uzbek NGO activists in 2010. In July, activist Tolekan Ismailova, an ethnic Kyrgyz who had actively condemned violence against Uzbeks in June, left the country after receiving threats. In September, ethnic Uzbek human rights activist Azimjan Askarov was sentenced to life in prison for the murder of a Kyrgyz police official. Rights organizations called for his release, citing credible reports that he was documenting, not committing, acts of violence, as well as evidence that he was mistreated in detention.

The law provides for the formation of trade unions, and unions are generally able to operate without obstruction. However, strikes are prohibited in many sectors. Legal enforcement of union rights is weak, and collective-bargaining agreements are not always respected by employers.

The judiciary is not independent and remains dominated by the executive branch. Corruption among judges, who are underpaid, is widespread. Defendants' rights, including the presumption of innocence, are not always respected, and there are credible reports of violence against suspects during arrest and interrogation. Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch documented rights violations at numerous trials of ethnic Uzbeks in 2010, with defendants attacked in courtrooms, abused in detention, and convicted on flimsy or fabricated evidence. UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Navi Pillay stated in July that security forces in southern Kyrgyzstan had subjected ethnic Uzbeks to abuses, including arbitrary detention and torture. Ethnic Kyrgyz convicted of attacks on a Meshketian Turkish community outside Bishkek in April received little or no jail time, and probable ethnic Kyrgyz culprits in the June violence did not even face such basic elements of justice as viable investigations, let alone prosecutions.

The widespread and extensively documented violence against the Uzbek community in southern Kyrgyzstan cast a harsh light on the plight of ethnic minorities. Uzbeks, who make up roughly one seventh of the population, had long demanded more political and cultural rights, including greater representation in government, more Uzbek-language schools, and official status for the Uzbek language. Ethnic tensions began to flare in April with the attacks on Meskhetian Turks near Bishkek, which were followed by attacks on ethnic Dungans and Uighurs in Tokmok. Kyrgyz-Uzbek clashes in Jalalabad in May left at least two people dead. The Kyrgyzstan Inquiry Commission (KIC), an independent international body, put the death toll from the worst outbreak of ethnic violence in June at 470, noting that "the majority of victims were ethnic Uzbeks." Government forces were ineffective at stopping ethnic violence, and may have been complicit in it. The Kyrgyz government did not conduct an adequate investigation of the violence or make a reasonable effort to bring the perpetrators to justice.

The government generally respects the right of unrestricted travel to and from the country. There are barriers to internal migration, however, including a requirement that citizens obtain permits to work and settle in particular areas of the country.

Personal connections, corruption, organized crime, and widespread poverty limit business competition and equality of opportunity. Conscripted soldiers have reportedly been rented out to civilian employers under illegal arrangements, with some forced to work for no pay. The ethnic violence of mid-2010 seriously affected property rights in the south, as a large number of businesses, mainly owned by ethnic Uzbeks, were either destroyed or forcibly seized during and after the unrest.

Cultural traditions and apathy among law enforcement officials discourage victims of domestic violence and rape from contacting the authorities. Rapes often accompanied the ethnic violence of June 2010. The KIC noted that the government response to the few cases of rape that were actually reported was, "inadequate if not obstructive." The trafficking of women and girls into forced prostitution abroad is a serious problem, and some victims report that the authorities are involved in trafficking. The practice of bride abduction persists despite being illegal, and few perpetrators are prosecuted. Women are well represented in the workforce and institutions of higher learning, but poor economic conditions have had a negative effect on women's professional and educational opportunities.

Laos

Political Rights: 7

Population: 6,400,000

Civil Liberties: 6

Capital: Vientiane

Status: Not Free

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline For Year Under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

2001	2001	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
7,6NF									

Overview: Human rights advocates continued to voice concern over the fate of some 4,000 Hmong migrants who were forcibly returned to Laos by the Thai government in late 2009 and early 2010. Nine of the 300 Lao farmers arrested in 2009 for their plans to protest government land seizures remained in custody at the end of 2010.

Laos won independence in 1953 after six decades of French rule and Japanese occupation during World War II. The constitutional monarchy soon fell into a civil war with Pathet Lao guerrillas, who were backed by the Vietnamese Communist Party. As the conflict raged on, Laos was drawn into the Vietnam War in 1964. The Pathet Lao seized power in 1975, and the Lao People's Revolutionary Party (LPRP) has ruled the country ever since. By the 1980s, the economy was in tatters after years of civil war and state mismanagement. The LPRP began to relax controls on prices, encouraged foreign investment, and privatized farms and some state-owned enterprises.

The party's policy of maintaining tight political control while spurring economic development continued over subsequent decades, and Laos now reports high annual growth. However, the rapid expansion of extractive industries and the influx of thousands of Chinese businesses have increased economic inequality. The seizure of land from subsistence farmers and tribal communities for leasing to foreign-owned agribusinesses has also triggered occasional protests and violence. In late 2009, some 300 Lao farmers planning to travel to the capital to petition the government over the loss of their land were arrested by security forces. Nine remained in custody at the end of 2010.

Approximately 400 Hmong migrants were forcibly returned to Laos by the Thai government in late 2009 and early 2010, 150 of whom were deemed to be persons of concern by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). The Thai and Lao governments initially told international observers that the persons of concern would be resettled in third countries, but the Lao government claimed that the migrants declined resettlement after arriving in Laos. In March 2010, a group of reporters and diplomats were invited to visit the Hmong returnees in Laos. After the migrants asked the group for assistance in fleeing the country, the foreigners were removed, and the Hmong were reportedly put under curfew and heavy guard. Efforts to secure their release by members of the U.S. Congress visiting Laos during the summer, as well as subsequent appeals to the government of Laos, were unsuccessful.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Laos is not an electoral democracy. The 1991 constitution makes the LPRP the sole legal political party and grants it a leading role at all levels of government. The LPRP vets all candidates for election to the rubber-stamp National Assembly, whose 115 members elect the president. Elections are held every five years, most recently in 2006, when former vice president and defense minister Choummaly Sayasone became head of the LPRP and state president.

Corruption by government officials is widespread. Laws aimed at curbing corruption are rarely enforced, and government regulation of virtually every facet of life provides many opportunities for bribery. Senior officials in government and the military are frequently involved in commercial logging, mining, and other enterprises aimed at exploiting Lao natural resources. The country was ranked 154 out of 178 countries surveyed in Transparency International's 2010 Corruption Perceptions Index.

Freedom of the press is severely restricted. Any journalist who criticizes the government or discusses controversial political topics faces legal punishment. The state owns all media. Residents within frequency range of Radio Free Asia and other foreign broadcasts from Thailand can access these alternative media sources. While very few Lao have access to the internet, its content is not heavily censored. The government does not respect internet freedom, but lacks the capabilities to monitor and block most web traffic. Many educated Lao use the internet to read news about Laos through Thai online newspapers.

Religious freedom is constrained. Lao officials reportedly continue to jail Christians or expel them from their villages for proselytizing. The religious practice of the majority Buddhist population is somewhat restricted through the LPRP's control of clergy training and supervision of temples. In late 2010, police in the province of Khammouan reportedly detained several pastors and worshippers.

Academic freedom is not respected. University professors cannot teach or write about democracy or other politically sensitive topics, although Laos has started inviting select foreign academics to teach courses in the country. While some young people now go overseas for university education, they are generally selected by the government or are children of senior officials or wealthy families. Government surveillance of the population has been scaled back in recent years, but searches without warrants still occur.

The government severely restricts freedom of assembly. Laws prohibit participation in organizations that engage in demonstrations or public protests, or that in any other way cause "turmoil or social instability." Those found guilty of violating these laws can receive sentences of up to five years in prison. Groups of demonstrators have vanished on occasion, including the nine farmers arrested in 2009 for protesting against government land seizures. After signing the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights in 2009, Laos created a legal framework for nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), allowing such groups to be licensed; this development has affected primarily foreign NGOs, which have proliferated in the country in recent years. Laos is home to some domestic nongovernmental welfare and professional groups, but they are prohibited from pursuing political agendas and are subject to strict state control.

All unions must belong to the official Federation of Lao Trade Unions. Strikes are not expressly prohibited, but workers rarely stage walkouts, and they do not have the right to bargain collectively.

The courts are corrupt and controlled by the LPRP. Long procedural delays are common, particularly for cases dealing with public grievances and complaints about government abuses. Security forces often illegally detain suspects. Prisoners are often tortured and must bribe prison officials to obtain better food, medicine, visits from family, and more humane treatment.

Discrimination against members of ethnic minority tribes is common. The Hmong, who fielded a guerrilla army allied with U.S. forces during the Vietnam War, are particularly distrusted by the government and face harsh treatment. Thousands have been forced off their land to make way for the exploitation of timber and other natural resources.

All land is owned by the state, though citizens have rights to use it. On some occasions, the government has awarded land to certain citizens with government connections, money, or links to foreign companies. Traditional land rights still exist in some areas of the country, adding to confusion and conflict over land access. With no fair or robust system to protect land rights or ensure compensation for displacement, development projects often spur public resentment.

Although laws guarantee women many of the same rights as men, gender-based discrimination and abuse are widespread. Tradition and religious practices have contributed to women's inferior access to education, equal employment opportunities, and worker benefits. An estimated 15,000 to 20,000 women and girls from the Mekong region, including Laos, are trafficked each year for prostitution. However, the Lao government has made some improvement in combating trafficking over the last five years, including cooperating more closely with other governments to fight trafficking. The construction of new highways through Laos linking China to Thailand and Vietnam has raised concerns over likely increases in prostitution, drug trafficking, and the prevalence of HIV/AIDS. Visitors to the highway already noted spikes in prostitution along the road during the past year.

Latvia

Political Rights: 2

Population: 2,200,000

Civil Liberties: 2*

Capital: Riga

Status: Free

Ratings Change: Latvia's civil liberties rating declined from 1 to 2 due to negative developments for press freedom, including threats to editorial independence following the sale of an influential newspaper under less-than-transparent circumstances.

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline For Year Under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
1,2F	1,2F	1,2F	1,2F	1,1F	1,1F	2,1F	2,1F	2,1F	2,2F

Overview:

An electoral bloc led by incumbent prime minister

tary elections and went on to form a governing majority with another party. Unlike in 2009, the government's fiscal austerity policies did not provoke violent protests. Also during the year, the appointment of new editors at the prominent *Diena* newspaper and the purchase of a controlling stake by a businessman linked to a conservative political bloc raised concerns about media independence.

After centuries of foreign domination, Latvia gained its independence in 1918, only to be annexed by the Soviet Union during World War II. The long Soviet occupation featured a massive influx of Russians and the deportation, execution, and emigration of tens of thousands of ethnic Latvians. In 1991, Latvia regained its independence as the Soviet Union disintegrated, and a multiparty system took root during the 1990s. The country joined both the European Union (EU) and NATO in 2004.

A coalition government headed by Prime Minister Aigars Kalvitis of the People's Party, who had been in office since 2004, announced its resignation in December 2007, after Kalvitis's attempt to remove the head of the Bureau for the Prevention and Combating of Corruption (KNAB) triggered street protests. However, the new government approved by Parliament included the same four parties as its predecessor. Former prime minister Ivars Godmanis of Latvia's First Party-Latvian Way (LPP-LC) was selected to replace Kalvitis. The KNAB director, Aleksejs Loskutovs, was eventually dismissed by Parliament in June 2008 for inadequate oversight, following revelations that two KNAB employees had stolen funds over several years.

In the face of a deepening economic crisis, thousands of Latvians marched on the Parliament building in January 2009, and their peaceful demands for the government's resignation escalated into violent protests. President Valdis Zatlers then demanded that the government adopt key reforms or face a referendum on dissolving Parliament. The ruling coalition collapsed in February, and a new government was formed by the New Era Party, the People's Party, the Union of Greens and Farmers (ZZS), For Fatherland and Freedom/Latvian National Independence Movement (TB/LNNK), and the Civic Union. New Era's Valdis Dombrovskis was appointed prime minister. Zatlers did not follow through on his threats to dissolve Parliament, citing positive steps including strengthened oversight of international funds and the belated appointment of a new KNAB director to replace Loskutovs. The new government spent the rest of 2009 enacting spending cuts, as Latvia suffered one of the deepest economic recessions in the world.

The unemployment rate ranged from 16.9 to 20.5 percent during 2010, and the number of people living in poverty nearly doubled—to 200,000—by the end of the year. In January, the government was forced to renegotiate terms with its international creditors after the Constitutional Court ruled that 2009 pension cuts were unconstitutional. Nevertheless, Latvia won praise from the International Monetary Fund, the EU, and the World Bank for implementing their economic recommendations. Despite widespread outcry against spending cuts in 2009, austerity measures did not provoke protests in 2010.

The People's Party withdrew from the government in March, leaving it with 44 of the 100 seats in Parliament. The move was seen as an effort by the party to distance

itself from unpopular fiscal policies ahead of the October parliamentary elections. In May, the People's Party joined the LPP-LC to form a conservative electoral bloc called For a Good Latvia (PLL). Meanwhile, New Era, the Civic Union, and the Society for Political Change (SCP) formed the center-right Unity bloc, and the TB/LNNK joined the far-right Everything for Latvia party to form the National Alliance.

The election campaign, which officially began in June, was dominated by personalities rather than party programs. The Unity bloc secured the largest number of seats in the October balloting, 33, followed by the Harmony Center—backed largely by the ethnic Russian community—with 29, the ZZS with 22, and PLL and the National Alliance with 8 each. After extensive postelection talks, Unity and the ZZS formed a governing majority, and Dombrovskis retained the premiership. Voter turnout was just over 63 percent.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Latvia is an electoral democracy. The constitution provides for a unicameral, 100-seat Parliament (Saeima), whose members are elected for four-year terms. Parliament elects the president, who serves up to two four-year terms; incumbent Valdis Zatlers, who took office in 2007, is eligible for reelection in July 2011. The prime minister is nominated by the president and must be approved by Parliament. The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) found that the October 2010 parliamentary elections met all international standards, though it expressed concern that nearly 17 percent of residents of voting age could not participate, as they were noncitizens. However, prisoners were able to vote for the first time.

Noncitizen residents may organize political parties, but only if the party counts an equal number of Latvian citizens as members. The political landscape remained fractured and personality driven in 2010, and parties continued to suffer from very low levels of public confidence. A Eurobarometer poll during the year showed that 95 percent of Latvians do not trust political parties.

Latvia's efforts to combat corruption were hampered in 2010 by internal divisions at the KNAB. The bureau's director, Normunds Vilnitis, proposed a sweeping reorganization that many argued would reduce the KNAB's effectiveness. The prime minister opposed the restructuring, and a number of high-ranking KNAB employees released a public letter casting doubt on Vilnitis's commitment to the body's mission. Three major bribery cases broke in June, implicating the mayor of Jurmala, the director of the Investment and Development Agency of Latvia, and five executives at the national electricity monopoly. A high-profile corruption case against the former mayor of Ventspils, Aivars Lembergs, was ongoing at year's end. Latvia was ranked 59 out of 178 countries surveyed in Transparency International's 2010 Corruption Perceptions Index.

The government generally respects freedom of the press. Private television and radio stations broadcast programs in both Latvian and Russian. While newspapers publish a wide range of political viewpoints, there has been evidence of increasing business and political influence on the media. In 2009, the highly respected independent newspaper *Diena* was sold to a foreign owner whose identity was not disclosed; many of the paper's leading journalists and editors resigned in protest. In July 2010, two former public relations experts with close ties to the conservative

PLL electoral bloc were appointed as editor in chief and deputy editor. Viesturs Koziols, a wealthy businessman who was also linked to PLL, bought a controlling stake in the *Diena* media group in August. Separately, police in May raided the home of a television journalist and seized her computer and documents after she reported on the case of a hacker who had exposed the inflated salaries of executives at state firms. Her subsequent lawsuit against the police was dismissed. Violence against journalists is rare, but Grigorijs Nemcovs—the publisher of *Million*, a Russian-language newspaper focusing on political corruption—was shot at close range in April in an apparent contract killing. His murder remained unsolved at year's end. The government does not restrict access to the internet, and 68.2 percent of Latvians had access in 2010.

Freedom of religion is generally respected. However, so-called traditional religious groups enjoy certain privileges, such as the ability to provide religious instruction to public school students, which are unavailable to newer groups. There are no government restrictions on academic freedom.

Freedoms of assembly and association are protected by law and in practice. A controversial March 2010 parade in honor of Latvians who served in German-led units during World War II proceeded peacefully after a court overturned the city of Riga's ban, with riot police keeping counterdemonstrators away from the marchers. The government does not restrict the activities of nongovernmental organizations. Workers enjoy the right to establish trade unions, strike, and engage in collective bargaining. Union members make up roughly 15 percent of the workforce.

While judicial independence is generally respected, inefficiency, politicization, and corruption continue to be problems. In April 2010, Prosecutor General Janis Maizitis, a popular anticorruption figure, unexpectedly lost a bid for reelection by Parliament. The vote, which employed secret balloting, suggested that many lawmakers were uncomfortable with his office's far-reaching corruption investigations yet unwilling to say so publicly. In May, a number of organizations warned of politicization of the judiciary when the head of the People's Party faction was appointed to the Supreme Court without any prior judicial experience. Lengthy pretrial detention remains a concern; detainees may be held for up to 18 months. Law enforcement officials have allegedly abused persons in custody. Many prisons fail to meet international standards, and continue to suffer from overcrowding, seriously inadequate facilities, and poor access to health care.

Approximately 15 percent of Latvia's residents are noncitizens. Those who immigrated during the Soviet period, the majority of whom are ethnic Russians, must apply for citizenship and pass a Latvian language test. Some noncitizens have cited resentment at not having been granted citizenship automatically as a reason for not applying.

Women enjoy the same legal rights as men, but they often face employment and wage discrimination. There are 20 women in the newly elected Parliament, and 3 women in the 14-member cabinet. Domestic violence continues to be a serious problem. Amendments to the criminal code in October 2010 added domestic violence as an aggravating factor in criminal offenses; previously, there had been no legal definition of domestic violence. Latvia continues to be a source for women trafficked for the purpose of prostitution, mostly to Western Europe.

Lebanon

Political Rights: 5

Population: 4,300,000

Civil Liberties: 3

Capital: Beirut

Status: Partly Free

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline For Year Under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
6,5NF	6,5NF	6,5NF	6,5NF	5,4PF	5,4PF	5,4PF	5,4PF	5,3PF	5,3PF

Overview: Municipal elections in May 2010 did not benefit from the reforms enacted for the 2009 parliamentary elections, as officials failed to approve similar changes for the local polls. Moreover, political parties effectively divided districts among themselves before election day, meaning the balloting was generally not competitive. In August, the parliament passed a law granting greater, though still severely limited, rights to Palestinian refugees.

Lebanon was established as a League of Nations mandate under French control in 1920. After winning its independence in 1943, the new state maintained a precarious electoral system based on the division of power among the country's then 18 officially recognized sectarian communities. As the population's slight Christian majority waned into a minority, Muslim leaders demanded reform of the fixed 6-to-5 ratio of Christian-to-Muslim parliamentary seats and an end to exclusive Maronite Christian control of the presidency. In 1975, war erupted between a coalition of Lebanese Muslim and leftist militias aligned with Palestinian guerrilla groups on one side, and an array of Christian militias bent on preserving the political status quo on the other. Complicating the conflict further, Syrian and Israeli troops entered Lebanon in 1976 and 1978.

In 1989, the surviving members of Lebanon's 1972 parliament convened in Taif, Saudi Arabia, and agreed to an Arab League plan that would weaken the presidency, establish equality in Christian and Muslim parliamentary representation, and mandate close security cooperation with occupying Syrian troops. A new Syrian-backed government then extended its writ to most of the country, with southern Lebanon remaining under Israeli occupation until 2000. By the end of the 1990s, Lebanon's economy was in deep recession, and growing public disaffection with the postwar establishment spurred demonstrations against Syrian domination.

In 2004, the United States joined with France and most other European governments in calling for an end to Syria's power over Lebanon. Damascus moved to defend its position by forcing the Lebanese parliament to approve a constitutional amendment extending the six-year tenure of President Emile Lahoud, a staunch Syrian ally and a rival of Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri. On the eve of the parliamentary vote, the UN Security Council issued a resolution calling for a presidential election, the withdrawal of all foreign forces, and the disarmament of militias. The amendment nevertheless passed, provoking an international outcry.

Encouraged by the international climate, Hariri and other politicians who had

been loyal to Syria began defecting to the opposition. In February 2005, four months after resigning as prime minister, Hariri and 22 others were killed in a car bombing. Widespread suspicions of Syrian involvement led to international pressure for an immediate Syrian withdrawal and to extensive anti-Syrian demonstrations in Beirut. An interim government was formed to oversee legislative elections. Syrian troops pulled out of the country in April, and in the May and June balloting, allies of the late Hariri—calling themselves the March 14 Coalition—expanded their parliamentary bloc to 72 out of 128 seats. The coalition, consisting mainly of Sunni Muslims and certain Christian and Druze factions, and with international support from the United States, Saudi Arabia, and others, went on to form a new government led by Prime Minister Fouad Siniora.

The March 14 Coalition lacked the two-thirds parliamentary majority needed to overturn Lahoud's term extension and elect a new president, leaving Lahoud in office and paralyzing the government. Meanwhile, a series of assassinations and bombings that began in the months after the Syrian withdrawal targeted key anti-Syrian politicians.

In July 2006, the powerful militia of the Shiite Islamist movement Hezbollah attacked Israeli forces in a cross-border raid, sparking a six-week war that severely damaged Lebanon's infrastructure and killed some 1,500 people, most of them Lebanese civilians. After a UN-brokered ceasefire, Lebanese politicians struggled to stabilize the government. The March 8 Coalition—a largely Shiite and Christian bloc that included Hezbollah and was aligned with Syria and Iran—left the national unity government in November, demanding a reorganized cabinet in which it would hold veto power.

In 2007, the army waged a four-month campaign against a Sunni Islamist militant group based in Nahr el-Baréd, a Palestinian refugee camp. The fighting killed some 400 people and displaced more than 30,000 others, and the camp was completely destroyed. Reconstruction did not begin until late 2008, but it has been stalled since then.

In May 2008, responding to a pair of government decisions they viewed as a threat, Hezbollah and its allies seized West Beirut by force. Battles between the opposition and government supporters raged across Lebanon for almost a week, leaving nearly 100 people dead. A power-sharing agreement brokered by Qatar then cleared the way for the delayed election of politically neutral army commander Michel Suleiman as president, the formation of a new national unity government, and the passage of a revised election law in September.

In June 2009 parliamentary elections, the March 14 and March 8 coalitions won 71 and 57 seats, respectively, and Saad Hariri—the son of Rafiq Hariri—was named prime minister. The majority was granted 15 ministers and the minority 10, while the remaining 5 were named by the president. This arrangement meant that the majority could not act unilaterally, but the minority would lack a clear veto.

The regional and international climate—including U.S. and Saudi attempts to improve relations with Syria—produced a rapprochement between the Hariri government and both Syria and Iran in late 2009 and 2010. Political leaders of all persuasions tried to calm the public mood after it became clear that the Special Tribunal for Lebanon was investigating Hezbollah members suspected of involvement in the 2005 assassination of Rafiq Hariri, threatening the tenuous 2009 power-sharing

agreement. Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah stated that he would not allow any members of his party to be interrogated by the international court, accused Israel of Hariri's murder, and effectively prevented security forces from executing an arrest warrant for a general previously accused in the Hariri case. To avoid political and sectarian fighting, political leaders chose which candidates would run in the 2010 municipal elections, and, therefore, they effectively decided the outcome well in advance of the balloting. As a result, the elections were generally not competitive, with the exception of a few high-profile Christian districts. Sectarian tensions flared in August, when armed Sunni and Shiite groups clashed in Beirut, killing three people.

Tensions between Israel and Lebanon were high in 2010, and in April, Israel and the United States accused Syria of transferring Scud missiles to Hezbollah. In August, the Lebanese and Israeli armies traded fire along the border, killing four people, after Israeli troops began cutting down trees in a disputed area.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Lebanon is not an electoral democracy. Although the 2009 parliamentary elections were conducted peacefully and judged to be free and fair in some respects, vote-buying was reported to be rampant, and the electoral framework retained a number of fundamental structural flaws linked to the country's sectarian political system.

The president is selected every six years by the 128-member National Assembly, which in turn is elected for four-year terms. The president and parliament nominate the prime minister, who, along with the president, chooses the cabinet, subject to parliamentary approval. The unwritten National Pact of 1943 stipulates that the president must be a Maronite Christian, the prime minister a Sunni Muslim, and the speaker of the National Assembly a Shiite Muslim. Parliamentary seats are divided among major sects under a constitutional formula that does not reflect their current demographic weight. Shiites comprise at least a third of the population, but they are allotted only 21 percent of parliamentary seats. The sectarian political balance has been periodically reaffirmed and occasionally modified by foreign-brokered agreements like the 1989 Taif accords and the 2008 Doha Agreement.

The 2009 parliamentary elections were conducted under the 2008 election law, which stemmed from the Doha agreement. It condensed nationwide voting into a single day, introduced some curbs on campaign finance and advertising, and created smaller, more religiously homogeneous districts. However, some important changes that were scheduled to come into force by the time of the 2010 municipal elections—including the reduction of the voting age to 18 from 21, a system allowing expatriates to vote abroad, the provision of preprinted ballots, quotas for women, and institutional reforms to strengthen political parties—were delayed due to sectarian and partisan concerns. As a result, the elections were conducted under the old municipal elections law, which predated the positive reforms in the 2008 law covering parliamentary elections. While the municipal voting was generally free of violence and other irregularities, it was not competitive, as party leaders cut deals with their rivals to avoid divisive campaigning. The only competitive elections occurred in certain Christian districts, and in one case, a political leader accused the president of interfering inappropriately to secure the victory of his relative.

The sectarian political system and the powerful role of foreign patrons effectively limits the accountability of elected officials to the public at large. Political and

bureaucratic corruption is widespread, especially in the construction sector. Businesses routinely pay bribes and cultivate ties with politicians to win contracts, and anticorruption laws are loosely enforced. Lebanon was ranked 127 out of 178 countries surveyed in Transparency International's 2010 Corruption Perceptions Index.

Lebanon has a long tradition of press freedom, though nearly all media outlets have ties to political groups. There are seven privately owned television stations and dozens of privately owned radio and print outlets that reflect a range of views. Internet access is not restricted. Vaguely worded laws that could be used to ban critical reporting on Syria, foreign leaders, the military, the judiciary, and the presidency remain in effect. While officials generally choose not to enforce such restrictions, they were applied in isolated cases during 2010. Military intelligence officials interrogated a blogger for posting articles that criticized the army and the confessional political system in March, and in July, four people were arrested for creating a group on the social-networking site Facebook that criticized the president. A journalist was interrogated illegally in August after publishing accusations that members of the army's leadership had worked with Israel. Religious leaders of all sects also have formal and informal power to censor media they consider offensive. In August, an Iranian-produced television series depicting the life of Jesus from an Islamic perspective was pulled due to Christian leaders' objections. The series of assassinations targeting anti-Syrian journalists between 2005 and 2008 have all gone unpunished to date. One journalist died and another was injured by Israeli fire during the August 2010 border clash.

Freedom of religion is guaranteed in the constitution and protected in practice. However, informal religious discrimination is common. In 2009, the Interior Ministry allowed citizens not to list their religion on their national identity cards or national registration, the first time in Lebanese history that identification cards did not immediately identify individuals as a member of a religious group. The reform has had little practical effect, since the country's political system is based on sectarian quotas. Those who delete their religion from their national registration therefore seriously limit their ability to hold government positions or run for political office. Academic freedom is firmly established.

Rights to freedom of association and assembly are generally unrestricted. On several occasions in recent years, hundreds of thousands of Lebanese have rallied in favor of or in opposition to the government. Lebanon's civil society is vibrant, and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), including human rights groups, operate openly. The government requires notification of an NGO's formation. The Interior Ministry has at times transformed this into an approval process and has been known to conduct inquiries into an organization's founding members. NGOs must invite ministry representatives to votes on bylaws or boards of directors. All workers except those in government may establish unions, which have the right to strike and bargain collectively. In recent years, unions have been closely affiliated with political groupings, and labor concerns have thus taken a backseat to union-based political activity.

The judiciary is ostensibly independent, but it is subject to heavy political influence in practice. The Judicial Council nominates judges, who are then approved by the Justice Ministry. Both government and opposition parties vet judicial appointments. International standards of criminal procedure are generally observed in the regular judiciary, but not in the military courts, which consist largely of military

officers with no legal training. Though civilian oversight is guaranteed in theory, it is very difficult for civilians to observe the trials in practice, and in some cases, defendants have no right to appeal. The military courts are tasked with trying more than 100 people who were accused of spying for Israel in 2009 and 2010, as well as Fatah al-Islam militants and individuals involved in the sectarian clashes of August 2010.

The security forces' practice of arbitrary detention has declined since 2005, though isolated incidents still occur. In March 2010, authorities seized the passport of an advocate for Iraqi refugees for two days, and in August, they held a prominent critic of the government's Nahr el-Baréd policy incommunicado for 24 hours and then denied him access to his lawyer or family. While the government has made some progress toward ending torture since 2007, new legislation and regulations on the issue are often not enforced, and the use of torture remains widespread in security-related cases. Prison conditions are poor.

Nearly 350,000 Palestinian refugees living in Lebanon are denied citizenship rights and face employment and property restrictions. A law passed in August 2010 eased conditions somewhat by allowing them access to social security benefits, end-of-service compensation, and the right to bring complaints before labor courts. However, the law effectively left several highly skilled professions closed to Palestinians, retained very high bars to their entering other skilled professions, and did not remove restrictions on property ownership.

The estimated 50,000 Iraqi refugees in Lebanon also face employment and property restrictions. According to Human Rights Watch, as of March 2010, about 100 remained jailed on illegal immigration charges, down from 580 in 2007, and 40 of the 100 were being "voluntarily" detained to avoid repatriation. An August 2009 government study reportedly found that 13 percent of detainees in Lebanese jails were foreigners whose formal sentences had expired. There is also a substantial Sudanese refugee population in Lebanon. Most of them do not enjoy official refugee status and thus face arbitrary detention, deportation, and harassment. In June 2010, police conducted a raid on an event held by Sudanese, Ethiopians, and Somalis; even those residing legally in Lebanon reported being beaten and arrested.

Women enjoy many of the same rights as men, but they experience some social and legal discrimination. Since personal-status matters are adjudicated by each sect's religious authorities, women are subject to discriminatory rules governing marriage, divorce, inheritance, and child custody. Women are underrepresented in politics, holding only four parliamentary seats, and do not receive equal social security provisions. Men convicted of so-called honor crimes against women usually receive lenient sentences. Female foreign household workers are especially vulnerable to exploitation and abuse. The Labor Ministry in 2009 introduced a uniform contract for household workers that guaranteed weekly time off and other basic protections, but according to the U.S. State Department's 2010 Trafficking in Persons Report, arriving foreign workers must sign the contract in Arabic, which most cannot read.

Lesotho

Political Rights: 3

Population: 1,900,000

Civil Liberties: 3

Capital: Maseru

Status: Partly Free

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline For Year Under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
4,4PF	2,3F	3,3PF	3,3PF						

Overview: The government of Lesotho in 2010 continued to delay a long-overdue media reform bill that would liberalize the legal framework for both state and independent outlets, as well as for journalists. In September, the cabinet declined to send the bill to a vote in Parliament, returning it to the Ministry of Communications instead.

Lesotho gained independence from Britain in 1966, and the following 30 years featured a number of military coups, annulled elections, and suspensions of constitutional rule. Parliamentary elections in 1998, although judged free and fair by international observers, set off violent protests after the results gave the ruling Lesotho Congress for Democracy (LCD) party 79 out of 80 constituency seats with just 60.5 percent of the vote. Troops from South Africa and Botswana—under the mandate of the 14-country Southern African Development Community (SADC)—were summoned to restore order. Following an evaluation of the country's electoral process, an Interim Political Authority decided that future elections would be supervised by an independent commission, and 40 proportionally determined seats would be added to the National Assembly. In the 2002 elections, the LCD captured 57.7 percent of the vote and 77 constituency seats, while the opposition Basotho National Party (BNP) won 21 of the new proportional representation seats. The elections were carried out with a minimal level of violence.

In late 2006, Prime Minister Pakalitha Mosisili called snap elections after 18 members of the LCD—led by former cabinet minister Tom Thabane—defected to join a new opposition party, the All Basotho Congress (ABC). In the February 2007 voting, the LCD won 61 seats, while the ABC captured 17. Lesotho's Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) allocated 21 of the 40 proportional representation seats to the LCD-allied National Independent Party (NIP) and 10 to the ABC's ally, the Lesotho Workers' Party (LWP). Six other parties were also awarded seats. The elections were declared free and fair by domestic and international observers.

Opposition parties—including the ABC/LWP and the BNP, which had lost 18 seats—disputed the allocations and called a general strike. The strike was halted after the SADC agreed to mediate, but the talks failed to resolve the dispute formally. In 2008, 43 by-elections were held, the results of which were also contested by the opposition. ABC supporters protested outside the office of the IEC, holding several workers hostage until the protest was broken up by police. In 2009, the head SADC mediator, former Botswana president Sir Ketumile Masire, ended his mission in Lesotho, accusing the government of avoiding direct talks with the op-

position. The Christian Council of Lesotho took over SADC's facilitation of the dialogue, but the disputes remained unresolved at the end of 2010.

In April 2009, several gunmen opened fire on Prime Minister Mosisili's house, but he escaped unharmed. Government officials and some journalists linked the assassination attempt to the ongoing election dispute, calling it a failed coup. Seven people were subsequently arrested, and their trials were pending at the end of 2010.

Drought has plagued the country since 2001, leading to critical food shortages and the dependence of some 450,000 people on food aid. Lesotho is also scarred by an adult HIV/AIDS prevalence rate of approximately 23 percent, one of the world's highest. The government announced in 2005 that it would offer free HIV testing to all citizens, the first such program in the world. Roughly half of the country's 58,000 infected citizens have received antiretroviral treatment.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Lesotho is an electoral democracy. King Letsie III serves as ceremonial head of state. Of the 120 seats in the lower house of Parliament, the National Assembly, 80 are filled through first-past-the-post constituency votes, and 40 through proportional representation. Members serve five-year terms, and the leader of the majority party becomes prime minister. The Senate, the upper house of Parliament, consists of Lesotho's 22 traditional principal chiefs, who wield considerable authority in rural areas, and 11 other members appointed on the advice of the prime minister. Political violence occasionally occurs, as evidenced by the 2009 assassination attempt on Prime Minister Pakalitha Mosisili.

The snap elections held in 2007 resulted in a landslide victory for the ruling LCD and its ally, the NIP. Opposition parties—including the ABC, LWP, and BNP—continue to contest the results of both the 2007 polls and 2008 by-elections, accusing the government of poll rigging, gerrymandering, and unfairly allocating seats. In 2008, the government announced a new digital voter registration system designed to curtail fraud. In May 2010, the LCD won three rural by-elections, which occurred without incident. The ABC was runner-up in all three contests.

While the government has aggressively prosecuted cases of graft, political corruption remains a problem. A 2010 report by the African Peer Review Mechanism stated that corruption was rife in all sectors of government and public services, and that cronyism was prevalent in state bidding procedures. Lesotho was ranked 78 out of 178 countries surveyed in Transparency International's 2010 Corruption Perceptions Index.

Freedom of speech and the press are generally respected, though the government has increasingly restricted the media in recent years. Among other problems, critical media outlets and journalists face heavy libel penalties, and reporters are occasionally harassed or attacked. The government has also been accused of withdrawing advertisements from critical outlets. In October 2010, ABC leader Tom Thabane threatened to shoot a *Sunday Express* reporter for inquiring about members of his family who were facing rape and assault charges lodged by Thabane's former wife. Independent newspapers and radio stations routinely criticize the government, while state-owned print and broadcast media tend to reflect the views of the ruling party. The state controls the country's largest radio station and its only television station. In September 2010, the cabinet refused to send a long-delayed media re-

form bill to Parliament for approval and returned the proposal to the Ministry of Communications. The bill, which has been under review for 13 years, would create a public-service broadcaster, eliminate repressive national security statutes, and place the burden of proof on the plaintiff in cases involving slander and libel. The government does not restrict internet access.

Freedom of religion in this predominantly Christian country is widely observed. The government does not restrict academic freedom.

Freedoms of assembly and association are generally respected. Several non-governmental organizations operate openly. In March 2010, an LCD-proposed bill on public meetings and processions—which requires prior authorization from local chiefs, the police, or other relevant government officials to hold public meetings—passed through the law and public safety committee in Parliament. Following protests from the opposition and civic groups, 21 amendments were made to the bill, including less onerous requirements for gatherings in rural areas and more discretion for judges in fining violators. The revised bill was approved by the legislature in April. While labor rights are constitutionally guaranteed, the union movement is weak and fragmented, and many employers in the textile sector do not allow union activity.

Courts are nominally independent, but higher courts are especially subject to outside influence. The large backlog of cases often leads to trial delays and lengthy pretrial detention. Mistreatment of civilians by security forces reportedly continues. Prisons are dilapidated, severely overcrowded, and lack essential health services; instances of torture and use of excessive force have been reported. An independent ombudsman's office is tasked with protecting citizens' rights, but its enforcement powers are weak.

Tensions between the Basotho and the small Chinese business community have led to minor incidents of violence in recent years.

The constitution bars gender-based discrimination, but customary practice and law still restrict women's rights in the areas of property and inheritance. While their husbands are alive, women married under customary law have the status of minors in civil courts and may not enter into binding contracts. Domestic violence is reportedly widespread, but has become less socially acceptable. Women are prevalent in senior political and economic positions in Lesotho: about one in five government ministers are women, and women make up some 50 percent of national legislators and senior managers. A 2005 constitutional amendment reserves a third of the seats in municipal councils for women.

Liberia

Political Rights: 3
Civil Liberties: 4
Status: Partly Free

Population: 4,100,000
Capital: Monrovia

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline For Year Under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
6.5NF	6.6NF	6.6NF	5.4PF	4.4PF	3.4PF	3.4PF	3.4PF	3.4PF	3.4PF

Overview: In 2010, Liberia's electoral districts were reallocated, and critical constitutional amendments were advanced in an effort to improve conditions for the 2011 presidential and legislative elections. The government continued to pursue its anticorruption agenda, and the first guilty verdict in a corruption case was handed down in July. In September, the Freedom of Information Act was passed after years of debate, and commissioners for the Independent National Human Rights Commission were finally confirmed.

Liberia was settled in 1821 by freed slaves from the United States and became an independent republic in 1847. Americo-Liberians, descendants of the freed slaves, long dominated the political landscape. During the 1970s, a number of groups agitated for multiparty democracy and an end to the marginalization of indigenous Liberians. In 1980, army master sergeant Samuel Doe murdered President William Tolbert in a coup. Doe's regime concentrated power among members of his Krahn ethnic group and suppressed others. In 1989, former government minister Charles Taylor recruited fighters from among the Gio and Mano ethnic groups and launched a guerrilla insurgency from Côte d'Ivoire's. A year later, an armed intervention led by Nigeria—under the aegis of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)—prevented Taylor from seizing the capital, but failed to protect Doe, who was murdered by a splinter rebel group led by Prince Johnson.

After years of endemic violence, the proliferation of armed factions, and numerous failed transitional arrangements, a peace accord was signed in 1995. Taylor won national elections in 1997, but subsequently made little effort to seek genuine reconciliation or undertake mandated security reforms. Violence erupted again in 1999, as the rebel group Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD) sought to overthrow Taylor, purportedly receiving backing from Sierra Leone and Guinea. Meanwhile, the United Nations in 2001 imposed an arms embargo and diamond sanctions on the country in response to Liberia's alleged involvement in the conflict in Sierra Leone. By 2003, LURD controlled most of northern Liberia, while another rebel group, the Movement for Democracy in Liberia (MODEL), squeezed Taylor's government from the southeast. With the capital threatened and calls from the United States for his resignation, Taylor stepped down in August 2003 and accepted Nigeria's offer of asylum.

Taylor's departure ended 14 years of intermittent civil war, which had killed 200,000 Liberians. ECOWAS helped negotiate an end to the fighting, and West

African peacekeepers became part of a 15,000-strong UN peacekeeping force. In accordance with the 2003 Comprehensive Peace Agreement, members of Taylor's government, LURD, MODEL, and civil society representatives formed the National Transitional Government of Liberia (NTGL). Under the chairmanship of businessman Charles Gyude Bryant, the NTGL governed the country until the 2005 elections.

Unity Party (UP) candidate Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf won the 2005 presidential runoff vote, defeating the first-round winner, Congress for Democratic Change (CDC) candidate George Weah. In concurrent legislative polls, the CDC placed first with 18 seats, followed by the UP with 12 seats. Twelve other parties and numerous independents also secured seats. For the first time in Liberian history, the president's party did not hold the majority of seats in the Legislature.

Johnson-Sirleaf's tenure featured strained relations between the executive and legislative branches. The Speaker of the House of Representatives was removed in 2007, and a deadlocked leadership crisis incapacitated the Senate for much of 2008 and 2009. Local elections slated for 2008 were cancelled, ostensibly for financial reasons, and the Supreme Court subsequently granted the president the authority to appoint mayors.

Recommendations made by the Truth and Reconciliation Committee (TRC) in its 2009 report elicited heated public debate throughout 2010. The president and the Legislature clashed over the appointment of commissioners for the Independent National Human Rights Commission (INHRC), which was tasked with implementing the TRC's recommendations. The president stressed the supremacy of the constitution and called on the Liberia National Bar Association to analyze the recommendations' legal and constitutional implications, including the proposed prosecutions, public sanctions, and lustration. In early 2010, the Senate twice rejected all of the INHRC nominees without justification, though a new list presented by the president was confirmed at the end of September.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Liberia is an electoral democracy. The 2005 presidential and legislative elections were considered free and fair by international observers. The bicameral Legislature consists of a 30-member Senate and a 64-member House of Representatives; senators are elected to nine-year terms, and representatives to six-year terms. The president serves up to two six-year terms.

The constitution required that constituencies be reapportioned following the 2008 national census and before the next general elections in 2011. Throughout 2009 and early 2010, President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf vetoed numerous iterations of the reapportionment bill on the grounds that it would add too many new seats to the House and strain the national budget. Instead of determining electoral districts according to the census results, a compromise act passed in August 2010 maintained the existing 64 seats and created an additional 9 seats to be distributed among the six most populous counties. The constitutionality of the act was contested in the Supreme Court, though no final judgment had been made by year's end.

Also in August 2010, the Legislature passed a joint resolution calling for four constitutional amendments, including changes that would allow all public officials except the president and vice president to be elected with a plurality rather than an

absolute majority. A national referendum on the amendments was scheduled for August 2011, to be followed closely by presidential and legislative elections in October.

Political parties continue to be challenged by weak organizational capacity, a lack of consultation with constituents, and the dominant role of key personalities and ethnic affiliations. A number of new parties and coalitions were registered in 2010 in preparation for the 2011 national elections.

Anticorruption efforts were stepped up in 2010, with the Liberian Anti-Corruption Commission (LACC) investigating at least eight high-level cases and recommending several suspects for prosecution, including the former police inspector general and numerous Finance Ministry employees. In July, the first guilty verdict for a corruption case was handed down against two men who defrauded the Central Bank of Liberia. In October, the former chairman of the Liberia Telecommunications Authority was found guilty of financial crimes. Separately, the government decided to drop charges of economic sabotage against former NTGL chairman Charles Gyude Bryant in September. However, bills regarding the civil servants' code of conduct, corruption offenses, and whistle-blower protections remained pending at year's end, calling into question the Legislature's commitment to accountability and transparency. The whistle-blower legislation had been issued by the president as an executive order in December 2009, and was binding all public and private employers. Liberia was ranked 87 out of 178 countries surveyed in Transparency International's 2010 Corruption Perceptions Index.

The General Auditing Commission (GAC) audited numerous ministries throughout 2010. However, its work has been highly politicized, and there have been acrimonious public debates between senior GAC members and the ministries under scrutiny. Following a GAC audit, the minister of information resigned and was subsequently recommended for prosecution by the GAC for defrauding the government. Follow-up by the LACC on evidence uncovered during GAC investigations has been slow, as has the implementation of audit report recommendations, particularly those concerning prosecutions.

Since the expulsion of former president Charles Taylor, the media environment has become decidedly more open. A variety of newspapers publish mainly in the capital, and dozens of radio stations operate across the country. The media have been vigilant in exposing corruption and actively participate in critical public debates. After nearly two decades of discussion, the Legislature in September 2010 passed the Freedom of Information Act, which promotes unhindered access to public information and is considered a model for the region. The government does not restrict internet access, but poor infrastructure, illiteracy, and cost limit usage to a small fraction of the population.

Religious freedom is affirmed in the constitution, and legally, there is no official religion. However, Liberia is a *de facto* Christian state, and the Muslim minority reports discrimination. The government does not restrict academic freedom, though educational infrastructure remains insufficient.

Freedoms of assembly and association are guaranteed and respected. Numerous civil society groups, including human rights organizations, operate in the country. The right of workers to strike, organize, and bargain collectively is recognized, but the labor minister has acknowledged the urgent need to modernize Liberia's labor laws. High unemployment remains a significant challenge.

The justice sector suffers from a lack of public defenders, case backlogs, prolonged pretrial detention, and prison overcrowding. Security at correctional facilities is inadequate, and prison breaks are common. A mobile court at Monrovia Central Prison is expediting cases of prolonged pretrial detention in an attempt to ease overcrowding, and other facilities have been built or refurbished. In March 2010, the Judicial Training Institute launched its first professional magistrates' training program. Despite being a signatory, Liberia has yet to implement the international protocol aimed at abolishing the death penalty. While no executions have been authorized since 1979, Liberian courts handed down more than 10 death sentences in 2010, adding to the roughly 25 inmates already on death row.

Mob violence and vigilantism occur regularly, as the public generally lacks confidence in the criminal justice system. In February 2010, communal violence in Lofa County resulted in four deaths, numerous injuries, the destruction of churches and mosques, and the escape of 58 prisoners. In April, a similar outbreak of mob violence occurred in Maryland County, resulting in the deployment of the police's Emergency Response Unit for several weeks. In both cases, allegations of ritual killings triggered the clashes. In Monrovia, a police shooting in February set off mob attacks that killed the officer in question as well as a soldier who sought to intervene.

Communal tensions over land access and ownership remain a potential threat to peace. A Land Commission established in 2009 began countrywide consultations with communities regarding land-related laws in 2010.

Drug and human trafficking continue to pose a threat to peace consolidation. The coast guard was activated in February 2010 to protect Liberian waters from drug and human traffickers who are active throughout the Mano River region. In May, a sting operation conducted in cooperation with U.S. authorities resulted in the arrest and extradition of seven foreign suspects charged with conspiring to transport \$100 million in cocaine to the United States. A case involving the trafficking of 39 Bangladeshi victims was uncovered in March; Liberian authorities later arrested five Bangladeshis and one Liberian national on charges of human trafficking.

While female representation in the Legislature remains limited, numerous cabinet ministers and senior officials are women. Women in various state commissions and civil society groups are highly engaged politically. Violence against women and children, particularly rape, is widespread. In most rape cases, victims are under 15 years of age. A specialized prosecution unit and a court with exclusive jurisdiction over sexual and gender-based violence are unable to process effectively the large number of cases brought before them.

Libya

Political Rights: 7
Civil Liberties: 7
Status: Not Free

Population: 6,600,000
Capital: Tripoli

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline For Year Under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
7/7NF									

Overview: A law granting Libyan women the ability to pass their citizenship to their children was approved in January 2010, though the measure's pervasive ambiguity and lack of enforcement mechanisms left its practical effects in doubt. Government crackdowns on the country's only quasi-independent media group continued in 2010, including a six-month shutdown of two of the group's newspapers and the arrest of 20 journalists in November. The Libyan authorities faced ongoing criticism for their abuse of migrant workers, and in June, the UN refugee agency was expelled from the country without explanation.

Libya was part of the Ottoman Empire until the Italian conquest and occupation of the country in 1911. It achieved independence in 1951, after a brief period of UN trusteeship in the wake of World War II. Libya was then ruled by King Idris, a relatively pro-Western monarch, until 1969, when a group of young army officers led by 27-year-old Captain Mu'ammarr al-Qadhafi overthrew the king's government.

Al-Qadhafi argued that foreign oil companies were profiting from the country's resources at the expense of the Libyan people, and he moved to nationalize oil assets, claiming that the revenues would be shared among the population. In the early years of his rule, al-Qadhafi published a multivolume treatise, the *Green Book*, in which he expounded his political philosophy—a fusion of Arab nationalism, socialism, and Islam. Although he has been Libya's undisputed leader since 1969, making him one of the world's longest-serving rulers, he holds no official title and is referred to as Brother Leader or the Guide of the Revolution.

Al-Qadhafi adopted decidedly anti-Western policies, and after his regime was implicated in several international terrorist attacks, the United States imposed sanctions on Libya in 1981. Relations between the two countries continued to worsen, and in 1986, the United States bombed targets in Libya, including al-Qadhafi's home. In 1988, a U.S. airliner exploded over Lockerbie, Scotland, killing all 259 people aboard as well as 11 residents of the town. After an exhaustive investigation, Scottish police issued arrest warrants for two Libyans, including an intelligence agent. The UN Security Council imposed trade sanctions on the country, and over the next several years, Libya became more economically and diplomatically isolated.

In 1999, al-Qadhafi moved to mend his international image and surrendered the two Lockerbie bombing suspects for trial. He accepted responsibility for past acts of terrorism and offered compensation packages to the families of victims. The United Nations suspended its sanctions, and the European Union (EU) reestablished

diplomatic and trade relations with Tripoli. In 2001, a special Scottish court sitting in the Netherlands found one of the Lockerbie suspects guilty of masterminding the attack. Libya agreed to pay a \$10 million compensation package to the family of each of the 270 victims in 2003. The following year, al-Qadhafi made his first trip to Europe in more than 15 years, and European leaders in turn traveled to Libya. The EU subsequently lifted its arms embargo and normalized diplomatic relations; Libya purchased hundreds of millions of dollars in European weapons systems in 2007. The regime also improved its relations with the United States. In 2004, a year after al-Qadhafi's government announced that it had scrapped its nonconventional weapons program, the United States established a liaison office in Tripoli. The U.S. government eventually removed Libya from its list of state sponsors of terrorism, reestablishing a full embassy in Tripoli in 2006.

Many observers speculated that Saif al-Islam al-Qadhafi, the leader's son, was behind some of these policy moves. He facilitated visits by foreign human rights activists, and according to press reports, his charitable umbrella organization—the Qadhafi International Foundation for Charity Associations—made it possible for Libyan citizens to report abuses by the authorities. Saif al-Islam also publicly criticized current conditions in Libya and advocated changes in the leadership.

Nevertheless, the diplomatic and economic shifts were not accompanied by noticeable improvements in political rights or civil liberties, and the regime has remained hostile to foreign criticism and other perceived affronts. In 2009, the authorities nationalized the country's only quasi-independent media group, Al-Ghad, founded by Saif al-Islam in 2007. The campaign against the company continued in 2010, as the government reportedly shut down two of its newspapers for six months in January and later arrested 20 of its journalists for three days in November.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Libya is not an electoral democracy. Power theoretically lies with a system of people's committees and the indirectly elected General People's Congress, but in practice, those structures are manipulated to ensure the continued dominance of Mu'ammar al-Qadhafi, who holds no official title. It is illegal for any political group to oppose the principles of the 1969 revolution, which are laid out in the *Green Book*, although market-based economic changes in recent years have diverged from the regime's socialist ideals.

Political parties are illegal, and the government strictly monitors political activity. Organizing or joining anything akin to a political party is punishable by long prison terms and even the death penalty. Many Libyan opposition movements and figures operate outside the country.

Corruption is pervasive in both the private sector and the government in Libya, which was ranked 146 out of 178 countries surveyed in Transparency International's 2010 Corruption Perceptions Index.

There is no independent press. State-owned media largely operate as mouthpieces for the authorities, and journalists work in a climate of fear and self-censorship. Those who displease the regime face harassment or imprisonment on trumped-up charges. In 2010, the government created the new position of press deputy, tasked with monitoring journalists who report on corruption. Four investigative journalists were arrested in January after they uncovered graft in the eastern city of Benghazi.

The government also continued to target the Al-Ghad media group, which had run the country's only quasi-independent newspapers, radio stations, and satellite television station until it was nationalized in 2009. Two newspapers in the Al-Ghad group, *Quryna* and *Oea*, said that they were forced to suspend publication from January to July 2010, after publishing articles critical of the government. In an apparent power struggle between the media group and conservative elements in the ruling elite, a group of 20 Al-Ghad journalists were arrested in November, and the head of Al-Ghad resigned shortly thereafter, publicly citing his inability to protect journalists in Libya's hostile media environment.

The government controls the country's only internet service provider. Independent news websites were sporadically blocked during 2010, as was the international video-sharing site YouTube, after users posted what they claimed were clips of demonstrations within Libya. Opposition websites based outside of Libya were also routinely hacked.

Nearly all Libyans are Muslim. The government closely monitors mosques for Islamist activity, and there have been unconfirmed reports of Islamist militant groups allied to Al-Qaeda operating against the government. In 2007, Al-Qaeda declared that the so-called Libyan Islamic Fighting Group had joined its international network. The few non-Muslims in Libya are permitted to practice their faiths with relative freedom. Academic freedom is tightly restricted.

The government does not uphold freedom of assembly. Those demonstrations that are allowed to take place are typically meant to support the aims of the regime. According to Amnesty International, prisoners' relatives who gather weekly in the city of Benghazi are subject to harassment, intimidation, and arrest.

The law allows for the establishment of nongovernmental organizations, but those that have been granted authorization to operate are directly or indirectly linked to the government. There are no independent labor unions.

The People's Court, infamous for punishing political dissidents, was abolished in 2005, but the judicial authority has since created the State Security Court, which carries out a similar function. The judiciary as a whole remains subservient to the political leadership and regularly penalizes political dissent.

Human Rights Watch reported in 2009 that 500 political prisoners remained in custody, despite having been acquitted of all charges or served their full prison sentences. Incommunicado detention and disappearances of political dissidents are common in Libya, and the fate of thousands of prisoners taken into custody over the last 30 years remains unknown. These include up to 1,200 prisoners who were massacred at Abu Salim prison in 1996, when guards violently crushed an inmate revolt. In 2008, the government began to issue death certificates for prisoners thought to have died in the revolt, but it did not indicate the cause of death in those cases. The government has not released any other information about the Abu Salim incident, despite having called for an official investigation in 2008. No one has been prosecuted for the massacre.

A large number of migrants from sub-Saharan Africa work in Libya or pass through in attempts to reach Europe. Human rights organizations have documented and criticized the country's treatment of these migrants, including forced repatriation of detainees to countries where they are at high risk of torture and mistreatment by their home governments. Following a 2009 agreement between Libya and

Italy on joint naval operations to stop illegal migration, there have been reports of Libyan authorities firing live ammunition at boats they believe to be carrying illegal migrants. In June 2010, the Libyan government expelled the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees from the country without explanation or an official statement.

Women enjoy many of the same legal protections as men, but certain laws and social norms perpetuate discrimination, particularly in areas such as marriage, divorce, and inheritance. In January 2010, the Libyan government passed Law No. 24 of 2010, which nominally gave Libyan women the right to pass their nationality to their children. However, a key clause defines a Libyan as a person born either to a Libyan father or to a Libyan mother and a father who is stateless or of unknown nationality, which seems to rule out Libyan citizenship if the father has a known foreign nationality. Moreover, the law lacks implementation regulations, leaving it unclear as to whether and how the new rights will be applied in practice. Women who have been cast out by their families are particularly vulnerable in Libya. The government considers such women wayward and can hold them indefinitely in "social rehabilitation" facilities, which are de facto prisons.

Liechtenstein

Political Rights: 1

Population: 40,000

Civil Liberties: 1

Capital: Vaduz

Status: Free

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline For Year Under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1

Overview.¹

In a continued effort to address criticism over lax financial standards, Liechtenstein passed a comprehensive new tax code in July, helping to bring the country's financial legislation into line with European legal standards.

Liechtenstein was established as a principality in 1719 and gained its sovereignty in 1806. From 1938 to 1997, it was governed by a coalition of the Progressive Citizens' Party (FBP) and the Fatherland Union, now the Patriotic Union (VU). The latter party then ruled alone until the FBP won the 2001 elections.

In a 2003 referendum, voters approved a constitutional amendment that granted significantly more power to the monarch, Prince Hans-Adam II. In 2004, Hans-Adam handed his constitutional powers to his son, Hereditary Prince Alois, though the elder prince retained his title as head of state.

In the 2005 elections, the FBP and the VU captured 12 and 10 seats, respectively. A small third party, the Free List, captured 3 seats, forcing the two larger parties to form a grand coalition. FBP leader Otmar Hasler retained his post as prime minister.

In the February 2009 parliamentary elections, the VU won 13 seats and the FBP captured 11, while the Free List took the remaining seat. Prime Minister Hasler was replaced in March by Vice Prime Minister Klaus Tschiitscher of the VU, who subsequently formed a coalition government with the FBP.

Liechtenstein, a leading offshore tax haven, has traditionally maintained tight bank secrecy laws. However, the principality in 2009 signed tax information sharing agreements with several countries and agreed to comply with transparency and information sharing standards outlined by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). Following a 2009 agreement with the United Kingdom, Liechtenstein passed laws in July 2010 that will oblige those holding offshore accounts in Liechtenstein to declare their assets to tax authorities and pay as much as 10 percent in taxes evaded over the past 10 years.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties:

Liechtenstein is an electoral democracy. However, the unelected monarchy won greater authority in 2003, making it the most politically powerful in Europe. The unicameral Parliament (Landtag) consists of 25 deputies chosen by proportional representation every four years. These freely elected representatives determine the policies of the government, but the monarch has the power to veto legislation, dismiss the government, and appoint judges. Voting is compulsory.

Political parties are able to freely organize. Two parties—the VU and the FBP—have dominated politics over the last half century.

Liechtenstein's politics and society are largely free of corruption, and the country continues to work to build sufficient mechanisms to fight money laundering in its banking system. Due to recent commitments, the OECD removed Liechtenstein from its list of uncooperative tax havens in 2009. Government officials are not legally obligated to disclose their financial assets.

The constitution guarantees freedom of expression and of the press. There is one private television station, and the only radio station is privately held. The two daily newspapers are roughly aligned with the two major political parties. Broadcasts from Austria and Switzerland are available and popular in the country, as are foreign newspapers and magazines. Internet access is not restricted.

The constitution establishes Roman Catholicism as the state religion but protects freedom of belief. Catholic or Protestant religious education is mandatory, but exemptions are routinely granted. All religious groups are tax exempt. The government respects academic freedom.

Freedoms of assembly and association are protected, and the principality has one small trade union. A 2008 law provides civil servants with the right to strike.

Judges are appointed by the prince. Despite controversy over the monarch's expanded powers, Liechtenstein has remained a law-based state with an independent judiciary. Due process is respected, and prison conditions meet international standards. Crime is rare in the country. Switzerland is responsible for its customs and defense.

A third of the population is foreign born. Some native citizens have expressed concern over the growing number of immigrants from non-German-speaking countries. The government has responded by seeking to teach newcomers the language and culture of Liechtenstein in formal integration programs. Foreigners have occasionally been the target of violence by ring-wing groups. In February 2010, a

Turkish-owned kebab house was fire-bombed by a right-wing extremist, who was subsequently tried and sentenced to two and a half years in prison. The number of asylum applications received by the country has dropped significantly, with only 105 applications in 2010 compared with 227 in 2009. A report released by the UN Committee against Torture (CAT) in May 2010 noted that asylum seekers' claims do not always receive adequate attention. Among other complaints, the CAT also voiced concern over Liechtenstein's rejection of most applications, as well as reports that government officials have bribed asylum seekers to leave the country. A total of 85 asylum applications were denied in 2010.

Since 1995, Liechtenstein has been a member of the European Economic Area, a free-trade area that links the non-European Union (EU) members of Norway, Iceland, and Liechtenstein with the EU.

Under a 2005 reform, abortion is legal in the first 12 weeks of pregnancy. A 2003 court decision upheld the principle of equal pay for equal work for women, though women are at times excluded from jobs traditionally held by men. Women are underrepresented in the upper levels of business and government, with only 6 women serving in the 25-seat Parliament. Women enjoy equal rights in family law.

Lithuania

Political Rights: 1

Population: 3,399,000

Civil Liberties: 1

Capital: Vilnius

Status: Free

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline For Year Under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
1,2F	1,2F	1,2F	2,2F	1,1F	1,1F	1,1F	1,1F	1,1F	1,1F

Overview: Although the ruling coalition held less than half of the seats in Parliament by the middle of 2010, the government managed to survive thanks to cooperation with a small opposition faction. In May, a gay pride parade in Vilnius was allowed to proceed after an initial ban, but it sparked violent protests by counterdemonstrators.

Lithuania became independent at the end of World War I, but was annexed by the Soviet Union during World War II. The country declared its independence from the Soviet Union on March 11, 1990, and the move was eventually recognized by Soviet authorities in 1991. A multiparty political system was soon established, providing for competitive elections and frequent rotations of power over the next two decades. Lithuania joined NATO and the European Union (EU) in 2004.

Lithuanian politics have been characterized by shifting coalitions among several different parties, and in the run-up to the October 2008 parliamentary elections, the creation of new parties further fragmented the country's political scene. The Homeland Union-Lithuanian Christian Democrats (TS-LKD), an alliance of right-wing parties, was formed in May, as was the National Resurrection Party

(TPP). In the October balloting, the TS-LKD took the lead with 45 seats, followed by the Lithuanian Social Democratic Party (LSDP) with 25, the TPP with 16, Order and Justice (TT) with 15, the Liberal Union (LRLS) with 11, the Labor Party with 10, and the Liberal and Center Union (LCS) with 8 seats. Smaller parties and independent candidates won the remaining 11 seats. A four-party, center-right majority coalition was formed in late 2008, consisting of the TS-LKD, TPP, LRLS, and LCS. Andrius Kubilius of the TS-LKD, who had previously served as prime minister in 1999-2000, headed the new government. In May 2009, independent candidate Dalia Grybauskaitė was elected president with nearly 70 percent of the vote, becoming the first woman to hold the post.

A split in the TPP in mid-2009 resulted in some members of the party withdrawing from the ruling coalition, leaving it with 71 out of 141 seats as of early 2010. Additional defections in the first six months of the year reduced the ruling bloc to just 69 seats, forcing Kubilius to secure an informal alliance with the Lithuanian Peasant Popular Union (LVLS), which held 3 seats. Despite divisions within the ruling TS-LKD—mainly between original members and newer, more conservative members—on social and human rights issues, the fragile government managed to survive through the end of the year.

The economy in 2010 showed tentative signs of recovery from a deep recession, though by year's end, the unemployment rate was still 17.1 percent. Kubilius's approval ratings declined as a result of fiscal austerity measures, including cuts to social spending and an unpopular mandatory health-care tax on the unemployed. However, unlike in 2009, when demonstrations escalated into violent riots, these measures did not prompt major protests.

Relations with Russia, which provided 100 percent of the country's natural gas supplies, were strained throughout the year, as Lithuania expressed support for Georgia's territorial integrity and denied backing for an EU visa-free travel regime for residents of Kaliningrad, a Russian exclave on Lithuania's western border. In March, Russia's state-owned energy giant, Gazprom, demanded \$135 million in compensation from Lithuania for an allegedly broken 2003 contract, for which the Lithuanian government denied responsibility. In September, Kubilius announced that Lithuania planned to renationalize all gas pipelines in accordance with an EU directive, prompting Gazprom and Germany's E.ON Ruhrgas, which co-owned the pipelines, to threaten a disruption of supplies. The country suffered from disruptions of up to 40 percent of gas supplies in 2010.

**Political Rights
and Civil Liberties:**

Lithuania is an electoral democracy. The 1992 constitution established a unicameral, 141-seat Parliament (Seimas), with 71 members elected in single-mandate constituencies and 70 chosen by proportional representation, all for four-year terms. The prime minister is selected by Parliament, and the president is directly elected for a five-year term. The most recent parliamentary elections, in 2008, were largely free and fair, though there were some reports of irregularities, including alleged bribery and forged ballots. Lithuania's many political parties operate freely, but the Communist Party is banned. In November, Parliament stripped Linas Karalius—a TPP member who had defected to the opposition Christian Party—of his seat for having a colleague vote on his behalf while he was on vacation.

Corruption remains a problem in Lithuania. A number of government officials and employees of state enterprises faced charges for alleged corrupt practices in 2010, including the mayor of Vilnius, the director of Lithuanian Post, and the director and four senior managers at Vilnius's water utility. In February, the vice minister of health was sentenced to two years' probation after he solicited a bribe from the head of the National Blood Center. In September, the European Parliament lifted the immunity of former economy minister and Labor Party leader Viktor Uspaskich, and he was set to face trial in Lithuania on fraud charges. Lithuania was ranked 46 out of 178 countries surveyed in Transparency International's 2010 Corruption Perceptions Index.

The government generally respects freedom of the press. Privately owned newspapers and independent broadcasters express a wide variety of views and criticize the government freely. However, the press suffers from inadequate standards for transparency of ownership. In March 2010, the Law on the Protection of Minors came into effect, prohibiting online and broadcast media from providing "detrimental" material to minors, including material with sexual content or that promotes bad hygiene or gambling. No prosecutions under the law were reported in 2010. The government does not restrict access to the internet, and roughly 59 percent of the population had access in 2010. In recent years, authorities have prosecuted citizens for posting material online that was deemed to incite hatred.

Freedom of religion is guaranteed by law and largely upheld in practice. However, so-called traditional religious communities enjoy certain government benefits, including annual subsidies, that are not granted to other groups. There were no reports of religiously motivated violence in 2010, and anti-Semitic vandalism is reportedly on the wane. Academic freedom is respected.

Freedoms of assembly and association are generally observed. The first gay pride parade to be held in Vilnius proceeded in May 2010, after an appellate court overturned a lower court's decision to ban it due to security concerns. Some 500 people marched in the parade, outnumbered by roughly 600 police officers and 1,000 protesters. When the protesters became violent, the police used tear gas on the crowd. Prosecutors attempted to charge two members of Parliament for inciting the counterdemonstrators, but Parliament declined to lift their immunity. International observers criticized the fact that while no Lithuanian lawmakers had denounced the ultranationalist tone of an Independence Day parade in March, 53 signed a petition against the gay pride parade.

There are no serious obstacles to the registration of nongovernmental organizations, and human rights groups operate without restrictions. Workers have the right to form and join trade unions, to strike, and to engage in collective bargaining, though there have been reports of employees being punished for attempting to organize. Slightly less than 10 percent of the country's workforce is unionized.

The constitution guarantees judicial independence, which is respected in practice. Defendants generally enjoy due process rights, including the presumption of innocence and freedom from arbitrary arrest and detention, but detained suspects are not always granted timely access to an attorney. Lengthy pretrial detention remains a problem. Police abuse of detainees—including juveniles—continues to be reported, and judges and prosecutors have failed to respond adequately to claims of such mistreatment. The Council of Europe's Committee on the Prevention of

402 Freedom in the World—2011

Torture found in 2010 that little progress had been made in improving poor prison conditions, which include overcrowding and poor access to health care.

The rights of ethnic minorities, who make up 16.5 percent of the population, are legally protected. However, roughly a quarter of all ethnic minorities report job discrimination. The small Romany population faces the greatest discrimination, including in access to social services and employment, and in relations with police. Unlike Latvia and Estonia, which continue to have large noncitizen populations, Lithuania made it relatively easy for all existing residents to gain citizenship after independence.

Although men and women enjoy the same legal rights, women earn 17 percent less on average than men in comparable jobs and remain underrepresented in management positions. Twenty-six members of the 141-seat Parliament are women, and in 2009, the first female president and Speaker of Parliament were elected. Domestic violence, including both spousal and child abuse, remains a serious problem. In July 2010, Parliament amended the criminal code to increase penalties for child abuse. Lithuania continues to be a source, transit point, and destination for the trafficking of women and girls for the purpose of prostitution.

Luxembourg

Political Rights: 1

Population: 510,000

Civil Liberties: 1

Capital: Luxembourg

Status: Free

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline For Year Under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
1,1F									

Overview: Discussions in Luxembourg's legislature over liberalizing the country's abortion law continued in 2010, after the government said current penalties for unapproved abortions would remain in place. Several strikes by publicly employed doctors took place in October and November over government-sponsored austerity measures.

The Grand Duchy of Luxembourg was established in 1815 after the Napoleonic wars. Following a brief merger with Belgium, it acquired its current borders in 1839. The country was occupied by Germany during both world wars, and it abandoned neutrality to join NATO in 1949. Luxembourg became a founding member of the European Coal and Steel Community in 1952, a precursor to the European Union (EU); it adopted the euro currency in 1999.

After falling in public opinion polls in 2003, the center-right Democratic Party (DP) performed poorly in June 2004 general elections. The opposition Socialist Workers' Party of Luxembourg (LSAP) replaced the DP as the junior coalition partner of Prime Minister Jean-Claude Juncker's Christian Social Party (CSV).

In the June 2009 parliamentary elections, the CSV gained 2 seats for a total

of 26, and the LSAP lost 1 seat for a total of 13. The DP followed with 9 seats, the Green Party with 7, the Action Committee for Democracy and Pension Justice with 4, and the Left alliance with 1. Juncker remained prime minister for the 15th consecutive year—the longest tenure of any EU head of government—and formed a coalition government with the LSAP in July. That same month, Juncker resigned from his dual role as finance minister but continued as treasury minister and chairman of the Eurogroup of eurozone finance ministers until the end of his term in December 2010.

Luxembourg has been criticized for its bank secrecy rules, especially following the economic crisis that struck in late 2008. After being placed on the Organization for Economic Cooperation's (OECD) tax haven gray list in 2009, Luxembourg agreed to follow OECD rules and share banking information when clear evidence of tax evasion exists. Luxembourg was removed from the gray list before the end of 2009 after signing several agreements regarding the sharing of tax information.

Luxembourg struggled with continued financial hardship in 2009, as the country experienced a 3.5 percent contraction in gross domestic product (GDP) during the year. However, the economy expanded again in 2010, with an estimated GDP growth rate of 3.2 percent. The budget deficit rose from just 0.7 percent of GDP in 2009, to a high of 2.2 percent in 2010, raising concerns. The government has proposed some austerity measures to reduce the deficit for 2011, generating tension within the governing coalition and touching off strikes within the publicly funded health-care system.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties:

Luxembourg is an electoral democracy. The head of state is the unelected Grand Duke Henri, whose powers are largely ceremonial. The unicameral legislature, the Chamber of Deputies, consists of 60 members elected by proportional representation to five-year terms. Following a 2008 constitutional amendment, the Chamber no longer requires the grand duke's approval to pass bills into law. The legislature chooses the prime minister. Voting is compulsory for Luxembourg's citizens. Citizens of EU countries may vote in local and European elections in Luxembourg after six years' residency but are not required to do so; residents from non-EU countries may not vote. Foreigners constitute over a third of Luxembourg's population.

The political system is open to the rise of new parties. There are three traditionally strong parties: the CSV, historically aligned with the Catholic Church; the LSAP, a formerly radical but now center-left party representing the working class; and the DP, which favors free-market economic policies.

The government is largely free from corruption. Luxembourg was ranked 11 out of 178 countries surveyed in Transparency International's 2010 Corruption Perceptions Index.

Freedom of expression is guaranteed by the constitution, and Luxembourg maintains a vibrant media environment. A single conglomerate, Radio Television Luxembourg (RTL), dominates broadcast radio and television, and its programming remains popular in neighboring countries. Newspapers generally represent a broad range of opinion. However, in May 2009, the police searched the offices of the weekly Portuguese-language newspaper *Contacto* and confiscated a journalist's computer files and notes. The journalist had recently published an article criticiz-

ing a social worker's handling of a child custody case, leading the social worker to file defamation and libel charges against the *Contacto* reporter. While the police had reportedly breached Luxembourg law by failing to notify the press council before the search, an appeals court ruled in September 2009 that the police had done nothing wrong. Internet access is not restricted.

Although Roman Catholicism is the dominant religion, there is no state religion, and the state pays the salaries of clergy from a variety of sects. Schoolchildren may choose to study either the Roman Catholic religion or ethics; most choose the former. Academic freedom is respected.

Freedoms of assembly and association are protected. Civic groups and non-governmental organizations operate freely. Luxembourgers may organize in trade unions, and approximately half of the workforce is unionized. The right to strike is constitutionally guaranteed. Several unions held protests in September 2010, after the government announced austerity reforms to the child and educational subsidy policy. In October 2010, doctors working for the public health system went on strike over reforms meant to reduce government expenditures in the health-care sector; talks between the government, doctors, and other health-care workers reached a resolution in November, and the legislature passed the reform bill in December.

The judiciary is independent, though judges are still appointed by the grand duke. Detainees are treated humanely in police stations and prisons. However, overcrowding has been reported at the main prison in Schrassig. In March, the justice minister announced the construction of a new, 400-bed facility to house inmates imprisoned on drug charges, a group that constitutes half of the prisoners in Schrassig.

Luxembourg's Muslim minority, mainly of Bosnian origin, faces no official hostility.

Women comprise nearly 50 percent of the labor force, and the gap between men's and women's wages is about 15 percent. Women are underrepresented in the highest levels of government; 15 women currently serve in the 60-member parliament, and only 4 hold seats in the 15-member cabinet. While the law does not technically allow for abortion on demand, women can legally have abortions if in "distress," and "distress" is interpreted liberally. In 2010, the legislature began discussions to liberalize Luxembourg's abortion law, but while the proposed legislation would allow abortions in a greater number of situations, it maintains current penalties for having unapproved abortions. In December, Luxembourg's Consultative Committee on Human Rights reviewed the government's draft law and expressed concerns regarding several provisions, including a residency restriction that would require women to have lived in Luxembourg for at least three months before obtaining an abortion. In November 2010, two Albanian men were convicted of trafficking women for prostitution and sentenced to three and four years in prison, respectively.

Macedonia

Political Rights: 3

Population: 2,100,000

Civil Liberties: 3

Capital: Skopje

Status: Partly Free

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline For Year Under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
4,4PF	3,3PF								

Overview: Macedonia's dispute with Greece over its official name continued to hamper the country's efforts to join NATO and the European Union in 2010, and the government's handling of the problem remained a major subject of domestic political debate. The independence of the judiciary and the media came under pressure during the year, as the head of the Constitutional Court faced possible removal for alleged collaboration with communist-era security services, and an important opposition-oriented media owner was arrested for alleged financial crimes.

Macedonia, a republic in the communist-era Yugoslav federation, gained independence in 1992 as the federation broke up. The country's legitimacy has since been threatened on several levels. Greece objects to the name "Macedonia," arguing that it implies a territorial and cultural claim to the Greek region of the same name. Bulgaria contends that the Macedonian language is a dialect of Bulgarian. The Serbian Orthodox Church does not recognize the separation of the self-proclaimed Macedonian Orthodox Church. And internally, poor relations between the Macedonian Slav majority and the ethnic Albanian minority have raised doubts about the country's long-term viability.

Since independence, power has alternated between center-left and center-right governments, although an important constant has been the inclusion of an ethnic Albanian party in each ruling coalition. In 2000-2001, Albanians mounted an armed insurgency, demanding greater use of the Albanian language in official institutions, an increase in the number of Albanians in the civil service, and a transfer of various governmental powers to municipalities. Unofficially, however, the insurgency was motivated in part by a desire to control lucrative smuggling routes in northwestern Macedonia. An August 2001 agreement, known as the Ohrid Accords, prevented the conflict from turning into a full-scale civil war, but violent incidents continued to erupt periodically.

Parliamentary elections in 2002 returned the Social Democratic Party of Macedonia (SDSM) to power after a period of rule by the center-right Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization-Democratic Party for Macedonian National Unity (VMRO-DPMNE), and SDSM leader Branko Crvenkovski became prime minister. The Democratic Union for Integration (DUI), headed by the leader of the ethnic Albanian uprising, Ali Ahmeti, joined the SDSM government as a coalition partner. Crvenkovski rose to the presidency in a special 2004 election, after the incumbent died in a plane crash.

VMRO-DPMNE won parliamentary elections in July 2006, but the polls were marred by preelection violence and significant irregularities on election day. DUI supporters then mounted weeks of demonstrations to protest the VMRO-DPMNE's decision to form a coalition with a rival group, the Democratic Party of Albanians (DPA). The DUI subsequently engaged in months of intermittent parliamentary boycotts, sometimes blocking key legislation related to the Ohrid Accords and Macedonia's European Union (EU) candidacy.

Early parliamentary elections held in 2008 were widely seen as the worst since independence. Irregularities—mainly in Albanian areas—included attacks on party offices, failure to guarantee equal access to the media, and ballot-box stuffing. The final results gave the ruling VMRO-DPMNE and its smaller allies 63 out of 120 seats. The opposition SDSM and its junior partners took only 27 seats. The DUI, which won 18 seats, confirmed its position as the leading Albanian party and entered the new government, while the rival DPA garnered 11 and went into opposition.

University professor Georgi Ivanov, running for the VMRO-DPMNE, won the 2009 presidential election. He led by a wide margin in the March first round and then took 63 percent of the vote in the April runoff against the SDSM's Ljubomir Frckoski. After the Albanian candidates were eliminated in the first round, turnout for the runoff was negligible among Albanian voters, but the election was generally praised by international observers as an improvement over the 2008 polls. The VMRO-DPMNE also performed well in the concurrent municipal elections, capturing 55 out of the country's 84 municipalities outright.

The dispute with Greece over Macedonia's official name remained unresolved in 2010, obstructing the country's efforts to join NATO and the EU, and straining its internal political relations. Other obstacles to EU membership included its ethnic tensions and weak administrative capacity. Greece had blocked an invitation for Macedonia to join NATO in 2008, but Macedonia citizens secured visa-free travel within the EU's Schengen zone in 2009.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Macedonia is an electoral democracy. Most elections held since independence have been deemed satisfactory according to international standards, though the parliamentary 2008 polls were marred by a number of irregularities. Members of the unicameral, 120-seat Sобрание (Assembly) are elected to four-year terms by proportional representation. The president is elected to a five-year term through a direct popular vote, but the prime minister holds most executive power. According to reforms put in place by the Ohrid Accords, certain types of legislation need to be passed by a "double majority," meaning a majority of legislators from both of the main ethnic groups.

Corruption remains a serious problem. Transparency with regard to public expenditures is still weak, and the law on public access to information does not require that the details of public contracts be revealed. No sanctions have been imposed on political parties that do not comply with financing regulations. Macedonia was ranked 62 out of 178 countries surveyed in Transparency International's 2010 Corruption Perceptions Index.

The constitution provides for freedom of the press, but political tensions have increased pressure on the media. In November 2010, police raided the headquarters of the opposition-oriented A1 TV in Skopje to investigate alleged financial ir-

regularities at companies controlled by the station's owner, Velija Ramkovski. In late December, Ramkovski and more than a dozen associates were arrested and charged with crimes including money laundering and tax evasion. The opposition denounced the case as a politically motivated attack on independent media. Also during the year, government-aligned media outlets carried harsh criticism and threats aimed at rival outlets and journalists. Libel is punishable by fines, and libel suits against journalists are common in practice. The public broadcast service, Macedonian Radio and Television (MRTV), lacks reliable, independent funding, exposing it to political influence. Macedonia's media outlets, like society at large, are strongly divided along ethnic lines. There were no reports of restrictions on access to the internet during 2010, though a new law gave the Interior Ministry the authority to monitor internet and telephone communications without a court order. The security services have a history of improperly wiretapping journalists.

The constitution guarantees freedom of religion. Some 26 religious organizations are now officially registered in Macedonia. A long-standing dispute between the breakaway Macedonian Orthodox Church and the canonically recognized Serbian Orthodox Church remained unresolved in 2010. The leader of a faction loyal to the Serbian Church, Bishop Jovan Vraniskovski, has been repeatedly jailed for his religious activities. In February 2010, the Islamic Community in Macedonia complained of unequal treatment by the state regarding the reconstruction of the central square in Skopje, and a proposal to build a church there but not a mosque. Hard-line Islamists have reportedly taken control of several mosques with financial help from Middle Eastern countries.

Academic freedom is generally not restricted, but the country's ethnic divisions sometimes affect education. In 2010, schools in Albanian areas boycotted a move to extend the teaching of Macedonian as a second language to first-year elementary school students; such instruction had previously been mandated to begin in the fourth grade.

Constitutional guarantees of freedoms of assembly and association are generally respected. In 2010, the courts acquitted all 18 people charged in connection with a 2009 protest against the church construction plans in Skopje's central square. Reports suggest that the role of nongovernmental organizations in drafting legislation and policy formulation has been improving in recent years. The constitution recognizes the right of workers to organize and bargain collectively, though the International Trade Union Confederation's 2010 report for Macedonia stated that strikes are difficult to organize, union activities can be easily terminated, and anti-union dismissals are common. More than 50 percent of the legal workforce (mostly in the public sector) is unionized, but some unions have reported obstacles in their efforts to register.

The EU's 2010 progress report on Macedonia noted no advances in the implementation of reforms intended to improve judicial independence, and political influence over the courts—including apparently politicized appointments—remained a problem. In late 2010, a commission operating under a 2008 lustration law found that the head of the Constitutional Court had collaborated with communist-era security services, potentially forcing him to resign. The finding was under appeal at year's end. The judge, Trendafil Ivanovski, had recently faced sharp criticism for a series of judgments that went against the ruling coalition. Also during the year,

a new automated case-management system published roughly 34,000 decisions, promoting transparency in the judicial system, and some progress was made in reducing the courts' case backlog. Prison conditions are generally unsatisfactory, with overcrowding and poor health care among the main concerns.

A law passed in April 2010 prohibited discrimination on a variety of grounds, but it did not include a ban on discrimination based on sexual orientation, drawing criticism from the opposition and human rights groups. Homosexuals, Roma, and other vulnerable groups remain subject to societal discrimination.

While women in Macedonia enjoy the same legal rights as men, societal attitudes limit women's participation in nontraditional roles. In Albanian Muslim areas, many women are subjected to proxy voting by male relatives and are frequently denied access to education. Domestic violence and trafficking of women for forced labor and prostitution remain serious problems.

↓ Madagascar

Political Rights: 6

Civil Liberties: 4

Status: Partly Free

Population: 20,200,000

Capital: Antananarivo

Trend Arrow: Madagascar received a downward trend arrow due to de facto president Andry Rajoelina's attempt to unilaterally impose an electoral process in violation of internationally mediated agreements with the main opposition parties.

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline For Year Under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
2,4PF	3,4PF	3,3PF	3,3PF	3,3PF	4,3PF	4,3PF	4,3PF	6,4PF	6,4PF

Overview: In August 2010, de facto president Andry Rajoelina announced that a presidential election would be held in May 2011. Opposition parties refused to endorse his electoral calendar, citing a previous, internationally negotiated demand for a coalition government that would oversee a consensus-based electoral process. The opposition boycotted a constitutional referendum in November that approved changes allowing Rajoelina to seek the presidency. Meanwhile, former president Marc Ravalomanana in August was sentenced in absentia to life at hard labor for ordering the killing of at least 30 opposition protesters in February 2009.

After 70 years of French colonial rule and episodes of severe repression, Madagascar gained independence in 1960. A member of the leftist military junta that seized power in 1972, Admiral Didier Ratsiraka, emerged as leader in 1975 and retained power until his increasingly authoritarian regime bowed to social unrest and nonviolent mass demonstrations in 1991.

Under a new constitution, opposition leader Albert Zafy won the 1992 presidential election. Following Zafy's impeachment by the National Assembly in

1996, Ratsiraka won that year's presidential runoff election, which was deemed generally legitimate by international and domestic observers.

A decentralization plan was narrowly approved in a 1998 referendum amid a boycott by the country's increasingly fractious opposition. In the 2001 presidential election, opposition candidate and Antananarivo mayor Marc Ravalomanana claimed that he had been denied an outright victory in the first round by polling irregularities. He declared himself president in February 2002, having refused to take part in a postponed runoff against the incumbent. After considerable violence between his and Ratsiraka's supporters, the High Constitutional Court announced that Ravalomanana had indeed won the election in the first round. Ratsiraka refused to acknowledge the result. Sporadic clashes continued until July 2002, when Ratsiraka left the country and the last of his forces surrendered. The extended crisis seriously damaged the Malagasy economy.

Ravalomanana's party, I Love Madagascar (TIM), won a large majority in the 2002 parliamentary elections. Observers from the European Union said the conduct of the polls was "generally positive." Political tensions increased in the run-up to the 2006 presidential election, in which Ravalomanana secured a second term. While most observers agreed that the vote reflected the will of the people, the campaign was marred by opposition claims of a biased administration and electoral irregularities.

A constitutional referendum in April 2007 increased presidential powers, and Ravalomanana's authority was bolstered again in the September parliamentary elections. Local elections in December largely confirmed TIM's dominance, though Andry Rajoelina, a young and charismatic opposition candidate, won the mayoral race in the capital.

The closure of an opposition television station in December 2008 triggered months of violent protests in Antananarivo. Well over 100 people were killed, as protesters destroyed property and marched on government sites, and police responded with gunfire. Rajoelina called on Ravalomanana to resign, and declared himself president. The political crisis deepened in early 2009, with some army officers announcing their support for the opposition. In March, Ravalomanana handed power to the military, which quickly transferred it to Rajoelina.

Rajoelina proceeded to suspend the parliament, suppress opposition protests, and limit press freedom. These actions, combined with his unconstitutional accession to power and erratic leadership, resulted in prolonged political uncertainty. In August 2009, the various political factions backing Rajoelina reached a tentative power-sharing deal—known as the Maputo Declaration—with former presidents Ravalomanana, Zafy, and Ratsiraka. However, Rajoelina subsequently refused to agree to the formation of a transitional coalition government of national unity as called for in the pact.

In August 2010, Rajoelina announced that he was abandoning the agreement. Instead, he concluded an accord with 99 minor parties, drawing up an election calendar and setting the presidential election for May 2011. While Rajoelina stated that he would not stand for the presidency, the main opposition parties refused to endorse his plan, citing the Maputo Declaration's call for a coalition government to oversee the electoral process. The political climate became further polarized after Ravalomanana was sentenced in absentia in August to life at hard labor for

ordering the killing of at least 30 opposition protesters in February 2009. A national conference sponsored by Rajoelina that was designed to provide an internal solution to the crisis took place in September 2010. It was boycotted by major opposition leaders and did not have the support of the international community. Rajoelina appointed a transitional parliament in October, with some members of the opposition included. A referendum held in November, boycotted by the opposition, approved constitutional changes sought by Rajoelina, including a lowering of the age requirement for presidential candidates.

While Madagascar experienced overall economic growth between 2003 and 2008, due in part to large mining projects, the 2009 coup and ensuing political crisis seriously damaged the economy. Following Rajoelina's takeover, the international community levied severe sanctions on the country, but continued to provide humanitarian aid. In March 2010, the African Union imposed targeted sanctions on Rajoelina and more than a hundred of his political and military associates, including travel bans and the freezing of assets. In June, the European Union suspended development assistance until a broad-based political agreement could be negotiated.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Madagascar is not an electoral democracy. The undemocratic and unconstitutional manner in which Andry Rajoelina assumed the presidency in March 2009 demonstrated that the political culture has so far failed to incorporate a rules-based system and the practice of peaceful democratic succession. The 2007 constitutional referendum had continued a trend of steadily increasing presidential power. Among other provisions, it allowed the president to rule by decree during a state of emergency, and abolished autonomous provinces. Rajoelina's unilateral constitutional referendum in November 2010 lowered the minimum age for the president from 40 to 35; Rajoelina would be 36 by the time of the presidential election scheduled for May 2011. The elected bicameral parliament was suspended in March 2009. The transitional parliament appointed by Rajoelina in October 2010 consists of a 256-seat lower house and a 90-seat upper chamber.

Approximately 150 parties are registered, although only a few have a national presence. Parties tend to suffer from internal divisions, shifting alliances, and a lack of resources and clear ideology. Prior to the suspension of the parliament in 2009, ousted president Marc Ravalomanana's TIM party had an overwhelming majority in both houses. Since Rajoelina's accession to power, opposition political activity has been circumscribed through arbitrary and periodic bans on meetings and protests, killings of opposition supporters, and unsubstantiated government allegations of opposition party involvement in a series of explosions in Antananarivo in mid-2009. Following his ouster, Ravalomanana fled to South Africa, where he remained at the end of 2010. While some members of the opposition participated in the transitional parliament, their parties officially rejected Rajoelina's electoral plan. Continuing unrest within the military led to an unsuccessful coup attempt in November 2010, triggered by the constitutional referendum.

Corruption remains a major concern in Madagascar. In spite of an April 2010 decree that prohibited the logging, transport, trading, and export of precious woods, the illegal trade continued. Several large caches of illegally harvested rosewood were confiscated by authorities during the year, illustrating the magnitude of the

problem. Madagascar was ranked 123 out of 178 countries surveyed in Transparency International's 2010 Corruption Perceptions Index.

The constitution officially provides for freedom of the press. A 1990 law on press freedom was followed by the introduction of privately owned FM radio stations and more critical political reporting by the print media. However, subsequent governments have at times curbed press freedom in practice, and the media remain highly polarized and partisan. There are dozens of licensed television, radio, and print outlets. Because of the low literacy rate, the print media are mostly aimed at the French-speaking urban elite. According to the International Telecommunication Union, less than 1 percent of the population had access to the internet as of July 2010, largely due to inadequate infrastructure.

The 2009 political crisis began in December 2008, when Ravalomanana ordered the closure of a private television station run by Rajoelina after it aired an interview with former president Didier Ratsiraka without official permission. Media outlets associated with each side were raided by security forces or ransacked by armed civilians during the turmoil, and a Ravalomanana-owned radio station was shut down by authorities in April 2009. The independent outlets that remain in operation practice varying levels of self-censorship. The government remains highly suspicious of and at times hostile to the independent press. For example, 10 employees of the independent Radio Fahazavana were arrested in 2010 on charges of inciting revolt. They were released after four months in jail, but on the same day, authorities banned broadcasts by another independent radio station.

The Malagasy people have traditionally enjoyed religious freedom. The law strongly encourages, but does not require, religious organizations to register with the Ministry of Interior. There are no limitations on academic freedom.

Freedom of association is generally respected, and hundreds of nongovernmental organizations, including legal and human rights groups, are active. Freedom of assembly was severely affected by the unrest in early 2009, as protests degenerated into riots and looting, and security forces opened fire on demonstrators. In 2010, Rajoelina's government continued to restrict opposition protests sharply.

Workers' rights to join unions and strike are largely respected. The Ravalomanana administration endured a series of demonstrations and work stoppages, mainly over the high rate of inflation; strikes, often politically motivated, have continued under the Rajoelina regime. Some of the country's labor organizations are affiliated with political groups. More than 80 percent of workers are engaged in agriculture, fishing, and forestry at a subsistence level.

The judiciary remains susceptible to corruption and executive influence. Its acquiescence in the face of Rajoelina's unconstitutional rise to power highlighted its weakness as an institution, and subsequent judicial decisions were tainted by frequent intimidation. A lack of training, resources, and personnel hampers judicial effectiveness, and case backlogs are prodigious. Most of the approximately 20,000 people held in the country's prisons are pretrial detainees and suffer from extremely harsh and sometimes life-threatening conditions. Customary law courts in rural areas continue to lack due process guarantees and regularly issue summary and severe punishments. In the demonstrations and chaos surrounding the change in government in 2009, security forces often engaged in abusive behavior with impunity.

A political cleavage has traditionally existed between the coastal cotier and the highland Merina peoples, of continental African and Southeast Asian origins, respectively. Due to past military conquest and long-standing political dominance, the status of the Merina tends to be higher than that of the cotier. Ethnicity, caste, and regional solidarity are often factors that lead to discrimination.

Approximately 45 percent of the workforce is female. Malagasy women hold significantly more government and managerial positions than women in continental African countries. However, they still face societal discrimination and enjoy fewer opportunities than men for higher education and employment. Domestic violence remains common.

Malawi

Political Rights: 3

Population: 15,500,000

Civil Liberties: 4

Capital: Lilongwe

Status: Partly Free

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline For Year Under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
4,3PF	4,4PF	3,4PF	4,4PF	4,4PF	4,3PF	4,4PF	4,4PF	3,4PF	3,4PF

Overview: While President Bingu wa Mutharika and the Democratic Progressive Party enjoyed a commanding position in the political system, concerns emerged in 2010 about the subservience of the legislature to the executive branch. The government continued its heavy-handed approach toward critics, and threats to media independence, nongovernment organizations, and freedom of assembly remained major concerns throughout the year. Following considerable international outcry, a gay couple sentenced to fourteen years in prison received a pardon from President Mutharika in May.

Following Malawi's independence from Britain in 1963, President Hastings Kamuzu Banda ruled the country for nearly three decades, exercising dictatorial power through the Malawi Congress Party (MCP) and its paramilitary youth wing. Facing an economic crisis and strong domestic and international pressure, Banda accepted a 1993 referendum that approved multiparty rule. Bakili Muluzi of the United Democratic Front (UDF) won the 1994 presidential election, which was generally perceived as free and fair. He was reelected in 1999.

Muluzi handpicked Bingu wa Mutharika, a relative political outsider, as his successor ahead of the 2004 presidential election. While Mutharika defeated his MCP opponent, the MCP led concurrent parliamentary elections. In early 2005, a rift between Mutharika and Muluzi, who remained the UDF chairman, worsened after several powerful UDF figures were arrested as part of Mutharika's new anticorruption campaign. Mutharika resigned from the UDF and formed the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP), which many lawmakers subsequently joined. With

the UDF and the MCP forming an opposition alliance against the president, the remainder of Mutharika's first term was characterized by acute tensions between the executive and legislative branches, sometimes leading to the paralysis of governing institutions.

Despite predictions that Muluzi would emerge as Mutharika's primary challenger for the May 2009 presidential contest, the constitutional two-term limit proscribed him from standing again. Instead, Muluzi and the UDF formed an alliance with the head of the MCP, John Tembo, and backed his candidacy for the presidency. Mutharika ran a highly effective campaign and defeated Tembo with approximately 66 percent of the vote. In concurrent parliamentary elections, Mutharika's DPP won a total of 112 seats in the 193-seat legislature; the MCP took 26, and the UDF captured 17, leaving independent candidates and smaller parties with the remaining seats. According to international and domestic election observers, the 2009 polls were more free and competitive than in previous years. However, incumbents had a clear advantage due to the use of state resources during the campaign period and a clear bias on government-controlled media outlets.

With Mutharika's party dominating the legislature, the contentious politics that characterized the president's first term has dissipated. However, the president now plays a clearly dominant role in the polity, with parliament adopting a subservient posture. Mutharika has displayed a tendency to use divisive political strategies, catering to his own ethnic group while marginalizing the northern region of the country. The government has displayed a lack of respect for certain democratic institutions and practices, including the passage of legislation in 2009, which increased executive control over local government institutions. Questions over who will replace Mutharika in 2014 arose during the year; as the president's brother emerged as the heir apparent, the vice president was expelled from the ruling party.

International donors, which account for 80 percent of Malawi's development budget, have applauded economic management under the Mutharika administration. In December 2007, Malawi qualified for financial support under the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) initiative, and a Millennium Challenge Account was established in March 2008. Both the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank announced new grants and loan facilities for Malawi in 2010. Dramatic improvements in agricultural output, partially credited to a popular fertilizer subsidy program, have helped the country to achieve solid economic growth rates over the last few years despite the global economic downturn. The economy grew at a rate of 5.9 percent in 2010.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Malawi is an electoral democracy. The president is directly elected for five-year terms and exercises considerable executive authority. The unicameral National Assembly is composed of 193 members elected by popular vote to serve five-year terms. The 2009 presidential and parliamentary elections, though characterized by an uneven playing field in favor of the incumbents, were the most fair and competitive since the first multiparty elections in 1994. While opposition groups had questioned the impartiality and legitimacy of the Malawi Electoral Commission (MEC) in previous years, key observers concluded that it operated with sufficient transparency during the

2009 elections. Some concerns have arisen over delays in holding local government elections, which have not been held since district-level assemblies were dissolved in 2005. In apparent contravention of a court order, the president suspended and closed the MEC in December 2010, after an audit report revealed that large sums of money allocated to run the 2009 elections remained unaccounted for.

The main political parties are the ruling DPP, the opposition MCP, and the UDF. The opposition was able to organize and campaign freely during the 2009 elections. In 2010, the efficacy of these parties was undermined by infighting, largely over leadership issues.

While President Bingu wa Mutharika has pledged to fight corruption, opposition and civil society groups have charged that the effort has been directed primarily at Mutharika's political opponents. The new National Anti-Corruption Strategy launched in 2009 includes a plan to establish "integrity committees" in public institutions. However, a February 2010 report by Global Integrity indicated that the Anti-Corruption Bureau has largely focused on low-level civil servants while avoiding high-ranking officials under political pressure. After years of investigation and two prior arrests, former president Bakili Muluzi was arrested in 2009 and charged with 86 counts related to his alleged theft of public resources during his time in office. His trial remained ongoing at the end of 2010. Other figures investigated or questioned during the year included former cabinet ministers (who lost positions in a cabinet shuffle in August 2010) and the highly regarded former ombudsman. In January, Malawi's former postmaster general was convicted on corruption charges. Malawi was ranked 85 out of 178 countries surveyed in Transparency International's 2010 Corruption Perceptions Index.

Freedom of the press is legally guaranteed. Despite occasional restrictions, Malawi's dozen or so newspapers present a diversity of opinion. There are approximately 20 radio stations and 2 television stations in the country. However, the government-controlled Malawi Broadcasting Corporation and TV Malawi—the historically dominant outlets in the country—display a significant bias in favor of the government. In the lead-up to the 2009 elections, broadcasts from these outlets took a strongly progovernment position, garnering criticism from election observers. Independent broadcast outlets are playing an increasingly important role, though broadcast and print media have been the target of government harassment. In January 2010, the government placed a ban on advertising at the largest independent daily in response to unflattering articles about the president's family; the ban continued through year's end. In June, the government directed private media to stop providing live coverage of certain VIP functions. In August, Mutharika threatened to close down newspapers that had reported on potential food insecurity in the country, an act that led to instances of media self-censorship. Meanwhile, the courts halted a government attempt to ban a weekly publication in November.

Religious freedom is generally respected, and the government does not restrict academic freedom.

While the government has generally upheld freedoms of assembly and association, these rights have come under pressure in recent years. In August 2010, three members of the clergy were charged with treason for criticizing the government during a funeral; their trial remained ongoing at year's end. Leaders of a nongovernmental organization (NGO) were arrested in February for inciting violence af-

ter they criticized the distribution of government development funds. Many NGOs and the constitutionally mandated Malawi Human Rights Commission operate, though with some government interference. The right to organize labor unions and to strike is legally protected, with notice and mediation requirements for workers in essential services. Unions are active, and collective bargaining is practiced, but workers face harassment and occasional violence during strikes. Since only a small percentage of the workforce is formally employed, union membership is low.

During Mutharika's first term, the generally independent judiciary became involved in political disputes and faced government hostility. There were no recorded instances of harassment of judges for political reasons in 2010, and the courts rendered several significant decisions against the government, including a supreme court decision that reversed government efforts to change rules for selecting the leader of the opposition in parliament, and a high court decision that halted the government from banning a newspaper. However, due process is not always respected by the overburdened court system, which lacks resources, personnel, and training. Police brutality is reportedly common, as are arbitrary arrests and detentions. Prison conditions are appalling, with many inmates dying from AIDS and other diseases.

The government respects private property and has generally embraced free-market principles. However, President Mutharika has displayed a willingness to intervene in economic life. In August 2010, the president banned the exportation of cotton so that processing of the crop could be undertaken domestically.

Malawi faced international attention and outcry in December 2009, when a gay couple who had become engaged through a traditional ceremony was charged with gross public indecency. In May 2010, the couple was found guilty of engaging in unnatural acts, among other violations, and was sentenced to fourteen years in prison. However, they were pardoned by President Mutharika later that same month.

Despite constitutional guarantees of equal protection, customary practices perpetuate discrimination against women in education, employment, business, and inheritance and property rights. Violence against women and children remains a serious concern, though in recent years there has been greater media attention on and criminal penalties for abuse and rape. Abusive practices, including forced marriages and the secret initiation of girls into their future adult roles through forced sex with older men, remain widespread. The practice of *kupimbira*, in which young girls of any age are sold by families to pay off debts, still exists in some areas. However, Malawian women recorded significant gains in the 2009 elections. A large number of women ran as parliamentary candidates, and Joyce Banda became the first female vice president in the country's history. Women hold 22 percent of the seats in parliament and 26 percent in the cabinet.

Trafficking in women and children, both locally and to locations abroad, is a problem. Penalties for the few successfully prosecuted traffickers have been criticized as too lenient. In June 2010, the parliament passed the Child Care, Protection, and Justice Bill, which attempts to address these and other threats to children. Among other things, the new law specifically details the responsibilities of parents on raising and protecting their children and outlines the duties of local authorities to protect children from harmful, exploitative, or undesirable practices.

Malaysia

Political Rights: 4
Civil Liberties: 4
Status: Partly Free

Population: 28,900,000
Capital: Kuala Lumpur

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline For Year Under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
3.5PF	3.5PF	3.4PF	4.4PF						

Overview: Ethnic and religious tensions were stoked in January 2010 by a series of arson attacks on places of worship that stemmed from a legal dispute over the use of the word "Allah" by Christians and other non-Muslims. In a sign of stricter enforcement of Islamic law, religious courts carried out caning sentences against three young women who were found guilty of premarital sex. Also during 2010, opposition leader Anwar Ibrahim went on trial for sodomy charges, and the politically fraught case was ongoing at year's end.

Malaya gained independence from Britain in 1957 and merged with the British colonies of Sarawak and Sabah to become the Federation of Malaysia in 1963. The ruling Barisan Nasional (National Front, or BN, known as the Alliance before 1969) won at least a two-thirds majority in 10 of the first 11 general elections after independence, the exception being the 1969 elections, which were nullified following race riots. The BN consists of mainly ethnic parties, dominated by the conservative, Malay-based United Malays National Organization (UMNO).

Racial tensions between the Malay majority and Chinese and Indian minorities have played a central role in Malaysian politics since the country's founding. Independence was premised on a social contract, enshrined in the constitution, that granted citizenship to the non-Malay population in exchange for special rights and privileges, especially in education and economics, for all Malays and other indigenous peoples. After the outbreak of race riots in 1969, in which thousands of Chinese homes and businesses were destroyed and more than 180 people were killed, the government declared an 18-month state of emergency and tightened restrictions on free speech, assembly, and political organizations.

Mahathir Mohamed was one of the key architects of efforts to shift economic power from the Chinese to the Malays, first as education minister and then as prime minister from 1981 to 2003. His development policies transformed Malaysia into a hub for multinational corporations and high-technology exports. At the same time, he stunted democratic institutions, weakened the rule of law by curtailing the press and political opponents, and drew allegations of cronyism with his state-led industrial development. Mahathir criticized conservative Muslim leaders for failing to promote a more modern brand of Islam, and he co-opted Islamist opposition forces by weaving their positions into UMNO's ideology.

In 2003, Mahathir stepped down and handed power to his deputy, Abdullah Ahmad Badawi. The BN won 198 of the 219 seats in the lower house of Parliament

in the 2004 elections. However, the three main opposition parties—the Democratic Action Party (DAP), the Islamic Party of Malaysia (PAS), and the People's Justice Party (PKR)—challenged the results on the grounds that the BN had engaged in vote rigging and other irregularities. Most specific challenges were rejected in court or withdrawn, although allegations of vote buying and problems with the electoral roll were substantiated.

Despite popular mandate, Abdullah achieved little in the way of reform. In 2006, sharp divisions emerged within UNMO as Mahathir launched a series of harsh attacks on Abdullah. Meanwhile, Anwar Ibrahim, a former deputy prime minister who had been controversially removed by Mahathir in 1998, reemerged as a major opposition figure. A series of court rulings during the year that denied certain religious and legal rights for non-Muslims sparked a national debate on constitutional guarantees and the role of Islam in Malaysia. The government took action to suppress press coverage, public discussion, and related activism on ethnic issues by non-Malay groups, citing the need to prevent national unrest.

During 2007, public frustration skyrocketed in response to government suppression of peaceful protests, the exposure of high-level political corruption cases, a related crackdown on online media, and a crisis involving alleged politicization of the judiciary. Demands for electoral reform in advance of the 2008 general elections—coupled with perceptions of rising crime, corruption, and inflation—triggered the largest antigovernment demonstrations in nearly a decade.

In the March 2008 elections, the BN lost its two-thirds majority in the lower house of Parliament for the first time since 1969, meaning it could no longer amend the constitution unilaterally. The BN managed to secure just 140 of the 222 lower-house seats, and Abdullah faced calls for his resignation. Anwar's PKR captured 31 seats, up from only 1 in the 2004 elections, followed by the DAP with 28 and PAS with 23. The opposition parties also won control of five of Malaysia's 13 states, and formed a coalition called the People's Alliance (PR) in the wake of the polls.

Despite claims that he would be able to encourage defections from the BN and form a new government by September 2008, Anwar failed, and the PR suffered from defections and infighting. The opposition lost control of the state of Perak in 2009 after a handful of crucial defections in the state assembly, and its attempts to dispute the legality of the power transfer were ultimately rejected by the courts.

Abdullah, discredited by the BN's 2008 electoral setbacks, eventually stepped down as UMNO leader and prime minister. He was succeeded in April 2009 by his deputy, Najib Razak, who pledged to promote unity among the country's racial and religious groups. He promoted this idea through a campaign known as "1 Malaysia," but the program failed to mend ethnic and religious divisions, and generated new political controversy. In December 2010, Anwar was suspended from Parliament for six months after he compared 1 Malaysia to a similar program in Israel, and three of his PKR colleagues received similar punishment for vocally objecting to the suspension.

Religious friction during 2010 included a wave of arson attacks and vandalism in January that struck a dozen churches, two Muslim prayer halls, a mosque, and a Sikh temple. The attacks were apparently touched off by a court ruling in late 2009 that overturned a government ban prohibiting Christians and other non-Muslims from using the word "Allah" to refer to God. The ruling had not been put into effect at the end of 2010, pending the outcome of the government's appeal.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Malaysia is not an electoral democracy. The leader of the party that wins a plurality of seats in legislative elections becomes prime minister. Executive power is vested in the prime minister and cabinet. The paramount ruler, the titular head of state, is elected for five-year terms by fellow hereditary rulers in 9 of Malaysia's 13 states. Mizan Zainal Abidin al-Marhum Sultan Mahmud al-Muktafi Billah Shah was elected to the post in 2006. The upper house of the bicameral Parliament consists of 44 appointed members and 26 members elected by the state legislatures, serving three-year terms. The lower house, with 222 seats, is popularly elected at least every five years.

The ruling BN is a coalition of 13 parties, most with an ethnic or regional base, including the dominant UMNO as well as the Malaysian Chinese Association (MCA) and the Malaysian Indian Congress (MIC). The three main opposition parties—the DAP, PAS, and PKR—formed their own coalition, the PR, after the 2008 elections. Their dramatic electoral gains came despite serious obstacles, such as unequal access to the media and restrictions on campaigning and freedom of assembly, which left them unable to compete on equal terms with the BN. The country's first-past-the-post voting system also increases the power of the largest grouping, and national electoral outcomes have been affected by the malapportionment of constituencies in favor of East Malaysia. Despite winning more than 40 percent of the vote in the 2004 elections, opposition parties collectively captured only 18 out of 219 seats in the lower house. In 2008, the BN won just 51 percent of the vote but secured 140 of 222 lower-house seats.

The Election Commission (EC) is frequently accused of manipulating electoral rolls and gerrymandering districts to aid the ruling coalition, and the Registrar of Societies arbitrarily decides which parties can participate in politics.

The government and law enforcement bodies have suffered a series of corruption scandals in recent years, despite the BN's anticorruption campaign pledges. The Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC), the agency tasked with restoring transparency to the government, came under scrutiny itself in July 2009, when opposition DAP official Teoh Beng Hock was found to have fallen to his death from the window of an MACC building. Teoh was being questioned late at night about an investigation into the disbursement of state funds. An inquest into the death was ongoing at the end of 2010. Malaysia was ranked 56 out of 178 countries surveyed in Transparency International's 2010 Corruption Perceptions Index. A Whistleblower Protection Act took effect in December 2010, but it remained unclear whether it would improve transparency.

Freedom of expression is constitutionally guaranteed but restricted in practice. The 1984 Printing Presses and Publications Act gives the government the authority to revoke licenses without judicial review. It also requires that publications and printers obtain annual operating permits, encouraging self-censorship and limiting investigative journalism. During 2010, the government delayed renewing the licenses of three opposition parties' periodicals. Privately owned television stations have close ties to the BN and generally censor programming according to government guidelines. State outlets also reflect government views. In April 2010, the public station TV2 canceled a current-affairs series on the plight of indigenous people displaced by a dam project in Sarawak, which could have generated anger against

the ruling coalition ahead of a by-election in the state. Books and films are directly censored or banned for profanity, violence, and political and religious material. In September 2010, political cartoonist Zulkiflee Anwar Ulhaque, known as Zunar, was arrested under the Sedition Act for his new book *Cartoon-o-Phobia*. Although he was released on bail, he faced up to three years in prison if convicted. Other books by Zunar had been banned earlier in the year.

The internet has emerged as a primary outlet for free discussion and for exposing cases of political corruption. The government responded in 2007 with an escalating crackdown, including the first defamation charges against bloggers. Bloggers were also threatened with arrest under the Internal Security Act (ISA), the Official Secrets Act, and the Sedition Act, all of which can draw several years in prison. The BN significantly softened its efforts to curtail online expression immediately after the 2008 elections, but security laws were used to temporarily detain two bloggers. The Malaysian Communication and Multimedia Commission (MCMC), an agency responsible in part for regulating the internet, has become one of the greatest roadblocks for freedom of expression in the country. It has a record of being unnecessarily harsh toward the independent news website *Malaysiakini.com*, which is often critical of the government.

While the BN government continues to articulate the need for a tolerant and inclusive form of Islam, religious freedom is restricted in Malaysia. Ethnic Malays are defined by the constitution as Muslims, and practicing a version of Islam other than Sunni Islam is prohibited. Muslim children and civil servants are required to receive religious education using government-approved curriculums and instructors. Proselytizing among Muslims by other religious groups is prohibited, and a 2007 ruling by the country's highest court effectively made it impossible for Muslims to have their conversions to other faiths recognized by the state; in very rare exceptions, a small number of non-Malays have been allowed to revert to their previous faiths after converting to Islam for marriage. Non-Muslims are not able to build houses of worship as easily as Muslims, and the state retains the right to demolish unregistered religious statues and houses of worship.

The government restricts academic freedom; teachers or students espousing antigovernment views or engaging in political activity are subject to disciplinary action under the Universities and University Colleges Act of 1971. In April 2010, four students were charged for participating in campaigning for a by-election; they challenged the law in court, and appeals were ongoing at year's end.

Freedoms of assembly and association are limited on the grounds of maintaining security and public order. A police permit is required for all public assemblies except picket lines, and the granting of permits is sometimes politically influenced. Demonstrators can be detained under laws including the Sedition Act, the Police Act, and the ISA. The Societies Act of 1996 defines a society as any association of seven or more people, excluding schools, businesses, and trade unions. Societies must be approved and registered by the government, which has periodically refused or revoked registrations for political reasons. Numerous nongovernmental organizations operate in Malaysia, but some international human rights organizations are not allowed to form Malaysian branches.

Most Malaysian workers—excluding migrant workers—can join trade unions, but the law contravenes international guidelines by restricting unions to represent-

ing **workers** in a single or similar trade. The Director General of Trade Unions can refuse or withdraw registration arbitrarily, and the union recognition process can take from 18 to 36 months. In practice, collective bargaining is limited. Unions in essential services must give advance notice of strikes, and various other legal conditions effectively render strikes impossible.

Judicial independence has been compromised by extensive executive influence. Arbitrary or politically motivated verdicts are not uncommon, with the most prominent case being the convictions of Anwar Ibrahim in 1999 and 2000 for corruption and sodomy. The sodomy conviction was overturned in 2004, and Anwar was released from prison, but the corruption charge was upheld, delaying his return to elected office until 2008. He was again accused of sodomy that year, and the new trial, which began in February 2010, was ongoing at year's end. Anwar's legal troubles have caused uncertainty and leadership struggles within the opposition coalition.

Malaysia's secular legal system is based on English common law. However, Muslims are subject to Sharia (Islamic law), the interpretation of which varies regionally, and the constitution's Article 121 stipulates that all matters related to Islam should be dealt with in Sharia courts. In 2010, a Sharia court carried out caning sentences against three teenage girls convicted of premarital sex.

There is no constitutional provision specifically banning torture, and police have been known to torture prisoners and use excessive force or inhumane tactics in conducting searches. Police reform has been inhibited by resistance at the highest levels of the police force and, according to many, by the attorney general. Individuals may be arrested without a warrant for some offenses and held for 24 hours without being charged. The ISA, in force since 1960, gives the police sweeping powers to hold any person acting, "in a manner prejudicial to the security of Malaysia," for up to 60 days, extendable to two years without trial. The law has been used to jail mainstream politicians, alleged Islamist militants, trade unionists, suspected communist activists, ordinary criminal suspects, and members of "deviant" Muslim sects, among others. In 2009, the government released all but nine detainees being held under the ISA. However, 25 people remained under detention at the end of 2010, demonstrating the government's reluctance to end the practice all together.

Although the constitution provides for equal treatment of all citizens, the government maintains an affirmative-action program intended to boost the economic status of ethnic Malays and other indigenous people, known collectively as bumiputera. Bumiputera receive preferential treatment in areas including property ownership, higher education, civil service jobs, and business affairs, and bumiputera-owned companies receive the lion's share of large government contracts.

Foreign household workers are often subject to exploitation by employers. Malaysians officially employ about 220,000 household workers, 90 percent of whom are Indonesian. There are an estimated two million illegal workers in Malaysia. If arrested and found guilty, illegal workers can be caned and detained indefinitely pending deportation. An untrained volunteer reserve of hundreds of thousands of baton-wielding Malaysians, called Rela, has been pursuing illegal foreign workers and refugees since 2005, raising serious concerns among human rights groups.

Despite government initiatives and continued gains, women are still underrepresent-

ed in politics, the professions, and the civil service. Violence against women remains a serious problem. Muslim women are legally disadvantaged, because their family grievances are heard in Sharia courts, where men are favored in matters such as inheritance and divorce and women's testimony is not given equal weight. In 2010, two women were appointed as Sharia court judges. However, they are barred from handling cases that relate to marriage and divorce. Despite some progress in investigating and punishing sex-trafficking offenses, efforts to combat trafficking have been criticized as inadequate.

Maldives

Political Rights: 3

Population: 320,000

Civil Liberties: 4

Capital: Male

Status: Partly Free

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline For Year Under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
6,5NF	4,4PF	3,4PF	3,4PF						

Overview: After significant political openings in 2008 and 2009, the reform process faltered during 2010, as President Mohamed Nasheed struggled to implement his ambitious agenda. Rising tension between the executive and the legislative branch, which is dominated by the opposition Maldivian People's Party, led to the temporary resignation of the cabinet in June. Despite an improved environment for freedoms of expression and association, corruption, religious restrictions, and abysmal prison conditions remained issues of concern.

The Maldives achieved independence in 1965 after 78 years as a British protectorate, and a 1968 referendum replaced the centuries-old sultanate with a republican system. The first president, Amir Ibrahim Nasir, held office for 10 years. He was succeeded by Maumoon Abdul Gayoom, who served six five-year terms. Gayoom won and repeatedly renewed his mandate through a tightly controlled system of presidential referendums rather than competitive elections.

Gayoom initiated political reforms after the beating death of a prison inmate sparked riots in 2003. A People's Special Majlis (PSM), composed of lawmakers and other elected and appointed delegates, was tasked with amending the constitution in 2004. The next several years brought incremental improvements to the legislative, judicial, and media frameworks, interspersed with bouts of unrest, crack-downs on the opposition Maldivian Democratic Party (MDP), and restrictions on freedom of expression.

In June 2008, the PSM approved the final set of constitutional amendments. Under pressure from opposition demonstrators, the president in August ratified the new charter, which included protection for a range of civil liberties while maintaining restrictions on religious freedom. The country's first multiparty presidential

election was held in October. Gayoom outpolled five challengers in the first round, taking 41 percent of the vote, but MDP leader and former political prisoner Mohamed Nasheed won the runoff with 54 percent. Nearly 87 percent of registered voters turned out for the second round.

Nasheed's immediate priorities were anticorruption measures, democratization, government decentralization, and press freedom. In line with the third objective, the government in 2009 abolished the Atolls Ministry, appointed seven provincial state ministers, and published a draft decentralization bill. The president also abolished the Information Ministry and introduced draft bills guaranteeing freedom of expression and press freedom which remained under consideration by the parliament at the end of 2010.

In the May 2009 parliamentary elections, Gayoom's Maldivian People's Party (DRP) won 28 of 77 seats, while the MDP won 26, the DRP-allied People's Alliance (PA) took 7, and independents garnered 13. A Commonwealth observer team characterized the voting as largely transparent and competitive, with a turnout of 79 percent. The DRP's strong showing—and the election of DRP member Abdulla Shahid and PA member Ahmed Nazim as Speaker and deputy speaker, respectively, of the new Majlis—raised questions about Nasheed's ability to push through his ambitious reform agenda.

The cabinet resigned in June 2010, citing frustration over continued efforts by the opposition-controlled legislature to block the president's reform agenda. Nasheed reappointed the cabinet a week later, though the appointments still required ratification by the parliament. In October, disagreements emerged over whether a parliamentary committee had the right to individually interview cabinet appointees prior to approval. The case was brought to the Supreme Court, which in December, decided that cabinet ministers rejected by the parliament must resign. Seven ministers were affected by this decision, but remained in their positions at year's end, while the president prepared to replace them. Meanwhile, a parliamentary delay in ratifying the legislation required to appoint a new Supreme Court led to the resignation of the attorney general in August.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: The Republic of Maldives is an electoral democracy. The first democratic presidential election in 2008 was deemed relatively free and fair, although observers reported flaws including some preelection violence, a compressed timeframe, and voter registration problems. The interim election commission was considered generally professional, transparent, and impartial. The 2009 parliamentary elections were also judged to be largely credible, despite minor problems related to the compilation of the voter list as well as some intimidation and other irregularities.

Under the new constitution, the president is directly elected for up to two five-year terms. The 2009 Parliamentary Constituencies Act increased the size of the unicameral People's Majlis to 77 seats, with members elected from individual districts to serve five-year terms. The president, parliament members, and other key officials are required to be Sunni Muslims. Since political parties were legalized in 2005, a dozen have registered. The space for opposition parties to mobilize has expanded significantly in recent years, although interparty rivalries, which sometimes flare into violence, remain a concern.

Under former president Maumoon Abdul Gayoom, government accountability was limited by the executive branch's almost complete control over the legislature and judiciary. However, a new, independent auditor general and the revised constitution have provided greater transparency, shedding light on pervasive corruption. An Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) established in 2008 opened dozens of cases in 2009, but none had been concluded by the end of 2010. A presidential commission formed in May 2009 to investigate corruption in Gayoom's government was denounced by the DRP as politically motivated and of questionable legality. In July 2010, the PA's Ahmed Nazim, deputy speaker of the Majlis, and MDP lawmaker Mohamed Musthafa were arrested for allegedly bribing fellow parliament members and a judge. The case was pending in the courts at year's end. The Maldives was ranked 143 out of 178 countries surveyed in Transparency International's 2010 Corruption Perceptions Index. Transparency International's recently established Maldives branch was actively engaged in lobbying efforts in 2010.

The new constitution guarantees freedoms of expression and the press. While restrictions on speech deemed "contrary to the tenets of Islam" remain in place, defamation was decriminalized in 2009. Private print media have expanded and present a diversity of viewpoints, though some publications are still owned by Gayoom allies. The number of private radio stations has also increased, and the country's first private television channels began operating in 2008, though their legal protections remain limited. In August 2010, the Broadcasting Act was passed, establishing a commission to oversee the licensing and regulatory process, but this body had not been appointed by year's end. Reforms at state-run Television and Radio Maldives provided somewhat more balanced coverage of the 2009 elections. Legislation to transform the state broadcaster into the Maldives Broadcasting Corporation, an independent public service entity, was passed in April 2010, but the government delayed implementing the handover. Journalists remained subject to some harassment in 2010. In August, the office of private television station VTV was attacked by unknown assailants, and police attacked journalists covering a political protest in October. Journalists and specific media outlets also came under verbal attacks by a number of party officials. Christian websites that were blocked by the Ministry of Islamic Affairs (MIA) in 2008 for allegedly threatening belief in Islam remained inaccessible in 2010, and several additional sites, most of which contained pornography or material perceived to be anti-Islam, were blocked by the Telecommunication Authority at the MIA's request. Oppositionist websites were accessible.

Freedom of religion remains severely restricted. Islam is the state religion, and all citizens are required to be Sunni Muslims. Imams must use government-approved sermons. The MIA has sole authority to grant licenses to preachers; a number of members of the Islamist Adhaalath Party hold senior positions in the ministry. In May 2010, the MIA introduced new regulations under the 1994 Religious Unity Act that allow the ministry to oversee the curriculum for religious education in schools, create new criteria for preaching licenses for imams, and deport those who openly preach a faith other than Islam. In July, a man hanged himself after reportedly feeling victimized for being an atheist. Non-Muslim foreigners, including approximately 70,000 guest workers on long-term visas, are allowed to observe their religions only in private, which is difficult in practice. There were no reported limitations on

academic freedom, but many scholars self-censor. Maldivians are palpably freer to discuss politically sensitive issues in public under the current administration.

The new constitution guarantees freedom of assembly, and several demonstrations were held in 2010. While police sometimes disperse peaceful protesters with excessive force, no such instances were reported during the year. There were no reports of harassment of nongovernmental organizations, whose numbers grew in 2010.

The new constitution and the 2008 Employment Act provide for a minimum wage and allow workers to form trade unions and to strike, though these rights are not guaranteed. In response to a series of strikes, the country's first labor tribunal was established in December 2008 to enforce the Employment Act. In 2009, the Maldives joined the International Labour Organization. Foreign workers occasionally have trouble collecting wages from their employers.

The new constitution provides for an independent judiciary, and judges were sworn into the first Supreme Court and final court of appeals in 2008. Courts have subsequently shown signs of increased independence from the executive. To further separate the two branches, the president established the Judicial Services Commission in 2009, although concerns remain about its composition. Civil law is used in most cases, but it is subordinate to Sharia (Islamic law), which is applied in matters not covered by civil law and in cases involving divorce or adultery. As a result, the testimony of two women is equal to that of one man, and punishments such as internal exile continue to be carried out. Revisions to the penal code remained under debate in the Majlis in 2010.

The new constitution bans arbitrary arrest, torture, and prolonged detention without adequate judicial review. It also requires compensation for those detained without legal justification. The current administration has initiated police reform, and established a parole board to recommend sentence reductions for unjustly detained inmates. However, progress on improving prison conditions has been slow, and abuses continue. In April 2010, 15 prisoners were injured in a riot at Maafushi Jail. In July, 236 Maafushi inmates sent a petition to the president requesting better prison conditions.

Women, who enjoy a 98 percent literacy rate, are increasingly entering the civil service and receiving pay equal to that of men, though opportunity is sometimes limited by traditional norms. Women hold few senior government positions, but there are five female members of parliament, and the president appointed several women to high-ranking posts in the cabinet and other commissions in 2009 and 2010. Unlike the old charter, the new constitution allows a woman to become president. International human rights groups have urged reform of severe legal punishments that primarily affect women, including the sentence of flogging for extramarital sex. In October 2010, a draft domestic violence bill—which offers a broad definition of domestic violence and provides for the establishment of a Family Protection Agency—received bipartisan support from the parliament and was under consideration at year's end.

Mali

Political Rights: 2
Civil Liberties: 3
Status: Free

Population: 15,200,000
Capital: Bamako

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline For Year Under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
2,3F	2,3F	2,2F	2,2F	2,2F	2,2F	2,3F	2,3F	2,3F	2,3F

Overview: In 2010, the government's decision to release imprisoned members of Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) in exchange for a French hostage strained Mali's diplomatic ties with Algeria and Mauritania. Relations improved in September after Mali became involved in regional collaborative efforts to fight AQIM. The Party for Economic and Social Development, a successor party to President Amadou Toumani Touré's Citizen Movement, was established in July in preparation for the 2012 presidential election.

Mali was ruled by military and one-party regimes for more than 30 years following independence from France in 1960. After soldiers killed more than 100 demonstrators demanding a multiparty system in 1991, President Moussa Traoré was overthrown by the military.

Alpha Oumar Konaré of the Alliance for Democracy in Mali (ADEMA) won the presidency in the 1992 elections, which were deemed credible by most observers. He secured a second and final term in 1997 amid a boycott by most of the opposition. Several opposition parties also boycotted that year's National Assembly elections, in which ADEMA captured 128 of 147 seats.

In the 2002 presidential election, independent candidate Amadou Toumani Touré, a popular former military officer who had led Mali during the post-Traoré transition period, defeated his ADEMA opponent. During legislative elections that year, the opposition Hope 2002 coalition, led by the Rally for Mali (RPM) party, emerged victorious over the ADEMA-led coalition.

In the April 2007 presidential election, Touré—running as the candidate of the Alliance for Democracy and Progress (ADP) coalition—was reelected with 71 percent in the second round of voting. In elections for the National Assembly held in July, the ADP secured a total of 114 seats, with 51 going to ADEMA, its largest constituent party. The main opposition coalition, the Front for Democracy and the Republic (FDR), captured 15 seats, while a smaller party and a number of independents secured the remaining 19 seats.

The April 2009 municipal elections were conducted without government restrictions on the opposition. Turnout was approximately 45 percent of registered voters. ADEMA won all but one of Bamako's six communes and almost 30 percent of the seats contested nationwide.

Violence between government forces and the marginalized ethnic Tuareg minority has flared up in recent years. Following a 1991 peace agreement and more

than a decade of relative calm, a group of Tuareg army deserters attacked military barracks in 2006, demanding greater autonomy and development assistance. Fighting continued between 2006 and 2008 amid a series of negotiations and ceasefires with the government. Clashes escalated at the end of 2008 as a rebel faction, the North Mali Tuareg Alliance for Change (ATNMC), increased its insurgency efforts. However, the Malian army responded forcefully, and the ATNMC signed a peace treaty in April 2009. By 2010, the group was working cooperatively with government troops to police drug-smuggling routes. In December 2010, the government announced that a joint operation with Mauritanian forces had dismantled the largest trafficking network in the Sahel.

The terrorist organization Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) continued to threaten security in the north throughout 2010. A number of international aid workers and European tourists have been kidnapped since 2008, and several have been killed. In February 2010, Mali liberated four AQIM fighters to secure the release of a French hostage, prompting Algeria and Mauritania to recall their ambassadors from Bamako. In July, the Malian government criticized a Mauritanian-French operation that included attacks against AQIM on Malian soil. However, regional cooperation improved following a September meeting, at which military representatives from Mali, Mauritania, Algeria, and Niger signed an agreement on the creation of a shared intelligence command.

Although it is one of the world's least-developed countries, Mali has undertaken significant political and economic reforms since the early 1990s, including a decentralization program that gave greater autonomy to local communities. Mali has benefited from international debt relief, and is currently working with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to improve its budget and meet the targets under the Poverty Reduction and Growth Facility.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties:

Mali is an electoral democracy. During the 2007 presidential election, voting was peaceful, and the results were deemed valid by domestic and international observers. The president, who appoints the prime minister, is elected by popular vote to serve up to two five-year terms. Members of the 147-seat unicameral National Assembly serve five-year terms, with 13 seats reserved to represent Malians living abroad.

Nearly 70 political parties operate in shifting electoral coalitions and are often organized around leading personalities. The largest party, ADEMA, participated in the coalition to back President Amadou Toumani Touré during the 2007 elections. A new political party, the Project for Economic and Social Development (PDES), was formed in July 2010 in preparation for the 2012 presidential election. PDES was established as a successor to the Citizen Movement, Touré's nonpartisan political association.

A number of anticorruption initiatives have been launched under Touré's administration, including the creation of the Office of the General Auditor. However, corruption remains a problem, particularly in public procurement and contracting. In September 2010, members of the Health Ministry were arrested for embezzling \$4 million from the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria. Two related grants were suspended, resulting in the loss of more than \$22 million in aid. Mali was ranked 116 out of 178 countries surveyed in Transparency International's

2010 Corruption Perceptions Index, and 153 of 183 countries in the World Bank's 2011 Doing Business report.

Mali's media have been considered among the freest in Africa. Dormant criminal libel laws have not been invoked by authorities since 2007, and there were no reports of harassment or intimidation of journalists in 2010. The government does not restrict internet access, although less than 1 percent of the population had access in 2010.

While Mali's population is predominantly Muslim and the High Islamic Council has a great deal of influence over politics, the state is secular, and minority religious rights are protected by law. Academic freedom is respected.

Freedoms of assembly and association are respected. Many civic groups and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), including human rights groups, operate without interference. However, AQIM's activity in the north has complicated the work of NGOs in the affected region. The constitution guarantees workers the right to unionize, with the exception of those who provide "essential services," such as security force personnel or school principals.

The judiciary is not independent of the executive and is too weak to provide an adequate check on the other two branches of government. Traditional authorities decide the majority of disputes in rural areas. In July 2010, the National Assembly passed a law calling for the establishment of Centers for Access to Rights and Justice, which would provide citizens with information about their legal rights and judicial procedures. The centers were not yet operational at year's end. Detainees are not always charged within the 48-hour period set by law, and there are lengthy delays in bringing defendants to trial. Police brutality has been reported, though courts have convicted some perpetrators. Prison conditions are harsh, and while human rights monitors are permitted to visit prisons, cumbersome administrative procedures reportedly make investigations difficult.

No ethnic group predominates in the government or security forces. Long-standing tensions between the more populous nonpastoralist ethnic groups and the marginalized Moor and Tuareg pastoralist groups have fueled intermittent instability.

Women are underrepresented in high political posts; 15 were elected to the National Assembly in 2007, and 5 of 27 cabinet ministers are women. Women's representation at the local level increased from 6.5 percent in 2004 to 8.7 percent in 2009. Domestic violence against women is widespread, and cultural traditions have hindered reform.

Forced labor is prohibited, and child trafficking is punishable by 20 years in prison. However, adult trafficking is not criminalized, and Mali remains a source, transit, and destination country for women and children trafficked for the purposes of sexual exploitation and forced labor. Prosecution of suspected traffickers has been weak; most are briefly detained and released without charges. Traditional forms of slavery persist, particularly in the north, and according to some rights groups, there may be thousands of people living in conditions of servitude.

Malta

Political Rights: 1

Population: 420,000

Civil Liberties: 1

Capital: Valletta

Status: Free

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline For Year Under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
1;1F									

Overview: Conditions for immigrants seeking entrance into the European Union (EU) through Malta improved in 2010, largely due to agreements reached between the EU and Libya. Several EU countries also agreed to accept a large number of asylum seekers, who had been awaiting relocation from Malta, which helped to reduce the portion of immigrants Malta was required to absorb.

After gaining independence from Britain in 1964, Malta joined the Commonwealth and became a republic in 1974. Power has alternated between the pro-Western, center-right Nationalist Party (PN) and the nonaligned, leftist Malta Labour Party (MLP). The PN pursued membership in the European Union (EU), which the country finally achieved in 2004.

Edward Fenech Adami, the outgoing prime minister and veteran PN leader, was elected president of the republic in 2004. Lawrence Gonzi, the deputy prime minister, took over the premiership.

In the March 2008 elections, Gonzi led the PN to a narrow victory over the MLP; the PN won 49.3 percent of the vote, while the MLP captured 48.9 percent. However, results in the country's 13 five-seat electoral constituencies gave the MLP 34 seats and the PN 31, triggering a constitutional provision that allows extra seats to be added to ensure a legislative majority for the party winning the popular vote. The PN consequently received four additional seats. Voter turnout was 93 percent, the lowest the country had seen since 1971.

Former MLP leader George Abela was sworn in as president in April 2009. Abela is the first president to be nominated by a political party not in power and the first since 1974 to be backed by both sides of the House.

In a 2008 agreement with Italy, Libya pledged to strengthen its border control and take steps to curb immigration to the EU, which resulted in a significant decline in unauthorized immigration to Malta in 2010. According to the National Statistics Office of Malta, only one boat carrying 27 immigrants was documented to have landed in Malta during the year compared to 84 in 2008. The pilot intra-EU Relocation of Refugees from Malta (EUREMA) programme that began in 2010 also helped reduce the number of immigrants that Malta would need to accept; the United States and several EU countries absorbed some 1,000 immigrants who had been awaiting relocation from Malta. While the number of people being held in Maltese detention centers had decreased, incoming refugees and asylum seekers could still face mandatory detention of up to 18 months under Maltese law. The forcible return

of asylum seekers in 2010 to their home country, where they faced a high risk of human rights abuses, violated Malta's obligations under the European Convention on Human Rights. In October 2010, the EU passed an Association Agreement, which will provide Libya with more than 50 million euros over the next two years to assist in improving border control and providing better protection for asylum seekers.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Malta is an electoral democracy. Members of the 65-seat unicameral legislature, the House of Representatives, are elected through proportional representation with a single-transferable-vote (STV) arrangement, allowing voters to rank competing candidates by preference. Members are elected for five-year terms, and lawmakers in turn elect the president, who also serves for five years. The president names the prime minister, usually the leader of the majority party or coalition. Elections are generally free and fair. Following the 2008 elections, four extra seats were added to the parliament, for a total of 69 members, to ensure that the party winning the popular vote could obtain a legislative majority.

The ruling PN and opposition MLP dominate national politics. The smaller Democratic Alternative party also competes, but is not currently represented in the parliament.

Malta faced a series of corruption scandals in 2010. In August, the mayor of San Gwann was charged with soliciting bribes, and his son received a two-year suspended jail sentence on corruption charges for soliciting bribes for waste contracts. In August, the mayor of Santa Venera resigned after corruption charges were brought against her. Separately, the deputy mayor of Gharb resigned in August, after statutory rape charges were brought against him. A survey conducted by Malta Today in 2010 indicated that only 20 percent of the population felt that corruption was being fought at the local and national levels. In September 2010, the Maltese government presented the Whistleblower's Act in an effort to combat corruption. Private sector employers would be required to establish a whistle-blower's office to address allegations of irregularity, providing workers with the opportunity to report corrupt activities at their place of employment. Whistle-blowers would be protected from prosecution or disciplinary measures unless they reported allegations to the media before passing the claims through the whistle-blower's office. The act would also add a special investigator position to Malta's Permanent Commission against Corruption. The bill had not yet been passed by year's end. Malta was ranked 37 out of 178 countries surveyed in Transparency International's 2010 Corruption Perceptions Index.

The constitution guarantees freedom of speech and of the press, though incitement to racial hatred is punishable by a jail term of six to eight months. Blasphemy is also illegal, and censorship remains an ongoing issue. There are several daily newspapers and weekly publications in Maltese and English, as well as radio and television stations. Residents also have access to Italian television broadcasts. Finance Minister Tonio Fenech filed a libel suit against two Malta Today editors in 2009 for challenging his integrity as a minister. The newspaper filed a counter-protest in November of that year, and no further action was taken against the paper in 2010. In February 2010, student organizations joined together to form the Front Against Censorship, organizing a march against the country's blasphemy laws and

a clause in the Press Act that prohibits printed criticism of public morals. The government does not restrict internet access.

The constitution establishes Roman Catholicism as the state religion, and the state grants subsidies only to Catholic schools. While the population is overwhelmingly Roman Catholic, small communities of Muslims, Jews, and Protestants are tolerated and respected. There is one Muslim private school. Academic freedom is respected.

The constitution provides for freedoms of assembly and association, and the government generally respects these rights in practice. Nongovernmental organizations investigating human rights issues are able to operate without state interference. The law recognizes the right to form and join trade unions, and limits on the right to strike were eased in 2002. However, a compulsory arbitration clause in the country's Employment and Industrial Relations Act allows the government to force a settlement on striking workers, contravening the International Labor Organization's Convention 87. The clause is reportedly used only when all other channels for arbitration have been exhausted. Approximately 55 percent of workers are unionized.

The judiciary is independent, and the rule of law prevails in civil and criminal matters. Prison conditions generally meet international standards, though both the Council of Europe's Commission for Human Rights and the EU Justice Commissioner have criticized poor detention conditions for irregular migrants and asylum seekers. Migrant workers are reportedly often exploited and subject to substandard working conditions. In July 2010, a group of immigrants introduced a "Network for Equality" in order to voice their own opinions on the immigration debate and pressure the Maltese government on certain migration and integration issues. Malta won a bid in 2009 to host the European Commission's European Asylum Support Office, which will facilitate communication and cooperation between EU member states on asylum applications. However, the office had not been opened by the end of 2010.

Women occupy only 6 of the 69 seats in parliament, though they now hold two cabinet posts. Divorce is illegal, and violence against women remains a problem. Abortion is prohibited, even in cases of rape or incest. Malta is a destination for men and women trafficked for the purpose of sexual exploitation.

Marshall Islands

Political Rights: 1

Population: 50,000

Civil Liberties: 1

Capital: Majuro

Status: Free

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline For Year Under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
1,1F									

Overview:

Pressures to increase economic self-reliance under the terms of the 2004 Compact of Free Association with the

United States and worsening economic problems compelled the government to propose numerous fiscal reforms in 2010, including cuts to cabinet officials' allowances and new taxes. Many of the austerity proposals were included in the 2011 national budget, which was passed in September.

The atolls and islands that make up the Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI) were claimed by Germany in 1885 and occupied by Japan during World War I. U.S. forces took control during World War II, and the RMI came under U.S. trusteeship in 1947. The country gained independence in 1986.

The RMI maintains close relations with the United States under a Compact of Free Association. The first compact, which came into force in 1986, allows the United States to maintain military facilities in the RMI in exchange for defense guarantees and development assistance, as well as visa-free access to the United States to live, work, study, and seek medical services. The RMI relies on compact funds for nearly two-thirds of its annual budget.

An amended compact with new funding and accountability requirements took effect in 2004 and will run through 2023. The country will receive an annual transfer of \$57 million for the first 10 years and \$62 million for the last 10. In exchange, the United States will have use of the Kwajalein missile-testing site—the primary U.S. testing ground for long-range nuclear missiles—through 2066. For many years, the local population has voiced concern over such testing facilities due to potential health and environmental hazards. Bikini Atoll remains uninhabitable, and Enewetak Atoll is partly contaminated. A \$150 million Nuclear Claims Fund provides compensation for past, present, and future RMI claimants, but victims argue that this sum is inadequate. The U.S. government rejected calls for additional compensation on the basis that it had already paid out \$1.5 billion in personal injury and property damages under the original compact. In April 2010, the U.S. Supreme Court declared that it would not hear the case brought against the U.S. government by Bikini residents seeking "just compensation."

With limited education and employment opportunities, about one-third of RMI's citizens currently live overseas, mostly in the United States. In response to the global economic downturn and in an effort to reduce dependence on international aid, the government in July 2010 proposed numerous austerity measures, including halting new vehicle purchases, cutting allowances for legislators, and imposing additional sales taxes. Many of the austerity proposals were included in the 2011 budget passed in September 2010, which is expected to bolster income and reduce the government's budget deficit by 50 percent.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: The RMI is an electoral democracy. The president is chosen for a four-year term by the unicameral parliament (Nitijela), from among its 33 members, who are directly elected to four-year terms. An advisory body, the Council of Chiefs (Iroij), consists of 12 traditional leaders who are consulted on customary law. The two main political parties are Aelon Kein Ad (AKA) and the United Democratic Party (UDP). In the November 2007 legislative elections, the AKA won 18 seats, while the UDP captured 15. In January 2008, Litokwa Toméing was elected president. A no-confidence vote in October 2009 toppled Toméing, and

Jurelang Zedkaia, the Speaker of the legislature, was elected to succeed him later that month.

Corruption is a serious problem, and little progress has been made on reforms or improvements in transparency. An Asian Development Bank report released in April 2010 found that RMI lacked adequate accountability mechanisms for public enterprises, which lost \$6.4 million annually between 1999 and 2008. The report also found redundancy of government workers and overpayment for services.

The government generally respects freedom of speech and of the press. A privately owned newspaper, the *Marshall Islands Journal*, publishes articles in English and Marshallese. The government's *Marshall Islands Gazette* provides official news but avoids political coverage. Broadcast outlets include both government- and church-owned radio stations, and cable television offers a wide variety of international news and entertainment programs. Residents can also access U.S. armed forces radio and television in some parts of the country. The government does not restrict internet access, but penetration rates are low due to cost and technical difficulties.

Religious and academic freedoms are respected in practice. However, the quality of secondary education remains low, and four-year college education is rare.

Citizen groups operate freely in the country. Many are sponsored by or affiliated with church organizations and provide social services. The government broadly interprets constitutional guarantees of freedom of assembly and association to cover trade unions. There is no formal right to strike or engage in collective bargaining, but neither activity is prohibited.

The constitution provides for an independent judiciary. The government raised judges' salaries in recent years to attract and retain more qualified jurists. Nearly all judges and attorneys are recruited from overseas. To ease the increasing backlog of land dispute cases, the government revived the use of Traditional Rights Courts in May 2010 to make advisory rulings to the High Court. However, persons knowledgeable about traditional rights and customs had yet to be appointed to serve on the courts by year's end. Police brutality is generally not a problem, and detention centers and prisons meet minimum international standards.

RMI has a tradition of matrilineal inheritance in tribal rank and personal property, but social and economic discrimination against women is widespread. Women's rights groups say that few women graduate from college, obtain jobs outside the home, or hold positions in government. Only one woman sits in the parliament. Tensions between the local population and Chinese migrants are increasing, as Chinese businessmen control much of the retail sector. Several cases of assaults against Chinese migrants have been reported. In December 2010, a Chinese national was charged with promoting prostitution and employing aliens without work permits; his bail was set at an unprecedented \$500,000.

Mauritania

Political Rights: 6

Population: 3,400,000

Civil Liberties: S

Capital: Nouakchott

Status: Not Free

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline For Year Under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
5,5PF	5,5PF	6,5NF	6,5NF	6,5NF	5,4PF	4,4PF	6,5NF	6,5NF	6,5NF

Overview: The Mauritanian government stepped up its efforts to combat terrorism in 2010, approving an antiterrorism law in July and adopting a new counterterrorism strategy in October. The National Assembly passed legislation in July that allows for private ownership of radio and television stations. In September, the opposition Rally for Democratic Forces finally recognized Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz as the country's president.

Following independence from France in 1960, Mauritania was ruled by a series of civilian and military authoritarian regimes. In 1984, Colonel Maaouya Ould Sidi Ahmed Taya ousted President Mohamed Khouna Ould Haidallah. Although Taya introduced a multiparty system in 1991, he repeatedly secured poll victories for himself and his Democratic and Social Republican Party (PRDS) through the misuse of state resources, suppression of the opposition, and manipulation of the media and electoral institutions.

In August 2005, soldiers led by Colonel Ely Ould Mohamed Vail overthrew Taya's government in a move that received strong public support. Soon after taking power, the Military Council for Justice and Democracy (CMJD) pardoned and released hundreds of political prisoners, and dozens of political activists returned from exile. The CMJD set a timeline for holding elections and established an independent electoral commission to administer the process. Legislative and municipal elections were held in November and December 2006, with independent candidates, mostly former PRDS members, securing a majority of the seats. Independents also won a majority of seats in January and February 2007 Senate elections, while Sidi Ould Cheikh Abdellahi, an independent, won the presidency in March. This series of elections were the first in Mauritania's history to be broadly viewed as generally free and fair.

Abdellahi drew criticism from military leaders and members of the National Party for Democracy and Development (PNDD), a propresidential party formed in early 2008, after he invited hard-line Islamists and former members of Taya's regime into the cabinet. The government resigned in June under the threat of a parliamentary no-confidence vote, and Abdellahi formed a new cabinet in July that included only PNDD members. However, this failed to restore lawmakers' confidence, and 48 PNDD parliamentarians quit the party on August 4. On the morning of August 6, Abdellahi fired four leading generals. One of them, General Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz, mounted a coup the same day.

Aziz and his allies announced that an 11-member junta, the High State Council

(HSC), would run the country until new elections were held. While the international community strongly condemned the coup and key donors suspended non-humanitarian aid, the domestic reaction was mixed. A majority of lawmakers and mayors expressed support, but a coalition of four pro-Abdellahi parties formed the National Front for the Defense of Democracy and refused to participate in the junta-led government.

In April 2009, Aziz announced that he would resign from the military in order to run for president. Despite initial resistance, opposition parties eventually agreed to participate in the presidential vote after six days of negotiations in Senegal. Under international pressure, the HSC in June handed power to a transitional government comprising both opposition and coup supporters that would supervise an election set for July.

Aziz won the election in the first round with 52.6 percent of the vote. Four opposition parties claimed that the results were prefabricated, electoral lists had been tampered with, and fraudulent voters had used fake ballot papers and identity cards. The parties lodged a formal appeal with the Constitutional Council that was ultimately rejected, and the head of the electoral commission resigned over doubts about the election's conduct. While some opposition parties continued to protest the outcome, the Rally for Democratic Forces (RDF) recognized Aziz's presidency in September 2010, citing the need for unity in the face of increased terrorist attacks.

Despite the initiation of oil production in 2006, Mauritania remains one of the world's poorest countries and imports about 70 percent of its food. Three-quarters of the population is dependent on subsistence agriculture and livestock production.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Mauritania is not an electoral democracy. The transitional elections of 2006 and 2007 were generally praised by independent observers, but the constitutional government was ousted by the August 2008 military coup. Serious doubts have been raised about the legitimacy of the 2009 presidential election, which installed coup leader Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz as the civilian president.

Under the 1991 constitution, the president is responsible for appointing and dismissing the prime minister and cabinet, and a 2006 amendment imposed a limit of two five-year presidential terms. The bicameral legislature consists of the 95-seat National Assembly, elected to five-year terms by popular vote in single-member districts, and the 56-seat Senate, with 53 members elected by mayors and municipal councils and 3 members chosen by the rest of the chamber to represent Mauritians living abroad. Senators serve six-year terms, with a third coming up for election every two years. In the 2009 Senate elections, the Union for the Republic, formed by Aziz supporters, won 14 of the 17 seats contested. Mauritania's party system is poorly developed, and clan and ethnic loyalties strongly influence the country's politics.

Corruption is believed to be a serious problem, and political instability has helped to prevent fiscal transparency from taking root in recent years. The Aziz government's anticorruption campaign has resulted in some notable arrests, including the detention of the former human rights commissioner on embezzlement charges in September 2010. However, the opposition has criticized the government's efforts as ineffective and politicized. Mauritania was ranked 143 out of 178 countries surveyed

in Transparency International's 2010 Corruption Perceptions Index and 165 out of 183 countries in the World Bank's 2011 Doing Business report. In December 2010, the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative designated Mauritania as a candidate country, finding it "close to compliant" with the organization's requirements.

Journalists continue to practice self-censorship, and private newspapers face the threat of closure for material seen as offensive to Islam or threatening to the state. Following the 2008 coup, the military imposed new restrictions, including the takeover of state broadcast media. In 2009, the editor of the website Taqadoumy, Hanevy Ould Dehah, was sentenced to six months in jail for, "offending public decency." He continued to be held after completing his sentence in December 2009, and was sentenced to two additional years in prison in February 2010. Dehah was finally released later that month under a broader presidential pardon. In July 2010, the National Assembly passed a new law aimed at liberalizing the broadcast sector and allowing private ownership of radio and television stations. However, no private stations had been launched by year's end. The British Broadcasting Corporation's World Service and Radio France Internationale are rebroadcast on local FM stations, and wealthier residents have access to satellite television. Several private newspapers compete with state-run Arabic and French dailies, but their reach is limited by low circulation and literacy rates. The government sometimes attempts to restrict internet access, though little more than 1 percent of the population uses the medium.

Mauritania was declared an Islamic republic under the 1991 constitution, and proselytizing by non-Muslims is banned. In practice, however, non-Muslim communities have not been targeted for persecution. Academic freedom is respected.

The 1991 constitution guaranteed freedoms of association and assembly, and conditions grew more permissive when civilian rule was restored after the 2005 coup. In the wake of the 2008 coup, however, the junta banned protests and allowed only supporters to demonstrate. There were fewer instances of police repression of protesters in 2010; in one incident, police violently broke up a sit-in by government employees in Ksar, just outside the capital.

Workers have the legal right to unionize and bargain for wages, but unions must be approved by the public prosecutor and often encounter hostility from employers. Although only about a quarter of Mauritians are formally employed, the vast majority of workers in the industrial and commercial sectors are unionized. The right to strike is limited by notice requirements and bans on certain forms of strike action. In May 2010, some 50 warehouse workers were reportedly arbitrarily arrested in Nouakchott after demanding pay raises; some were held as long as two weeks.

The judicial system is heavily influenced by the government. Many decisions are shaped by Sharia (Islamic law), especially in family and civil matters. Prison conditions are harsh, suspects are routinely held for long periods of pretrial detention, and security forces suspected of human rights abuses operate with impunity. There are reports that prisoners, particularly terrorism suspects, are subject to torture by authorities.

Islamist militants have carried out a number of attacks in Mauritania in recent years. In August 2010, Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) carried out a suicide attack on military barracks in Nema, though no soldiers were killed. Mauritanian forces clashed with AQIM at the Malian border in July and September, resulting in the deaths of 27 militants and five soldiers.

The National Assembly passed a new antiterrorism law in July 2010. The original bill, introduced in January, was declared unconstitutional by the Constitutional Council. The new version includes provisions for court-authorized wiretapping, allows minors to be tried on terrorism charges, and provides immunity to informants who alert government to planned terrorist attacks. Despite its improved wiretapping safeguards, some opposition figures remained concerned that the revised law would lead to violations of civil liberties. In October, the government held a conference with academics and members of civil society that culminated in the adoption of a new counterterrorism strategy. In addition, Mauritania and Mali launched a joint military border patrol in November that enabled cross-border intervention. Also in November, Mauritania conducted its first national census since 1994 in hopes of better controlling its vast territory.

The country's three main ethnic groups are the politically and economically dominant Moors of Arab and Berber descent; the black descendants of slaves, also known as Haratin or black Moors; and black Africans who are closer in ethnic heritage to the peoples of neighboring Senegal and Mali. Racial and ethnic discrimination persists in all spheres of political and economic life. In April 2010, students clashed at the University of Nouakchott following Francophone student protests in response to speeches made by the prime minister on National Arabic Language Day that emphasized Arabic as the official language of Mauritania. Despite a 1981 law banning slavery in Mauritania, an estimated half a million black Mauritians are believed to live in conditions of servitude. A 2008 law set penalties of 5 to 10 years in prison for slavery, but it drew criticism for not covering related practices such as forced marriage and indentured labor.

The Aziz government has continued ousted president Sidi Ould Cheikh Abdellahi's initiative to facilitate the return of the some 30,000 black Mauritians who still reside in Senegal and Mali after being expelled following communal violence in 1989. For the first time, the government in 2009 publicly acknowledged its involvement in the expulsion of Afro-Mauritians between 1989 and 1991 and agreed to provide compensation to 244 widows of those killed during the ordeal. While returnees have faced difficulty in recovering confiscated land, the government has provided them with housing assistance.

Under a 2005 law, party lists for the National Assembly elections must include district-based quotas of female candidates. Women currently hold 21 seats in the National Assembly, 8 Senate seats, and 30 percent of all municipal council seats. Nevertheless, discrimination against women persists. Under Sharia, a woman's testimony is given only half the weight of a man's. Legal protections regarding property and pay equity are rarely respected in practice. Female genital mutilation (FGM) is illegal, but still widely practiced. In January 2010, 34 Islamic scholars issued a religious edict banning FGM. Abortion is legal only when the life of the mother is in danger. Human trafficking remains a serious problem, as the country remains a source and destination for women, men, and children trafficked for the purposes of forced labor and sexual exploitation.

Mauritius

Political Rights: 1

Population: 1,300,000

Civil Liberties: 2

Capital: Port Louis

Status: Free

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline For Year Under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
1,2F	1,2F	1,2F	1,1F	1,1F	1,2F	1,2F	1,2F	1,2F	1,2F

Overview: In parliamentary elections held in May 2010, Prime Minister Navinchandra Ramgoolam's Alliance for the Future captured 45 seats in the 70-member National Assembly, while former prime minister Paul Berenger's Alliance of the Heart took 20. Throughout the year, Mauritius stepped up its efforts to combat piracy on the Indian Ocean.

Mauritius's ethnically mixed population is primarily descended from immigrants brought as laborers from the Indian subcontinent during the island's 360 years of Dutch, French, and British colonial rule. Since gaining independence from Britain in 1968, Mauritius has maintained one of the developing world's most successful democracies.

Navinchandra Ramgoolam served as prime minister from 1995 until 2000, when President Cassam Uteem called early elections, partly in response to a series of corruption scandals. The opposition alliance, led by the Mauritian Socialist Movement (MSM), won the vote, and its leader, former prime minister Anerood Jugnauth, returned to the premiership. In a planned power shift, Paul Berenger—the leader of the Mauritian Militant Movement (MMM), which was allied with the MSM—became prime minister in September 2003, becoming the first person from outside the island's Indian-origin majority to hold the post. Jugnauth was then elected as president.

In the 2005 parliamentary elections, frustration with rising unemployment and inflation following the loss of preferential trade deals resulted in a victory for the opposition Social Alliance, and Ramgoolam returned to power. However, rising prices and increasing levels of crime quickly diminished the popularity of the new government.

In 2008, the National Assembly approved legislation establishing a Truth and Justice Commission to examine the country's history of slavery and indentured labor and to consider possible reparations. In July 2010, the commission held 26 public hearings on Rodrigues Island, a Mauritian dependency, and found that the islanders' complaints centered primarily on the loss of ancestral property.

In March 2010, President Jugnauth dissolved the National Assembly as its five-year term of office came to an end. Elections were held in May, with a voter turnout of approximately 78 percent. Ramgoolam's Alliance for the Future (AF)—which included his Labour Party, the Mauritian Social Democratic Party, and the MSM—captured 45 seats in the 70-member parliament, while Berenger's Alliance of the Heart (AH)—a coalition between the MMM, the National Union, and the Mau-

ritanian Socialist Democratic Movement—captured 20. The two coalitions campaigned on similar platforms of strengthening the welfare state and improving social justice. Several smaller parties captured the remaining seats. Outside observers judged the elections to be free and fair, and Ramgoolam retained the premiership.

In 2010, the government increased its efforts to address piracy on the Indian Ocean, which continued to adversely affect the country's economy. In March, Mauritius signed a regional code of conduct regulating the repression of piracy, providing for information sharing, cooperation regarding the arrest and prosecution of alleged pirates, and the seizure of suspected pirate ships, among other responsibilities. In October, the country hosted a regional ministerial conference on combating piracy with the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) and the Indian Ocean Commission (IOC), which resulted in the adoption of a new antipiracy strategy. At year's end, the government was in the process of finalizing an agreement with the European Union to prosecute and detain pirates in Mauritius.

Mauritius has actively sought to promote itself as an economic gateway to Africa. The country has reportedly attracted more than 9,000 offshore entities since independence in 1968, with the banking sector alone drawing more than \$1 billion in investments. Mauritius ranked 20 out of 183 countries surveyed in the World Bank's 2011 report on the ease of doing business.

**Political Rights
and Civil Liberties:**

Mauritius is an electoral democracy. Since independence, voters have regularly chosen their representatives in free, fair, and competitive elections. The head of state is a largely ceremonial president elected by the unicameral National Assembly for a five-year term. Executive power resides with the prime minister, who is appointed by the president from the party or coalition with the most seats in the legislature. Of the National Assembly's 70 members, 62 are directly elected and 8 are appointed from among unsuccessful candidates who gained the largest number of votes; all members serve five-year terms. The MMM and MSM have alternated in power for decades. Decentralized structures govern the country's small island dependencies. The largest dependency, Rodrigues Island, has its own government, local councils, and two seats in the National Assembly.

The country continues to enjoy a positive reputation for transparency and accountability. Mauritius was ranked 39 out of 178 countries surveyed in Transparency International's 2010 Corruption Perceptions Index, and the country has been ranked first in the Ibrahim Index of African Governance since its inception in 2007.

The constitution guarantees freedom of expression. Several private daily and weekly publications criticize both government and opposition politicians and their policies. The state-owned Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation (MBC) operates radio and television services that generally reflect government viewpoints. In 2010, two independent journalists who had criticized government actions were briefly detained on charges of libel. A small number of private radio stations have been authorized, but the state-run media hold a monopoly in broadcasting local news. Internet use is widespread and unrestricted, with four different service providers. Religious and academic freedoms are respected.

The right to freedoms of assembly and association are honored, though police

occasionally use excessive force in response to riots. The island's nine labor federations include 300 unions. Tens of thousands of foreign workers employed in export-processing zones suffer from poor living and working conditions, and employers in the zones are reportedly hostile to unions.

The generally independent judiciary, headed by the Supreme Court, administers a legal system that is an amalgam of French and British traditions. Civil rights are for the most part well respected, although individual cases of police brutality have been reported.

Various ethnic cultures and traditions coexist peacefully, and constitutional prohibitions against discrimination are generally upheld. However, Mauritian Creoles, descendants of African slaves who comprise about a third of the population, live in poverty and are culturally and economically marginalized. Tensions between the Hindu majority and Muslim minority persist, constituting one of the country's few potential ethnic flashpoints. Chagos Islanders—resettled in Mauritius after being evicted by the British in the 1960s to make room for a military base—have not been integrated into society and suffer from high levels of unemployment.

Women comprise only 20 percent of the paid labor force, receive less compensation than men for similar work, and generally occupy a subordinate role in society. However, they enjoy equal access to public services and education. Women currently hold 13 seats in the National Assembly, though they occupy only 5 percent of the senior positions in the 100 top companies. Domestic violence against women remains a major concern.

Mexico

Political Rights: 3*

Population: 110,700,000

Civil Liberties: 3

Capital: Mexico City

Status: Partly Free

Status Change: Mexico's political rights rating declined from 2 to 3 and its status from Free to Partly Free due to the targeting of local officials by organized crime groups and the government's inability to protect citizens' rights in the face of criminal violence.

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline For Year Under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
2,3F	2,2F	2,2F	2,2F	2,2F	2,3F	2,3F	2,3F	2,3F	3,3PF

Overview: Violence between security forces and organized criminal groups, and among the criminal groups themselves, reached unprecedented levels in 2010. Over 15,000 people were killed as the syndicates fought over territory, continued an expansion into new criminal activities, and sought to coerce officials and corrode state institutions. The government maintained troop deployments in the regions most affected by violence even as allegations of rights abuses by the military increased. The

Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) won six of the year's nine state gubernatorial races, but alliances between the ruling center-right National Action Party and the left-leaning Party of the Democratic Revolution succeeded in defeating the PRI in three of its traditional strongholds.

Mexico achieved independence from Spain in 1810 and became a republic in 1822. Seven years after the Revolution of 1910, a new constitution established the United Mexican States as a federal republic. From its founding in 1929 until 2000, the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) dominated the country through patronage, corruption, and repression. The formal business of government often took place in secret, and the rule of law was frequently compromised by arbitrary power.

In the landmark 2000 presidential election, Vicente Fox Quesada of the National Action Party (PAN) defeated the candidates of the PRI and the leftist Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD), capturing 42.5 percent of the vote. By 2003, Fox's greatest achievements remained his defeat of the long-ruling PRI, providing for more open and accountable government, and arresting some leaders of the country's vicious drug-trafficking groups. However, solutions to the problems of poverty, corruption, crime, and unemployment proved elusive. Elections held in July 2003 confirmed the PRI as the most powerful party in Congress and in many state governments.

In the 2006 presidential election, PAN candidate Felipe Calderón defeated Mexico City mayor Andrés Manuel López Obrador of the PRD by a mere 244,000 votes in the initial count. López Obrador rejected the result and for several months led protests that paralyzed parts of Mexico City, but many Mexicans—and most international observers—were not convinced by the PRD's evidence of fraud. In September, after a partial recount, the Federal Electoral Tribunal formally declared

Calderón the winner. Though the PAN won the most seats in the congressional elections, the PRD's share of deputies exceeded the PRI's for the first time.

In 2007, Calderón managed to forge coalitions with opposition lawmakers to pass modest pension, tax, electoral, and judicial reforms, but political wrangling increased in 2008 due to an attempted reform of the petroleum sector and the approach of the 2009 congressional elections. The PRI emerged from the July 2009 balloting with control of the Chamber of Deputies, taking 237 seats and forming a majority with the 21 seats of the allied Green Party. The PAN's share fell to 143 seats, and the PRD declined to a distant third, with 71. For a third straight year, the PRI outperformed its rivals in state and local elections, which were held in six states in 2009. Balloting was held in nine states in 2010, with PRI candidates winning the gubernatorial contests in six. Nonetheless, alliances between the PAN and the PRD led to the election of non-PRI governors in Oaxaca, Sinaloa, and Puebla for the first time in decades.

Intermittent talks among the three major parties in 2010 failed to yield progress on a major political reform proposed by Calderón in December 2009. The package would, among other changes, allow limited reelection for many elected officials, permit candidates to run as independents, provide for a second round of voting in presidential elections, reduce the size of Congress, and grant the president a line-item veto on budget bills.

Also in 2010, more than 15,000 people were killed in violence associated with

major drug-trafficking syndicates, which has increased each year since 2006 and has become the dominant concern in Mexican politics. This precipitous rise occurred despite Calderón's decision to deploy the military to the worst-affected areas soon after taking office. While a majority of Mexicans continued to support the government's offensive against organized crime, opinion polls also registered skepticism about official claims that the campaign was making progress. In addition, mounting allegations of severe human rights violations have surrounded the security operations conducted by more than 45,000 soldiers in various parts of Mexico.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Mexico is an electoral democracy. The president is elected to a six-year term and cannot be reelected. The bicameral Congress consists of the 128-member Senate, elected for six years through a mix of direct voting and proportional representation, with at least two parties represented in each state's delegation, and the 500-member Chamber of Deputies, with 300 elected directly and 200 through proportional representation, all for three-year terms. Members of Congress are also currently barred from reelection. Each state has an elected governor and legislature.

Mexico's Federal Electoral Institute, which supervises elections and enforces political party laws, has come to be viewed as a model for other countries. The 2006 elections were considered generally free and fair, but there were many complaints, especially by the opposition PRD, concerning negative advertising and the use of administrative resources on behalf of the presidential victor, Felipe Calderón of the ruling PAN. In response, an electoral reform was passed in 2007 to strictly regulate campaign financing and the content of political advertising. Opinion was mixed regarding the efficacy of the reform in its first major test, the 2009 Chamber of Deputies elections, but the contest overall was considered free and fair. At the state level, allegations of abuse of public resources to favor specific gubernatorial candidates have increased in recent years.

Perceptions of the vulnerability of politicians to pressure from organized crime increased in 2010 with the murders of 13 small-town mayors and the PRI candidate for governor of Tamaulipas, one of the most violent states. Estimates of the number of municipalities subject to drug traffickers' influence have grown substantially in recent years. In the most violence-plagued regions, provision of public services has become more difficult.

Official corruption remains a serious problem. Billions of dollars in illegal drug money is believed to enter the country each year from the United States, and there is a perception that drug money affects politics, particularly on the state and local levels. In May 2009, federal authorities arrested more than 30 public officials in Michoacan for ties to the locally dominant La Familia criminal organization, but by the end of 2010, nearly all of the cases had collapsed, feeding allegations that the charges were politically motivated. No senior politicians have been convicted of corruption in recent years, though many security officials have been dismissed or charged with links to drug traffickers. Mexico was ranked 98 out of 178 countries surveyed in Transparency International's 2010 Corruption Perceptions Index.

Legal and constitutional guarantees of free speech have been gradually improving, but the security environment for journalists has deteriorated markedly. Some major media outlets are no longer dependent on the government for advertising

and subsidies, and the competitive press has taken the lead in denouncing official corruption, though serious investigative reporting is scarce. Other outlets, particularly at the local level, remain vulnerable to relationships in which positive coverage of politicians is exchanged for financial benefits. Broadcast media are dominated by two corporations that control over 90 percent of the stations. Defamation was decriminalized at the federal level in 2007, and while it remains a crime in many states, a 2009 Supreme Court decision expanded the range of reporting protected from such state laws.

Since a sharp increase in violence in 2006, reporters probing police issues, drug trafficking, and official corruption have faced a high risk of physical harm. The National Human Rights Commission reported nine journalists killed in 2010, with another four disappeared, making Mexico one of the world's most dangerous countries for journalists. Self-censorship has increased, and many newspapers in high-violence zones no longer publish bylines with stories involving organized crime; others avoid such stories altogether. A special prosecutor's office devoted to investigating crimes against journalists has made only slow progress since opening in 2006. The office was given increased powers in July 2010, and in October, the government pledged to arrange protection for threatened journalists, but rights groups considered the initiative weak. Mexico's 2002 freedom of information law, despite some limitations, has been considered successful at strengthening transparency at the federal level, though many states lag behind. The government does not restrict internet access.

Religious freedom is constitutionally protected and generally respected in practice. However, it is limited in some areas, and political battles over issues such as abortion and homosexual rights have led to an increase in religious discourse in the public sphere in recent years. In August 2010, the Roman Catholic archbishop of Guadalajara accused the Supreme Court of corruption, after it ruled that same-sex marriages conducted in Mexico City must be considered valid throughout Mexico. The government does not restrict academic freedom.

Constitutional guarantees regarding free assembly and association are generally respected, but political and civic expression is restricted in some regions. In June 2010, the Supreme Court ordered the release of 12 prisoners convicted of responsibility for the violence that erupted when police attempted to evict market vendors in Atenco in 2006. Nongovernmental organizations, though highly active, sometimes face violent resistance, including threats and occasional murders. The United Nations documented 5 murders of human rights defenders in 2010. The most highly publicized was the December killing in Chihuahua of Marisela Escobedo, who had become an anti-impunity activist following the murder of her daughter.

Although Mexican trade unions' role as a pillar of the PRI has diminished significantly, independent unions have long faced government and management interference. Informal, nontransparent negotiations between employers and politically connected union leaders often result in "protection contracts" that govern employee rights but are never seen by workers. Those attempting to form independent unions are frequently fired. The government's closure of a state-run electric company in October 2009 led to protests and political strife that continued in 2010. Several large unions, particularly the teachers' union, are considered by many observers and citizens to pose obstacles to necessary policy reforms.

The justice system remains plagued by delays and unpredictability. A 2008 constitutional reform replaced the civil-inquisitorial trial system with an oral-adversarial one. An explicit presumption of innocence and stricter rules regarding evidence were also included, and the reform was widely expected to strengthen due process and increase efficiency and fairness. Nonetheless, human rights groups raised concerns about the vague definition of organized crime and the substantially weaker protections, including extended detention without charge, afforded to organized crime suspects. Implementation of the new system was expected to take eight years, and by the end of 2010, legislation to apply the procedures had passed in just 10 of 31 states.

In rural areas, respect for laws by official agencies remains tenuous, and coordination between federal authorities and the state and local police is problematic. In many of the most crime-plagued zones, federal police and troops have, upon arrival, simply relieved local police of duty, and the replacement of senior police officials with military personnel increased in 2010. A 2009 law requires all members of the police to be vetted; while in August 2010 over 10 percent of the federal police was dismissed for various offenses, the process moved slowly at the state and municipal levels. In October 2010, Calderón sent a bill to Congress that mandates the merger of state and municipal police, but the legislation had not passed by year's end.

Lower courts and law enforcement in general are undermined by widespread bribery, and a significant majority of crimes go unreported, because the underpaid police are viewed as either inept or in league with criminals. Torture, arbitrary arrest, and abuse of prisoners persist in many areas. Prisons are violent and overcrowded, and pretrial detainees account for over 40 percent of inmates. Several prison riots in 2010 resulted in the deaths of scores of prisoners, while more than 400 inmates escaped during the year, including over 230 in two incidents in Tamaulipas in September and December. Reports of vigilante activity increased in 2009 and 2010, though evidence regarding the scale is scant.

Presidential authority over the armed forces is extensive, but the military has historically operated beyond public scrutiny, and human rights advocates have warned that its strengthened counternarcotics role has not been accompanied by increased clarity regarding limitations on its conduct. Complaints of abuse increased dramatically in 2009 and 2010, including allegations of kidnapping, torture, rape, and murder. Several highly publicized incidents in which civilians were killed by soldiers created pressure to establish greater accountability for military abuses. Military personnel are generally tried in military courts. The Inter-American Court of Human Rights issued several decisions in 2010, reconfirming Mexico's obligation to try cases of human rights violations in civilian courts. In October 2010, the government submitted a bill to Congress that would give civilian courts jurisdiction over serious crimes involving the military, including torture and forced disappearance, but human rights groups complained that the legislation would continue to allow military justice to be applied in other cases of severe crimes against civilians. The legislation remained pending at year's end.

The number of deaths attributed to drugs and organized crime has risen sharply each year since 2007, with over 15,200 in 2010 alone. The carnage was concentrated in northern Mexico, particularly in Ciudad Juárez, where over 3,200 killings occurred, making it one of the world's deadliest cities. The murders often featured

extreme brutality and torture designed to maximize the psychological impact on civilians, authorities, and rival groups. The number of massacres also rose, including several attacks on drug rehabilitation centers and an attack at a party in Juárez that left 17 teenagers dead.

In addition to homicides, organized criminals have increased kidnappings, extortion, and other offenses. The government took a number of steps in recent years to curb the violence and ease popular frustration, including consultations with civic leaders, the signing of a \$1.5 billion counternarcotics aid agreement with the United States, the continued deployment of over 45,000 troops, the reformation of the federal police, and the decriminalization of possession of small quantities of drugs. The government has pointed to the killing or arrest of several dozen criminal kingpins in 2009 and 2010 as evidence of increased pressure on the syndicates.

Mexican law bans all forms of discrimination, including those based on ethnic origin, gender, age, and religion. Nevertheless, social and economic discrimination has marginalized indigenous peoples, with many relegated to extreme poverty in rural villages that lack essential services. The government has attempted to improve indigenous-language services in the justice system, an area of major concern. Indigenous groups, particularly in Chihuahua and southern states, were harmed by the criminal violence in 2010. In addition, disputes over land issues within indigenous groups at times become violent. One such dispute, between factions of the Triqui indigenous group, resulted in over 30 deaths in 2010. Rights groups also frequently detail the persecution and criminal predation faced by migrants from Central America, many of whom are bound for the United States. In August 2010, the bodies of 72 migrants, presumably executed by criminal gangs, were found in Tamaulipas. In several states, criminals impeded free movement by blocking major roads.

Domestic violence and sexual abuse are common, and perpetrators are rarely punished. Implementation of a 2007 law designed to protect women from such crimes remains halting, particularly at the state level. Mexico is both a major source and a transit country for trafficked persons. Internal trafficking is also a problem. The murder of hundreds of women in the U.S. border zone over the last 15 years has remained a controversial subject. Abortion has been a contentious issue in recent years, with many states reacting to Mexico City's 2007 liberalization of abortion laws by strengthening their own criminal bans on the procedure.

Micronesia

Political Rights: 1

Civil Liberties: 1

Status: Free

Population: 110,000

Capital: Palikir

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline For Year Under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
1,2F	1,2F	1,1F							

Overview: In 2010, ties between the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) and China expanded, including additional offers of scholarships at Chinese universities for FMS students, the appointment of the first FSM ambassador to China, and the naming of China as a top candidate for exclusive fishing rights in FSM waters.

The United States administered Micronesia, which included the Marshall Islands and other Pacific island groups, between 1947 and 1979 as a UN Trust Territory. In 1970, the Northern Marianas, Marshall Islands, and Palau demanded separate status from Kosrae, Pohnpei, Chuuk, and Yap; the latter four territories, representing 607 islands, became the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM). The FSM adopted a constitution and became self-governing in 1979, as the trusteeship expired and status negotiations with the United States continued.

In 1986, the FSM signed its first Compact of Free Association with the United States, which provides the FSM with U.S. economic and defense assistance in exchange for U.S. military bases on the islands. FSM citizens also receive visa-free entry to the United States for health services, education, and employment. An amended compact, which extends this core commitment for another 20 years, came into effect in 2003. Compact funds, which represent about one-third of the FSM's national income, contribute to education, health, and infrastructure, among other sectors. Money is also put toward a trust fund overseen by a joint board of U.S. and FSM trustees. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) warned in November 2010 that Micronesia's economy could be threatened in the future by declining compact funds and out-migration.

The allocation of funds has been a source of serious tension in federal-state relations, as several states have threatened to leave the federation unless they receive larger shares of the compact payments. The federal Congress agreed to distribute larger shares to each of the four states in 2005. To improve transparency and accountability in its use of compact funds, a new record system was launched in November 2009 to track fund projects.

With limited domestic options for postsecondary education, FSM in early 2010 accepted offers of additional scholarships from Australia and China. FSM's expanding ties with China were also reflected in the appointment of Akillino Susaia as the first ambassador to China in March. Additionally, Congress passed a resolution in May urging the president to bid out fishing rights exclusively to one country, and proponents of the resolution named China as a top candidate.

**Political Rights
and Civil Liberties:**

The FSM is an electoral democracy. The 2009 congressional elections were deemed largely free and fair. The unicameral, 14-member Congress has one directly elected representative from each of the four constituent states, who serve four-year terms. The other 10 representatives are directly elected for two-year terms from single-member districts. Chuuk state, home to nearly half of the FSM's population, holds the largest number of congressional seats; this has been a source of resentment among the three smaller states. The president and vice president are chosen by Congress from among the four state representatives to serve four-year terms. By informal agreement, the two posts are rotated among the representatives of the four states. Emanuel Mori of Chuuk and Alik L. Alik of Kosrae were chosen as president and vice president, respectively, in 2007. Each state has its own constitution, elected legislature, and governor; the state governments have considerable power, particularly in budgetary matters. Traditional leaders and institutions exercise significant influence in society, especially at the village level.

There are no formal political parties, but there are no restrictions on their formation. Political loyalties are based mainly on geography, clan relations, and personality.

Official corruption and abuses are widespread and a major source of voter discontent. The United States suspended compact payments to the state of Chuuk in 2008, after it failed to implement plans for proper financial and management oversight.

The news media operate freely. Print outlets include government-published newsletters and several small, privately-owned weekly and monthly newspapers. Television stations operate in three of the four states. Each state government runs its own radio station, and the Baptist church runs a fifth station. Cable television is available in Pohnpei and Chuuk, and satellite television is increasingly common. Use of the internet is also growing, but low income and small populations make it difficult for service providers to expand coverage.

Religious freedom is respected in this mainly Christian country. There are no reports of restrictions on academic freedom, but lack of funds negatively affects the quality of and access to education.

Freedom of assembly is respected, and citizens are free to organize civic groups. A small number of student and women's organizations are active. No labor unions exist, though there are no laws against their formation. No specific laws regulate work hours or set workplace health and safety standards. The right to strike and bargain collectively is not legally recognized. The economy is dependent on fishing, tourism, subsistence agriculture, and U.S. assistance.

The judiciary is independent, but it lacks funds to improve the functioning of the courts. There is also cultural resistance to using the court system, particularly for sex crimes.

Women enjoy equal rights under the law, including those regarding property ownership and employment. Women generally receive equal pay for equal work and are well represented in the lower and middle ranks of the state and federal governments. However, there are no women in Congress, and social and economic discrimination against women persists in the male-dominated culture. Domestic violence is common, and cases often go unreported because of family pressure, fear of reprisal, or an expectation of inaction by the authorities. Offenders rarely face trial, and those found guilty usually receive light sentences.

Moldova

Political Rights: 3

Population: 4,100,000

Civil Liberties: 3*

Capital: Chisinau

Status: Partly Free

Note: The numerical ratings and status listed above do not reflect conditions in Transnistria, which is examined in a separate report.

Ratings Change: Moldova's civil liberties rating improved from 4 to 3 due to a more balanced and diverse media environment, a reduction in government hostility toward civil society groups, and a lack of interference with political gatherings ahead of the November 2010 parliamentary elections.

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline For Year Under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

2001	2001	2002	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
2,4PF	3,4PF	3,4PF	3,4PF	3,4PF	3,4PF	3,4PF	4,4PF	3,4PF	3,3PF

Overview: Having failed to secure the three-fifths parliamentary majority needed to elect a president after taking power in 2009, the ruling Alliance for European Integration (AIE) called a September 2010 constitutional referendum in a bid to institute direct presidential elections. However, the referendum was ruled invalid due to low turnout amid an opposition boycott, and the government was forced to schedule the third round of parliamentary elections since April 2009. The fresh voting, held in November, left the AIE in power but still short of a three-fifths majority. The campaign environment represented a significant improvement over that of the previous year, benefiting from a more open media landscape and greater respect for freedoms of assembly and association.

Moldova gained independence from the Soviet Union in 1991, and free and fair elections followed in 1994. Centrist parties governed until 2001, when the Party of Communists of the Republic of Moldova (PCRM) won a landslide victory, promising a return to Soviet-era living standards. Communist leader Vladimir Voronin was elected president by Parliament.

The PCRM took 56 of 101 seats in the 2005 parliamentary elections and built a coalition to obtain the 61 votes needed to reelect Voronin. Election monitors noted police harassment of the opposition, manipulation of the state media, and abuse of state funds by the PCRM, among other flaws.

After charting a foreign policy course away from Russia and toward the European Union (EU) in the period surrounding the elections, Voronin steered the country back toward Russia in 2007 and 2008. The Kremlin's cooperation was seen as essential in resolving the status of Transnistria, a separatist region that has maintained de facto independence from Moldova since 1992.

The PCRM won 60 seats in April 2009 parliamentary elections, though international monitors documented problems, including flaws in the voter lists, intimidat-

tion and harassment of opposition parties, and media bias. Three opposition parties also won representation: the Liberal Party (PL) and the Liberal Democratic Party (PLD), each with 15 seats, and the Our Moldova Alliance (AMN), with 11. The results triggered youth-led protests in Chisinau, and the demonstrations turned violent on the second day, with some protesters ransacking government buildings. Police responded with beatings, hundreds of arrests, and serious abuse of detainees in custody.

The PCRM, one vote short of the necessary three-fifths parliamentary majority, failed twice to elect its choice to replace the term-limited Voronin as president, triggering fresh parliamentary elections in July. Although similar electoral flaws were reported by observers, the defection of former PCRM Parliament Speaker Marian Lupu to the opposition Democratic Party (PD) helped to reduce the PCRM's share to 48 seats, and four opposition parties captured a majority. The PLD took 18, followed by the PL with 15, the PD with 13, and the AMN with 7.

The new majority, calling itself the Alliance for European Integration (AIE), subsequently elected PLD leader Vlad Filat as prime minister and PL leader Mihai Ghimpu as Parliament Speaker and acting president. The coalition failed twice—in November and December—to secure Lupu's election as president.

Article 85 of the constitution, reinforced by legislation passed in October 2009, barred another dissolution of Parliament within 12 months of the most recent one. However, there was no specific deadline for the AIE government to announce new elections after the expiration of the 12-month period in June 2010; the Constitutional Court ordered only that the dissolution and elections come, "within a reasonable timeframe." This gave the AIE time to hold a September referendum on a proposal to institute direct presidential elections. The opposition PCRM, which maintained that the post-June Parliament was illegitimate, boycotted the referendum, and it was nullified after failing to garner the minimum 33 percent voter turnout. The government was consequently forced to schedule yet another round of parliamentary elections for November.

The new balloting, which was praised by observers, strengthened the AIE parties' position overall, but they still lacked the supermajority needed to elect a president. The PCRM took 42 seats, followed by the PLD with 32, the PD with 15, and the PL with 12. Lupu was elected as Parliament Speaker and acting president in late December, and Filat was expected to resume his role as prime minister.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Moldova is an electoral democracy. Voters elect the 101-seat unicameral Parliament by proportional representation for four-year terms. Since 2000, Parliament has elected the president, who serves up to two four-year terms. His choice for prime minister must be approved by Parliament.

Revisions to the electoral code in the months ahead of the November 2010 elections lowered the threshold for party representation from 5 to 4 percent of the vote; altered the seat-allocation formula to potentially favor smaller parties; lifted bans on preelection coalitions and lawmakers with multiple citizenships; and eased voting by students and overseas residents. Despite the approval of electoral blocs, the AIE parties ran separately, having engaged in significant infighting during the year. Domestic and international observers hailed the November balloting as

a substantial improvement over the 2009 elections, citing a more open and diverse media environment, impartial and transparent administration by the Central Election Commission, and a lack of restrictions on campaign activities. Some problems were reported, including flaws in the voter list, unbalanced distribution of overseas polling sites, and isolated cases of intimidation.

Corruption remains a major problem in Moldova, and high-profile antigraft prosecutions under the PCRM government often appeared politicized. In 2010, former president Vladimir Voronin faced scrutiny over property he had acquired in 2008 and 2009, and his son Oleg Voronin was the focus of a tax investigation regarding millions of dollars in overseas spending that allegedly conflicted with his declared income. Access to information remains limited, and a 2008 law on state secrets has drawn criticism for its broad scope and potential conflicts with the existing access to information law. Moldova was ranked 105 out of 178 countries surveyed in Transparency International's 2010 Corruption Perceptions Index.

The media environment improved following the 2009 change in government. In 2010, the public broadcaster, Teleradio-Moldova, grew more impartial under new management, and two new private satellite television channels added to the diversity of national news coverage. However, many media outlets are perceived as party affiliates. The television station NIT strongly favored the PCRM during the election campaign, and it was cited by regulators on at least three occasions for biased coverage. Print media present a range of opinions, but they are not widely available in rural areas. Reporters continue to face abuse in the course of their work; in late July, an employee of the country's anticorruption commission assaulted a television reporter outside a courthouse, destroyed his camera, and seized its memory card. There was no repetition in 2010 of the disruptions to internet access during the postelection crisis in 2009.

Although the constitution guarantees religious freedom, a 2007 law banned "abusive proselytism" and acknowledged the, "special significance and primary role," of the Orthodox Church; the PCRM government clearly favored the Russian-backed Moldovan Orthodox Church and showed hostility toward the Romanian-backed Bessarabian Orthodox Church. The government allowed optional religious instruction in schools beginning in September 2010, but the Supreme Court in July rejected an opposition politician's proposal for compulsory study of Orthodox Christianity. Muslim and Pentecostal Christian groups have reported difficulty registering with the authorities. Moldovan officials do not restrict academic freedom, though the PCRM claimed that university students were pressured to support the AIE parties ahead of the November 2010 elections. In July, nine public university rectors declared support for the PLD.

Private organizations must register with the state, and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) complained of bureaucratic obstruction and police harassment under the PCRM government. State relations with civil society groups have improved under the AIE, however, and domestic NGOs actively monitored the 2010 election campaign with little official interference. Under legislation passed in 2008, organizers of demonstrations must only give notice rather than seek permission from authorities. Hundreds of people were arrested in connection with the April 2009 postelection protests, and many reported severe beatings and other abuse both before and after arrest, but charges against them were dropped after the change in

450 Freedom in the World—2011

government. A PCRМ demonstration was held peacefully in the capital in May 2010, and campaign events and meetings proceeded without incident ahead of the November elections. Authorities have exerted pressure on unions and their members, and employers are rarely punished for violating union rights. Workers in illegal strikes face possible fines or prison time.

Although the constitution provides for an independent judiciary, there has been evidence of bribery and political influence among judicial and law enforcement officials. Long-standing concerns about abuse and ill-treatment in police custody were renewed in the aftermath of the April 2009 protests. At least one person was confirmed to have died in the crackdown, and detainees were allegedly charged collectively with no access to counsel. In December 2009, the new government filed charges against the former interior minister and the former Chisinau police commissioner in connection with the police response to the protests. Another police official was charged in April 2010. However, AIE parties in September failed to lift Voronin's immunity and allow his prosecution for negligence in the case. In the first convictions stemming from the 2009 crackdown, two police officers received suspended two- and four-year prison sentences in December for improperly arresting and beating a protester. Prison conditions in general are exceptionally poor.

Roma suffer the harshest treatment of the various minority groups in Moldova. They face discrimination in housing and employment, and are targets of police violence. Gay men are also reportedly subject to police harassment and extortion.

Women are underrepresented in public life. A total of 19 women were elected to Parliament in November 2010. Moldova is a significant source for women and girls trafficked abroad for forced prostitution, though in late 2010 the police began antitrafficking training sponsored by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe. The country remains on the Tier 2 Watch List in the U.S. State Department's 2010 Trafficking in Persons Report.

Monaco

Political Rights: 2

Population: 40,000

Civil Liberties: 1

Capital: Monaco

Status: Free

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline For Year Under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
2,1F									

Overview:

In a continued effort to achieve greater financial transparency, Monaco signed a number of financial agreements with European Union and other countries throughout 2010. The country remained committed to clearing its name as a tax haven and strengthening economic cooperation with other nations.

The Grimaldi family has ruled the Principality of Monaco for the past 700 years, except for a period of French occupation between 1793 and 1814. Under a treaty ratified in 1919, France pledged to protect the territorial integrity, sovereignty, and independence of the country in return for a guarantee that Monégasque policy would conform to French political, military, and economic interests.

Prince Rainier III, who ruled from 1949 until his death in 2005, is often credited with engineering Monaco's impressive economic growth. During his reign, the country ended its dependence on gambling and nurtured other sources of revenue—principally tourism and financial services. Monaco adopted the euro currency in 2002, but has remained outside the European Union (EU). In April 2005, Rainier was succeeded by Prince Albert II, who has made global environmental awareness a priority of his reign.

In the 2008 legislative elections, the Union of Monaco (UPM) won 21 of the 24 seats in the Conseil National, or parliament. The conservative opposition party, Rally and Issues for Monaco (REM), captured the remaining three seats.

In March 2010, Minister of State Jean-Paul Proust resigned due to old age and was replaced by Michel Roger, a former lawyer. In September, Monaco became the 65th Permanent Observer to the Organization of American States, an honorary position presented to Monaco for its contributions to the protection of health and the environment across the Americas. Also in September, the United Nations presented Prince Albert II with the Millennium Development Goals Award for championing peace through sport, such as developing a sports program throughout camps in Haiti that were erected to house those displaced by the devastating earthquake of 2009.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Monaco is an electoral democracy. However, the prince, who serves as head of state, has the sole authority to initiate legislation and change the government. The 24 members of the unicameral Conseil National are elected for five-year terms; 16 are chosen through a majority electoral system and 8 by proportional representation.

The head of government, known as the minister of state, is traditionally appointed by the monarch from a candidate list of three French nationals presented by the French government. The current minister of state, Michel Roger, has held the post since March 2010. The prince also appoints five other ministers (counselors), who make up the cabinet. All legislation and the budget require the approval of the Conseil National, which is currently dominated by the UPM. The only other party represented is REM, which holds just three seats.

Inadequate financial record keeping has traditionally made the country's level of corruption difficult to measure. However, the principality in 2009 started providing foreign tax authorities with information on accounts held by noncitizens, and by October, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) had removed Monaco from its list of uncooperative tax havens. Monaco took further steps toward improving financial transparency by signing tax information exchange agreements with 24 countries between 2009 and 2010, 13 of which were with OECD countries. The agreements ensure that Monaco will hand over relevant tax documents requested by the signatories.

The media in Monaco are free and independent. The constitution provides for

freedom of speech and the press, although the penal code prohibits criticism of the ruling family. Internet access is not restricted.

The constitution guarantees freedom of religion, though Roman Catholicism is the state religion. There are no laws against proselytizing by formally registered religious organizations, but proselytizing in public is strongly discouraged by authorities. Academic freedom is not restricted. The country's only institution of higher education, the private University of Monaco, offers degrees in business administration. Monégasque students are eligible to enter French and other post-secondary educational institutions on the basis of specific agreements.

The constitution provides for freedom of assembly, which is generally respected by the authorities. No restrictions are imposed on the formation of civic and human rights groups. Workers have the legal right to organize and bargain collectively, although they rarely do so. Less than 5 percent of the workforce is unionized. All workers except state employees have the right to strike.

The legal rights to a fair public trial and an independent judiciary are generally respected. The justice system is based on the French legal code, and the constitution requires that the prince delegate his judicial powers to the courts. The prince names the five full members and two judicial assistants to the Supreme Court on the basis of nominations by the Conseil National and other government bodies. Jail facilities generally meet international standards. Once criminal defendants receive definitive sentences, they are transferred to a French prison.

The constitution differentiates between the rights of Monégasque nationals and those of noncitizens. Of the estimated 40,000 residents in the principality, only about 5,000 are actual Monégasques, who alone may participate in the election of the Conseil National. Monégasques also benefit from free education, unemployment assistance, and the ability to hold elective office. As long as they secure a residence permit, noncitizens are free to purchase real estate and open businesses.

Women generally receive equal pay for equal work. Although naturalized male citizens can transfer citizenship to their offspring, naturalized female citizens cannot. Women who become naturalized citizens by marriage cannot vote or run as candidates in elections until five years after the marriage. There are six women in the Conseil National. Abortion is legal only under special circumstances, including rape.

Mongolia

Political Rights: 2

Population: 2,800,000

Civil Liberties: 2

Capital: Ulaanbaatar

Status: Free

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline For Year Under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
2,3F	2,2F								

Overview:

In January 2010, Mongolia held the inaugural hearing of Citizens' Hall, an institutional mechanism es-

established in 2009 to increase civic participation in the legislative process. In March, the government finalized a contract with two international mining firms to develop the Oyu Tolgoi copper and gold mine. Concerns over the details of the deal and the allocation of royalties dominated the domestic agenda throughout the year, leading to a series of large protests in April.

Once the center of Genghis Khan's sprawling empire, Mongolia was ruled by China for two centuries, until Soviet-backed forces took control in the early 1920s. A people's republic was proclaimed in 1924, and the Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party (MPRP) established a one-party communist state. In response to persistent antigovernment protests, the MPRP legalized opposition parties in 1990. However, facing a poorly prepared and underfunded opposition, the MPRP easily won the first multiparty parliamentary elections that year and won again in 1992.

The MPRP lost the 1996 parliamentary elections after 72 years in office, and power was transferred peacefully to the opposition Democratic Union Coalition. The new government sought to implement political and economic reforms, but after an economic downturn the following year, the MPRP regained power, winning both the 1997 presidential election and the 2000 parliamentary vote.

The 2004 parliamentary elections were marred by irregularities and gave neither side a majority. The MPRP consequently agreed to a power-sharing government with the opposition Motherland Democracy Coalition (MDC).

The MPRP's Nambaryn Enkhbayar, the parliament Speaker and a former prime minister, won the 2005 presidential election, despite street demonstrations by protesters who accused him of corruption. In January 2006, the MDC-MPRP coalition government broke down, and the MPRP formed a new government with several small parties and MDC defectors. Miyegombo Enkhbold of the MPRP became prime minister, but he was replaced in November 2007 by Sanjaa Bayar after being accused of excessive political favoritism and corruption.

The initial results of the June 2008 parliamentary elections handed the MPRP a solid majority, but the opposition Democratic Party (DP) and others challenged the outcome. Small-scale protests escalated into large, violent demonstrations in the capital. Five people were killed, scores were injured, and over 700 others were arrested. The government declared a four-day state of emergency on July 2. The final vote tally, released in August, gave the MPRP 46 seats and the DP 27; Bayar remained prime minister.

Former prime minister Tsakhiagiin Elbegdorj of the opposition DP took 51.2 percent of the vote in the May 2009 presidential election, becoming the first DP president. Enkhbayar, the incumbent, quickly admitted defeat, averting a repeat of the previous year's unrest. International observers deemed the election generally free and fair. In October, Bayar resigned as prime minister for health reasons and was replaced by Foreign Minister Sukhbaatar Batbold.

The global economic downturn, combined with an extremely harsh winter, exacerbated Mongolia's high poverty and unemployment rates in 2009. In October, a \$5 billion contract was signed with the international mining companies Ivanhoe Mines and Rio Tinto to develop a copper and gold mine in Oyu Tolgoi. While the deal was positively received, some expressed concerns over ongoing corruption and a lack of transparency surrounding the contract's negotiations. The govern-

ment set up a Human Development Fund in 2009 to distribute mining royalties to citizens.

In March 2010, the government approved the feasibility study proposed by Ivanhoe and Rio Tinto and finalized the deal. A series of large-scale protests followed in April over the government's failure to distribute aid from mining royalties, a campaign promise made by both the DP and the MPRP during the 2008 parliamentary elections. In the largest demonstration, approximately 10,000 people convened in Ulaanbaatar, calling for the dissolution of the parliament. The government responded by offering social services rather than cash handouts, but no compromise could be reached, and the protesters initiated a hunger strike on April 9. On April 16, police dispersed the remaining 34 protesters, leading to minor injuries; the hunger strikers were hospitalized to treat symptoms of starvation. An agreement to officially end the protests was concluded on April 22, outlining constitutional modifications, financial commitments, and government reporting requirements.

The Oyu Tolgoi mine is expected to provide double-digit annual growth for several years and quadruple per capita gross domestic product (GDP) by 2018. However, observers have questioned Mongolia's capacity to handle the economic boom, predicting an increase in corruption and political instability. Disputes over the mine dominated public debate throughout 2010, including concerns over water resources, labor rights, and how to utilize the Human Development Fund.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Mongolia is an electoral democracy. The 2009 presidential election was generally considered free and fair by international observers. Parliamentary balloting has varied over the years between multimember and single-member districts, and there is concern that these frequent changes make it difficult to stabilize the expectations of political elites and enhance popular confidence in democratic government. The prime minister, who holds most executive power, is nominated by the party or coalition with the most seats in the 76-member parliament (the State Great Hural) and approved by the parliament with the agreement of the president. There is no requirement that the prime minister be an elected member of parliament. The president is head of state and of the armed forces, and can veto legislation, subject to a two-thirds parliamentary override. Both the president and the parliament are directly elected for four-year terms. The MPRP continues to be the most powerful party, but a number of smaller opposition groups are competitive.

Corruption remains a serious problem in Mongolia. The Independent Authority Against Corruption (IAAC) has been actively investigating corruption allegations since 2007. By February 2010, all civil servants were required to have submitted asset and income disclosure statements to the IAAC; 297 were found to have misreported or submitted their statements late. As of the end of 2010, the IAAC had investigated hundreds of corruption cases; of the roughly one-fifth referred for prosecution, about one in three resulted in convictions. Transparency International ranked Mongolia 116 out of 178 countries surveyed in its 2010 Corruption Perceptions Index.

The government operates with limited transparency. However, the Citizens' Hall—established in 2009 to encourage civic participation in the legislative pro-

cesses—held its first open discussion on a proposed press law in January 2010. The measure had not passed by year's end. Citizens have the opportunity to provide feedback on draft laws and government services by attending such hearings or submitting their views via letter, fax, e-mail, or telephone. Meetings continued to be held on a regular basis throughout 2010.

While the government generally respects press freedom, many journalists and independent publications practice a degree of self-censorship to avoid legal action under the State Secrets Law or libel laws that place the burden of proof on the defendant. A 2010 report by the nongovernmental organization *Globe International* voiced concern over the growing number of criminal cases against journalists, as well as an increase in the financial compensation demanded of them. The report noted that the majority of press freedom violations in Mongolia are committed by government officials or politicians.

There are hundreds of privately owned print and broadcast outlets, but the main source of news in the vast countryside is the state-owned Mongolian National Broadcasting. Foreign content from satellite television and radio services like the British Broadcasting Corporation and Voice of America is also increasingly available. The government does not interfere with internet access.

Freedom of religion is guaranteed by the constitution. The fall of communism led to a growth in various Christian sects, as well as a revival of Mongolia's traditional Buddhism and shamanism. Religious groups are required to register with the government and renew their status annually. While most registration requests are approved, authorities in Tuv province have routinely denied registration to Christian churches. The Kazakh Muslim minority generally enjoys freedom of religion. Academic freedom is respected.

Freedoms of assembly and association are observed in law and in practice. A number of environmental, human rights, and social welfare groups—while largely reliant on foreign donors—operate without government restriction. Trade unions are independent and active, and the government has generally protected their rights in recent years, though the downsizing or sale of many state factories has contributed to a sharp drop in union membership. Collective bargaining is legal, but in Mongolia's poor economy, employers are often able to set wages unilaterally.

The judiciary is independent, but corruption among judges persists. The police force has been known to make arbitrary arrests, hold detainees for long periods, and beat prisoners. Deaths in prisons—due largely to disease—continue to be reported, as insufficient nutrition, heat, and medical care remain problems. In a National Commission on Human Rights (NCHR) survey following the 2008 post-election riots, nearly 90 percent of prisoners reported being abused in detention. Police also reportedly used live ammunition during the riots, killing at least five people. Ten police officers and four senior police officials were referred to prosecutors for investigation in January 2010. By February, all charges had been dropped; the senior officials were pardoned under a 2009 amnesty law, and the others were found to have not intended to kill anyone. Widespread criticism of the pardons led to debate—ongoing at year's end—over whether the cases should be reopened.

The NCHR consists of three senior civil servants nominated by the president, the Supreme Court, and the parliament for six-year terms; appointees are not required to have human rights experience or expertise. In 2010, the NCHR was criti-

cized by NGOs for not establishing an effective mechanism for ensuring human rights or compensating victims.

While Mongolia is not a party to the 1951 UN Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and lacks legislation enabling the granting of asylum, the government frequently provides protection to refugees, including those fleeing persecution in China.

While women make up 60 percent of all university students as well as 60 percent of all judges, women hold only five parliamentary seats. Spousal abuse is prohibited by law, but social and cultural norms continue to discourage victims from reporting such crimes.

Montenegro

Political Rights: 3

Population: 630,000

Civil Liberties: 2

Capital: Podgorica

Status: Free

Note: The ratings through 2002 are for the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, of which Montenegro was a part, and those from 2003 through 2005 are for the State Union of Serbia and Montenegro.

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline For Year Under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
3,3PF	3,2F	3,2F	3,2F	3,2F	3,3PF	3,3PF	3,3PF	3,2F	3,2F

Overview: In December 2010, Montenegro was officially granted candidate status in its bid to join the European Union. Later that month, Milo Dukanovic, who had served as prime minister or president for most of the previous two decades, resigned from the premiership. He was replaced by Finance Minister Igor Luksic.

Montenegro was first recognized as an independent state in 1878. In 1918, it joined the newly formed Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes, which after World War II became the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. As that state collapsed in the early 1990s, Montenegro maintained its ties to Serbia as part of the truncated Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY), dominated by Serbian leader Slobodan Milosevic. In 1997, however, a group of former Milosevic cohorts in Montenegro, led by then prime minister Milo Dukanovic, decided to break with Milosevic and set Montenegro on a slow course toward independence.

Milosevic's fall from power in 2000 did not improve relations between Montenegro and its larger federal partner, and the two republics signed an agreement in 2002 that loosened their bond, replacing the FRY with the State Union of Serbia and Montenegro. The deal allowed either republic to hold an independence referendum after three years, and Dukanovic chose to exercise this right in May 2006. Referendum voters approved the final break with Serbia by a relatively small margin, and in July, the Montenegrin parliament officially declared independence.

The September 2006 parliamentary elections confirmed voter support for the ruling proindependence coalition. Đukanovic retired from the premiership in October but subsequently returned to the office in April 2008, allegedly after a brief experiment in trying to maintain control of the country from behind the scenes. Aside from that 18-month hiatus, he had served as either president or prime minister of Montenegro since 1991.

Independence and national identity remained divisive issues, and a 2007 investigation stoked suspicions that Đukanovic's Democratic Party of Socialists (DPS) had manipulated the 2006 referendum and elections. Several police officers reported being pressured by the DPS to solicit votes in favor of independence and for the government. The government drew additional criticism from pro-Serbian factions in October 2008, when it officially recognized Kosovo's independence.

In January 2009, President Filip Vujanovic, a close Đukanovic ally, called snap parliamentary elections, reportedly because the government was concerned that the effects of the global economic crisis could erode voter support by the time its full term ended. The early balloting, held in March, yielded the best outcome for the ruling party to date. With voter turnout at 66 percent, the DPS-led coalition won a comfortable majority of 48 seats in the 81-seat parliament. The opposition Socialist People's Party took 16 seats, followed by New Serb Democracy with 8, Movement for Change with 5, and four small ethnic Albanian parties with 1 seat each. Local elections held in several municipalities in May 2010 again confirmed the DPS's dominance of the political scene.

Montenegro had sought to join NATO and the European Union (EU) since gaining independence, and in December 2010, the EU officially granted Montenegro candidate status. A few days later, Đukanovic resigned from the premiership for a second time, arguing that he had successfully guided the country toward European integration. However, there were indications that his continued tenure could have obstructed Montenegro's EU candidacy, as he had been accused of involvement in smuggling activities in the 1990s. Đukanovic retained his post as chairman of the DPS, and 34-year-old Finance Minister Igor Lukšić, also a DPS member, succeeded him as prime minister.

Despite its ambitions to join NATO and the EU, Montenegro has built extensive economic ties with Russia. Some accounts suggest that as much as \$13 billion in Russian capital has entered Montenegro since the 1990s, allegedly making it the largest recipient of foreign investment per capita in Europe in recent years.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties:

Montenegro is an electoral democracy. International observers reported that the independence referendum, the 2006 and 2009 parliamentary elections, and the 2008 presidential election were conducted freely and fairly, though with minor irregularities. Members of the unicameral, 81-seat Assembly (Skupština) are elected for four-year terms. The president, directly elected for up to two five-year terms, nominates the prime minister, who must be approved by the legislature. The current president, Filip Vujanovic of the DPS, was elected to a second five-year term in April 2008 by a wide margin.

Numerous political parties compete for power, though the opposition remains relatively weak and divided. The current coalition government consists of the DPS, the Social Democratic Party, and two smaller parties representing the Bosniak and

Croat minorities. Other parties in the parliament represent ethnic Serbs and Albanians, and the Movement for Change party advocates liberal policies and European integration. Serbs, who form an estimated 35 percent of the population, were generally opposed to independence prior to 2006, but their adjustment to the new reality in recent years has eased political tensions to some degree.

Corruption has traditionally been a very serious and widespread phenomenon. The European Commission reported in 2010 that recent reforms have largely established the necessary legal and institutional framework for dealing with organized crime and corruption, but that anticorruption legislation is not consistently implemented, and political will to deal with the problem is lacking. Montenegro was ranked 69 out of 178 countries surveyed in Transparency International's 2010 Corruption Perceptions Index. The corruption problem is partly a legacy of the struggle against the Milošević regime in the 1990s, when the small republic turned to various forms of smuggling to finance government operations. Prime Minister Milo Đukanović has been accused of involvement in cigarette smuggling, and a number of Montenegrin officials and businesspeople have been indicted in Italy for such activities.

Freedom of the press is generally respected, and there is a variety of private print and broadcast outlets, but journalists who criticize the government are sometimes attacked. In August 2009, the mayor of Podgorica assaulted two journalists working on a story about official abuses of power. Belgrade-based publications remain popular in the country, partly because a large segment of the population identifies itself as Serb. Criminal libel is not punishable by imprisonment, but the threat of fines forces journalists to engage in self-censorship. Access to the internet has not been restricted.

The constitution guarantees freedom of religious belief. However, the canonically recognized Serbian Orthodox Church and a self-proclaimed Montenegrin Orthodox Church have repeatedly clashed over ownership of church properties and other issues.

Academic freedom is guaranteed by law, but political debates about the nature of Montenegrin identity and history have sometimes spilled over into the educational realm. In 2010, "Montenegrin" became the official language of the state broadcaster, and a Montenegrin grammar text was introduced in schools, drawing criticism from those who argued that the government was promoting an artificial language carved out of standard Serbian.

Citizens enjoy freedoms of association and assembly. Foreign and domestic nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) are generally able to pursue their activities without state interference, though the European Commission's 2010 report noted that some NGOs have been subjected to political and administrative pressures after criticizing the government. Some 95 percent of all employees in the formal economy belong to unions, and the right of workers to strike is generally protected. Collective bargaining, however, is still considered to be at a rudimentary level. The country has strict protections against employee dismissal and generous worker benefits, but these are thought to limit efficiency and encourage informality in the economy. A 2009 law expanded the right to strike to public administration employees. Workers at Montenegro's largest industrial enterprise, the Podgorica Aluminum Plant (KAP), staged a number of protests and strikes in 2010 over low wages.

The European Commission's 2010 report on Montenegro cited improvements in the area of judicial reform, but also expressed continuing concerns about political interference and inefficiency in the court system, as well as problems with the implementation of newly adopted laws, particularly regarding organized crime. Despite efforts to improve prison conditions, most facilities are antiquated, overcrowded, and often unhygienic.

Ethnic Albanians, who make up roughly 7 percent of the population, claim that they are underrepresented in the civil service, particularly in the police and the judiciary. They have also sought proportional representation in the government and greater municipal autonomy. Members of various other minority groups, such as Roma, Ashkali, Egyptians, and the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgendered (LGBT) communities, often face both societal and state discrimination.

Women in Montenegro are legally entitled to equal pay for equal work, but traditional patriarchal attitudes often limit their earnings, education, and role in the economy. In general, women are underrepresented in higher levels of government. Domestic violence is rarely punished with imprisonment, and sexual harassment in the workplace is illegal but reportedly common. Trafficking in persons for the purposes of forced prostitution and forced labor remains a significant problem. The country has secured only 17 criminal sentences for human trafficking since 2004.

Morocco

Political Rights: 5

Population: 31,900,000

Civil Liberties: 4

Capital: Rabat

Status: Partly Free

Note: The numerical ratings and status listed above do not reflect conditions in Western Sahara, which is examined in a separate report.

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline For Year Under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
5,5PF	5,5PF	5,5PF	5,4PF						

Overview: The king retained Prime Minister Abbas el-Fassi in a January 2010 cabinet shuffle, and the government continued to suppress criticism of its Western Sahara policies and other matters during the year. As part of a broader campaign against critical media coverage, the authorities in October revoked the accreditation of journalists working for Al-Jazeera, the Qatar-based satellite television station.

Morocco gained independence in 1956, after more than four decades of French rule. The first ruler after independence, King Mohamed V, reigned until his death in 1961. His son, the autocratic Hassan II, then ruled the country until 1999. Thousands of his political opponents were arrested, tortured, and killed, while many simply disappeared. This repression was particularly acute in the years following

two failed coup attempts in 1971 and 1972. In 1975, Morocco and Mauritania occupied Western Sahara; after three years of fighting the Algerian-backed Polisario Front, a Sahrawi nationalist guerrilla movement, Mauritania withdrew from the portion it claimed. Morocco then annexed the territory in full. A planned referendum on Western Sahara's future—attached to a UN-monitored ceasefire agreement in 1991—never took place. In the last few years of his life, Hassan initiated a political opening. Several political prisoners were released, independent newspapers began publishing, and a new bicameral parliament was established in 1997.

King Mohamed VI inherited the throne in 1999, at age 35. He declined to expand political freedom much further in the first years of his reign, apparently aiming to check the increased influence of Islamist political parties. However, he removed longtime Interior Minister Driss Basri, who had led much of the repression under King Hassan, and allowed exiled dissidents to return to the country.

Parliamentary elections held in 2002 were recognized as generally open. Over a dozen political parties participated, though independent journalists and other critics of the king were harassed and detained.

In May 2003, local Islamist militants with purported links to Al-Qaeda mounted a series of deadly suicide bombings, targeting symbols of Morocco's Jewish community in Casablanca. The government responded by enacting a harsh antiterrorism law, but it was subsequently used to prosecute nonviolent opponents of the king. An anti-immigration law was also passed, ostensibly to fight illegal immigration from sub-Saharan Africa.

In 2004, King Mohamed inaugurated the Equity and Reconciliation Commission (IER), tasked with addressing the human rights abuses perpetrated by the authorities from 1956 to 1999 and providing the victims with reparations. The commission, which was unprecedented in the Arab world, was headed by a former political prisoner and allowed victims to testify in public hearings. It submitted its final report to the king in 2006, including a series of recommendations for legal and institutional reforms designed to prevent future abuses. Critics of the IER complained that it did not hold perpetrators to account for their actions, and that its recommendations did not lead to major structural changes. Human rights abuses continued to occur on a regular basis, albeit on a smaller scale; political Islamism remained especially circumscribed. Moreover, the authorities were intolerant of further discussion of past abuses. In June 2008, a court in Rabat ordered the private daily *Al-Jarida al-Oula* to stop publishing IER testimony.

The 2007 elections for the Chamber of Representatives, the lower house of Parliament, drew the lowest turnout in Moroccan history, 37 percent. The Socialist Union of People's Forces (USFP), previously the lead party in the governing coalition, fell to 38 seats. Its chief ally, the conservative Independence Party (Istiqlal), won a plurality of 52 seats. Opposition parties, which had criticized the elections as unfair, gained fewer seats than expected. The largest, the Islamist Justice and Development Party (PJD), placed second with 46 seats. Istiqlal leader Abbas el-Fassi was appointed prime minister.

El-Fassi appeared to have fallen out of favor in 2009, as former deputy interior minister Fouad Ali el-Himma, a close associate of the king, organized the Modernity and Authenticity Party (PAM) to contest local elections in June. The new party led the voting with more than 20 percent of local council seats, followed by Istiqlal

with about 19 percent. Widespread vote-buying, bribery, intimidation, and other forms of manipulation were reported, and analysts regarded the official turnout figure of 52 percent with some skepticism.

Despite the challenges to the Istiqlal's preeminence, el-Fassi remained prime minister after a cabinet shuffle in January 2010. Interior Minister Chakib Benmoussa was replaced with Tayeb Cherkaoui, who was seen by some observers as less severe than his predecessor. Cherkaoui announced in August that a drug-trafficking network tied to Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) had been dismantled. Also during the year, the king established a new Advisory Commission on Regionalization to help improve local governance.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Morocco is not an electoral democracy. Most power is held by the king and his close advisers. The monarch can dissolve Parliament, rule by decree, and dismiss or appoint cabinet members. He controls four sovereign ministries: Foreign, Judiciary, Islamic Affairs, and Interior. He sets national and foreign policy, commands the armed forces and intelligence services, and presides over the judicial system. One of the king's constitutional titles is "commander of the faithful," giving his authority a claim to religious legitimacy.

The lower house of Parliament, the Chamber of Representatives, has 325 directly elected members who serve for five-year terms. Members of the 270-seat upper house, the Chamber of Counselors, are chosen by an electoral college to serve nine-year terms. Thirty seats in the lower house are reserved for women, and under a rule that took effect in 2009, women are guaranteed 12 percent of the seats in local elections.

Given the concentration of power in the monarchy, the country's fragmented political parties and even the cabinet are generally unable to assert themselves. The most vocal opposition party that remains respectful of the monarchy is the PJD, which fared poorly in local elections in 2009. The popular Justice and Charity Movement, an Islamist group, is illegal but generally tolerated by the authorities. Other, more explicitly nonviolent Islamist groups that criticize the monarchical system are harassed by authorities and not permitted to participate in the political process.

Despite the government's rhetoric on combating widespread corruption, it remains a structural problem, both in public life and in the business world. Morocco was ranked 85 out of 178 countries surveyed in Transparency International's 2010 Corruption Perceptions Index.

Although the independent press enjoys a significant degree of freedom when reporting on economic and social policies, the authorities use the restrictive press law and an array of financial and other, more subtle mechanisms to punish critical journalists, particularly those who focus on the king, his family, or Islam. The managing editor of the daily *Akhbar al-Youm* was sentenced to six months in prison on dubious fraud charges in June 2010, having apparently escaped a suspended prison sentence and fine for publishing a cartoon of the king's cousin after the cousin asked that the sentence be voided in late 2009. Also during the year, the critical weeklies *Nichane* and *Le Journal Hebdomadaire* were forced to shut down under heavy financial pressure from a government-linked advertising boycott and a defamation penalty, respectively.

The state dominates the broadcast media, but residents have access to foreign satellite television channels. In late October 2010, the authorities indefinitely suspended reporting by the Qatar-based satellite channel Al-Jazeera and revoked the accreditations of its staff in the country, apparently due to its critical coverage of the Western Sahara issue. Several foreign journalists were reportedly assaulted during the year while working on Western Sahara-related stories. The authorities occasionally disrupt websites and internet platforms, while bloggers and other internet users are sometimes arrested for posting content that offends the monarchy. In February 2010, blogger and activist Boubaker al-Yadib was sentenced to six months in prison for encouraging a protest in defense of freedom of expression.

Nearly all Moroccans are Muslims. While the small Jewish community is permitted to practice its faith without government interference, Moroccan authorities are growing increasingly intolerant of social and religious diversity, as reflected in arrest campaigns against Shiites, Muslim converts to Christianity, and those opposed to a law enforcing the Ramadan fast. While university campuses generally provide a space for open discussion, professors practice self-censorship when dealing with sensitive topics like Western Sahara, the monarchy, and Islam.

Freedom of assembly is not well respected, and protests in Western Sahara especially have been controlled through violence and threats. Three Western Saharan activists were put on trial in Casablanca in September 2010 for "undermining internal security." On November 8, two days of deadly clashes erupted in the Western Sahara town of Laayoune after Moroccan forces moved to break up a protest camp set up to demand jobs and better social services. Civil society and independent nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) are quite active, though the authorities monitor Islamist groups and arrest suspected extremists. While NGOs in Morocco operate with more freedom than in many other states in the Middle East and North Africa, groups that offend the government face harassment.

Moroccan workers are permitted to form and join independent trade unions, and the 2004 labor law prevents employers from punishing workers who do so. However, the authorities have forcibly broken up labor actions that entail criticism of the government, and child laborers, especially girls working as domestic helpers, are denied basic rights.

The judiciary is not independent, and the courts are regularly used to punish opponents of the government. In a case associated with a Belgian-Moroccan national, Abdelkader Belliraj, 35 people were arrested in February 2008 and convicted in July 2009 of forming a terrorist group, plotting attacks, and raising funds through criminal activities. However, according to Human Rights Watch, the alleged acts were limited to one assassination attempt in 1996 and robberies committed a decade ago. The defendants claimed that confessions and statements in the case were made under torture, and that they were simply members of political parties that the government wanted to eliminate. In November 2010, Spanish authorities extradited Ali Aarrass, a dual Belgian-Moroccan national, to Morocco. He had been arrested in Spain in April 2008 on the basis of international arrest warrants issued by Morocco for allegedly being part of the group headed by Belliraj. Human rights groups voiced concerns that Aarrass would face torture and other human rights violations in Morocco.

Arbitrary arrest and torture still occur, though they are less common than un-

der King Hassan. The security forces are given greater leeway for abuse with detainees advocating independence for Western Sahara.

Many Moroccans have a mixed Arab-Berber ancestry, and the government has officially recognized the language and culture of the Berbers.

Women continue to face a great deal of discrimination at the societal level. However, Moroccan authorities have a more progressive view on gender equality than leaders in many Arab countries. The 2004 family code has been lauded for granting women increased rights in the areas of marriage and child custody, and various other laws aim to protect women's interests.

Mozambique

Political Rights: 4
Civil Liberties: 3
Status: Partly Free

Population: 23,400,000
Capital: Maputo

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline For Year Under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
3,4PF	3,4PF	3,4PF	3,4PF	3,4PF	3,4PF	3,3PF	3,3PF	4,3PF	4,3PF

Overview: President Armando Guebuza and his party, the Front for the Liberation of Mozambique, continued to dominate Mozambique's political institutions and its economy during 2010. The country achieved impressive rates of economic growth, largely due to increased foreign investment in mining and related sectors. However, popular anger over rising living costs led to riots in September that turned deadly when security forces opened fire on protesters.

Mozambique achieved independence from Portugal in 1975. The Front for the Liberation of Mozambique (FRELIMO), a guerrilla group that had long fought to oust the Portuguese, installed itself as the sole legal political party of a Marxist-style state. Independence was followed by a 16-year civil war that pitted the Soviet-allied FRELIMO against the Mozambique National Resistance (RENAMO), a force sponsored by the white-minority governments of Rhodesia (Zimbabwe) and South Africa. The war resulted in nearly a million deaths and the displacement of several million others. President Samora Machel, the FRELIMO leader, was killed in a suspicious plane crash in 1986; he was succeeded by Joachim Chissano, a reform-minded FRELIMO moderate. A new constitution was enacted, calling for a multiparty political system, a market-based economy, and free elections. A peace accord signed in 1992 brought an end to the war, and a 7,500-strong UN peacekeeping force oversaw a disarmament and demobilization program and a transition to democratic government.

Mozambique held its first democratic elections in 1994. Chissano retained the presidency, and FRELIMO secured a majority of seats in the National Assembly.

RENAMO accepted the outcome, transforming itself into a peaceful opposition political movement. Chissano was reelected in 1999, and FRELIMO once again won a majority of parliamentary seats. These results were deemed credible by the international community, despite technical difficulties and irregularities in the tabulation process. However, RENAMO accused the government of fraud and at one point threatened to form its own government in the six northern and central provinces it controlled.

Chissano announced that he would step down as president on completion of his second elected term. In 2002, FRELIMO leaders chose Armando Guebuza, a hard-liner, to lead the party. Pledging to address corruption, crime, and poverty, Guebuza and FRELIMO won presidential and legislative elections in 2004 with a wide margin of victory, but RENAMO cited evidence of fraud. The National Electoral Commission (CNE) later admitted that 1,400 vote-summary sheets favoring RENAMO had been stolen—accounting for 5 percent of the total vote—and transferred one parliamentary seat from FRELIMO to RENAMO as compensation. International election observers expressed concerns about the CNE's conduct during the tabulation process, but ultimately determined that the abuses had not altered the overall outcome.

Mozambique held presidential, legislative, and—for the first time—provincial elections in October 2009. Guebuza was reelected by a landslide, securing 75 percent of the vote. His opponents, Afonso Dhlakama of RENAMO and Daviz Simango of the newly formed Democratic Movement of Mozambique (MDM), received 16.4 percent and 8.6 percent, respectively. In the parliamentary contest, FRELIMO captured 191 of 250 seats, while RENAMO won 51, and the MDM won 8. FRELIMO also won absolute majorities in all 10 of the country's provincial assemblies. RENAMO and the MDM both alleged fraud, and international observer groups were highly critical of many preelection processes. Observers also documented irregularities that indicated ballot stuffing and tabulation fraud at some polling stations, though they concluded that the distortions were insufficient to have impacted the overall result of the election.

Guebuza's government has largely continued the liberal economic reforms and poverty-reduction policies of his predecessor. However, he has been criticized for his heavy-handed management of FRELIMO and his confrontational stance toward opposition parties. His government suffered an embarrassing blow in September 2010, when riots erupted in the capital of Maputo and in the northern city of Chimoio in response to rising food, transport, and utility prices. Police reportedly fired live ammunition, leaving at least a dozen dead and more than 400 wounded. The government later announced that it would subsidize the cost of bread and cancel increases in water and electricity tariffs for the poor.

Mozambique has achieved high levels of sustained economic growth since the end of the civil war, owing to relative political stability and substantial foreign investment, particularly in mining. The economy showed resilience in the face of the global downturn that struck in 2008, with the International Monetary Fund estimating average real gross domestic product growth at 7.2 percent in 2010. Nevertheless, most of the population continues to live in poverty, and the country received a staggeringly low ranking—165 out of 169 countries—on the UN's 2010 Human Development Index.

Mozambique has long enjoyed close relations with donors, whose support has accounted for roughly half of the state's budget in recent years. However, in an effort to communicate disapproval of FRELIMO's problematic handling of the 2009 elections and its increasing dominance over the state and economy, Western donors withheld aid in 2010 until late March, when the government agreed to reform the electoral system and introduce new legislation to address rampant corruption. Donors also announced that aid would not be increased in 2011, as has usually been the case from year to year.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Mozambique is not an electoral democracy. While international observers have deemed the overall outcomes of Mozambique's national elections to have reflected the will of the people, electoral processes have repeatedly been riddled with problems. The 2009 elections were particularly criticized for the widespread rejection of party lists and for irregularities in the tabulation of results.

The president, who appoints the prime minister, is elected by popular vote for up to two five-year terms. Members of the 250-seat, unicameral Assembly of the Republic are also elected for five-year terms. The national government appoints the governors of the 10 provinces and the capital city of Maputo. Despite the introduction of elected provincial assemblies and municipal governments, power remains highly centralized, particularly in the hands of the president.

Political parties are governed by a law that expressly prohibits them from identifying exclusively with any religious or ethnic group. Although RENAMO and the upstart MDM have won representation as opposition parties in the parliament, FRELIMO is the only party to have held power nationally, and its unbroken incumbency has allowed it to acquire significant control over state institutions. In the lead-up to the 2009 elections, the government was heavily criticized for the CNE's disqualification of MDM candidates in 7 of the country's 11 parliamentary constituencies. Elements within FRELIMO are also believed to have instigated several violent attacks against opposition candidates and their supporters during the campaign.

Corruption in government and business remains pervasive, despite increased efforts to curb it. Mozambique was ranked 116 out of 178 countries in Transparency International's 2010 Corruption Perceptions Index. Local journalists and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) such as the Center for Public Integrity have played a crucial monitoring role by investigating and exposing high-profile corruption cases. In an important victory for anticorruption advocates, a Mozambican court issued lengthy prison sentences in February 2010 to former transport minister Antonio Munguambe and several others for their role in siphoning millions of dollars from the state-owned Mozambique Airport Company. In June, the U.S. Treasury Office named prominent businessman Mohamed Bachir Suleman, who is known to have close ties with FRELIMO, a drug kingpin. The designation brought renewed attention to Mozambique's role in the international drug trade, which has flourished under the country's weak judiciary.

While press freedoms are legally protected, journalists are sometimes harassed or threatened and often practice self-censorship. In May 2010, Salomao Moyana, editor of the weekly *Magazine Independente*, received threatening text messages

after publishing an editorial critical of RENAMO party leader Afonso Dhlakama. Mozambique has a government-run daily, *Noticias*, and the privately owned *Diário de Moçambique*. There is also a state news agency and a state radio and television broadcaster. Independent media sources have proliferated since the introduction of multiparty democracy in 1994. These include several weeklies and the daily *O País*, a number of independent and community radio stations, and, more recently, news websites. However, they face sustainability issues as a result of advertising being dominated by the state. Although there are no official government restrictions on internet use, opposition leaders have claimed that government intelligence services monitor e-mail. The government suspended text messaging services to mobile phone users during the September 2010 riots. International media operate freely in the country.

Religious freedoms are well respected, and academic freedoms are generally upheld. However, there have been reports of teachers encountering pressure to support FRELIMO and being refused promotions if not party members.

Associational and organizational rights are broadly guaranteed, but with substantial regulations. By law, the right to assembly is subject to notification and timing restrictions, and in practice, it is also subject to governmental discretion. In several instances, campaign rallies in the lead-up to the 2009 elections were violently disrupted by rival party activists, though most events proceeded peacefully. Security forces have at times broken up protests using disproportionate force. In September 2010, security forces opened fire on rioters in Maputo, killing 12 persons, including 2 children, and injuring more than 400. NGOs operate openly but face bureaucratic hurdles in registering with the government, as required by law. Workers have the right to form and join unions and to go on strike. The Organization of Mozambican Workers is the country's leading trade union confederation.

Judicial independence is undermined by endemic corruption, scarce resources, and poor training. The judicial system is further challenged by a dearth of qualified judges and a backlog of cases. Despite recent improvements, suspects are routinely detained well beyond the preventive detention deadline. Prison conditions are abysmal. According to Amnesty International, 13 detainees died from overcrowding in a police cell in Nampula province in March 2009, while 22 reportedly died, mainly from disease, in a prison in Manica province in early 2009. Abuses by security forces—including unlawful killings, excessive use of force, and arbitrary detention—remain serious problems despite human rights training. Public dissatisfaction with the police has also led to a rise in deadly vigilante violence.

Excessive bureaucracy, pervasive corruption, and insufficient legal redress unduly hinder private enterprise, especially at the local level.

Women are fairly well represented politically, holding the premiership from 2004 to 2010 and some 39 percent of the parliament, but they continue to face societal discrimination and violence despite recent advances in the law. Trafficking in persons, including the trafficking of children, is a serious problem along the highway from Maputo to Johannesburg in South Africa. Legal protections for women and children are rarely enforced.

Namibia

Political Rights: 2
Civil Liberties: 2
Status: Free

Population: 2,200,000
Capital: Windhoek

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline For Year Under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
2,3F	2,3F	2,3F	2,3F	2,2F	2,2F	2,2F	2,2F	2,2F	2,2F

Overview: Questions emerged in 2010 over who would succeed President Hifikepunye Pohamba in the 2014 elections, portending possible divisions in the ruling party. Planned protests by civil servants in November signaled a potential weakening of the ruling party, which nevertheless dominated regional and local elections later that month. Meanwhile, a major scandal erupted in July following revelations that millions of dollars from a government pension fund had been lost in recent years.

Namibia, formerly known as South West Africa, was claimed by German imperial forces in the late 19th century and became a South African protectorate after World War I. In 1966, South Africa's mandate was revoked by the United Nations, and the South West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO) began a guerrilla campaign for independence. After years of war, a UN-supervised transition led to independence in 1990, and SWAPO leader Sam Nujoma was chosen as president. The previous year, SWAPO had won 57 percent of the ballots in a free and fair vote for the Constituent Assembly, which became the National Assembly after independence.

Secessionist fighting in Namibia's Caprivi region between 1998 and 1999 led some 2,400 refugees to flee to neighboring Botswana. A mass trial of 120 defendants involved in the separatist rebellion opened in October 2003 and was ongoing at the end of 2010.

Nujoma and SWAPO retained control of the presidency and legislature in the 1994 and 1999 elections. In 2004, after a bitter succession contest within the party, Nujoma's longtime ally, Hifikepunye Pohamba, was chosen as the party's presidential candidate and went on to win elections. Divisions within SWAPO became a central concern for Pohamba, as the Rally for Democracy and Progress (RDP)—a breakaway party headed by several former prominent members of SWAPO—emerged in 2007. Challenges also emerged from elements within the ruling party, notably the hard-line SWAPO Party Youth League (SPYL) and, to a lesser degree, from Nujoma.

Nevertheless, Pohamba won 75 percent of the vote in the November 2009 presidential elections, while the first runner-up, RDP's Hidipo Hamutenya, obtained just 11 percent. In concurrent parliamentary elections, SWAPO won 54 seats in the 72-member legislature, while RDP took 8. Following the contests, nine opposition parties filed a legal challenge calling for the nullification of the presidential and parliamentary elections because of "gross irregularities." Key allegations included

claims that some areas registered turnouts of over 100 percent and concerns that polling centers failed to post results as they were tallied, as is required by law. While the high court dismissed the case on a technicality in March 2010, a supreme court decision in September overruled that verdict; the case remained under review by the high court at year's end.

In advance of local and regional elections held in November 2010, a number of opposition parties voiced a lack of confidence in the electoral commission, claiming that the voters roll was contaminated. SWAPO dominated those contests, winning a total of 226 council seats compared to 48 for the RDP. Throughout the year, individuals began positioning themselves for the upcoming contest over who would succeed Pohamba as party president and candidate for the 2014 elections.

The small white minority owns just under half of Namibia's arable land, and redistribution of property has been slow despite efforts to accelerate the process. In 2004, the government declared that all landholders were susceptible to expropriation. While 30 farms have been targeted, the government had expropriated only 5 by the end of 2009. Several farm owners have used the courts to contest the expropriation or the prices offered. In 2010, several SWAPO parliamentarians warned of a "land grab" if reforms were not expedited.

Namibia's economy has been among the strongest in the region, and the country has consistently been rated positively in terms of competitiveness and ease of doing business. While the economy contracted 0.7 percent in 2009, it grew at a rate of approximately 4 percent in 2010.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Namibia is an electoral democracy. The bicameral legislature consists of the 26-seat National Council, whose members are appointed by regional councils for six-year terms, and the 72-seat National Assembly, whose members are popularly elected for five-year terms using party-list proportional representation. The president, who is directly elected for five-year terms, appoints the prime minister and cabinet.

A number of amendments to the electoral code were passed in advance of the 2009 elections, such as authorizing the counting of ballots at polling places. These changes were applauded by the opposition, but other issues, including the length of the polling period and the absence of an electoral tribunal, remained the subject of criticism. The campaign period witnessed some localized tension and violence between SWAPO supporters and the opposition RDP. Domestic and international observers declared the elections free and fair, although the latter raised some concerns about the pro-SWAPO bias on the government-run Namibian Broadcast Corporation (NBC), delays in the counting process, and organizational mishaps during the polling process.

The ruling SWAPO party has dominated since independence. Significant opposition parties include the recently formed RDP, the Congress of Democrats, the Democratic Turnhalle Alliance, and the United Democratic Front. Since its formation in 2007, RDP supporters have been subject to harassment and intimidation by SWAPO members, who occasionally disrupt RDP rallies despite calls by police to disperse. While these problems have subsided somewhat in recent years, the RDP experienced some difficulty in holding rallies before the 2009 elections and faced isolated bans and disruptions of demonstrations in 2010. The RDP also boycotted

parliament for most of 2010 to protest the failure of the high court to decide their election petition on substantive grounds and delays in the resolution of their appeal of that decision with the supreme court.

Although President Hifikepunye Pohamba has made anticorruption efforts a major theme of his presidency, official corruption remains a significant problem, and investigations of major cases proceed slowly. The Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) has considerable autonomy, as it reports only to the National Assembly. However, it lacks prosecutorial authority; it can recommend cases to the prosecutor-general, who has final say on whether to proceed. In two separate cases in 2010, a former minister and the former head of the NBC were found guilty of corruption-related charges. While the ACC was actively pursuing a number of other corruption investigations, criticism remained over the quality of its work and its focus on relatively low-profile cases. A major scandal surfaced in July 2010 concerning the depletion of a government pension fund, which lost huge sums from 1994 to 2002, when money was loaned to individuals with suspected connections to the ruling elite; a forensic audit was ongoing at year's end. Namibia was ranked 56 out of 178 countries surveyed in Transparency International's 2010 Corruption Perceptions Index.

The constitution guarantees free speech, and Namibia's media have generally enjoyed a relatively open environment. Private broadcasters and independent newspapers usually operate without official interference. However, government and party leaders at times issue harsh criticism and even threats against the independent press, usually in the wake of unflattering stories. While many insist that the state-owned NBC has been free to criticize the government, concerns have increased about excessive government influence over programming and personnel.

There are no restrictions on internet sites. While many publications and organizations have websites that are critical of the government, the 2009 Communication Act has raised concerns about privacy rights. The new legislation, which allows the government to tap into private communications without a warrant, threatens to limit private discussion.

Freedom of religion is guaranteed and respected in practice. The government does not restrict academic freedom.

Freedoms of assembly and association are guaranteed by law and permitted in practice, except in situations of national emergency. In August 2010, a police attempt to ban temporarily public demonstrations was declared illegal by the high court. Through informal pressure, such as declining to grant civil servants' requests for time off from work, the government in November tried to limit protests by civil servants over the government's tepid response to the pension fund scandal. Although human rights groups generally have operated without interference, government ministers have in the past threatened and harassed nongovernmental organizations and their leadership. Constitutionally guaranteed union rights are respected. Although collective bargaining is not widely practiced outside the mining and construction industries, informal collective bargaining is increasingly common. Essential public sector workers do not have the right to strike.

The constitution provides for an independent judiciary, and the separation of powers is observed in practice. Access to justice, however, is obstructed by economic and geographic barriers, a shortage of public defenders, and delays caused by a lack of capacity in the court system, especially at lower levels. Traditional courts

in rural areas have often ignored constitutional procedures. However, legislation to create greater uniformity in traditional court operations and better connect them to the formal judicial system was implemented in 2009. Allegations of police brutality persist, and conditions in prisons and military detention facilities are quite harsh.

Minority ethnic groups have claimed that the government favors the majority Ovambo in allocating funding and services.

Despite constitutional guarantees and one of the highest percentages of women parliamentarians in Africa, women continue to face discrimination in customary law and other traditional societal practices. Widows and orphans have been stripped of their land, livestock, and other assets in rural areas. Lack of awareness of legal rights as well as informal practices have undermined the success of legal changes, such as the 2002 Communal Land Reform Act. Violence against women is reportedly widespread, and rights groups have criticized the government's failure to enforce the country's progressive domestic violence laws. The government has been praised for providing antiretroviral drugs to Namibians infected with HIV/AIDS and for its 2007 policy outlawing societal and workplace discrimination against those living with the virus. Concerns about human trafficking increased in the context of the 2010 World Cup in neighboring South Africa and led to government efforts to promote awareness of trafficking issues among personnel in state agencies.

Nauru

Political Rights: 1

Population: 10,000

Civil Liberties: 1

Capital: Yaren

Status: Free

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline For Year Under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
1,3PF	1,2F	1, 1F	1,1F						

Overview: After President Marcus Stephen survived a no-confidence vote in February, parliamentary elections were held twice, in April and June, but both failed to produce a majority. A state of emergency was declared on June 11, and Stephen continued to govern as acting president until he was reelected in November. Separately, voters rejected proposed amendments to the constitution in February.

Nauru, an eight-square-mile island in the South Pacific, is the world's smallest republic. It was a German protectorate from 1888 until Australian troops seized it during World War I. The League of Nations granted a joint mandate to Australia, Britain, and New Zealand to govern the island in 1919. Japan occupied Nauru during World War II, and in 1947, the United Nations designated it as a trust territory under Australia. Nauru gained independence in 1968, became an associate Commonwealth member in 1969, and joined the United Nations in 1999.

Nauru's once-plentiful supplies of phosphate, mined by Australia for use as fertilizer, have been almost entirely exhausted. Mining has made more than 80 percent of the island uninhabitable, and the government has squandered much of its accumulated wealth through financial mismanagement. The country currently carries a large foreign debt, and rising sea levels threaten its survival.

Recent governments have tried different ways to generate income, with limited success. With few viable economic alternatives, foreign development assistance became a major source of government income. However, money laundering tied to Nauru's offshore banking operations landed the country on international black-lists, restricting its access to international loans. Despite such restrictions, Nauru has received considerable aid from China and Taiwan by switching diplomatic recognition between the two rivals. Between 2001 and 2008, Nauru served as a refugee-processing and detention center for Australia in exchange for rent and aid. International groups criticized the center for detaining refugees—including children—for years while awaiting processing, adjudication, and settlement. Its closure cost Nauru approximately one-fifth of the country's gross domestic product.

Intense political rivalry and the use of no-confidence votes have been a source of political instability. The election of Ludwig Scotty as president in 2004, and his reelection in August 2007 provided hope for a stable government and implementation of much-needed economic reforms. However, following a no-confidence vote in December 2007, Scotty was replaced by Marcus Stephen, who pledged good governance and transparency. Stephen secured a second term as president in a snap election in April 2008.

In February 2010, Stephen's opponents tried to unseat him with a no-confidence vote, but he survived the challenge and called for a snap election in April to secure his position. Parliament remained equally split between supporters and opponents of Stephen, and a deadlock ensued. As acting president, Stephen declared a state of emergency on June 11 and dissolved Parliament. A second election on June 19 failed to resolve the stalemate. Political maneuvering continued until November 1, when Stephen was reelected in an 11 to 6 vote as part of a deal that returned Scotty as parliamentary speaker.

To improve political stability and government accountability, the Scotty administration launched a constitutional review in 2005. Proposals included a directly elected president, making the state auditor an independent officer of Parliament, and requiring strict accounting for all public revenue and expenditures. In February 2010, 78 percent of all voters participated in the referendum to amend the constitution. The results fell far short of the required two-thirds majority, as nearly 70 percent of participating voters opposed the 34 proposed changes.

Political Rights

and Civil Liberties:

Nauru is an electoral democracy. The 2010 elections were deemed free and fair by international observers. The 18-member unicameral Parliament is popularly elected from 14 constituencies for three-year terms. Parliament chooses the president and vice president from among its members. Political parties include the Nauru First Party and the Democratic Party, but many politicians are independents.

Corruption is a serious problem in Nauru. In 2010, the Australian federal police began investigations into an Australia-based company for allegedly bribing legis-

lators in Nauru to gain exclusive control of the phosphate reserves remaining on the island.

The government does not restrict or censor the news media. Local journalists produce a number of weekly and monthly publications; foreign dailies, most in English, are freely admitted and widely available. The government publishes occasional bulletins, and the opposition publishes its own newsletters. Radio Nauru and Nauru TV, which the government owns and operates, broadcast content from Australia, New Zealand, and other international sources. There are no formal restrictions on internet usage, though cost and lack of infrastructure have limited access.

The constitution provides for freedom of religion, which the government generally respects in practice. There have been no reports of government suppression of academic freedom.

The government respects the freedoms of assembly and association. There are several advocacy groups for women, as well as development-focused and religious organizations. There are no trade unions or labor protection laws, partly because there is little large-scale, private employment.

The judiciary is independent, and defendants generally receive fair trials and representation. The Supreme Court is the highest authority on constitutional issues, and Parliament cannot overturn court decisions. Appeals in civil and criminal cases can be lodged with the high court of Australia. Traditional reconciliation mechanisms, rather than the formal legal process, are frequently used, typically by choice but sometimes under communal pressure. A civilian official controls the 100-person police force. Police abuse is rare, although foreign workers have complained that the police are slow to act on cases filed against native employers. Nauru has no armed forces; Australia provides national defense under an informal agreement.

Societal pressures limit the ability of women to exercise their legal rights. Sexual harassment is a crime, but spousal rape is not. Domestic violence is frequently associated with alcohol abuse. There are currently no women serving in Parliament.

Nepal

Political Rights: 4
Civil Liberties: 4
Status: Partly Free

Population: 28,000,000
Capital: Kathmandu

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline For Year Under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
3,4PF	4,4PF	5,4PF	5,5PF	6,5NF	5,4PF	5,4PF	4,4PF	4,4PF	4,4PF

Overview: After prolonged Maoist opposition and political infighting among rival parties in the Constituent Assembly over the need for new leadership, Prime Minister Madhav Kumar Nepal resigned at the end of June 2010. The assembly had yet to replace him at year's end, as continued partisan disagreement prevented the only candidate, Ram Chandra

Poudel, from securing a majority vote. Meanwhile, the deadline for introducing a new constitution was pushed back to May 2011.

King Prithvi Narayan Shah unified the Himalayan state of Nepal in 1769. Following two centuries of palace rule, the left-leaning Nepali Congress (NC) party won the country's first elections in 1959. King Mahendra abruptly dissolved Parliament and banned political parties in 1960, and in 1962, he began ruling through a repressive panchayat (village council) system. Many parties went underground until early 1990, when the Jan Andolan (Peoples' Movement) organized prodemocracy rallies that led King Birendra to establish parliamentary democracy. An interim government introduced a constitution that vested executive power in a prime minister and cabinet responsible to Parliament, but retained the monarch as head of state.

In Nepal's first multiparty elections in 32 years, Girija Prasad Koirala, a veteran dissident, led the NC to victory and formed a government in 1991. Torn by intraparty conflicts, the NC was forced in 1994 to call early elections, which it lost to the Communist Party of Nepal/United Marxist-Leninist, or CPN-UML. The Communists, however, failed to secure a majority in Parliament. Separately, the more militant Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) launched a guerrilla insurgency in 1996, leading to a decade-long civil conflict that ultimately claimed some 12,800 lives. Hopes for a more stable government rose after the NC won a majority in 1999 elections.

In June 2001, King Birendra's brother Gyanendra took the throne after a bizarre palace incident in which the crown prince apparently shot and killed Birendra and nine other members of the royal family before killing himself. Gyanendra declared a state of emergency in November, and for the next several years, he ruled without Parliament, appointing governments unilaterally. Moreover, he presided over a sharp escalation in the civil conflict, using the army to fight the Maoist rebels. The fighting, combined with periodic strikes and blockades, crippled the economy.

By 2005, Gyanendra's government was cracking down on political dissent and shutting down numerous media outlets and other means of communication, such as telephone and internet services. Realizing that their attempts to engage the king were unlikely to bear fruit, a seven-party alliance (SPA) of mainstream political factions entered into talks with the Maoists, yielding an agreement that called for the restoration of democracy.

In April 2006, hundreds of thousands of people took part in demonstrations across the country, with the general public—led by professionals, civil society and human rights activists, and the civil service—forming the core of most marches. Gyanendra relented that month, agreeing to the provisions of the SPA-Maoist pact. The restored Parliament quickly removed most of the king's powers, and the SPA announced plans to elect a Constituent Assembly (CA) that would write a new constitution.

The SPA and Maoists concluded a Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) in November 2006, stipulating that the Maoists would place their weapons under UN monitoring, confine their fighters to camps, disband their parallel government, and join a new interim government alongside members of the existing Parliament. In January 2007, Maoists joined Parliament, weapons decommissioning was complet-

ed, and an interim constitution was promulgated. However, ethnic violence broke out in the Terai plains region along the border with India. Combined with the lack of finalized election laws and ongoing disagreement over the monarchy, this led to a series of postponements of CA elections from their original date in June 2007.

The elections were finally held in April 2008, and international observers deemed them generally free and fair, with few incidents of violence on election day. However, the campaign period was marred by regular attacks on candidates and campaign workers. Two candidates were killed, and Maoists were responsible for the bulk of the violence. The Maoist party captured 220 of the 601 seats. Its nearest rival was the NC (110 seats), followed by the CPN-UML (103 seats), the Madhesi People's Rights Forum (52 seats), and a range of smaller parties and independents. The CA quickly voted to replace the monarchy with a republican system, and in July it chose the NC's Ram Baran Yadav as president. Maoist leader Prachanda was elected prime minister in August, and the Maoists formed a coalition government.

Faced with a hostile press, a vocal opposition, and deep suspicion from the upper echelons of the increasingly politicized military, the Maoists achieved little during their time in government. Antagonism between the Maoists and the army came to a head in May 2009, when Prachanda, frustrated by the military's resistance to integration with former Maoist fighters, ordered the firing of army chief Rookman-gud Katawal. The order was legally dubious, since the president technically had control over such decisions, and it inspired widespread protest among coalition partners. Yadav ultimately rejected the dismissal. Prachanda resigned, and a new government, led by the CPN-UML, was formed. The Maoists maintained a physical blockade of the CA after leaving government, and Maoist protests were common throughout the country for the remainder of 2009. The siege was suspended for three days in late November to allow key budgetary legislation to pass.

Maoist opposition continued through the summer of 2010 and contributed to Prime Minister Madhav Kumar Nepal's decision to resign in June. Ram Chandra Poudel of the NC sought to replace him, but boycotts by a number of political parties prevented him from securing a majority vote in the CA despite well over a dozen attempts. The assembly had yet to install a new prime minister at year's end.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Nepal is not an electoral democracy. The CA elections held in April 2008 were found to be, "generally organized in a professional and transparent manner," by a European Union observation team. However, the observers noted that the elections did not fully meet international standards due to restrictions on freedoms of assembly, movement, and expression.

The government is operating under a 2007 interim constitution. In addition to its task of writing a permanent constitution, the 601-seat CA serves as the interim legislature. Members were selected through a mixed system of first-past-the-post constituency races (240 seats), proportional representation (335 seats), and appointments by the cabinet (26 seats). Both the president and the prime minister are elected by a majority of the CA. In May 2010, the CA amended the constitution to extend its tenure for an additional year, meaning the new deadline for a permanent constitution was May 2011.

Unlike the 1990 constitution, the interim constitution has no limitation on parties formed along ethnic lines. A third of the seats in the CA are reserved for women, and substantial allocations were also made for Madhesis, Dalits, and other minority groups. A 2007 civil service law reserves 45 percent of posts for women, minorities, and Dalits, but their representation in state institutions remains inadequate.

Corruption is endemic in Nepali politics and government. The political deadlock in the CA has contributed to weak enforcement of anticorruption regulations, while graft and cartels have undermined economic development and the efficacy of state spending. While the Commission for the Investigation of Abuse of Authority is active, high-level officials are rarely prosecuted. Many members of the CA have been accused or convicted of corruption in the past. Graft is particularly prevalent in the judiciary, with frequent payoffs to judges for favorable rulings, and in the police force, which has been accused of extensive involvement in organized crime. In 2010, disciplinary action was taken against 113 police officials for various abuses, and a Complaint Investigation Section (CIS) was set up to act on public complaints of police corruption. Nepal was ranked 146 out of 178 countries surveyed in Transparency International's 2010 Corruption Perceptions Index.

The interim constitution provides for press freedom and specifically prohibits censorship, although these rules can be suspended during an emergency. Many restrictions on the press were lifted after Parliament was restored in 2006. However, media workers frequently face physical attacks, death threats, and harassment by armed groups, security personnel, and political cadres, and the perpetrators typically go unpunished. During and after nationwide Maoist protests in May 2010, party supporters reportedly attacked and intimidated critical journalists. Also during the year, three media owners were murdered in separate crimes, none of which had been solved at year's end. The government maintains control of both the influential Radio Nepal, whose political coverage is supportive of official policies, and the country's main television station. However, there is a variety of independent radio and print outlets. Many mainstream media outlets showed a strong anti-Maoist bias during that party's short time in government.

The interim constitution identifies Nepal as a secular state, signaling a break with the Hindu monarchy. Religious tolerance is broadly practiced, but proselytizing is prohibited, and members of some religious minorities occasionally report official harassment. Tibetan groups have faced restrictions in organizing public events, and Christian groups have considerable difficulty registering as religious organizations, leaving them unable to own land. Hindu converts to Christianity or Islam have sometimes faced societal discrimination or pressure from Hindu extremist groups.

The government does not restrict academic freedom. However, Maoist strikes in 2009 disrupted the school system; a UN report estimated there were 120 instances of school closures and approximately 80 cumulative school days lost during the year. Maoists staged strikes again in May 2010, though their attempts to pressure the prime minister and the coalition government to step down were unsuccessful, and party leaders called off the strikes after six days.

Freedom of assembly is guaranteed under the interim constitution. While security forces allowed the large Maoist demonstrations—which included roadblocks and forced business closures—to proceed in May 2010, Tibetan protests have been

violently suppressed in recent years. In certain cases, authorities have detained Tibetan and Nepali monks in an attempt to force them to sign a pledge not to participate in more protests.

Nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) played an active role in the movement to restore democracy in 2006, and restrictions on NGO activity imposed by the king in 2005 were lifted under the interim regime. Maoist cadres and the affiliated Young Communist League (YCL) have at times threatened or disrupted the activities of NGOs.

Labor laws provide for the freedom to bargain collectively, and unions generally operate without state interference. A draconian labor ordinance put in place by the king's government was repealed in 2006, and restrictions on civil service members forming unions were lifted. Workers in a broad range of "essential" industries cannot stage strikes, and 60 percent of a union's membership must vote in favor of a strike for it to be legal. Bonded labor is illegal but remains a problem. Similarly, the legal minimum age for employment is 14 years, but over 2 million children are believed to be engaged in various forms of labor, often under hazardous conditions.

The constitution provides for an independent judiciary, but most courts suffer from endemic corruption, and many Nepalese have only limited access to justice. In 2008, the chief justice of the Supreme Court acknowledged that it was often subject to political pressure. Because of heavy case backlogs and a slow appeals process, suspects are frequently kept in pretrial detention for periods longer than any sentences they would face if tried and convicted. Prison conditions are poor, with overcrowding and inadequate sanitation and medical care.

In ordinary criminal cases, police at times commit extrajudicial killings and cause the deaths of suspects in custody. They have tortured and beaten suspects to punish them or extract confessions. The government generally has refused to conduct thorough investigations or take serious disciplinary measures against officers accused of brutality.

The army and the Maoists have been accused of committing an array of human rights abuses during the civil conflict. A truth and reconciliation commission envisioned in the 2006 peace agreement had yet to be established at the end of 2010. Perpetrators of human rights abuses in the army consistently evade prosecution, and the army refuses to comply with police investigations.

Under the terms of the peace agreement, some 19,600 disarmed Maoist fighters are living in UN-monitored camps. The Maoist party insists that they be allowed to join the state security forces, but other parties and the military have resisted the process. Investigation and prosecution of Maoist human rights abuses during the civil conflict have been lacking, and the YCL has attacked political opponents and been accused of meting out vigilante justice in rural areas since the peace agreement.

Members of the Hindu upper castes dominate government and business, and low-caste Hindus, ethnic minorities, and Christians face discrimination in the civil service and courts. Despite constitutional provisions banning caste-based discrimination, Dalits continue to be subjected to exploitation, violence, and social exclusion. Separately, Nepal has provided asylum to more than 100,000 Bhutanese refugees since the early 1990s.

Madhesis, plains-dwelling people with close connections to groups across the

border in India, comprise 35 to 50 percent of Nepal's population, but they are underrepresented in politics, receive comparatively little economic support from the government, and—until an amendment to the citizenship law in 2006—had difficulty acquiring formal citizenship due to Nepali language requirements. In recent years, the Madhesi People's Rights Forum has organized armed cadres and mounted general strikes and protests to bolster their demands for regional autonomy and other goals, especially in the context of the drafting of the formal constitution. Combined with attacks by more radical Madhesi groups, such activities have triggered curfews and increased violence from the state.

In 2007, the Supreme Court ordered the government to abolish all laws that discriminate against homosexuals, and in 2008 it gave its consent to same-sex marriage. The government has yet to implement these rulings, though citizens can now obtain third-gender identity documents. Homosexuals reportedly face harassment by the authorities and other citizens, particularly in rural areas.

Women rarely receive the same educational and employment opportunities as men, and domestic violence against women continues to be a major problem. The 2009 Domestic Violence Act provides for monetary compensation and psychological treatment for victims, but authorities generally do not prosecute domestic violence cases. Trafficking of young women from Nepal for prostitution in Indian brothels is common, with the practice occurring in 26 districts across the country.

Netherlands

Political Rights: 1

Population: 16,600,000

Civil Liberties: 1

Capital: Amsterdam

Status: Free

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline For Year Under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
1:1F									

Overview: The People's Party for Freedom and Democracy narrowly won parliamentary elections in June 2010 and formed a minority coalition with the Christian Democratic Appeal party. In order to guarantee a voting majority, the coalition agreed to accept support from Geert Wilders' right-wing Party for Freedom, necessitating the inclusion of several anti-immigration measures in the new government's policy statement. Meanwhile, public support for Wilders' party, as well as a growing number of incidents targeting minorities, raised concerns of an increase in societal discrimination.

After the Dutch won their independence from Spain in the 16th century, the princely House of Orange assumed the leadership of the Dutch Republic, which later became the Republic of the United Netherlands. Following a brief period of rule by Napoleonic France, the Kingdom of the Netherlands emerged in the 19th

century as a constitutional monarchy with a representative government. The Netherlands remained neutral in both world wars, though the 1940 invasion of Nazi Germany influenced the country to join NATO in 1949. In 1952, it became a founding member of the European Coal and Steel Community, a precursor to the European Union (EU).

Right-wing politician Pim Fortuyn was murdered several days before general elections in May 2002. His newly formed party, the Pim Fortuyn List (LPF), had been running on an anti-immigrant platform, returning issues of immigrant integration to the forefront of Dutch politics. Following the elections, a new coalition—consisting of the center-right Christian Democratic Appeal party (CDA), the far-right populist LPF, and the right-of-center People's Party for Freedom and Democracy (VVD)—took office in July, only to collapse that October due to party infighting. The CDA narrowly won ensuing elections in January 2003, and subsequently formed a center-right coalition government with the VVD and the smaller Democrats-66 (D66) party.

In May 2006, immigration and integration minister Rita Verdonk moved to annul the citizenship of a fellow WD member of parliament, the Somali-born Ayaan Hirsi Ali, after it was discovered that she had lied in her 1992 asylum application. Hirsi Ali had received death threats for being an outspoken critic of Islam and for a film made in collaboration with controversial filmmaker Theo Van Gogh, who was killed by a radical Islamist in 2004. D66 quit the government over the handling of the incident, causing the coalition to collapse in June 2006.

The CDA led the voting in the November 2006 elections and formed a centrist coalition government with the Labor Party (PvdA) and the Christian Union party in February 2007. The CDA's Jan-Peter Balkenende continued as prime minister. The coalition government included the country's first Muslim cabinet ministers and marked the morally conservative Christian Union's debut in government. The LPF gained no seats and has since disbanded.

Elections were held again in June 2010, following the collapse of the CDA-led government in February. The VVD made major gains, winning a total of 31 seats. The PvdA followed with 30 and the CDA took only 21, down from 41 seats in the 2006 elections. Geert Wilder's right-wing Party for Freedom (PVV) won 24 seats, nearly tripling the number of votes it received in 2006. The VVD and the CDA entered into a coalition agreement in September, but did not hold a majority of seats. The two parties agreed to include the PVV in its coalition government, thus awarding Wilders influence over the new government's policy statement. Several issues advocated by the PVV were included, such as a reduction in family migration, the elimination of financial support for immigrant integration classes, the possibility of withdrawing residence permits should the holder fail an integration exam, and a ban on clothing that covers the face. Mark Rutte of the VVD became the country's prime minister, with his party leading the government for the first time.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: The Netherlands is an electoral democracy. The 150-member lower house of parliament, or Second Chamber, is elected every four years by proportional representation. The 75-member upper house, or First Chamber, is elected for four-year terms by the country's provincial councils. Foreigners residing in the country for five years or

more are eligible to vote in local elections. The Netherlands extended voting rights to Aruba and the Netherlands Antilles for the first time in the June 2009 European Parliament elections.

The leader of the majority party or coalition is usually appointed prime minister by the monarch, currently Queen Beatrix. Mayors are appointed from a list of candidates submitted by the municipal councils. The monarch appoints the Council of Ministers (cabinet) and the governor of each province on the recommendation of the majority in parliament.

The country has few problems with political corruption. The Netherlands was ranked 7 out of 178 countries surveyed in Transparency International's 2010 Corruption Perceptions Index.

The news media are free and independent. The 1881 *lèse majesté* laws restricting defamation of the monarch are rarely enforced. The trial of PVV leader Geert Wilders, which began in January 2010, was subsequently postponed until January 2011, after a judge reportedly attempted to influence one of the defense witnesses. Wilders faces charges of discrimination and inciting hatred through his anti-Muslim editorials and his film *Fitna*. In April 2010, a Dutch court acquitted the Arab European League of hate crime charges related to the 2009 publication of an allegedly anti-Semitic cartoon, ruling that the cartoon's production was protected under the European Convention on Human Rights. In September 2010, the European Court of Human Rights overturned a September 2002 ruling by a Dutch court that had compelled journalists to reveal their sources during an investigation into illegal car races.

The constitution guarantees freedom of religion. Religious organizations that provide educational facilities can receive subsidies from the government. Members of the country's Muslim community have encountered increased hostility in recent years, including harassment and verbal abuse, as well as vandalism and arson attacks on mosques. The government requires all imams and other spiritual leaders recruited from Muslim countries to take a one-year integration course before practicing in the Netherlands. The government does not restrict academic freedom.

People have the right to assemble, demonstrate, and generally express their opinions. National and international human rights organizations operate freely without government intervention. Workers have the right to organize, bargain collectively, and strike. In April 2010, sanitation workers ended a nine-week strike, the longest in the Netherlands since 1933.

The judiciary is independent, and the rule of law prevails in civil and criminal matters. The police are under civilian control, and prison conditions meet international standards.

The population is generally treated equally under the law, although human rights groups have criticized the country's recent asylum policies for being unduly harsh and violating international standards. Since December 2009, asylum applications have been assessed on an individual basis, not according to country of origin. In the fall of 2010, Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch criticized the Netherlands for its plans to deport several asylum seekers to their home countries of Iraq and Somalia, ignoring appeals from the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to halt deportations to these countries. The PVV's gains in the 2010 elections have raised concerns about escalating levels of

societal discrimination against minorities, as the party openly opposes immigration and supports a headscarf ban. In September, the Justice Ministry reported a nearly 50 percent increase in anti-Semitic incidents in 2009 over 2008 and a 13 percent increase in homophobic incidents.

In April 2010, the Dutch high court ruled that the Calvinist political party, which holds two seats in parliament, must allow women to run on the party's ballot; the party has previously fielded only male candidates. However, doubt remains over how the ruling will be effectively enforced. The Netherlands is a destination and transit point for human trafficking, particularly in women and girls for sexual exploitation. A 2005 law expanded the legal definition of trafficking to include forced labor and increased the maximum penalty for convicted offenders. Prostitution is legal and regulated in the Netherlands, although links between prostitution and organized crime have been reported.

New Zealand

Political Rights: 1

Population: 4,400,000

Civil Liberties: 1

Capital: Wellington

Status: Free

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline For Year Under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)



Overview: Efforts toward reconciliation with the indigenous population continued in 2010 with the signing of a historic agreement in June that recognizes Maori claims to customary titles. In July, several former senior government ministers confessed to abusing their official privileges. New Zealand entered into a new strategic partnership with the United States in November, marking a significant change to New Zealand's defense and security policies. That same month, 29 miners were killed in one of country's the worst mining disasters.

British sovereignty in New Zealand was established in 1840 under the Treaty of Waitangi, a pact between the British government and Maori chiefs that also guaranteed Maori land rights. New Zealand gained full independence from Britain in 1947, though the British monarch remained head of state.

Increasing concerns over immigration and its effects on demographics in New Zealand led the government to tighten immigration requirements beginning in 2004. Among other measures, residents are required to live in New Zealand for five years before they can apply for citizenship, and automatic citizenship for immigrants is restricted to those born in Samoa between 1924 and 1948, when Samoa was under New Zealand's rule.

In October 2008, Prime Minister Helen Clark dissolved parliament and called snap elections for November. John Key's National Party, which took 58 seats, also

garnered support from the Maori Party (5 seats), the ACT New Zealand Party (5 seats), and the United Future Party (1 seat). The Labour Party—which had been in office since 1999—captured 43 seats. With the National Party holding a 69-seat majority in the 122-seat Parliament, Key became prime minister.

The 2006 Recognized Seasonal Employers Scheme (RSE) aims to bring in seasonal workers for farms and provide employment for workers from neighboring Pacific islands. Faced with high rates of unemployment and public discontent, the government in December 2009 imposed new regulations requiring that migrant workers earn a minimum gross annual income of \$33,675 in order for their children to receive visas to study in New Zealand.

The rights and welfare of the Maori population have been major issues for successive administrations. In the first official designation of intellectual property protection for the Maori, the government in 2009 officially acknowledged that the war dance (haka) performed by the national rugby team belonged to the Ngati Toa tribe. Although the tribe will not be awarded royalty claims, it can address grievances over inappropriate use of the haka. In addition, the government agreed to pay \$111 million in compensation—including both rent payments from state-owned forests and greenhouse gas emission credits—to eight tribes as a comprehensive settlement for grievances over land seizures and other breaches of the Treaty of Waitangi.

Reconciliation efforts with the indigenous population continued in 2010. In April, Key reversed the position of the Clark administration and officially signed the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. In June, the government signed a new agreement with the Maori over contentious foreshore and seabed rights, replacing a 2006 deal that had ended Maori rights to claim customary title in courts of law. Tribes can now claim customary title to areas proven to have been under continuous indigenous occupation since 1840. Maori tribes that secure a customary title will be granted title deeds, but cannot sell the property or bar public access to the area.

In July, several ministers in the previous Labour government admitted to misusing official credit cards for personal purchases, with one confessing to buying 20 pornographic films. Separately, Key ordered an investigation in September into how Stephen Wilce, a senior defense official, was given the highest level of security clearance despite false claims about his background.

On November 1, New Zealand signed the Wellington Declaration with the United States, which restored defense ties between the two countries and significantly changed New Zealand's defense and security policies. In 1986, the United States had ended its previous treaty obligations with New Zealand after nuclear weapons were barred from New Zealand's ports.

In November, a series of explosions at the Pike River mine on New Zealand's South Island killed 29 miners in one of the country's worst mining accidents.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties:

New Zealand is an electoral democracy. A mixed-member electoral system combines voting in geographic districts with proportional-representation balloting. New Zealand is a member of the Commonwealth, and a governor-general represents Britain's Queen Elizabeth II as the head of state. The prime minister, the head of govern-

ment, is the leader of the majority party or coalition and is appointed by the governor-general. The unicameral Parliament, or House of Representatives, currently has 122 members, all elected for three-year terms.

The two main political parties are the center-left Labour Party and the center-right National Party. Five smaller parties (the Maori, United Future, ACT New Zealand, Green, and Progressive parties) also won representation in the 2008 parliamentary elections.

Seven of the Parliament's constituency seats are reserved for the native Maori population, which continues to increase. Approximately 15 percent of the country's 4.4 million people identify themselves as Maori, and nearly a quarter of all children are Maori. The Maori Party, the country's first ethnic party, was formed in 2004 to advance Maori rights and interests.

New Zealand is one of the least corrupt countries in the world. It was ranked first out of 178 countries surveyed in Transparency International's 2010 Corruption Perceptions Index. However, public concern over high-level corruption has increased in recent years due to several cases of official abuse.

The media are free and competitive. Newspapers are published nationally and locally in English, as well as in many other languages for the growing immigrant population. Television outlets include the state-run Television New Zealand, three private channels, and a Maori-language public network. A Maori-language radio station has been broadcasting since 1996. The government does not control or censor internet access, and competitive pricing promotes large-scale diffusion.

Freedom of religion is provided by law and respected in practice. Only religious organizations that intend to collect donations need to register with the government. Although New Zealand is a secular state, the government has fined businesses for operating on the official holidays of Christmas Day, Good Friday, and Easter Sunday. A 2001 law granted exemptions to several categories of stores in response to demands from non-Christian populations.

Academic freedom is enjoyed at all levels of instruction.

The government respects freedoms of assembly and association. Nongovernmental organizations are active throughout the country, and many receive considerable financial support from the government. The New Zealand Council of Trade Unions is the main labor federation. Fewer than 20 percent of the country's wage earners are union members. Under the 2001 Employment Relations Act (ERA), workers can organize, strike, and collectively bargain, with the exception of uniformed personnel.

The judiciary is independent, and defendants can appeal to the Privy Council in London. Prison conditions generally meet international standards, though there have been allegations of discrimination against the Maori, who make up more than half of the prison population. Over the past decade, the police have introduced training to better deal with an increasingly racially and culturally diverse population.

Although no laws explicitly discriminate against the Maori, and their living standards have generally improved, most Maori and Pacific Islanders continue to lag behind the European-descended majority in social and economic status. The Maori population has become more assertive in its claims for land, resources, and compensation from the government. A special permanent commission hears Maori tribal claims tied to the Treaty of Waitangi.

Violence against women and children remains a significant problem, particularly among the Maori and Pacific Islander populations. Many governmental and nongovernmental programs work to prevent domestic violence and support victims, with special programs for the Maori community. A 2007 law banning the spanking of children remains controversial, as it gives police the authority to determine whether a parent should be charged with abuse. A majority of voters rejected the law in a non-binding referendum in August 2009, but Prime Minister John Key's government has kept the law in place. The 2005 Civil Union Bill granted same-sex partnerships recognition and legal rights similar to those of married couples.

Nicaragua

Political Rights: 4

Population: 6,000,000

Civil Liberties: 4

Capital: Managua

Status: Partly Free

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline For Year Under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
3.3PF	4.3PF	4.4PF	4.4PF						

Overview: In January 2010, President Daniel Ortega issued a controversial decree allowing appointed officials, including members of the Supreme Court and the Supreme Electoral Council, to remain in their posts after the end of their terms. The decree appeared to be an attempt to preserve a 2009 ruling that allowed consecutive presidential terms and cleared the way for Ortega to run for reelection in 2011. In September, the Supreme Court confirmed the removal of the ban on consecutive presidential terms.

The independent Republic of Nicaragua was established in 1838, 17 years after the end of Spanish rule. Its subsequent history has been marked by internal strife and dictatorship. The Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN), a leftist rebel group, overthrew the authoritarian regime of the Somoza family in 1979. The FSLN then moved to establish a left-wing government, leading to a civil war. The United States intervened, in part by supporting irregular rebel forces known as the *contras*. In 1990, National Opposition Union presidential candidate Violeta Chamorro defeated the FSLN's Daniel Ortega in free and open elections, leading to a peaceful transfer of power. Before leaving office, however, the Sandinistas revised laws and sold off state property to party leaders, ensuring that they would retain political and economic clout.

Former Managua mayor Arnoldo Alemán of the Liberal Constitutionalist Party (PLC) defeated Ortega in the 1996 presidential election, but he was accused of corruption throughout his presidency. In 1999, the PLC and FSLN agreed to a governing pact that guaranteed Alemán a seat in both the Nicaraguan and the Central American parliaments, ensuring him immunity from prosecution. It also included

reforms that lowered the vote threshold for winning an election without a runoff from 45 to 40 percent (or 35 percent if the winner had a lead of 5 percentage points). Using their combined bloc in the legislature, the two parties solidified their control over the Supreme Court and the electoral tribunal, among other institutions.

In the 2001 election, PLC presidential candidate Enrique Bolaños, a respected conservative businessman and former vice president to Alemán, defeated Ortega. He vowed to prosecute Alemán and his aides for corruption, causing a break with the PLC; Bolaños later formed the Alliance for the Republic (APRE) party. The protracted effort to convict Alemán eventually led to a 20-year prison sentence for money laundering in 2003. However, the former leader used his alliance with Ortega to secure his release from parole conditions in March 2007, so long as he did not leave the country. Meanwhile, the PLC- and FSLN-dominated National Assembly blocked virtually all of Bolaños's proposed legislation.

Ortega won the 2006 presidential election with 38 percent of the vote in the first round. Eduardo Montealegre of the Nicaraguan Liberal Alliance (ALN), who had served as finance minister under Bolaños, took 29 percent. In concurrent legislative elections, the FSLN captured 38 seats in the 92-member National Assembly, while the PLC took 25, giving the allied parties a two-thirds majority. The ALN secured 22, and the Sandinista Renéwal Movement (MRS) won 5. Bolaños also received a seat as outgoing president, and Montealegre took one as the presidential runner-up.

In 2007, Ortega consolidated his power over the central bank, the police, and the military through a series of legislative changes. His administration also established a system of Citizens' Power Councils (CPCs), from the neighborhood to the federal level, to promote direct democracy and participation in the government's Zero Hunger food-production project. Critics argued that the bodies would blur the lines between state and party institutions. In June 2008, Ortega appointed his wife to serve as head of the Social Cabinet, which put her in charge of programs like Zero Hunger as well as the National Social Welfare System.

Prior to the November 2008 municipal elections, the Supreme Electoral Council (CSE) took a number of steps that appeared designed to ensure an FSLN victory. Among other actions, the CSE postponed elections in several municipalities in the Northern Atlantic Autonomous Region (RAAN), where anti-FSLN sentiment was high. Two opposition parties, the Conservative Party and the MRS, were prevented from contesting the elections after the CSE revoked their legal status in May. The CSE also refused accreditations to local and international electoral observers for the first time since 1990.

After the balloting, the CSE announced that the FSLN had won 105 of 146 municipalities, including Managua. However, independent observers documented fraud in at least 40 municipalities. Civil society groups that led nationwide protests against electoral fraud in February 2009 were violently attacked by progovernment groups in some areas, leading to dozens of injuries. The international community condemned the election results, leading to the suspension of more than \$150 million in U.S. and European Union (EU) aid in 2009.

In July 2009, Ortega publicly stated that the constitutional ban on consecutive presidential terms should be eliminated. The National Assembly opposed his initiative, and Ortega lacked the support to pass a constitutional amendment on the issue.

However, in October, the FSLN-controlled Supreme Court lifted the ban on consecutive terms, leading the National Assembly to pass a resolution in December against the Supreme Court's decision. The president of the CSE—left to decide which body of government to obey—supported the Supreme Court's ruling, but was scheduled to leave his post in 2010.

In January 2010, Ortega decreed that appointed officials could remain in their posts until the National Assembly selects replacements, even if this occurs after the end of their terms. The decree affected 25 high-level posts, including the president and magistrates of the CSE, who had supported allowing Ortega to run for a consecutive presidential term in the 2011 elections.

The struggle over these appointments sent Nicaragua into a political crisis in 2010, as members of the National Assembly were unable to achieve the majority necessary to select replacements. Violence broke out in April, when groups of Sandinistas physically prevented lawmakers from entering the National Assembly, set their vehicles on fire, and caused substantial damage to a hotel where opposition members had attempted to hold a legislative session after being blocked from the assembly building. In keeping with Ortega's decree, many officials remained in their posts after their terms expired in June, including the CSE president and members of the Supreme Court, which moved ahead with preparations for the 2011 elections. In September, the Supreme Court confirmed the decision to remove the ban on consecutive presidential terms. Throughout 2010, leaders of the PLC and FSLN were negotiating new appointments as part of an agreement that would uphold the status quo favoring Ortega's reelection bid.

Meanwhile, opposition parties met in May 2010 and created the Patriotic Alliance in hopes of blocking both Ortega and Alemán from returning to office. Also in May, the CSE restored the Conservative Party's legal recognition. However, unity among opposition parties remained limited. Only one party, the Great National Republican Alliance, registered for the March 2011 opposition primary to be held by the Permanent Commission on Human Rights (CPDH). In September, the CPDH abandoned plans to hold an opposition primary altogether, citing mutual distrust and attacks between members of opposition parties. Also in September, Montealegre, who had been nominated by the "Let's Go with Eduardo" movement in March, withdrew from the race, and Central American Parliament member Fabio Gadea Mantilla announced that he would run as a consensus opposition candidate.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Nicaragua is an electoral democracy. The constitution provides for a directly elected president and a 92-member unicameral National Assembly. Two seats in the legislature are reserved for the previous president and the runner-up in the most recent presidential election. Both presidential and legislative elections are held every five years. While the president is limited to two nonconsecutive terms under the constitution, the Supreme Court lifted the restriction in October 2009. Despite allegations of fraud and concerns over the CSE's impartiality, the 2006 presidential and legislative elections were regarded as free and fair by the international community.

The political and civic climate is affected by corruption, political pacts, violence, and drug-related crime. Corruption cases against opposition figures are often criticized for being politically motivated. The Managua Appeals Court reopened a

case of fraud and theft pending against former president Arnoldo Alemán in January 2010, and it remained unresolved at year's end. The 2007 Law on Access to Public Information requires public entities and private companies doing business with the state to disclose certain information. However, it preserved the government's right to protect information related to state security, and in 2009, government-run enterprises failed to publish financial information in accordance with the law.

President Daniel Ortega's administration has created a network of private businesses under the auspices of the Bolivarian Alliance for the Americas (ALBA), a regional economic association through which the Venezuelan government provides Nicaragua with 10 million barrels of oil annually. Nicaragua pays half the cost up front and the rest over a 25-year period, with a 2 percent interest rate. The funds generated from the resale of Venezuelan oil are dedicated to social projects but administered directly by Ortega's office and outside of the national budget, raising concerns that the money could be allocated in a corrupt or politicized manner. In February 2010, the Office of the Comptroller General announced that it would carry out an audit of ALBANISA—the company receiving funds under ALBA to invest in social programs—citing concerns about the incorrect classification of investments, inadequate registry of payments, and deficiencies in bookkeeping. Nicaragua was ranked 127 out of 178 countries surveyed in Transparency International's 2010 Corruption Perceptions Index.

The constitution calls for a free press but allows some censorship. Radio remains the main source of information. Before leaving office in 1990, the Sandinistas privatized some radio stations and handed them to party loyalists. There are six television networks based in the capital, including a state-owned network, and many favor particular political factions. Three national newspapers cover the news from a variety of political viewpoints. Investigative journalism plays a major role in exposing corruption and official misconduct. The Communications and Citizenry Council, which oversees the government's press relations and is directed by First Lady Rosario Murillo, has been accused of limiting access to information and censoring the opposition. Access to the internet is unrestricted.

The press has faced increased political and judicial harassment since 2007, as the Ortega administration engages in systematic efforts to obstruct and discredit critics in the media. Journalists have received death threats, and some have been killed in recent years, with a number of attacks attributed to FSLN sympathizers. In addition, members of the ruling elite have acquired stakes in media outlets and used their ownership influence to sideline independent journalists. In January 2010, Managua's Channel 8 television station was sold to an FSLN supporter for \$10 million. Fernando Chamorro, a journalist for the station and one of the most outspoken critics of the FSLN government, resigned in response to the sale. Judges aligned with the FSLN have also ordered restrictions on coverage of particular cases. A poll released in April 2009 revealed that self-censorship had significantly increased since 2007; the share of respondents reporting that they did not feel safe discussing politics in public rose from 39 percent in 2007 to 68 percent in 2009.

Religious and academic freedoms are generally respected.

Freedoms of assembly and association are recognized by law, but their observance in practice has come under mounting pressure. While public demonstrations

are generally allowed, FSLN supporters used violence against antigovernment protesters in both 2008 and 2009. Opposition members have accused the police of partisan behavior and failing to protect demonstrators.

Although nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) are active and operate freely, they have faced harassment in recent years, and the emergence of the CPCs has weakened their influence. The FSLN controls many of the country's labor unions, and the legal rights of non-FSLN unions are not fully guaranteed. Although the law recognizes the right to strike, unions must clear a number of hurdles, and approval from the Ministry of Labor is almost never granted. Employers sometimes form their own unions to avoid recognizing legitimate organizations. Employees have reportedly been dismissed for union activities, and citizens have no effective recourse when labor laws are violated by those in power. In January 2010, unions and corporations in export-processing zones signed a comprehensive minimum wage agreement for 2010-13 that will provide workers with an 8 to 10 percent salary increase, covering 152 corporations that employ 72,000 workers. Child labor and other abuses in export-processing zones remain problems, though child labor occurs most often in the agricultural sector. In 2010, the Ministry of Labor estimated that 250,000 children work each year during the coffee harvest.

The judiciary remains dominated by FSLN and PLC appointees, and the Supreme Court is a largely politicized body controlled by Sandinista judges. The court system also suffers from corruption, long delays, a large backlog of cases, and a severe shortage of public defenders. Access to justice is especially deficient in rural areas and on the Caribbean coast.

Despite long-term improvements, the security forces remain understaffed and poorly funded, and human rights abuses still occur. In July 2010, clashes between police and sugar mill workers in Chichigalpa left 2 people dead and 32 injured. Forced confessions are also a problem, as are arbitrary arrests. Prison conditions are poor. Nicaragua is an important transshipment point for South American drugs, but the police have been active in combating trafficking and organized crime. In September 2010, the National Assembly approved a law that provides witnesses with new protections and establishes better procedures for the handling of evidence, drugs, money, and property seized from criminals.

The constitution and laws nominally recognize the rights of indigenous communities, but those rights have not been respected in practice. Approximately 5 percent of the population is indigenous and lives mostly in the RAAN and the Southern Atlantic Autonomous Region (RAAS). The government has failed to comply with a 2005 ruling by the Inter-American Court of Human Rights, which ordered it to pay damages to indigenous groups after the electoral commission prevented the majority-indigenous Yatama party from competing in 2000 municipal elections. In 2009, the Miskito Council of Elders in the RAAS announced the creation of a separatist movement demanding independence, citing government neglect and grievances related to the exploitation of natural resources. No party captured a majority in the RAAN regional council elections held in March 2010, and while opposition parties denounced irregularities in preparations for the vote, the results were not revised.

Violence against women and children, including sexual and domestic abuse, remains widespread and underreported. Abortion is illegal and punishable by im-

prisonment, even when performed to save the mother's life or in cases of rape or incest. Scores of deaths stemming from the ban have been reported in recent years. In March 2010, opposition parties introduced a bill in the National Assembly to decriminalize therapeutic abortions. NGOs opposing the ban delivered a petition containing 37,000 signatures to Ortega's home in September.

Nicaragua is a source country for women and children trafficked for prostitution. A 2008 penal code reform prohibits trafficking in persons, but the U.S. State Department's 2010 Trafficking in Persons Report criticized Nicaragua's lack of progress in raising awareness of the problem, improving treatment of victims, and compiling reliable trafficking statistics.

Niger

Political Rights: 5

Population: 15,900,000

Civil Liberties: 4

Capital: Niamey

Status: Partly Free

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline For Year Under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
4/4PF	4/4PF	4/4PF	3/3PF	3/3PF	3/3PF	3/4PF	3/4PF	5/4PF	5/4PF

Overview: On February 18, 2010, the Supreme Council for the Restoration of Democracy (CSRD), a military junta led by Major Salou Djibo, ousted President Mamadou Tandja in a coup d'état and installed a transitional government. The CSRD suspended the controversial 2009 constitution and established the National Consultative Council to draft a new charter, which was approved in an October referendum. Presidential, legislative, and municipal elections—initially scheduled for December—were delayed until January 2011.

After gaining independence from France in 1960, Niger was governed by a series of one-party and military regimes. General Ali Seibou took power in 1987, but his one-party regime yielded to international pressure and prodemocracy demonstrations, and a new constitution was adopted by popular referendum in 1992. Mahamane Ousmane of the Alliance of Forces for Change was elected president in 1993, but overthrown in January 1996 by Colonel Ibrahim Baré Maïnassara, who became president in a sham election six months later.

After members of the presidential guard assassinated Maïnassara in April 1999, the guard commander led a transitional government that organized a constitutional referendum in July and competitive elections in November. Retired lieutenant colonel Mamadou Tandja—supported by the National Movement for a Developing Society (MNSD) and the Democratic and Social Convention (CDS) parties—won the presidency in the generally free and fair balloting, and the MNSD and CDS took a majority of seats in the National Assembly. Tandja was reelected

in 2004, and in concurrent legislative elections, four parties joined the MNSD and CDS to secure 88 of the National Assembly's 113 seats.

The next few years were marked by rising prices, food shortages, renewed fighting with ethnic Tuareg rebels, and allegations of government corruption that created tensions within the MNSD. Prime Minister Hama Amadou's government lost a vote of confidence in 2007, and he was arrested in 2008 on embezzlement charges, which he alleged were designed to prevent him from running for president in 2009.

In May 2009, Tandja dissolved the National Assembly after lawmakers refused to approve a constitutional referendum that would delay the next presidential election until 2012, expand executive powers, and eliminate executive term limits. Tandja then dissolved the Constitutional Court—after it ruled against the referendum—and announced that he would rule by decree under emergency powers. The controversial constitutional changes were adopted by referendum in August, but observers rejected the results as fraudulent. Later that month, Tandja lifted emergency rule and announced that legislative elections to replace the dissolved National Assembly would be held in October. Key opposition parties boycotted the vote, allowing Tandja's MNSD to capture 76 of the 113 seats, a gain of 30 seats. The elections were denounced by the international community, and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) suspended Niger's membership.

On February 18, 2010, the Supreme Council for the Restoration of Democracy (CSRD), a military junta led by Major Salou Djibo, placed Tandja under house arrest, suspended the constitution, and dissolved all government institutions. The junta appointed a 20-member transitional government, which included many Nigeriens from the diaspora, 5 women, and 5 members of the CSRD. The transitional government in turn created the National Consultative Council, a 131-member body tasked with drafting key documents, including a new constitution and electoral code. Despite the creation of these new institutions and the designation of a civilian prime minister, Djibo maintained his status as *de facto* head of state without any genuine checks on his power.

In a referendum held in October, 90 percent of participating voters approved the new constitution amid a turnout of approximately 52 percent. An electoral commission, established by the transitional government in June, successfully lobbied for national and municipal elections to be pushed back from December to January 2011 due to organizational and funding difficulties. The junta forbade its members and representatives of the transitional government from running for office. The CSRD arrested four of its own senior officers in October for allegedly plotting a coup. Tandja remained under house arrest at year's end, and his confinement was ruled illegal by an ECOWAS court.

Separately in 2010, the Movement of Nigeriens for Justice (MNJ), a Tuareg rebel group, officially laid down its arms in January. Libya had led mediation efforts between Tuareg rebels and the Nigerien government from August 2008 until a peace deal was reached in October 2009.

Niger was ranked 167 of 169 countries surveyed in the 2010 UN Human Development Index. By the end of 2009, the United States and the European Union had withdrawn all nonhumanitarian assistance to Niger, stating that funds would not be reinstated until the country returned to civilian rule. In January 2010, the United

Nations estimated that one-fifth of the population was facing food shortages due to erratic rainfall.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Niger is not an electoral democracy. While observers considered the national polls held in 1999 and 2004 to be largely free and fair, President Mamadou Tandja's unconstitutional moves to extend his rule in 2009 dismantled much of the country's democratic progress, and the 2010 coup increased the military's control over government. The transitional government took steps toward restoring civilian rule and holding elections. The 2010 constitution, which was written in broad consultation with civil society, reinstated executive term limits and placed additional limitations on executive power. It also provided amnesty for members of the CSRD.

Opposition politicians and critics of the regime faced arrests, restricted movement, and imprisonment during 2009. The opposition openly welcomed the February 2010 coup as an opportunity to advance democratic development. Following the coup, former prime minister and presidential hopeful Hama Amadou returned from exile, and three former legislators were released from jail.

Corruption is a serious problem in Niger, and observers have raised transparency concerns regarding uranium mining contracts. However, the 2010 constitution contained provisions for greater transparency in government reporting of revenues from extractive industries. The transitional government created various institutions to prosecute corruption, including the State Audit Court and the Commission on Economic, Financial, and Fiscal Crime. The commission investigated 50 high-profile cases, including embezzlement charges against a presidential candidate and a former cabinet minister. Niger was ranked 123 out of 178 countries surveyed in Transparency International's 2010 Corruption Perceptions Index.

In 2010, the transitional government made efforts to restore freedoms of speech and of the press. In June, the National Assembly adopted a new press law that eliminated prison terms for journalists, and removed the threat of libel cases that journalists had faced during ousted president Mamadou Tandja's rule. Reaction to the new law was mixed, as the Media Foundation for West Africa reported that foreign journalists still had to pay high fees to work in Niger and submit final versions of their stories for government approval. Also during the year, the transitional government reopened Niger's Press Club and the largest private radio station in the Agadez region, which had been shuttered since 2008, and granted new licenses for three private television stations and 12 private and community radio stations. The government does not restrict internet use, though less than 1 percent of the population has access to the medium.

Freedom of religion is generally respected. However, the Muslim majority is not uniformly tolerant of minority religions. Academic freedom is guaranteed in principle but not always observed in practice.

Constitutional guarantees of freedoms of assembly and association are largely upheld, but authorities have restricted the operations of some nongovernmental organizations. The constitution and other laws guarantee workers the right to join unions and bargain for wages, although over 95 percent of the workforce is employed in subsistence agriculture and small trading.

The constitution provides for an independent judiciary, and courts have shown

some autonomy in the past, though the judicial system is overburdened and has been subject to executive and other interference. Public prosecutors are supervised by the Ministry of Justice, and the president has the power to appoint judges. Judicial corruption is fueled partly by low salaries and inadequate training. Prolonged pretrial detention is common, and police forces are also underfunded and poorly trained. Prisons are characterized by overcrowding and poor health conditions. Amnesty International has reported arbitrary detentions and extrajudicial killings of civilians by soldiers in retaliation for rebel attacks.

Insecurity continues to plague the northwest of the country along the Malian border. In the Tillabery region, disputes over land rights between herders and farmers have led to dozens of deaths in recent years. In September 2010, seven foreign nationals were kidnapped from a uranium-mining town by the regional terrorist group Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb.

Discrimination against ethnic minorities persists, despite constitutional protections. Nomadic peoples continue to have poor access to government services.

Under a 2002 quota system, political parties must allocate 10 percent of their elected positions to women, which has increased their representation. Human rights observers noted gains for women's rights in the 2010 constitution, which prohibits gender discrimination and condemns all forms of violence against women and children. Women continue to suffer discrimination in practice, especially in rural areas. Family law gives women inferior status in property disputes, inheritance rights, and divorce. In the east, some women among the Hausa and Peul ethnic groups are rarely allowed to leave their homes without a male escort. Domestic violence is reportedly widespread. Female genital mutilation was criminalized in 2003.

While slavery was also criminalized in 2003, as many as 43,000 people still live in conditions of servitude. Niger remains a source, transit point, and destination for human trafficking. In December 2010, the country adopted its first antitrafficking law, but investigation and prosecution efforts remained weak.

Nigeria

Political Rights: 4*

Population: 158,300,000

Civil Liberties: 4

Capital: Abuja

Status: Partly Free

Ratings Change: Nigeria's political rights rating improved from 5 to 4 due to increasing efforts at electoral reform, greater opposition leverage to demand transparent elections, and the emergence of a diverse slate of presidential candidates within the ruling People's Democratic Party.

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline For Year Under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
4,5PF	4,5PF	4,4PF	4,4PF	4,4PF	4,4PF	4,4PF	5,4PF	6,4PF	4,4PF

Overview: The death of President Umaru Yar'Adua and the decision of his successor, Goodluck Jonathan, to run for a full term complicated Nigeria's political situation in 2010. As multiple candidates announced their intentions to seek the presidency, time was running short to revise an irregular voter registry ahead of elections scheduled for early 2011. However, the ruling party undertook relevant reforms, and the electoral commission made progress toward ensuring credible balloting. Religious violence continued in the city of Jos, with hundreds of people killed in multiple incidents throughout the year. Despite efforts to improve living conditions for residents of the Niger Delta, militant groups based in the region remained active, extending their reach by detonating car bombs in the capital.

The military ruled Nigeria for much of the period after independence from Britain in 1960. Beginning with the first military coup in 1966, military officers claimed that their intervention was necessary to control simmering tensions among the country's 250 ethnic groups, as well as between religious communities. Muslims, who constitute a majority in the north, make up about 50 percent of the overall population, while Christians, who dominate in the south, account for most of the remaining 50 percent. Ethnic and regional tensions led to the attempted secession of Nigeria's oil-rich southeast as the Republic of Biafra in 1967, which touched off a three-year civil war and a devastating famine that together caused more than one million deaths.

A military-supervised political transition led to the inauguration of a civilian government in 1979, but the new democratic regime was burdened by factionalism, corruption, and communal polarization. Economic mismanagement and deeply flawed elections triggered another military intervention in 1983, followed by 16 more years of military rule.

After several years under the leadership of General Ibrahim Babangida, the country held a presidential election in June 1993. Moshood Abiola, a Muslim Yoruba from the south, was widely considered the winner, but Babangida annulled the election. A civilian caretaker administration governed briefly until General Sani

Abacha, a principal architect of previous coups, took power in November 1993. Abacha's dictatorial regime dissolved all democratic structures and banned political parties, governing through a predominantly military Provisional Ruling Council (PRC). Abiola was jailed in 1994 and ultimately died in detention, just weeks after Abacha's unexpected demise in 1998.

General Abdulsalami Abubakar emerged as the new military leader and presided over a transition to civilian rule. In 1999, Olusegun Obasanjo—a former general who had led a military regime from 1976 to 1979 and spent a number of years in prison under Abacha—won the presidential election on the ticket of the People's Democratic Party (PDP), which also captured the most seats in the National Assembly.

Nigeria made its first transition from one elected government to another when Obasanjo, a southern Christian, won a second term in 2003. The elections were preceded by violence, and observers documented widespread irregularities and fraud. Obasanjo's runner-up, former general Muhammadu Buhari, a northern Muslim and member of the All Nigeria Peoples Party (ANPP), filed a petition to nullify the election results. However, the Supreme Court in 2005 unanimously rejected the challenge, saying the documented fraud was not enough to have changed the vote's outcome.

The April 2007 elections were marred by bloodshed and reports of massive vote rigging and fraud. International and local election monitors were highly critical of the vote, and opposition parties refused to accept the results, which gave Umaru Yar'Adua, the PDP candidate, 70 percent of the presidential ballots. In the parliamentary vote, the PDP won 85 out of 109 Senate seats and 262 out of 360 lower house seats, while the ANPP took 16 Senate seats and 62 lower-house seats. The PDP also led the state elections, capturing 29 out of 36 governorships. The official results drew a raft of legal challenges that were adjudicated by election officials as well as the court system. In December 2008, the Supreme Court delivered its final ruling on the presidential contest, repudiating the opposition complaints and upholding Yar'Adua's victory.

In November 2009, the ailing Yar'Adua left the country to seek medical treatment in Saudi Arabia. The National Assembly in February 2010 provisionally handed power to Vice President Goodluck Jonathan. Yar'Adua returned quietly to Nigeria that month, but died on May 5, allowing Jonathan to formally assume the presidency. In September, Jonathan replaced leaders within the security forces and military in an apparent demonstration of his control. He also promised electoral reform and appointed the widely respected Attahiru Jega to head the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC).

Jonathan's decision to run in the 2011 presidential election challenged an informal power-sharing arrangement between the north and south initiated by the PDP in 1999. Under the traditional agreement—which called for the presidency to alternate between a northerner and a southerner—the next president should originate from the north, since Yar'Adua, a northerner, did not finish his term. However, Jonathan's constituency pushed for his right to compete in the next election, despite being a southerner. Many well-known political figures, including the northerners Babangida and Buhari, announced their intention to seek the presidency as well. While the presidential and legislative elections were initially scheduled for January 2011, the INEC faced significant difficulties in creating an accurate and valid reg-

istry of the approximately 70 million eligible voters, and the polls were postponed until April.

Nigeria's economy is dominated by oil, which accounts for 95 percent of export revenues and most foreign investment. It is estimated that nearly \$400 billion in oil revenue has been stolen or squandered since independence. Wealth and political power are concentrated in the hands of a narrow elite, and much of the regular violence in the oil-rich yet impoverished Niger Delta region stems from unequal distribution of oil revenue.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Nigeria is not an electoral democracy. According to the constitution, the president is elected by popular vote for no more than two four-year terms. Members of the bicameral National Assembly, consisting of the 109-seat Senate and the 360-seat House of Representatives, are elected for four-year terms. However, the International Crisis Group found that the 2007 general elections, "in the view of Nigerians and the many international observers alike, were the most poorly organized and massively rigged in the country's history." Civil society organizations reported numerous, widespread incidents of political harassment and violence surrounding the elections in six Niger Delta states, with the majority committed by PDP supporters or criminal gangs acting on behalf of PDP politicians.

The three major political parties are the ruling PDP; the ANPP, which is the largest opposition party and draws its strongest support from the Muslim north; and the opposition Action Congress (AC) party, formed from smaller groups ahead of the 2007 elections. Although political parties represent a wide array of policy positions and openly engage in debate, they continue to be marginalized by the PDP. Nevertheless, the PDP enacted reforms in 2010 to combat cronyism and favoritism within the party, and the run-up to the 2011 elections featured a variety of viable candidates. Moreover, the appointment of a new, reputedly independent chairman to the INEC served to address opposition complaints that the commission had effectively been an extension of the PDP.

Corruption remains pervasive despite government efforts to improve transparency and reduce graft. The Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), the country's main anticorruption agency, often faces politically motivated meddling. Nigeria was ranked 134 out of 178 countries surveyed in Transparency International's 2010 Corruption Perceptions Index.

Freedom of speech and expression is constitutionally guaranteed, and Nigeria has a lively independent media sector. However, state security agents occasionally arrest journalists, confiscate newspapers, and harass vendors, notably when journalists are covering corruption or separatist and communal violence. Local authorities frequently condemn those who criticize them, and cases of violence against journalists often go unsolved. Three Nigerian journalists were killed in separate events in April 2010, and investigations had not yielded results by year's end. Sharia (Islamic law) statutes in 12 northern states impose severe penalties for alleged press offenses. The government does not restrict internet access.

Religious freedom is guaranteed by the constitution, though many Nigerians, including government officials, discriminate against adherents of other religions. Religious violence frequently reflects regional and ethnic differences and accom-

panying competition for resources. In January 2010, clashes between Muslims and Christians broke out in the city of Jos; at least 200 people were killed, thousands were displaced, and religious buildings were set ablaze before troops were dispatched to address the violence. In March, an additional 700 people were killed near Jos when Muslim and Christian groups clashed again, seeking revenge for the earlier violence. Several ensuing incidents throughout the year killed hundreds more. The discovery of a sizable arms shipment in October, possibly destined for a third country, heightened fears that an influx of small arms could escalate communal and other violence, especially in the run-up to the 2011 elections.

Academic freedom is generally honored, although government officials frequently pressure university administrators and faculty to ensure special treatment for their relatives and associates. At the state level, policies related to the admission of students and the hiring of teaching staff are subject to ethnic politics. Nigeria's public education system remains dismal; more than a third of the population is illiterate, and less than 60 percent of school-aged children are enrolled.

Freedoms of assembly and association are generally respected in practice. However, protests are often suppressed by state and private security forces, especially demonstrations organized by youth groups or in the Niger Delta. Human rights groups report that dozens of activists have been killed in recent years, and hundreds have been detained. Workers, except those in the military or "essential services," may join trade unions and have the right to bargain collectively. Public-health workers strike frequently, and in October 2010, academic staff of tertiary institutions staged a strike in Lagos State over nonpayment of a new salary scale.

The higher courts are relatively competent and independent, but they remain subject to political influence, corruption, and inefficiencies. Certain departments, particularly the Court of Appeals, have often overturned decisions on election challenges or allegations of corruption against powerful elites, raising doubts about their independence.

Ordinary defendants in Nigerian courts frequently lack legal representation and are often ill-informed about court procedures and their rights. Human rights groups have alleged that Islamic courts in the 12 northern states with Sharia statutes fail to respect due process rights and discriminate against non-Muslims. Pre-trial detainees, many of whom are held for several years, account for 65 percent of the country's inmates, and few have had access to a lawyer. Children and the mentally disabled are often held with the general prison population. Prison facilities are rife with disease, as they commonly lack water, adequate sewage facilities, and general sanitation.

Security forces commit abuses with impunity, and corruption pervades their ranks. Extrajudicial killings of prisoners have been reported, and torture and general ill-treatment of suspects are widespread. A report issued by Nigerian and U.S. watchdog groups in May 2010 noted that police kill, torture, and rape suspects to force confessions and extort bribes. Police officers who routinely abuse their power are often supported by a chain of command that encourages and institutionalizes graft. Violent crime in certain cities and areas remains a serious problem, and the trafficking of drugs and small arms is reportedly on the rise.

The constitution prohibits ethnic discrimination and requires government offices to reflect the country's ethnic diversity, but societal discrimination is widely

practiced, and ethnic clashes frequently erupt. Minorities in the Niger Delta feel particular discrimination, primarily with regard to distribution of the country's oil wealth, and their grievances have fueled militant violence. The government launched an amnesty program in 2009, and some militant factions accepted the offer. However, in January 2010, a spokesperson claiming to represent the main militant group, the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND), warned oil companies of future attacks. In their first-ever strike on the capital, Delta militants detonated two car bombs during an independence celebration in October, killing 10 people.

The authorities often engage in forcible evictions to pave the way for development projects. Amnesty International estimated that between 2000 and 2009, more than two million Nigerians had been evicted. According to an Amnesty International report released in October 2010, recent urban development efforts in Port Harcourt included slum demolitions, which threatened to leave as many as 200,000 of the city's most impoverished residents homeless.

Nigerian women face societal discrimination, although their educational opportunities have improved and women hold several key governmental positions. Women throughout the country experience discrimination in employment and are often relegated to inferior positions. In the northern states governed under Sharia statutes, women's rights have suffered particularly serious setbacks. Women in some ethnic groups are denied equal rights to inherit property, and various forms of gender-based violence, including spousal rape, are not considered crimes. Although the federal government publicly opposes female genital mutilation, it has taken no action to ban the practice. While illegal, human trafficking to, from, and within the country for the purposes of labor and prostitution is reported to be on the rise. According to UNICEF, there are 15 million child laborers in Nigeria, 40 percent of whom are at risk of being trafficked. Forced labor is widespread, and the government makes no effort to combat it. Several organizations have reported on an illegal trade in which pregnant teenagers are promised abortions, only to be held until their babies are delivered and sold. No laws prohibit discrimination against the physically and mentally disabled, and people with disabilities face social stigma, exploitation, and discrimination. Homosexual activity is illegal and punishable by up to 14 years in prison.

North Korea

Political Rights: 7

Civil Liberties: 7

Status: Not Free

Population: 22,800,000

Capital: Pyongyang

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline For Year Under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
7,7NF									

Overview: Following a rare public backlash, authorities apologized for the failed currency reform implemented in late 2009 and reopened the markets in early 2010. In March, North Korea was accused of sinking the South Korean naval vessel, the *Cheonan*, causing tensions on the peninsula to soar. North Korea made several leadership changes throughout the year, promoting key members of the Kim family to top positions, presumably to facilitate an eventual power succession. In September, Kim Jong-un was promoted to the Korean Workers' Party Central Committee and formally introduced to the public. While inter-Korean relations had calmed by the fall, tensions flared again in November, when North Korea attacked South Korea's Yeonpyeong Island in response to joint U.S.-South Korean military exercises.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK, or North Korea) was established in 1948 after three years of post-World War II Soviet occupation. The Soviet Union installed Kim Il-sung, an anti-Japanese resistance fighter, as the new country's leader. In 1950, North Korea invaded South Korea in an attempt to reunify the peninsula under communist rule. Drawing in the United States and then China, the three-year conflict killed at least 2.5 million people and ended with a ceasefire rather than a full peace treaty. Since then, the two Koreas have been on a continuous war footing, and the border remains one of the most heavily militarized places in the world.

Kim Il-sung solidified his control after the war, purging rivals, consigning thousands of political prisoners to labor camps, and fostering an extreme personality cult that promoted him as North Korea's "Great Leader." Marxism was replaced by the "Juche" (translated as "self-reliance") ideology, which combines extreme nationalism, xenophobia, and the use of state terror. After Kim Il-sung died in 1994, he was proclaimed "Eternal President," but power passed to his son, Kim Jong-il.

The end of the Cold War and its associated Soviet and Chinese subsidies led to the collapse of North Korea's command economy. Decades of severe economic mismanagement were exacerbated by harsh floods in 1995 and 1996, resulting in a famine that killed at least a million people. As many as 300,000 North Koreans fled to China in search of food, despite a legal ban on leaving the country. In 1995, North Korea allowed the United Nations and private humanitarian aid organizations to undertake one of the world's largest famine-relief operations. Despite continuing food shortages over the next decade, the DPRK in 2005 instructed the UN World

Food Programme to either switch from humanitarian relief to development assistance or leave North Korea. The DPRK continues to force the international community to bear the burden of feeding its citizens while it devotes resources to its military.

The emergence of black markets helped to deal with extreme shortages, and illicit traders smuggled in goods of all kinds from China. The regime instituted halting economic reforms in 2002, easing price controls, raising wages, devaluing the currency, and giving factory managers more autonomy. China and South Korea also continued to provide aid, fearing that state collapse could lead to massive refugee outflows, military disorder, the emergence of criminal gangs and regional warlords, and a loss of state control over nuclear weapons.

The DPRK withdrew from the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty in 2003 and proceeded to test ballistic missiles and a nuclear device in 2006. In early 2007, the regime agreed to denuclearize in exchange for fuel aid and other concessions from its four neighbors and the United States, but further negotiations and implementation of the deal proceeded haltingly. In 2008, Pyongyang handed over its declaration of nuclear assets and disabled its Yongbyon nuclear plant, and the United States removed North Korea from its list of state sponsors of terrorism. The Six-Party Talks then broke down in December over the issue of verification.

In April 2009, the DPRK tested a long-range missile and announced its withdrawal from the Six-Party Talks. A second nuclear weapons test was conducted in May. In response, the UN Security Council unanimously passed Resolution 1874, which tightened weapons-related financial sanctions and called on all governments to search North Korean shipments for illicit weapons.

In late November, the government announced a currency revaluation and other measures designed to curb private trading and reassert state control over the economy. Citizens were allowed to exchange a limited amount of old currency for new notes, wiping out individuals' cash savings. Following public anger and confusion, as well as reported protests, the authorities eased the limitations somewhat. Individuals could deposit larger amounts of old currency in state banks, but risked being investigated for illegal trading. With the crippled black market unable to meet demand, prices rose sharply. The economy was disrupted further in early 2010, when the government banned the use of foreign currency.

In February 2010, the government backtracked on the currency revaluation, issuing a formal apology and allowing markets to reopen. Reports later emerged that Pak Nam-gi, the Korean Workers' Party finance and planning director, was tried and executed over the failed reforms, although this was never confirmed.

In March, a South Korean naval vessel, the *Cheonan*, was sunk in the West Sea, killing 46 crew members. While North Korea was widely believed to have perpetrated the attack, it never claimed responsibility. In May, an international group of experts concluded that the ship had been sunk by a North Korean torpedo. However, the investigative team did not include members from North Korea, China, or Russia, all of whom cited the evidence as inconclusive.

The findings triggered a series of escalatory provocations between the two Koreas. South Korea vowed retaliation and countermeasures and demanded that Pyongyang apologize and prosecute the perpetrators. In response, Pyongyang proclaimed it would not engage in a dialogue with South Korea until after President Lee Myung-bak was out of office. In June, North Korea petitioned the UN Security

Council for a new probe into the sinking of the *Cheonan*, warning of serious consequences if punishment against Pyongyang was discussed. The UN Security Council condemned the attack in a presidential statement, but no further sanctions were imposed.

Inter-Korean relations had begun to thaw only a few months after the *Cheonan* incident. North Korea agreed to return to Six-Party Talks and resumed bilateral talks with South Korea, and the North Korean government even invited Western media to Pyongyang to attend the 65th anniversary of the Workers' Party of Korea on October 15. However, in response to joint U.S.-South Korean live fire military exercises in the West Sea, North Korea conducted a surprise attack on South Korea's Yeonpyeong Island on November 23. South Korea launched a counterattack, and the exchange lasted an hour; the shelling resulted in a number of South Korean casualties. The year ended with tensions on the Korean peninsula at their highest levels since the Korean War, with the South Korean public calling for military retaliation.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: North Korea is not an electoral democracy. Kim Jong-il has led the DPRK since the 1994 death of his father, Kim Il-sung. He has many titles but rules as the chairman of the National Defense Commission, the "highest office of state," since the office of president was permanently dedicated to Kim Il-sung in a 1998 constitutional revision. North Korea's parliament, the Supreme People's Assembly (SPA), is a rubber-stamp institution elected to five-year terms. All candidates for office, who run unopposed, are preselected by the ruling Korean Workers' Party and two subordinate minor parties.

A delegates meeting of the Korean Workers' Party was convened in September for the first time since 1966, which included the promotion of several members of Kim Jong-il's family. His sister, Kim Kyong-hui, was elected as a member of the Political Bureau. Kim Jong-un, Kim Jong-il's third son and heir apparent, was elected as vice chairman of the Central Military Commission, and was subsequently appointed to the party's Central Committee. Kim Jong-un's promotion marked his first formal appearance in North Korean media. Observers considered the appointments and other reshuffling throughout the year as preparations for the political power succession.

Corruption is believed to be endemic at every level of the state and economy.

All media outlets are run by the state. Televisions and radios are permanently fixed to state channels, and all publications are subject to strict supervision and censorship. Internet access is restricted to a few thousand people, and foreign websites are blocked. Still, the black market provides alternative information sources, including cellular telephones, pirated recordings of South Korean dramas, and radios capable of receiving foreign programs.

Although freedom of religion is guaranteed by the constitution, it does not exist in practice. State-sanctioned churches maintain a token presence in Pyongyang, and some North Koreans living near the Chinese border are known to practice their faiths furtively. However, intense state indoctrination and repression preclude free exercise of religion as well as academic freedom. Nearly all forms of private communication are monitored by a huge network of informers.

Freedom of assembly is not recognized, and there are no known associations or organizations other than those created by the state. Strikes, collective bargaining, and other organized-labor activities are illegal.

North Korea does not have an independent judiciary. The UN General Assembly has recognized and condemned severe DPRK human rights violations, including torture, public executions, extrajudicial and arbitrary detention, and forced labor; the absence of due process and the rule of law; and death sentences for political offenses. South Korean reports suggest that up to 154,000 political prisoners are held in six detention camps. Inmates face brutal conditions, and collective or familial punishment for suspected dissent by an individual is a common practice. In January 2010, two Americans, Robert Park and Aijalon Gomes, were detained for illegally entering North Korea. While Park was released in February, Gomes was tried and sentenced to eight years of hard labor and a fine of \$700,000. In August, former U.S. president Jimmy Carter traveled to Pyongyang to secure Gomes's release.

The government operates a semihereditary system of social discrimination whereby all citizens are classified into 53 subgroups under overall security ratings—"core," "wavering," and "hostile"—based on their family's perceived loyalty to the regime. This rating determines virtually every facet of a person's life, including employment and educational opportunities, place of residence, access to medical facilities, and even access to stores.

There is no freedom of movement, and forced internal resettlement is routine. Access to Pyongyang, where the availability of food, housing, and health care is somewhat better than in the rest of the country, is tightly restricted. Emigration is illegal, but many North Koreans have escaped to China or engaged in cross-border trade. Ignoring international objections, the Chinese government continues to return refugees and defectors to North Korea, where they are subject to torture, harsh imprisonment, or execution.

The economy remains both centrally planned and grossly mismanaged. Development is also hobbled by a lack of infrastructure, a scarcity of energy and raw materials, an inability to borrow on world markets or from multilateral banks because of sanctions, lingering foreign debt, and ideological isolationism. The growth of the black market has provided many North Koreans with a field of activity that is largely free from government control.

There have been widespread reports of trafficked women and girls among the tens of thousands of North Koreans who have recently crossed into China. UN bodies have noted the use of forced abortions and infanticide against pregnant women, who are forcibly repatriated from China.

Norway

Political Rights: 1

Population: 4,900,000

Civil Liberties: 1

Capital: Oslo

Status: Free

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline For Year Under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
1,1F									

Overview: In July 2010, three men with alleged links to Al-Qaeda were arrested by Norwegian officials on suspicion of terrorist activity. The arrests were the culmination of a year-long international investigation. Also in July, two of Norway's major asylum centers were rocked by vandalism and arson. The government subsequently announced that existing centers would be replaced by facilities focused on expediting the deportation process.

Norway's constitution, the Eidsvoll Convention, was first adopted in 1814, during a brief period of independence after nearly four centuries of Danish rule. Subsequently, Norway became part of a Swedish-headed monarchy. The country gained independence in 1905 and has since functioned as a constitutional monarchy with a multiparty parliamentary structure. Norway became a founding member of NATO in 1949.

Norwegian citizens narrowly rejected membership in the European Union (EU) in 1972 and 1994, despite government support for joining. Norwegians wanted to preserve their sovereignty and feared that membership would threaten the country's energy, agriculture, and fishing industries. As part of the European Economic Area (EEA), Norway has nearly full access to EU markets, and 71 percent of Norwegian exports go to EU countries. While Norway has adopted almost all EU directives, it has little power to influence EU decisions.

Prime Minister Jens Stoltenberg's center-left Red-Green coalition was reelected in the September 2009 parliamentary elections, making it the first government to win reelection in the last 16 years. The coalition—led by Stoltenberg's Labor Party, which won 64 seats—includes the Socialist Left Party and the Center Party (Agrarians), which captured 11 seats each. The Progress Party secured 41 seats; the Christian Democrats, 10 seats; and the Liberal Left, 2 seats. In concurrent elections for the Sami Assembly, the Labor Party captured 14 seats, the Progress Party took 3 seats, and various other Sami parties won a total of 22 seats.

On July 6, 2010, residents of the asylum "waiting centers" near Nannestad and Drammen vandalized and set fire to the facilities. The following day, the Lier center near Drammen was burned to the ground; officials alleged that the fire was intentionally set by asylum seekers whose applications had been denied. Authorities subsequently arrested 23 residents on suspicion of arson; at year's end, 13 of the accused had been deported, while the remaining 10 were still being held in Norway. Residents reported poor living conditions in the asylums, including a lack

of food and mental health-care, though the authorities have denied such claims. In an effort to prevent future disturbances, the Norwegian Directorate of Immigration proposed solitary confinement for any asylum seeker who had committed a crime; the proposal had not been passed by year's end. In September, the justice minister announced that "return facilities" would be created for those denied asylum. While largely similar to the current facilities, "return facilities" will place greater emphasis on expediting deportation in an effort to reduce overcrowding.

Also in July, Norwegian officials arrested three men, two legal Norwegian residents and one naturalized citizen, with alleged ties to Al-Qaeda after a year-long international investigation. The suspects—originating from the Uighur region of China, Kurdish Iraq, and Uzbekistan—were suspected of planning attacks against *Jyllands-Posten*, the Danish newspaper that published cartoons featuring the prophet Muhammad in 2005. At least one of the suspects also admitted to a separate plan to attack the Chinese embassy in Oslo. In September, two of the three suspects confessed to the terrorist plot and remained in custody at year's end. The third, David Jakobsen, was released in October 2010, but would still face trial on terrorism charges.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties:

Norway is an electoral democracy. The unicameral Parliament, called the Storting, currently has 169 members. Lawmakers are directly elected for four-year terms through a system of proportional representation. The leader of the majority party or coalition in the Storting is appointed prime minister by the constitutional monarch, currently King Harald V. While the monarch is officially the head of state and commander in chief of the armed forces, his duties are largely ceremonial.

The indigenous Sami population, in addition to participating in the national political process, has its own Consultative Constituent Assembly, or Sameting, which has worked to protect the group's language and cultural rights, and to influence the national government's decisions about Sami land and its resources. The government supports Sami-language instruction, broadcast programs, and subsidized newspapers in Sami regions. A deputy minister in the national government deals specifically with Sami issues.

Norway remains one of the least corrupt countries in the world. However, isolated incidents of bribery and misconduct have occurred, and Norway's role in the international energy and mining industries has received particular scrutiny. Norway was ranked 10 out of 178 countries surveyed in Transparency International's 2010 Corruption Perceptions Index.

Freedom of the press is constitutionally guaranteed. In an effort to promote political pluralism, the state subsidizes many newspapers, the majority of which are privately owned and openly partisan. In February 2010, the newspaper *Dagbladet* republished a series of cartoons featuring the prophet Muhammad that had caused an uproar in 2005. In response, 3,000 demonstrators peacefully protested the cartoons' suggestion that Muslims are terrorists. Internet access is not impeded by the government.

Freedom of religion is protected by the constitution and respected in practice. The monarch is the constitutional head of the official Evangelical Lutheran Church of Norway, and at least half of the cabinet must belong to the church. Other denomi-

nations must register with the state to receive support, which is determined by size of membership. A course on religion and ethics focusing on Christianity is mandatory for students, but it is considered to be in violation of international human rights conventions, including the UN International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and the European Convention on Human Rights. Contrary to a decision reached in 2009, an administrative court in August 2010 issued a nonbinding opinion that banning female police officers from wearing hijab (headscarves) violates Norway's freedom of religion and antidiscrimination laws.

The constitution guarantees freedoms of assembly and association. Norwegians are very active in nongovernmental organizations. Labor unions play an important role in consulting with the government on social and economic issues, and approximately 53 percent of the workforce is unionized.

The judiciary is independent, and the court system, headed by the Supreme Court, operates fairly at the local and national levels. The king appoints judges on the advice of the Ministry of Justice. The police are under civilian control, and human rights abuses by domestic law enforcement authorities are rare. Prison conditions generally meet international standards, though problems with overcrowding continued in 2010.

Overcrowding in asylum centers has also become a concern in recent years, though the number of asylum seekers dropped by nearly 42 percent in 2010, according to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). As of September 2009, asylum seekers who voluntarily return to their homeland will receive approximately \$1,800 from the Norwegian government to assist in resettlement. While citizens within the EEA no longer need a residence permit to work in Norway, the agreement excludes Romanians and Bulgarians. An ombudsman for equality and antidiscrimination was established in 2006 to counter ethnic and sexual bias.

The Gender Equality Act provides equal rights for men and women. In 2009, nearly 40 percent of the seats in the Storting were won by women, a slight increase over the previous elections. Women currently head 10 of the 19 government ministries. Norway is a destination point for women trafficked for the purpose of sexual exploitation. The country, however, remains a leader in anti-trafficking efforts, according to the U.S. State Department's 2010 Trafficking in Persons Report. A 2009 law makes the purchase of sex illegal; citizens caught paying for sex can receive up to six months in prison. By the end of 2009, authorities had arrested 23 men under the new law, though sex workers claim that the new legislation has caused conditions to worsen due to increased risks.

Oman

Political Rights: 6

Population: 3,100,000

Civil Liberties: 5

Capital: Muscat

Status: Not Free

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline For Year Under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
6,5NF									

Overview: In January 2010, authorities dropped slander charges against A'sem al-Sheedi, a journalist who had published an article in December 2009 alleging the presence of corruption in the Omani police force. During the year, Oman's primary internet provider, Omantel, continued to block websites whose content was deemed immoral.

Except for a brief period of Persian rule, Oman has been an independent state since a native dynasty expelled the Portuguese from Muscat in 1650. After the expulsion, which ended more than a century of Portuguese involvement in the area, the sultan conquered neighboring territories and built a small empire that included parts of the eastern coast of Africa and the southern Arabian Peninsula. The overseas possessions were gradually lost beginning in the mid-19th century.

During the 1950s and 1960s, Oman experienced a period of civil unrest centered mostly in the interior regions of the country. In 1964, a group of separatists supported by Marxist governments, including that of the neighboring People's Democratic Republic of Yemen (South Yemen), started a revolt in Oman's Dhofar province. The insurgency was not completely quelled until the mid-1970s. Sultan Qaboos bin Said al-Said seized power in 1970 by overthrowing his father, Sultan Said bin Taimur, who had ruled for nearly four decades. The new sultan launched a program to modernize Oman's infrastructure, educational system, government, and economy.

In 1991, Qaboos replaced the appointed State Consultative Council, established in 1981, with a partially elected Consultative Council (Majlis al-Shura) designed to provide the sultan with a wider range of opinions on ruling the country. A limited number of women gained the right to vote and run as candidates in 1994. The 1996 basic law, promulgated by royal decree, created a bicameral parliament consisting of an appointed Council of State (Majlis al-Dawla) and a wholly elected Consultative Council. Only a limited number of citizens selected by tribal leaders were allowed to vote in the first elections. The basic law granted certain civil liberties; banned discrimination on the basis of sex, religion, ethnicity, and social class; and clarified the process for royal succession.

This limited political reform in the 1990s was overshadowed by a stronger effort, spearheaded by Qaboos in 1995, to liberalize and diversify Oman's oil-dependent economy. In preparation for Oman's accession to the World Trade Organization in 2000, the government lifted restrictions on foreign investment and ownership of enterprises in the country.

In 2003, the sultan decreed universal suffrage for all Omanis over the age of 21. Parliamentary elections were held that year and again in October 2007. However, political reform has continued to lag behind economic reform, with Qaboos maintaining a strong grip on the state throughout 2010.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Oman is not an electoral democracy. Citizens elect the 84-member Consultative Council for four-year terms, but the chamber has no legislative powers and can only recommend changes to new laws. The Consultative Council is part of a bicameral body known as the Council of Oman. The other chamber, the 59-member State Council, is appointed by the sultan, who has absolute power and issues laws by decree. The sultan serves as the country's prime minister; heads the ministries of Defense, Foreign Affairs, and Finance; and is the governor of Oman's central bank.

Under the country's constitution, citizens have the right to address public authorities on personal matters or on matters related to public affairs in a manner consistent with Omani law. Mechanisms exist for citizens to petition the government through local officials, and certain citizens are afforded limited opportunities to petition the sultan in direct meetings. Political parties are not permitted, and no meaningful organized political opposition exists.

Corruption is not perceived to be a serious problem in Oman. However, the legal code does not include freedom of information provisions. Oman was ranked 41 out of 178 countries surveyed in Transparency International's 2010 Corruption Perceptions Index.

Freedom of expression and democratic debate are limited, and criticism of the sultan is prohibited. The 2004 Private Radio and Television Companies Law allows for the establishment of private broadcast media outlets. The government permits private print publications, but many of these accept government subsidies and practice self-censorship. In January 2010, slander charges against the journalist A'sem al-Sheedi were dropped. Al-Sheedi was originally detained in December 2009 for publishing an article alleging corruption within the national police department. Omanis have access to the internet through the national telecommunications company, and the government censors politically sensitive and pornographic content. The sultan issued a decree in 2008 expanding government oversight and regulation of electronic communications, including communication on personal blogs. Omantel, Oman's primary internet service provider, temporarily blocked two websites in February and March 2010, including the blogs *Muscat Confidential* and *Community Queer* for publishing content that Omantel considered immoral.

Islam is the state religion. Non-Muslims have the right to worship, although they are banned from proselytizing. Non-Muslim religious organizations must register with the government. The Ministry of Awqaf (Religious Charitable Bequests) and Religious Affairs distributes standardized texts for mosque sermons and expects imams to stay within the outlines of these texts. The government restricts academic freedom by preventing the publication of material on politically sensitive topics.

The right to peaceful assembly within limits is provided for by the basic law. However, all public gatherings require official permission, and the government has the authority to prevent organized public meetings without any appeal process. The basic law allows the formation of nongovernmental organizations, but civic and

associational life remains limited. The government has not permitted the establishment of independent human rights organizations and generally uses the registration and licensing process to block the formation of groups that are seen as a threat to stability.

Oman's 2003 labor law allows workers to select a committee to voice their demands and represent their interests but prevents them from organizing unions. Additional labor reforms enacted in 2006 brought a number of improvements, including protections for union activity, collective bargaining, and strikes. However, legal provisions covering migrant workers remain inadequate, and domestic servants are particularly vulnerable to abuse. Employers using child labor face increased penalties, including prison terms, under the law.

The judiciary is not independent and remains subordinate to the sultan and the Ministry of Justice. Sharia (Islamic law) is the source of all legislation, and Sharia Court Departments within the civil court system are responsible for family law matters, such as divorce and inheritance. In less-populated areas, tribal laws and customs are frequently used to adjudicate disputes. Many of the civil liberties guarantees expressed in the basic law have not been implemented.

According to the law, arbitrary arrest and detention are prohibited. In practice, however, the police are not required to obtain an arrest warrant in advance. Government authorities must obtain court orders to hold suspects in pretrial detention, but the police and security services do not regularly follow these procedures. Prisons are not accessible to independent monitors, but former prisoners report overcrowding. The penal code contains vague provisions for offenses against national security, and such charges are prosecuted before the State Security Court, which usually holds proceedings that are closed to the public.

Omani law does not protect noncitizens from discrimination. Foreign workers risk deportation if they abandon their contracts without documentation releasing them from their previous employment agreement. Under these regulations, employers can effectively keep workers from switching jobs and hold them in a relationship that is open to exploitation.

Although the basic law prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex, women suffer from legal and social discrimination. Oman's personal status law, based on Sharia, favors the rights of men over those of women in marriage, divorce, inheritance, and child custody. According to official statistics, women constitute a very small percentage of the total labor force in Oman. No female candidates were elected in the 2007 Consultative Council elections.

While Oman remains a destination and transit country for trafficking in women and men, some progress has been noted in recent years. After a new anti-trafficking law came into effect in 2008, the government in March 2009 convicted 11 men of bringing 13 women into the country for prostitution. In February 2010, the Oman police conducted a seminar on trafficking and incorporated the training into its curriculum. The government published its inaugural anti-trafficking report in April, which included details on prosecutions, prevention efforts, and initiatives to raise public awareness.

Pakistan

Political Rights: 4

Population: 184,800,000

Civil Liberties: 5

Capital: Islamabad

Status: Partly Free

Note: The numerical ratings and status listed above do not reflect conditions in Pakistani-controlled Kashmir, which is examined in a separate report.

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline For Year Under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
6.5NF	4.5PF	4.5PF	4.5PF						

Overview: In 2010, tensions between President Asif Ali Zardari and the judiciary continued, as did efforts by the civilian government and Parliament to exert more control over policy formulation in the face of sustained military interference. A constitutional amendment passed by Parliament in April curtailed the powers of the executive branch over the judiciary, the legislature, and the military, among other provisions. The army's campaigns against Islamist militants led to a range of human rights abuses, displacement of civilians, and retaliatory terrorist attacks across the country. Societal discrimination and attacks against religious minorities and women, as well as the weak rule of law, remained issues of concern.

Pakistan was created as a Muslim homeland during the partition of British India in 1947, and the military has directly or indirectly ruled the country for much of its independent history. As part of his effort to consolidate power, military dictator Mohammad Zia ul-Haq amended the constitution in 1985 to allow the president to dismiss elected governments. After Zia's death in 1988, successive civilian presidents cited corruption and abuse of power in sacking elected governments headed by prime ministers Benazir Bhutto of the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) in 1990 and 1996, and Nawaz Sharif of the Pakistan Muslim League (PML) in 1993.

Sharif, who returned to power in the 1997 elections, was deposed in a military coup after he attempted to fire the army chief, General Pervez Musharraf, in 1999. Musharraf appointed himself "chief executive" (and later president), declared a state of emergency, and suspended democratic institutions. The 2002 Legal Framework Order (LFO) gave Musharraf effective control over Parliament and changed the electoral rules to the detriment of opposition parties. The regime also openly promoted progovernment parties, such as the newly formed Pakistan Muslim League Quaid-i-Azam (PML-Q), which captured the largest share of seats in the 2002 parliamentary elections and led the new government.

While he managed to contain the secular opposition over the next several years, Musharraf was less willing to rein in radical Islamist groups, with which the military traditionally had a close relationship. These groups gradually extended their influence from outlying regions, like the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) to major urban centers, carrying out attacks on both military and civilian targets.

Tensions between Musharraf and the increasingly activist judiciary came to a head in 2007, when he suspended Iftikhar Chaudhry, the chiefjustice of the Supreme Court, sparking mass protests by lawyers and wider political unrest. When the court attempted to rule on the validity of Musharraf's victory in the October presidential election, he again took preemptive action and imposed martial law on November 3, suspending the constitution, replacing much of the higher judiciary, and arresting more than 6,000 civil society activists, political leaders, and lawyers. The state of emergency was lifted in mid-December, and an amended version of the constitution was restored, but some restrictions on the press and freedom of assembly remained in place, as did the emasculated judiciary. Following the December 27 assassination of former prime minister Bhutto, parliamentary elections planned for early January 2008 were postponed until February, and Bhutto's widower, Asif Ali Zardari, assumed *de facto* leadership of the PPP.

The PPP led the February voting with 97 out of 272 directly elected seats in the National Assembly, followed by Nawaz Sharif's PML-N with 71. The ruling PML-Q was routed, taking only 42 seats, and the Muttahida Majlis-i-Amal (MMA), an alliance of Islamic parties, was also severely weakened. At the provincial level, the PML-N triumphed in its traditional stronghold of Punjab, the PPP dominated in Sindh, and the Awami National Party (ANP), a secular and ethnic Pashtun group, won the most seats in North-West Frontier Province (NWFP).

In March 2008, the PPP and PML-N reached a power-sharing deal—under which PPP-backed candidate Yousuf Raza Gilani was elected prime minister—and agreed to the key priorities of reinstating the ousted judges and stripping the president of his power to dissolve Parliament and dismiss the prime minister. Musharraf resigned as president in the face of impeachment efforts in August. Less than a week later, the PML-N ended its coalition with the PPP, accusing it of breaking a promise to immediately reinstate all of the judges after Musharraf's exit; several of the judges were reappointed that month, but Chaudhry was not included. Zardari was thought to oppose the chiefjustice's return, because it could lead to the revival of long-dormant corruption cases against him. In September, Zardari won the indirect presidential election with 481 of the 702 votes cast; 368 national and provincial lawmakers abstained or boycotted the vote. The PML-N candidate received 153 votes, and the PML-Q took 44. In addition, the PPP and its allies gained a plurality in the March 2009 Senate elections.

Zardari, under pressure from the military, the United States, and the PML-N, reinstated Chaudhry as chiefjustice in March 2009. The Supreme Court soon began dismantling the actions taken by Musharraf, declaring them illegal and calling on Parliament to "regularize" them through ordinary legislation.

During 2010, tensions between the civilian government, the judiciary, and the military persisted. The government faced pressure from the military to replace Zardari, and the judiciary repeated its calls for Zardari's old cases to be reopened. In a number of cases, the military and intelligence agencies attempted to undercut the government's policies and decision making. In a step intended to strengthen the democratic process, Parliament in April unanimously passed the 18th Amendment to the constitution, which among provisions rescinded the power of the president to dismiss Parliament and reduced executive power over appointments to the judiciary, the electoral commission, and the military leadership. At the end of the year,

both houses of Parliament also passed the 19th Amendment, strengthening the role of the senior judiciary in making appointments to superior courts and thus neutralizing a potential source of conflict between the executive and judiciary.

Although the military had stepped up its operations against Islamist militants in the FATA and NWFP in 2008, terrorist attacks and other violence continued to be a major concern. During 2009, the government and militants affiliated with the Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP, or Pakistani Taliban) network traded control over Swat and other districts in NWFP, as well as portions of the FATA, with government forces making gains during the year. There was further fighting on the ground in 2010, and substantially accelerated missile attacks by U.S. drone aircraft—aimed at militant leaders—resulted in numerous civilian casualties as well as increasing resentment among the inhabitants of the affected areas. A range of Islamist militant groups continued to stage regular and devastating suicide attacks throughout Pakistan, targeting official buildings, prominent politicians and military personnel, and religious ceremonies and places of worship. Security and governance were also tested by massive floods in August that killed approximately 1,900 people and displaced or otherwise affected around 20 million people. The government struggled to react expeditiously to the disaster, but the military's reputation was strengthened as it took a leading role in providing flood relief.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties:

Pakistan is not an electoral democracy. A civilian government and president were elected in 2008, ending years of military rule, but the military continues to exercise de facto control over many areas of government policy. The political environment is also troubled by corruption, partisan clashes, and Islamist militancy, among other problems.

The lower house of the bicameral Parliament is the 342-seat National Assembly, which has 272 directly elected members and additional seats reserved for women (60 seats) and non-Muslim minorities (10 seats), all with five-year terms. The upper house is the 100-seat Senate, most of whose members are elected by the four provincial assemblies for six-year terms, with half up for election every three years. The president is elected for a five-year term by an electoral college consisting of the national and provincial legislatures. The Constitution (18th Amendment) Act, unanimously passed by both houses of Parliament in April 2010, dramatically curtails the power of the president by rescinding his right (granted by the 2002 LFO) to dismiss unilaterally the prime minister and the national and provincial legislatures and to impose a provincial state of emergency. The president also loses the power to appoint the head of the army and the chief election commissioner. The reforms were intended to strengthen the premiership and Parliament.

The 2008 parliamentary elections were not completely free and fair. A European Union observer mission noted the abuse of state resources and media, inaccuracies in the voter rolls, and rigging of the vote tallies in some areas. Opposition party workers faced police harassment, and more than 100 people were killed in political violence during the campaign period. However, private media and civil society groups played a significant watchdog role, and despite the irregularities, the balloting led to an orderly rotation of power that reflected the will of the people.

A certain number of legislative seats are reserved for women and religious minorities at the national, provincial, and local levels. In some parts of the country, women have difficulty voting and running for office due to objections from social and religious conservatives, though women won an additional unreserved 16 National Assembly seats in the 2008 elections. At least 17 seats in the Senate are reserved for women, and religious minorities were allotted 4 seats in the Senate as part of the 18th Amendment. Members of the heterodox Ahmadiyya sect, who consider themselves Muslims but are deemed a non-Muslim religious minority by the constitution, largely boycotted the 2008 elections to protest this official designation. A requirement that all candidates hold either a bachelor's degree or madrasa (Islamic school) qualification was eliminated following the 2008 elections, though controversy erupted in 2010 over accusations that dozens of sitting politicians had lied about their qualifications to gain office. Several politicians stepped down from their seats, and others faced court cases brought by the Election Commission, none of which had reached a verdict by year's end.

The FATA are governed by the president through unelected civil servants. Elected councils, set up in 2007 with the intention of increasing local representation, have not altered the established decision-making structures. President Asif Ali Zardari in 2009 announced a reform package that would lift a ban on political parties in the tribal areas and rein in the arbitrary judicial and financial powers of the FATA's administration, but the changes had not been implemented at the end of 2010.

Pakistan's government operates with limited transparency and accountability, though this has improved with the resumption of civilian rule. The military has a stake in continuing to influence both commercial and political decision-making processes, in addition to its traditional dominance of foreign policy and security issues. Serving and retired officers have received top jobs in ministries, state-run corporations, and universities, and they enjoy a range of other privileges. Although several thousand active-duty officers were withdrawn from civilian posts in 2008, a tenth of all civilian jobs remain reserved for officers. In a move that some saw as strengthening the army's influence, the government extended the term of the incumbent army chief, General Ashfaq Kayani, by three years in July 2010. The military's Directorate for Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) has a particularly strong hold over all security-related decision making. However, the new Parliament has functioned more effectively than its predecessor, holding important policy debates and overturning key decisions of the former government.

Corruption is pervasive in politics and government. Under the National Reconciliation Ordinance (NRO) of 2007, Zardari and more than 8,000 other politicians, diplomats, and officials were granted immunity in ongoing corruption cases, allowing them to participate in the 2008 elections. The Supreme Court revoked the NRO in December 2009, and a government petition to review the decision was subsequently rejected. Though Zardari himself still enjoyed presidential immunity, several high-ranking ministers faced the threat of reopened cases or prosecution. In May 2010, Zardari pardoned Interior Minister Rehman Malik on a corruption conviction dating to 2004. The National Accountability Bureau (NAB), established in 1999 to combat corruption, was slated to be abolished in 2009 amid claims that it had become politicized under military ruler Pervez Musharraf. It remained in place in

2010, but was criticized for failing to act on the judiciary's calls for it to reopen hundreds of cases. Pakistan was ranked 143 out of 178 countries surveyed in Transparency International's 2010 Corruption Perceptions Index. In general, Pakistan has an extremely low level of tax collection, as many of the country's wealthiest citizens, including members of Parliament, use legal loopholes to avoid paying taxes. In October 2010, the Election Commission suspended 141 members of Parliament after they failed to disclose their assets; 15 of the lawmakers were reinstated several days later when they filed the required paperwork.

Pakistan's outspoken newspapers and a growing number of private television stations present a diverse range of news and opinion. However, powerful figures, including military officials and members of the higher judiciary, restrict media freedom by attempting to silence critical reporting, and there is a high level of violence against journalists. The constitution and other laws authorize the government to curb speech on subjects including the armed forces, the judiciary, and religion. Blasphemy laws are occasionally used against the media. In 2010, broadly defined contempt laws were increasingly used to curb reporting on particular court cases or judges. Additional restrictions associated with the imposition of martial law in 2007 were routinely flouted after civilian rule was restored, and they were formally nullified in April 2010 as part of Parliament's passage of the 18th Amendment, but the government continued to engage in sporadic efforts to suspend temporarily certain broadcasts or programs under other media regulations, including an official code of conduct. Websites addressing sensitive subjects, particularly Balochi separatism, are periodically blocked. In 2010, the government moved to block "blasphemous" internet content—leading to the blanket obstruction of access to several major sites in May—but refrained from cracking down on Islamist groups' online calls for violence.

According to the Committee to Protect Journalists, at least eight journalists were murdered because of their work in 2010, making Pakistan one of the world's deadliest countries for members of the press. Intimidation by the security forces—including physical attacks and arbitrary, incommunicado detention—continues to occur, as do harassment and attacks by Islamic fundamentalists and hired thugs working for feudal landlords or local politicians. A number of reporters covering the conflict in the FATA were detained, threatened, expelled, or otherwise obstructed in 2010, by either government forces or militants.

Pakistan is an Islamic republic, and there are numerous legal restrictions on religious freedom. Violations of blasphemy laws draw harsh sentences, including the death penalty, and injuring the "religious feelings" of individual citizens is prohibited. Incidents in which police take bribes to file false blasphemy charges against Ahmadis, Christians, Hindus, and occasionally Muslims continue to occur, with several dozen cases reported each year. In November 2010, Aasia Bibi, a Christian woman, was sentenced to death in a blasphemy case that was condemned by both local and international rights groups; an appeal was pending at year's end. No executions on blasphemy charges have been carried out to date, but the charges alone can lead to years of imprisonment, ill-treatment in custody, and extralegal persecution by religious extremists. For example, in July 2010, two brothers accused of blasphemy were killed by gunmen inside a courtroom. As reformers pressed for either repeal or amendment of the laws, on the grounds that they are discriminatory and

frequently misapplied, religious hard-liners alleged that even questioning the laws themselves constituted an act of blasphemy.

The penal code severely restricts the religious practice of Ahmadis, who comprise about 2.5 percent of the population, and they must effectively renounce their beliefs to vote or gain admission to educational institutions. Authorities occasionally confiscate or close Ahmadiyya publications and harass their staff, and dozens of Ahmadis faced criminal charges under blasphemy or other discriminatory laws in 2010.

Religious minorities also face unofficial economic and social discrimination, and they are occasionally subject to violence and harassment. In a growing trend, particularly in Sindh province, Hindu girls are kidnapped, forcibly converted to Islam, and compelled to marry their kidnappers. Terrorist and other attacks on places of worship and religious gatherings occur frequently, leading to the deaths of dozens of people every year. In a TTP attack against two Ahmadiyya mosques in Lahore in May 2010, almost 100 people were killed, and many more were injured. There was a notable upsurge in violence between members of the Sunni Muslim majority and the Shiite Muslim minority in 2009. Recent waves of attacks on Christians have also been attributed to the spread of Sunni extremist ideology. In April 2010, the Ministry of Minorities Affairs established an emergency telephone hotline for minorities to report incidents of violence.

The government generally does not restrict academic freedom. However, university student groups with ties to political parties or radical Islamist organizations intimidate students, teachers, and administrators; aim to impose "Islamic" moral codes by blocking certain types of classes or behavior; and try to influence university policies. In April 2010, members of the Islami Jamiat Talaba assaulted and seriously injured a professor in Lahore, leading to a protest strike by fellow teachers that lasted several weeks. Schools and female teachers, particularly in the FATA and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (as NWFP was renamed in 2010), face threats and attacks by Islamist militants, with dozens of schools blown up during the year.

The rights to freedom of assembly and association are selectively upheld. Authorities sometimes restrict public gatherings, disperse protests with excessive force, and use preventive arrest to forestall planned demonstrations. However, such tactics were employed less in 2010 than in previous years. Some Islamist leaders have been held under house arrest or in preventive detention under the Maintenance of Public Order Act, which allows three months' detention without trial.

Authorities generally tolerate the work of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and allow them to publish critical material. However, NGOs that focus on female education and empowerment, and female NGO staff in general, have faced threats, attacks, and a number of murders by radical Islamists, particularly in the FATA and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Citing security concerns, the government has at times prevented aid groups from operating in Balochistan, exacerbating the province's humanitarian situation. Pakistan is also home to a large number of charitable or cultural organizations, such as the Jamaat-ud-Dawa (JD), that have links to Islamist militant groups.

The 2008 Industrial Relations Act (IRA) allowed workers to form and join trade unions, but also placed restrictions on union membership, the right to strike,

and collective bargaining, particularly in industries deemed essential. According to an International Trade Union Confederation report, hundreds of workers have been fired for union activity since the act was passed. The constitutional amendment passed in April 2010 placed labor law and policy under the purview of the provinces, despite local groups' concerns about the devolution of issues such as labor standards and a minimum wage, as well as the capacity of the provinces to effectively implement labor laws. By year's end, the 2008 IRA had lapsed, and all provinces had passed their own versions of the act without addressing its shortcomings. Illegal bonded labor is widespread, particularly in Sindh province, and is generally used in agriculture or the brick and carpet industries. News reports have described a growing trend in which bonded laborers sell their organs to repay debts and escape servitude. Provincial authorities made some efforts during 2010 to better regulate the brick-kiln industry, mostly through the registration of workers and amelioration of working conditions. The enforcement of child labor laws remains inadequate; recent surveys have indicated that there are at least 10 million child workers in Pakistan.

The judiciary consists of civil and criminal courts and a special Sharia court for certain offenses. Lower courts remain plagued by corruption, intimidation, and a backlog of some 1.5 million cases that leads to lengthy pretrial detention. A new National Judicial Policy that took effect in June 2009 aims to tackle all three problems, and appeared to have had some positive effects in 2010, with case backlogs dramatically reduced in certain areas.

The Supreme Court was brought under the control of the executive during military rule. Increasing activism by the court, particularly by Chief Justice Iftikhar Chaudhry, led Musharraf in late 2007 to dismiss a majority of superior court judges (13 from the Supreme Court and 30 from provincial courts) and order the detention of Chaudhry as well as other judges, lawyers, and legal activists who opposed the executive's actions. After a protracted political standoff involving both main parties, Chaudhry and the remainder of the ousted judges were reinstated in March 2009, but tensions between the judiciary and President Zardari persisted. The two engaged in a spat in February 2010 over Zardari's proposed judicial appointments, and the Supreme Court continued to push for the revival of a money-laundering case against Zardari. Provisions of the 18th Amendment would strengthen the judiciary and potentially reduce politicization by granting power over judicial appointments to a judicial commission rather than the president, and the 19th Amendment passed in December further strengthened the role of the chief justice and other senior judges in the commission and appointments process.

Other parts of the judicial system, such as the antiterrorism courts, operate with limited due process rights. The Sharia court enforces the 1979 Hudood Ordinances, which criminalize extramarital sex and several alcohol, gambling, and property offenses. They provide for Koranic punishments, including death by stoning for adultery, as well as jail terms and fines. In part because of strict evidentiary standards, authorities have never carried out the Koranic punishments. The justice system in the FATA is governed by the Frontier Crimes Regulation, which allows collective punishment for individual crimes and preventive detention of up to three years. It also authorizes tribal leaders to administer justice according to Sharia and tribal custom. In designated parts of the Provincially Administered Tribal Areas

and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Sharia is imposed under the 2009 Nizam-e-Adl regulation, and judges are assisted by Islamic scholars.

Feudal landlords and tribal elders throughout Pakistan adjudicate some disputes and impose punishments—including the death penalty and the forced exchange of brides between tribes—in unsanctioned parallel courts called jirgas. Human rights groups have noted that hundreds of death sentences are handed down each year, the majority to women, by such jirgas. Militants in several tribal areas and districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa have reportedly set up their own parallel courts, imposing a strict interpretation of Islamic law and dispensing harsh penalties with little regard for due process.

Police routinely use excessive force, torture, and arbitrary detention; extort money from prisoners and their families; accept bribes to file or withdraw charges; rape female detainees; and commit extrajudicial killings. Concern over extrajudicial executions resurfaced in October 2010, when the media aired a video ostensibly showing soldiers executing civilians in Swat during 2009 counterinsurgency operations; the army agreed to conduct a probe into the incident, but at year's end, no further action had been taken. Conditions in the overcrowded prisons are extremely poor, and case backlogs mean that the majority of inmates are awaiting trial. Feudal landlords, tribal groups, and some militant groups operate private jails where detainees are regularly maltreated. Progress on creating an official human rights body empowered to investigate cases and redress grievances has been slow, and while a number of cases are investigated and some prosecutions do occur, impunity for human rights abuses remains the norm.

Although cases of politically motivated detention and disappearance have declined under civilian rule, the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP)—an NGO—estimated that as of November 2010 at least 1,100 people were being illegally detained by state agencies. Some were suspected of links to radical Islamist groups, but such detainees have also included Balochi and Sindh nationalists, journalists, researchers, and social workers. The ISI, which operates largely outside the control of civilian leaders and the courts, has faced intermittent pressure from the Supreme Court to end the practice of secret detentions. In 2010, the court continued to hold hearings on the issue, and in June it ordered the ISI to explain the disappearance of Akash Mallah, a Sindh political leader. In March, the federal government appointed a three-member commission tasked with compiling a comprehensive list of the disappeared and identifying those responsible.

Tens of thousands of armed militants belonging to radical Sunni Islamist groups—including the TTP, Lashkar-e-Toiba (LeT), Lashkar-i-Jhangvi, the JD, and the Sipah-i-Sahaba Pakistan (SSP)—have varying agendas and carry out terrorist attacks against foreign, government, and religious minority targets, killing hundreds of civilians each year. Sunni and Shiite groups engage in tit-for-tat sectarian violence, mostly bomb attacks against places of worship and religious gatherings. The New Delhi-based South Asia Terrorism Portal (SATP) reported that 509 people were killed and 1,170 were injured in sectarian violence in 2010, more than double the number the previous year. In April, seven LeT members went on trial for allegedly planning a 2008 terrorist attack in Mumbai, India's financial capital, but the alleged mastermind of the attack, JD leader Hafiz Mohammad Saeed, was released from preventive custody in May.

The military's campaigns against Islamist fighters in the tribal areas since 2002 have been accompanied by human rights abuses including arbitrary detention, property destruction, killing or displacement of civilians, and extrajudicial executions. Missile strikes attributed to U.S. drone aircraft have also reportedly killed or injured civilians. The authorities are sponsoring tribal militias, or lashkars, to help control the FATA, creating yet another unaccountable armed force. Islamist militants' expanding influence over territory in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and the FATA has led to severe practical restrictions on local inhabitants' dress, social behavior, educational opportunities, and legal rights. The militant groups also target political leaders (particularly from the ANP), tribal elders, teachers, and aid workers in their quest for control over local populations. At year's end, more than a million civilians remained displaced in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa alone as a result of the conflict. The SATP reported that 7,435 people were killed nationwide in terrorist- or insurgent-related violence in 2010, including 1,796 civilians, 469 security force personnel, and 5,170 militants, a substantial decrease from the previous year.

A low-level insurgency continued in Balochistan, with ethnic Balochi activists demanding enhanced political autonomy as well as more local control over the province's natural resources. Militants carried out a number of attacks on security forces as well as non-Balochi teachers and educational institutions in 2010. The army's counterinsurgency operations have led to human rights violations and the displacement of civilians. Thousands of activists, political leaders, and other locals with suspected separatist sympathies have been detained, according to the International Crisis Group, with dozens killed in unexplained circumstances. A package of reforms intended to address Balochi demands was passed in 2009, but civilian authorities struggled to implement the reforms amid the ongoing struggle between local groups and the military.

Ethnic tensions escalated in Karachi in 2010, with dozens killed in a surge of violence in October. Much of the bloodshed was instigated by the Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM), a party representing refugees from India who settled in Karachi in 1947, against ethnic Pashtun migrants from other areas of Pakistan. Dozens were also killed in clashes and riots following the murder of a leading MQM politician in August.

Pakistan hosts approximately 1.6 million registered Afghan refugees, as well as more than a million undocumented Afghans, with the majority living in urban areas rather than refugee settlements on the border. They face societal and official discrimination as well as economic exploitation, since even registered refugees are not allowed to work legally.

Traditional norms, discriminatory laws, and weak enforcement contribute to a high incidence of rape, domestic abuse, and other forms of violence against women. According to the HRC, up to 80 percent of women are victims of such abuse during their lifetimes. Female victims of sexual crimes are often pressured by police not to file charges, and they are sometimes urged by their families to commit suicide. Gang rapes sanctioned by village councils to punish the targeted woman's relatives continue to be reported, even though perpetrators in some cases have received harsh sentences. Under the 2006 Women's Protection Act, judges are required to try rape cases under criminal law rather than Sharia. However, extramarital sex is still criminalized, and spousal rape is not recognized as a crime.

According to the HRCP, at least 740 women were killed by family members in so-called honor killings in 2010, but many such crimes may go unreported. Activists have cast doubt on the authorities' willingness to enforce a 2005 law that introduced stiffer sentences and the possibility of the death penalty for honor killings. The incidence of acid attacks on women has been on the rise, with several hundred cases noted in 2010. Illegal forms of child and forced marriage remain problems. Most interfaith marriages are considered illegal, and the children of such unions would be illegitimate.

Pakistani inheritance law discriminates against women, who also face unofficial discrimination in educational and employment opportunities. Two laws were enacted in 2010 to criminalize sexual harassment in the workplace and institutionalize related codes of conduct and mechanisms for complaints. The trafficking of women and children remains a serious concern, with female victims used for forced labor or sexual exploitation.

Palau

Political Rights: 1
Civil Liberties: 1
Status: Free

Population: 20,000
Capital: Melekeok

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline For Year Under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
1,2F	1,2F	1,1F							

Overview: In September 2010, Palau signed a new financial agreement with the United States, guaranteeing the transfer of more than \$200 million in assistance through 2024 under the bilateral Compact Agreement.

The United States administered Palau, consisting of eight main islands and more than 250 smaller islands, as a UN Trust Territory from 1947 until 1981, when it became a self-governing territory. Palau gained full independence in 1994 under a Compact of Free Association with the United States, which stipulated that the United States would grant Palau \$442 million in economic aid between 1994 and 2009; allow Palauan citizens to reside, work, and study in the United States and its territories; give Palauans access to various federal government programs; and defend Palau in exchange for U.S. military access to the archipelago until 2044.

Johnson Toribiong was elected president in the 2008 elections. Parliamentary elections were held the same month, with all candidates running as independents. Securing U.S. aid beyond 2009 was the central issue of the elections. A new financial agreement under the compact would provide more than \$250 million in assistance through 2024. Signed in September 2010, the agreement awaited approval by the U.S. Congress at year's end.

In 2009, Palau accepted six Chinese Uighur Muslims who had been detained

at the U.S. naval base at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. The Palauan government denied claims that acceptance of the Uighurs was tied to the compact deal. By July 2010, all six had applied for resettlement in Australia. While the Palauan government backed their petition, Australia had not rendered a decision by year's end.

As of July 2010, all foreign residents—except diplomats, their dependents, and tourists—must register with the state within the first seven days of arrival and pay a registration fee of \$25 per person. The government said that recording incoming persons would help fight illegal migration and that the registration fee would cover administrative costs.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Palau is an electoral democracy. The 2008 presidential and parliamentary elections were considered free and fair. The bicameral legislature, the Olbiil Era Kelulau, consists of the 9-member Senate and the 16-member House of Delegates. Legislators are elected to four-year terms by popular vote, as are the president and vice president. The president may serve only two consecutive terms. The country is organized into 16 states; each is headed by a governor, and each has a seat in the House of Delegates. Every state is also allowed to formulate its own constitutional convention and elect a legislature and head of state.

There are no political parties, though no laws prevent their formation. The current system of loose political alliances that quickly form and dismantle has had a destabilizing effect on governance.

Official corruption and abuse are serious problems. Several high-ranking public officials have faced charges in recent years. The speaker of the Koror state government, the governor of Melekeok state, and former president Tommy Remengesau were all convicted of misconduct in 2009. In January 2010, President Johnson Toribiong ordered the special prosecutor to take legal action against Senate president Mlib Tmetuchl and his brother, Lucius Malsol, for allegedly laundering \$22.5 billion; the attorney general's office dismissed the charges against them in March, citing lack of evidence. While new measures to combat money laundering were introduced in 2007, evaluations have found significant deficiencies in due diligence, record keeping, and monitoring, and the attorney general's office generally lacks the resources to oversee implementation of these measures.

Freedoms of speech and the press are respected. There are several print publications, five privately owned radio stations, and one privately owned television station. Cable television provides rebroadcasts of U.S. and other foreign programs. The government does not impede internet access, but high cost and a lack of connectivity outside the main islands limit diffusion.

Citizens of Palau enjoy freedom of religion. Although religious organizations are required to register with the government, applications have never been denied. There have been no reports of restrictions on academic freedom, and the government provides well-funded basic education for all.

Freedoms of assembly and association are respected. Many nongovernmental groups represent youth, health, and women's issues. Workers can freely organize unions and bargain collectively, though the economy is largely based on subsistence agriculture and is heavily dependent on U.S. aid and rent payments, as well as remittances from Palauans working overseas.

The judiciary is independent, and trials are generally fair. A 300-member police and first-response force maintains internal order. Palau has no military. There have been no reports of prisoner abuse, though overcrowding is a problem in the country's only prison.

Foreign workers account for about one-third of the population and 75 percent of the workforce. There have been reports of discrimination against and abuse of foreign workers, who cannot legally change employers once they arrive in Palau and are paid far lower wages than Palauans. In response to social tensions and a slower economy, the government in 2009 decided to limit the number of foreign workers present in the country at any time to 6,000.

Women are highly regarded in this matrilineal society, in which land rights and familial descent are traced through women. Many women are active in traditional and modern sectors of the economy and in politics, though there are no women in the legislature. The number of domestic violence and child abuse cases remains small. Sexual harassment and rape, including spousal rape, are illegal. Palau is a destination for women trafficked for the purpose of prostitution.

Panama

Political Rights: 1

Population: 3,500,000

Civil Liberties: 2

Capital: Panama City

Status: Free

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline For Year Under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
1,2F									

Overview: In 2010, Panama's government approved troubling restrictions on freedoms of assembly, association, and speech, sparking protests from labor unions, journalists, and domestic and international nongovernmental organizations. President Ricardo Martinelli agreed to soften the measures affecting unions in October. Martinelli's popularity declined during the year due to controversial political appointments that were viewed by the opposition as attempts to consolidate power.

Panama was part of Colombia until 1903, when a U.S.-supported revolt resulted in the proclamation of an independent republic. A period of weak civilian rule ended with a 1968 military coup that brought General Omar Torrijos to power. After the signing of the 1977 Panama Canal Treaty with the United States, under which the canal was gradually transferred to Panamanian control by 1999, Torrijos promised democratization. However, a real transition to democracy would not come for another dozen years.

After Torrijos's death in 1981, General Manuel Noriega emerged as Panamanian Defense Force (PDF) chief. He rigged the 1984 elections to bring the Democratic Revolutionary Party (PRD), then the PDF's political arm, to power. The Demo-

cratic Alliance of Civic Opposition (ADOC) won the 1989 elections, but Noriega annulled the vote and declared himself head of state. He was removed during a U.S. military invasion late that year, and ADOC's Guillermo Endara became president. Both the PRD and the Arnulfista Party (PA) won elections in the 1990s. Presidential and legislative elections in 2004 returned the PRD to power, with Martín Torrijos, the son of the former strongman, winning the presidency.

In the May 2009 presidential and parliamentary elections, Ricardo Martinelli of the center-right, business-oriented Democratic Change (CD) party easily won the presidency with 60 percent of the vote. Balbina Herrera of the PRD, who had served as housing minister under the outgoing administration, placed second with 37.6 percent, and Endara garnered 2 percent. In the parliamentary contest, the PRD won 26 of 71 seats, followed by the Panameñista Party with 21 seats, the CD with 15, and smaller parties and independents all taking fewer than 5 seats. Voter turnout was 74 percent.

Martinelli's popularity plummeted in 2010 due to several controversial decisions, such as replacing the attorney general and Supreme Court judges with political allies, decreeing jail time for street protestors in May, and planning to invest \$13 billion in large-scale copper mining and other infrastructure projects without conducting environmental impact assessments. The most controversial decision was the passage in June of Law 30, which weakened labor unions, relaxed environmental laws, and reduced penalties for police officers who break the law while on duty. However, following the protests and criticism, Martinelli agreed in October to repeal the controversial measures contained in the original legislation.

**Political Rights
and Civil Liberties:**

Panama is an electoral democracy. The 2009 national elections were considered free and fair by international observers. The president and deputies of the 71-seat unicameral National Assembly are elected by popular vote for five-year terms. Presidents may not seek consecutive terms, and must wait two terms before running again. The constitution guarantees freedom for political parties and organizations.

Anonymous campaign contributions were banned in 1999 in an effort to stem the infiltration of drug money into the political process. Nevertheless, corruption remains widespread, and the 2006 electoral reforms have been criticized for failing to improve the transparency of campaign financing. Former dictator Manuel Noriega was sentenced to seven years in prison by a French court in July 2010 on charges of money laundering in French banks; Noriega had been extradited from the United States to France in April. Panama was ranked 73 out of 178 countries surveyed in Transparency International's 2010 Corruption Perceptions Index.

All of the country's media outlets are privately owned, with the exceptions of the state-owned television network and a network operated by the Roman Catholic Church. However, media ownership is generally concentrated among relatives and associates of former president Ernesto Pérez Balladares (1994-99) of the PRD. Panama maintains a harsh legal environment for journalists. In 2007, then President Martín Torrijos enacted criminal code reforms that lengthened sentences for offenses including libel. In September 2010, the Court of Appeals reversed the acquittal of journalists Sabrina Bacal and Justino González in connection to a 2005 investigation, in which they accused immigration officials of participating in hu-

man trafficking; the reversal resulted in one-year prison sentences for both journalists. The decision was criticized by journalists and human rights groups, leading President Ricardo Martinelli to pardon the journalists in October. Internet access is unrestricted.

Freedom of religion is respected, and academic freedom is generally honored.

Freedom of assembly is recognized, and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) are free to operate. Although only about 10 percent of the labor force is organized, unions are cohesive and powerful. In July 2010, opposition to Law 30 erupted into violence during a strike led by 5,000 banana plantation workers in Bocas del Toro. The demonstration was violently suppressed by security forces, leading to at least two deaths, hundreds of injuries, and a hundred arrests. In August, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights condemned the violence and expressed its concern over the government's restrictions on freedom of association. Also in July, authorities violently dispersed a similar protest organized by Panama Canal construction workers, which resulted in the arrest of a number of union leaders.

The judicial system remains overburdened, inefficient, politicized, and prone to corruption. Criminal code reforms that took effect in 2008 increased sentences for a number of offenses and raised questions about human rights. The prison system is marked by violent disturbances in its decrepit, overcrowded facilities. The prisoner-to-public ratio is high, with approximately 300 inmates for every 100,000 residents. The police and other security forces are poorly disciplined and corrupt. Security decrees issued by the Torrijos government in 2008 included the creation of a national aero-naval service, a border service, a council for public security and national defense, and a national intelligence service. He argued that the reforms were needed to combat drug trafficking and possible terrorist attacks on the Panama Canal, but opponents warned of a return to Panama's military past and said the changes lacked safeguards against the abuse of power. Former Noriega military lieutenant Gustavo Pérez, nominated by Martinelli, took office as chief of police in July 2009 amid protests.

The government's counternarcotics campaign has been limited by a lack of resources, weak border enforcement, and corruption. Analysts believe that Panama is emerging as a transit point for drug trafficking from Colombia to the United States, and the quantity of drug seizures, mostly cocaine, has grown from around 32,000 kilograms in 2005 to 54,000 kilograms in 2009. While the overall crime rate continued to rise, the number of homicides decreased from 818 in 2009 to 707 in 2010. Most violent crimes are reportedly drug related.

Refugees from Colombia have faced difficulty obtaining work permits and other forms of legal recognition. There were approximately 1,900 recognized refugees living in Panama in 2010, mainly Colombians. The Martinelli administration had suggested measures to normalize the status of thousands of undocumented Colombians living in Panama without official refugee status, but no progress had been made on these measures in 2010. New immigration rules that took effect in 2008 tightened controls on foreigners, but other legislation grants recognized refugees who have lived in Panama for more than 10 years the right to apply for permanent residency. This law applies mostly to long-standing refugees who fled Central American conflicts in the 1980s.

Discrimination against darker-skinned Panamanians is widespread. The country's Asian, Middle Eastern, and indigenous populations are similarly singled out. Indigenous communities enjoy a degree of autonomy and self-government, but some 90 percent of the indigenous population lives in extreme poverty. Since 1993, indigenous groups have protested the encroachment of illegal settlers on their lands and government delays in formally demarcating them. In March 2009, police leveled indigenous Naso communities in Bocas del Toro in response to a peaceful protest against a hydroelectric dam project, reportedly leaving over 200 people homeless. Separately, NGOs condemned the government before the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights for using force and intimidation to displace thousands of indigenous people in connection with a hydroelectric project on the Changuinola River, and in June 2009, the commission called on Panama to suspend all work on the dam.

Violence against women and children is widespread and common. Panama is a source, destination, and transit country for human trafficking. The government has worked with the International Labour Organization on information campaigns addressing the issue, and it has created a special unit to investigate cases of trafficking for the purpose of prostitution. In 2008, the government eliminated its *alternadora* visa category, which had been used to traffic foreign women for Panama's sex trade. However, the U.S. State Department's 2010 Trafficking in Persons Report criticized Panama for its failure to comply with minimum international standards to combat human trafficking. Law enforcement is weak, the penal code does not prohibit trafficking for forced labor, and the government provides inadequate assistance to victims.

Papua New Guinea

Political Rights: 4

Civil Liberties: 3

Status: Partly Free

Population: 6,800,000

Capital: Port Moresby

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline For Year Under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
2,3F	2,3F	3,3PF	3,3PF	3,3PF	3,3PF	3,3PF	4,3PF	4,3PF	4,3PF

Overview: During 2010, the government ignored public calls for caution and moved ahead with major energy projects after Parliament weakened the environmental law. In December, National Alliance Party leader Michael Somare resigned as prime minister in order to face a tribunal over allegations of submitting incomplete financial statements, though no proceedings had taken place by year's end. That same month, the Supreme Court ordered Governor-General Jeffrey Nape to step down, claiming that he was not chosen according to constitutional requirements.

Papua New Guinea (PNG) gained independence from Australia in 1975. In

1988, miners and landowners on Bougainville Island began guerrilla attacks on a major Australian-owned copper mine, and by 1990, the islanders' demands for compensation and profit-sharing became a low-grade secessionist war. Australia and New Zealand brokered a ceasefire in 1998 and a peace treaty in 2001, which called for elections for a semiautonomous Bougainville government and a referendum on independence in 10 to 15 years. To date, no referendum has been held, though Parliament approved a new constitution for Bougainville in 2004.

While National Alliance Party (NA) leader Michael Somare secured a second term as prime minister in the 2007 elections, his government has been plagued by allegations of widespread corruption. Strong economic growth has been overshadowed by increasing levels of violence and poverty, while public health, education, and infrastructure have also suffered. Public discontent has been fueled by the apparent insensitivity of elected leaders. In 2009, Parliament approved the purchase of a \$46 million jet airplane for Somare's use, and legislators voted to increase their annual allowances by \$35,000. While the government claimed that it had no money to improve schools and hospitals, an outbreak of cholera led to 200 deaths between August 2009 and December 2010.

Natural-resource exploitation, including mining and logging, provide the bulk of government revenue. Disputes surrounding a government-sponsored liquefied natural gas (LNG) project in the Southern Highlands led to 11 deaths in January 2010, when violence broke out between tribes with competing claims to the land. Separately, villagers in February tried to block access to Madang province's Ramu nickel mine, which is financed by a Chinese company. The mine had wanted to dump waste into Basamuk Bay, which provides drinking water and fishing grounds to local residents. Landowners filed suits to stop construction of the dumping pipe. However, Somare prides himself on this deal, and Parliament in June amended the environmental law to allow the dumping to proceed. The government banned the media from reporting on the amendment, leading thousands to protest in July against the project and the amendment. In December, the government announced that all proceeds from LNG project will go to an offshore trust.

In January, 12 criminals escaped from a maximum security prison, including the notorious criminal William Kapris. Following his recapture, Kapris alleged during his court hearings that several prominent politicians and businessmen had set up the escape. The presiding judge banned the media and the public from the courtroom, claiming that alleged accomplices might want to kill Kapris to silence him. After the escapes, Somare fired the minister for correctional services and took over the portfolio.

John Momis—an elder statesman pledging to fight corruption—defeated the incumbent, Joséph Kabui, in the Bougainville presidential elections in May. Reconciliation, disarmament, and how to handle revenues from mining were the top election issues. Observers viewed the elections as free and fair.

Somare maintained his hold on power in 2010 with clever political maneuvers and deal making. However, support for Somare within the NA waned following rumors that he planned to transfer leadership of the NA and the government to his son. In July, a Supreme Court decision lifted the 2001 law barring legislators from changing parties after elections; Somare openly supported the ruling, viewing it as beneficial to the NA and his power base. In December, Somare stepped down to

face a leadership tribunal for allegedly failing to file complete financial statements in the 1990s. Deputy Prime Minister Sam Abal became acting prime minister. The tribunal hearings had not begun by year's end. That same month, Governor-General Jeffrey Nape stepped down after the Supreme Court ruled his appointment invalid, claiming Nape had not been elected by secret ballot in Parliament as required by the constitution.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: PNG is an electoral democracy. However, the 2007 elections were marred by reports of fraud, lost ballots, attacks on journalists and candidates, and deaths. Voters elect a unicameral, 109-member National Parliament to serve five-year terms. A limited preferential voting system allows voters to choose up to three preferred candidates on their ballots. The prime minister, the leader of the majority party or coalition, is formally appointed by the governor general, who represents Britain's Queen Elizabeth II as head of state.

The major parties are the NA, the United Resources Party, the Papua New Guinea Party, and the People's Progressive Party. Political loyalties are driven more by tribal, linguistic, geographic, and personal ties than party affiliation. Many candidates run as independents and align with parties after they are elected.

Official abuse and corruption are serious problems. Under pressure from international donors, a number of corruption scandals were exposed in 2010. In January, an audit found that \$81.4 million intended for infrastructure projects was missing. In a separate investigation in February, an audit found \$37 million missing from the forest agency. In March, the Ombudsman Commission reported massive corruption involving millions of fraudulent claims paid out by the government, and the agriculture minister said \$36 million in public funds had gone missing. In April, legislators voted, 83 to 0, to grant themselves immunity from any charges brought by the ombudsman's office, provoking public outrage. PNG was ranked 154 out of 178 countries surveyed in Transparency International's 2010 Corruption Perceptions Index.

Freedom of speech is generally respected, and the media provide independent coverage of controversial issues such as alleged police abuse, official corruption, and opposition views. However, the government and politicians have occasionally used media laws and libel and defamation lawsuits to limit critical reporting. PNG has several local radio stations, two state-owned and two privately owned radio stations with national coverage, as well as one commercial and three state-owned television stations. Internet access is limited by cost and lack of infrastructure, but there are no government restrictions.

The government upholds freedom of religion. Academic freedom is generally respected, but the government does not always tolerate criticism.

The constitution provides for the freedoms of assembly and association, and the government generally observes these rights in practice. Many civil society groups provide social services and advocate for women's rights and environmental conservation, among other causes. The government recognizes workers' rights to strike, organize, and engage in collective bargaining. In January 2010, Parliament approved a new minimum wage of \$1.18 an hour, up from the 24 cents an hour that was set 16 years ago. Marches and demonstrations require 14 days' notice and

police approval. In May, 5,000 people marched in protest against proposed amendments to the Ombudsman Commission that limit its powers to expose the misuse of public funds; a petition containing more than 20,000 signatures was also presented to Parliament. Within days of the march, the attorney general and justice minister resigned in protest of Somare's public dismissal of citizen concerns. Somare called the marchers "retarded" or "depraved," and branded the media as "the devil" or "Satan." Although some citizens continued to voice their dissatisfaction peacefully, others resorted to physically attacking their elected representatives.

The judiciary is independent, and the legal system is based on English common law. The Supreme Court is the final court of appeal and has original jurisdiction on constitutional matters. Laypeople sit on village courts to adjudicate minor offenses under both customary and statutory law. Suspects often suffer lengthy detentions and trial delays because of a shortage of trained judicial personnel.

Law enforcement officials have been accused of corruption, unlawful killings, extortion, rape, theft, the sale of firearms, and the use of excessive force in the arrest and interrogation of suspects. The correctional service is understaffed, prison conditions are poor, and prisoners have reported torture while in detention. Prison breaks are not uncommon. The number of street and violent crimes continued to rise in 2010. Weak governance and law enforcement have allegedly made PNG a base for organized Asian criminal groups.

Native tribal feuds over land, titles, religious beliefs, and perceived insults frequently lead to violence and deaths. Inadequate law enforcement and the increased availability of guns have exacerbated this problem. Attacks on Chinese migrants and their businesses continue to rise, as the native population is generally frustrated by high unemployment and the increasing numbers of Chinese migrants opening businesses and working in mines.

Discrimination and violence against women and children are widespread. Females face high mortality rates from the lack of basic maternal health services, teenage pregnancy, and domestic violence. Although domestic violence is punishable by law, prosecutions are rare, as police commonly treat it as a private matter, and family pressure and fear of reprisal discourage victims from pressing charges. Women are frequently barred from voting by their husbands. Only one woman sits in Parliament.

Paraguay

Political Rights: 3

Population: 6,500,000

Civil Liberties: 3

Capital: Asuncion

Status: Partly Free

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline For Year Under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
4,3PF	4,3PF	3,3PF							

Overview: Despite some progress on his social agenda, President Fernando Lugo continued to struggle in advancing reforms due to divisions within his Patriotic Alliance for Change coalition and an obstructive Congress. Meanwhile, corruption in the judiciary and conflict between landowners and peasants continued. A string of kidnappings and murders by the Paraguayan People's Army, a radical guerrilla group, created yet another challenge for the government, as did the announcement in August that the president was battling lymphatic cancer.

Paraguay, which achieved independence from Spain in 1811, was wracked by a series of crises following the 1989 ouster of authoritarian president Alfredo Stroessner of the right-wing Colorado Party after 35 years in power. The fragility of the country's emerging democratic institutions resulted in nearly 15 years of popular uprisings, military mutinies, antigovernment demonstrations, bitter political rivalries, and continued rule by the Colorados.

Senate leader Luís González Macchi assumed the presidency in 1999, after the incumbent fled the country amid murder charges. In 2002, González Macchi offered to leave office early to avoid pending impeachment hearings against him for embezzlement. González Macchi and many other members of the Colorado Party were also discredited by their failed efforts to reverse the country's downward economic spiral.

Former education minister Nicanor Duarte Frutos of the Colorado Party emerged victorious in the 2003 national elections. After taking office, Duarte moved to take control of the tax, port, and customs authorities to combat tax evasion and smuggling. Tax evasion as well as prevalent corruption had deprived the state of about two-thirds of its legitimate revenues.

Fernando Lugo, leader of the Patriotic Alliance for Change (APC) coalition—a heterogeneous coalition comprising 20 parties, including Christian Democrats, Socialists, Communists and peasant organizations—was elected president in April 2008. Lugo's election represented widespread disappointment in the Colorado Party and also raised expectations that the standard of living for Paraguay's poor majority would improve. Land reform necessary to address Paraguay's highly skewed land distribution remains one of the administration's principle goals. Tellingly, in the UN Development Programme's 2010 Human Development Report, Paraguay was ranked 96 out of 169 countries—worse than nearby Ecuador, Peru, and Brazil.

Prospects for Lugo's reforms were dealt a blow in July 2009, when the coalition's

largest member party—the conservative Authentic Liberal Radical Party (PLRA)—dropped out of the alliance, leaving the Colorados, who strongly oppose Lugo's reformist agenda, in control of the legislature. Amid rumors of a pending military coup, Lugo replaced the heads of the army, navy, and air force in early November 2009. Less than a year later, Lugo dismissed those same individuals he had promoted in 2009, as well as five other senior officers. Nonetheless, Lugo managed to advance elements of his social agenda, including increasing access to public health services and extending an existing cash-transfer program.

Separately, the rise of the Paraguayan People's Army (EPP)—an armed leftist guerrilla group—forced President Lugo to declare a state of emergency in half of the country for one month in April 2010. The administration mobilized almost 3,000 police and troops to combat the guerrilla group, with little success. While the EPP has fewer than 100 members, the group has gained notoriety through high-profile kidnappings, drug smuggling, and alleged connections with the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC).

The Lugo administration signed a historical agreement with Brazil in July 2009 that settled a decades-long dispute over payments for energy produced by the Itaipu hydroelectric dam. The agreement is expected to triple Paraguay's income from the dam, but it had yet to be voted on by the Brazilian Congress at the end of 2010 due to strong pressure from manufacturing lobbies in Sao Paulo.

Lugo has maintained a conventional economic program. Supportive macroeconomic policies contributed to an economic rebound in 2010, following the previous year's drought. However, the Congress voted in November to postpone the introduction of a personal income tax until 2013, putting off any improvement in the Paraguayan government's extremely low tax take.

In November 7 local elections, the Colorado Party emerged as the victor in all of Paraguay's 238 municipalities, bolstering its prospects for the 2013 general election.

In August 2010, President Lugo announced that he was battling lymphatic cancer. Chemotherapy treatment in Brazil forced him to postpone overseas trips and limit appearances for the remainder of the year, contributing to calls for his resignation by some members of the opposition.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Paraguay is an electoral democracy. The 2008 national elections were considered to be free and fair. The 1992 constitution provides for a president, a vice president, and a bicameral Congress consisting of a 45-member Senate and an 80-member Chamber of Deputies, all elected for five-year terms. The president is elected by a simple majority vote, and reelection is prohibited. The constitution bans the active-duty military from engaging in politics.

Before Fernando Lugo and the APC came to power in 2008, the Colorado Party had ruled Paraguay for over 60 years. The other major political groupings include the PLRA, the Beloved Fatherland Party, the National Union of Ethical Citizens, and the National Agreement Party.

Corruption cases languish for years in the courts without resolution, and corruption often goes unpunished as judges favor the powerful and wealthy. The Lugo administration pledged to increase overall transparency in government and reduce corruption, specifically in the judiciary. However, the president has been unable to

depoliticize Paraguay's corrupt Supreme Court. Paraguay was ranked 146 out of 178 countries surveyed in Transparency International's 2010 Corruption Perceptions Index, lagging behind all other countries in the Americas, save Venezuela and Haiti.

The constitution provides for freedoms of expression and the press, and the government generally respects these rights in practice. There are a number of private television and radio stations and independent newspapers, but only one state-owned media outlet, Radio Nacional, which has a limited audience. Journalists investigating corruption or drug trafficking are often the victims of threats and violent attacks. This climate of insecurity showed no improvement in 2010, as harassment of journalists continued. The government does not restrict use of the internet, nor does it censor its content.

The government generally respects freedom of religion. All religious groups are required to register with the Ministry of Education and Culture, but no controls are imposed on these groups, and many informal churches exist. The government does not restrict academic freedom.

The constitution guarantees freedoms of association and assembly, and these rights are respected in practice. There are a number of trade unions, but they are weak and riddled with corruption. The labor code provides for the right to strike and prohibits retribution against strikers, though the government has generally failed to address or prevent retaliation by employers. Strikers and union leaders are often illegally dismissed and harassed by employers.

The judiciary is highly corrupt. Courts are inefficient and political interference in the judiciary is a serious problem, as politicians routinely pressure judges and block investigations. While the judiciary is nominally independent, more than 60 percent of judges are members of the Colorado Party. The constitution permits detention without trial until the accused has completed the minimum sentence for the alleged crime. Illegal detention by police and torture during incarceration still occur, particularly in rural areas. Poorly paid and corrupt police officials remain in key posts. Overcrowding, unsanitary conditions, and mistreatment of inmates are serious problems in the country's prisons.

The lack of security in border areas, particularly in the tri-border region adjacent to Brazil and Argentina, has allowed organized crime groups to engage in money laundering and the smuggling of weapons and narcotics. The Shiite Islamist movement Hezbollah has long been involved in narcotics and human trafficking in the largely ungoverned tri-border area; in recent years, Hezbollah has developed ties with Mexican drug cartels.

The constitution provides Paraguay's estimated 108,000 indigenous people with the right to participate in the economic, social, and political life of the country. In practice, however, the indigenous population is unassimilated and neglected. A 2008 census estimated that 48 percent of the indigenous were unemployed, and 88 percent lacked medical coverage. Peasant organizations sometimes occupy land illegally, and landowners often respond with death threats and forced evictions by hired vigilante groups. Violence between landless peasants and the predominantly Brazilian landowners practicing large-scale farming continued in 2010.

An estimated 6 out of every 10 children born in Paraguay are not registered at birth and consequently lack access to public health and educational services. Sexual

and domestic abuse of women continues to be a serious problem. Although the government generally prosecutes rape allegations and often obtains convictions, many rapes go unreported because victims fear their attackers or are concerned that the law will not respect their privacy. Employment discrimination against women is pervasive. Trafficking in persons is proscribed by the constitution and criminalized in the penal code, but there have been occasional reports of trafficking for sexual purposes and domestic servitude.

Peru

Political Rights: 2
Civil Liberties: 3
Status: Free

Population: 29,500,000
Capital: Lima

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline For Year Under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
1,3F	2,3F								

Overview: Local elections held in October 2010 were largely free and fair, though a slow vote count in the Lima mayoral contest raised concerns about electoral bodies. Episodes of social conflict continued throughout the year, and progress in achieving accountability for a June 2009 massacre involving police and indigenous protesters, among other human rights cases, remained limited. President Alan García issued a set of decrees on the military in September, but objections from civil society led to the reversal of the most controversial measure, which would have applied a statute of limitations to human rights abuses committed during the country's 1980-2000 internal conflict.

Since achieving independence from Spain in 1821, Peru has experienced alternating periods of civilian and military rule. Civilians have held office since a 12-year dictatorship ended in 1980. However, that year, a Maoist guerrilla group known as the Shining Path launched a vicious two-decade insurgency. The conflict led to the deaths of some 69,000 people, nearly three-fourths of whom were residents of poor highland villages.

Alberto Fujimori, a university rector and engineer, was elected president in 1990. In 1992, backed by the military, he suspended the constitution, took over the judiciary, and dissolved Congress. A new constitution, featuring a stronger presidency and a unicameral Congress, was approved in a state-controlled 1993 referendum. Congress passed a law in 1996 that allowed Fujimori to run for a third term, despite a constitutional two-term limit.

According to official results, Fujimori outpolled Alejandro Toledo—a U.S.-educated economist who had been raised in one of Peru's urban squatter settlements—in the first round of the 2000 presidential election. Toledo boycotted the runoff, pointing to widespread doubts about the first-round vote count and a

campaign of smears, threats, and assaults by Fujimori supporters linked to the government.

Beginning in September 2000, a series of videotapes emerged showing intelligence chief Vladimiro Montesinos bribing opposition congressmen and other figures. As a result, in late November, opposition forces assumed control of Congress, Fujimori fled to Japan and resigned, and respected opposition leader Valentin Paniagua was chosen as interim president.

Toledo's Perú Posible party led the April 2001 congressional elections with 25 percent of the vote, and he bested former president Alan García (1985-90) in a runoff presidential election in June. A 2002 decentralization process gave new regional governments almost a quarter of the national budget and a range of powers that had long been concentrated in the capital.

In 2004, a special anticorruption court convicted Montesinos in the first of many cases against him, sentencing him to 15 years in prison. Fujimori fled to Chile from Japan in 2005 in the hopes of mounting a 2006 presidential bid in Peru, but he was immediately detained as Peru requested his extradition.

Ollanta Humala of the Peruvian Nationalist Party (PNP) won the first round of the presidential election in April 2006, with García placing second. The PNP, allied with the Union for Peru (UPP) party, led the congressional elections with 45 seats, followed by García's Peruvian Aprista Party (APRA) with 36 and the right-wing National Unity party with 17. The pro-Fujimori Alliance for the Future party won 13 seats. García won the June presidential runoff with 52.5 percent of the vote. Once in office, García focused on macroeconomic growth and stability, but nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) faced harassment and hostility from his administration.

Fujimori was extradited from Chile in September 2007, and in December, he was sentenced to six years in prison for ordering an illegal search in 2000. In April 2009, after another trial on more serious charges, he was sentenced to 25 years in prison for overseeing death-squad killings and two kidnappings. International observers and local rights groups characterized the trial as fair and transparent, and hailed the verdict as an unprecedented example of a democratically elected leader convicted of human rights violations in his home country.

In June 2009, a violent confrontation between police and a group of protesters, consisting mainly of members of indigenous groups, left 10 protesters and 23 police officers dead and over 200 people injured. The protesters had objected to government decrees issued in June 2008 that they said violated their land rights. The disputed decrees were rescinded within weeks of the violence, and the government acknowledged its failure to consult with locals, but it maintained its claim—eventually discredited—that outside agitators were responsible for raising tensions. A commission appointed to produce an official report on the incident was unable to reach consensus. A version backed by four of the seven members, issued in December 2009, blamed nonindigenous groups for radicalizing the protests and faulted the government merely for communication failures. In April 2010, the panel's other members released a minority report, placing responsibility for initiating the violence with the government. Judicial investigations resulted in the conviction of three police officers in November 2010, but indigenous groups regarded the one- to three-year prison sentences as insufficient.

Separately, rights groups in 2010 expressed disappointment that the Fujimori trial had failed to create momentum in other cases involving rights violations, and that in fact, the number of acquittals increased, including in cases where the prosecution's evidence appeared preponderant.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Peru is an electoral democracy. Elections in 2006 were generally free and fair, according to international observers. Complaints focused on poor logistics and information distribution in rural areas, as well as the disenfranchisement of the roughly one million Peruvians who lacked identification documents.

The president and the 120-member, unicameral Congress are elected for five-year terms. Congressional balloting employs an open-list, region-based system of proportional representation with a 4 percent vote hurdle for a party to enter the legislature. While Peru remains relatively centralized, regional presidents have become important actors. Regional and local elections in October 2010 were considered generally free and fair, though several local officeholders and candidates were killed during the campaign period. In addition, the extremely slow vote count in the tight Lima mayoral race led to questions about the competence of electoral authorities. Center-left candidate Susana Villarán ultimately won by a margin of less than 1 percent of the vote, defeating veteran center-right politician Lourdes Flores Nano.

A lack of programmatic coherence and occasional party-switching by politicians have discredited political parties in the eyes of voters, reinforcing a broader trend toward political fragmentation. However, the October 2010 elections resulted in a moderately increased consolidation of regional political movements, which generally remain separate from the parties represented in Congress.

Corruption is a serious problem. Checks on campaign financing are weak, particularly at the local level, where drug traffickers' influence is perceived to have grown in recent years. Public officials and judges are often dismissed or investigated for graft, and Congress is considered the most corrupt institution. Investigations into a 2008 scandal over the improper awarding of oil exploration blocks continued at a slow pace in 2010, with the focus shifting from the alleged corruption to the illegal recording of telephone conversations that exposed it. As in previous years, accusations of corruption in government procurement processes led to the suspension of contracts. In May Congress passed a law that boosted protection for whistle-blowers. Peru was ranked 78 out of 178 countries surveyed in Transparency International's 2010 Corruption Perceptions Index.

The lively press is for the most part privately owned. Officials and private actors sometimes intimidate or even attack journalists in response to negative coverage. Low pay leaves reporters susceptible to bribery, and media outlets remain dependent on advertising by large retailers. Radio station La Voz de Bagua, which was closed in 2009 for allegedly inciting violence during that June's deadly clashes between police and protesters, had its license restored in August 2010. The controversial December 2009 pardon of former television station owner José E. Crousilat, who had been serving a prison term for selling his station's editorial line to former intelligence chief Vladimiro Montesinos, was rescinded in March, but Crousilat remained a fugitive at year's end. The government does not limit access to the

internet, though a blogger was among the several journalists convicted of criminal defamation during the year.

The constitution provides for freedom of religion, and the government generally respects it in practice. However, the Roman Catholic Church receives preferential treatment from the state. The government does not restrict academic freedom.

The constitution provides for the right to peaceful assembly, and the authorities uphold this right for the most part. However, the executive branch has issued several decrees in recent years that limit police and military responsibility in the event of injury or death during demonstrations. At least 16 protesters were killed in 2010, continuing a pattern of protest-related violence during the administration of President Alan García. In addition, by the end of 2010, nearly 2,000 citizens faced charges for protest-related incidents. In July, British priest Paul McAuley was issued an expulsion notice for supposedly encouraging protests. According to the national ombudsman's office, social conflict, often involving protests driven by local grievances, reached a peak of 288 active and latent disputes in September 2009 before declining to 246 by the end of 2010. The largest share involved environmental issues. Analysts observed that the government's approach typically relied on reaction rather than mediation and early intervention.

Freedom of association is generally respected, but García and other APRA leaders allege that NGOs hinder economic development. Anti-mining activists have faced questionable legal charges in recent years, and NGOs accuse the government's international cooperation agency of selective investigation.

Peruvian law recognizes the right of workers to organize and bargain collectively. Workers must notify the Ministry of Labor in advance of a strike, with the result that nearly all strikes are categorized as illegal in practice. Less than 10 percent of the formal-sector workforce is unionized. Parallel unionism and criminal infiltration of the construction sector in Lima led to several murders in 2009 and 2010.

The judiciary is widely distrusted and prone to corruption scandals. While the Constitutional Court is relatively independent, its autonomy has undergone a mix of setbacks and advances in recent years, and it has produced inconsistent jurisprudence on important issues. A 2008 Judicial Career Law improved the entry, promotion, and evaluation system for judges, and the judiciary's internal disciplinary body has been highly active. However, in February 2010, a bribery scandal within the body that selects judges and prosecutors halted a process to select new high prosecutors.

An estimated 70 percent of inmates are in pretrial detention, and the inmate population is far above the system's intended capacity. In October 2010, a shortage of funds led the government to suspend the introduction—ongoing since 2006—of an adversarial justice system designed to improve the speed and fairness of judicial proceedings. Access to justice, particularly for poor Peruvians, remains problematic.

The military has improved its human rights training, but it continues to place numerous obstacles in the path of investigators regarding past violations. The García government has made almost no efforts to prioritize justice for cases of human rights abuses by state actors during the 1980s and 1990s. In June 2010, Congress authorized the president to issue decrees related to the functioning of the military

justice system. In September, the government announced decrees that would apply a statute of limitations to grave human rights abuses committed during the internal conflict; expand, via vague language, the role of the military in maintaining internal order; and extend the reach of the military justice system with respect to acts involving civilians. The possibility of effective amnesty for notorious rights abusers drew immediate domestic and international objections, as well as the high-profile resignations of both the justice minister and author Mario Vargas Llosa, who was heading the board of the planned Museum of Memory. The pressure led Congress, at Garcia's request, to rescind the decree regarding the statute of limitations in September, but the other decrees remained in place at year's end.

Remnants of the Shining Path, which are involved in the drug trade, continue to clash with security forces in the Apurimac-Ene River Valley (VRAE) zone. Citizens there report sporadic cases of abuse by the military. Meanwhile, the government's coca-eradication efforts and economic development programs in other regions failed to reverse a trend toward increased coca production in 2010.

Discrimination against the indigenous population remains pervasive, and the government's calls to step up exploitation of natural resources have raised indigenous groups' concerns about environmental damage. Garcia vetoed a law passed by Congress in May 2010 that would have required prior consultation on development projects with the affected native communities, in keeping with International Labour Organization Convention 169. Despite protests by indigenous groups and civil society, the law remained in limbo at year's end.

In recent years, women have advanced into leadership roles in various companies and government agencies. Although legal protections have improved, domestic violence is epidemic, with over half of Peruvian women reporting instances of physical or emotional abuse. Forced labor, including child labor, persists in the gold-mining region of the Amazon.

Philippines

Political Rights: 3*

Population: 94,000,000

Civil Liberties: 3

Capital: Manila

Status: Partly Free

Ratings Change: The Philippines' political rights rating improved from 4 to 3 due to comparatively peaceful and credible presidential and legislative elections held in May 2010.

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline For Year Under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
2,3F	2,3F	2,3F	2,3F	3,3PF	3,3PF	4,3PF	4,3PF	4,3PF	3,3PF

Overview:

The May 2010 presidential and legislative elections were hailed as a notable improvement over past ballots.

The new president, Benigno "Noy" Aquino, ran on a reformist, anticorruption platform, and he immediately established a Truth Commission to investigate the corruption record of outgoing president Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo. Separately, in September 2010, trial proceedings began for some defendants in the closely watched case of a 2009 massacre allegedly committed by a powerful political clan in the southern province of Maguindanao. Local elections were held nationwide in late October.

After centuries of Spanish rule, the Philippines came under U.S. control in 1898 and won independence in 1946. The country has been plagued by insurgencies, economic mismanagement, and widespread corruption since the 1960s. In 1986, a popular protest movement ended the 14-year dictatorship of President Ferdinand Marcos and replaced him with Corazon Aquino, whom the regime had cheated out of an electoral victory weeks earlier.

Aquino's administration ultimately failed to implement substantial reforms and was unable to dislodge entrenched social and economic elites. Fidel Ramos, a key figure in the 1986 protests, won the 1992 presidential election. The country was relatively stable and experienced significant if uneven economic growth under his administration. Ramos's vice president, Joséph Estrada, won the 1998 presidential election by promising concrete socioeconomic reform, but his administration was dogged by allegations of corruption almost from the outset. Massive street protests forced him from office in 2001 after a formal impeachment process failed.

Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, Estrada's vice president, assumed the presidency upon his departure, and her political coalition won the May 2001 legislative elections. She nevertheless faced questions about the legitimacy of her unelected administration. In the 2004 presidential election, Arroyo initially seemed to have defeated her challenger by some 1.1 million votes. However, claims of massive fraud triggered demonstrations and were verified by some members of the administration.

When an audiotape of a conversation between the president and election officials surfaced in June 2005, supporting the previous year's vote-rigging allegations, many cabinet officials resigned to join a new opposition movement. An ultimately unsuccessful impeachment bid was launched, and the first of years of frequent protests called for the president's resignation.

The administration mounted several efforts to undercut the opposition movement, including punitive prosecutions and executive orders in 2005 and a week-long state of emergency in 2006 in response to an alleged coup attempt. The congressional opposition initiated a second unsuccessful impeachment bid that June.

Although the president's coalition increased its lower-house majority in May 2007 legislative elections, the opposition bolstered its control of the Senate. Later in the year, Arroyo was implicated in a major corruption scandal involving a national broadband contract with the Chinese company ZTE that had been approved in April. Separately, Arroyo pardoned former president Estrada in October, a month after the country's antigraft court sentenced him to life in prison. His conviction had been the first of a former Philippine president, and the pardon was widely perceived as a bid to set a favorable precedent for Arroyo's own treatment after leaving office. Leaders of an unsuccessful coup attempt in November called for Arroyo's

removal on the grounds of electoral fraud and corruption, and yet another failed impeachment bid was launched against the president in October 2008.

One of the worst cases of political violence in the country's recent history unfolded in November 2009, when the wife of a local vice-mayor was ambushed by 100 armed men as she traveled with other family members and supporters to file her husband's candidacy for the Maguindanao provincial governorship. A total of 57 people were massacred in the incident, including 29 journalists and three other media workers who were accompanying the unarmed group. Evidence soon emerged to implicate the Ampatuan clan, which dominated the province's politics and was closely allied with the Arroyo administration.

Arroyo responded in early December by declaring martial law for the first time in nearly 30 years, as well as a state of emergency, which remained in place in 3 Mindanao provinces even after martial law was lifted in mid-December. At least 62 people were arrested, including Maguindanao governor Andal Ampatuan Sr., and the authorities dug up arms caches as part of a broad effort to weaken local clans. Nevertheless, the Arroyo administration was widely criticized for its long-time policy of tolerating local warlords and supporting clan patronage as part of its counterinsurgency strategy, and the massacre brought new international attention to the country's deeply entrenched culture of impunity.

National elections held in May 2010 included contests for the presidency and both houses of Congress. A campaign to lift the one-term limit on the presidency had failed, leaving an open field for the presidential contest. The reformist Liberal Party (LP) candidate Benigno "Noynoy" Aquino—the son of former president Corazon Aquino, whose death in 2009 was widely mourned—ultimately prevailed with 42 percent of the vote. Former president Estrada placed second with 26 percent, followed by former senator and property tycoon Manny Villar, recent defense minister Gilberto Teodoro (endorsed by Arroyo), and several other candidates. As is customary in the Philippines, the campaign centered more on personality and family connections than policy or party affiliation, with Aquino benefiting from his mother's prodemocracy, anticorruption legacy. His considerable margin of victory protected him from accusations of electoral fraud.

With 12 out of 24 Senate seats up for election, 3 went to LP candidates; 2 each to Arroyo's Lakas-Kampi CMD party, the Force of the Filipino Masses, and the Nationalist Party; and 1 each to the National People's Coalition, the People's Reform Party, and an independent. In the 250-member House, the LP ultimately won 119 seats, while Lakas-Kampi CMD took 46 and other parties split the remainder. As is typical in the Philippines, the LP's predominance resulted from a number of seatholders defecting to join the new president's party. Arroyo won a seat as representative of her home district of Pampanga.

Despite allegations of extensive vote buying by Arroyo allies, among other problems, the elections were widely regarded as a significant improvement over previous polls; they were perceived as legitimate and saw much less violence than in previous years due to a gun ban. The nationwide introduction of electronic voting machines and computerized tabulation was also considered a success.

Soon after taking office, Aquino established a Truth Commission to investigate the corruption and electoral fraud allegations against Arroyo, though it was bogged down in a court challenge by year's end. Separately, the new president's leadership

was tested by a hostage crisis in August that ended in the deaths of eight tourists from Hong Kong. After the findings of an investigation in September called for charges against a number of officials for their handling of the incident, the president limited the most serious charges to police officials and spared his interior secretary and undersecretary.

Efforts to end a Muslim insurgency that had plagued the southern provinces since the early 1970s continued in 2010, as the government pursued negotiations with the rebel Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF). Fighting had surged in late 2008 after a proposed peace deal collapsed amid a constitutional challenge by local officials and opposition leaders. The draft agreement had outlined the creation of a Bangsamoro Juridical Entity (BJE)—a self-governing expansion of the existing Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (ARMM)—defined as the ARMM plus 712 barangays (small administrative units), subject to a formal referendum on inclusion to be held in the affected districts. The two sides agreed to a truce in 2009, and peace talks resumed at the end of that year. However, negotiators could not agree on an acceptable level of autonomy for the Muslim region, and little progress had been achieved by the time Arroyo left office. Her replacement by Aquino raised hopes for the talks, and some points of consensus related to security arrangements had been established by the end of 2010.

Meanwhile, fighting involving the Islamist militant group Abu Sayyaf flared in April 2010, when militants dressed as soldiers and police carried out a series of bombings and shootings in Isabela City, the capital of Basilan province. Thirteen people were killed, and a broader battle between militants and government forces ensued.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: The Republic of the Philippines is an electoral democracy. The May 2010 elections marked a significant improvement over previous polls marred by fraud, intimidation, and political violence. The Philippines has a presidential system of government, with the directly elected president limited to a single six-year term. The national legislature, Congress, is bicameral. The 24 members of the Senate are elected on a nationwide ballot and serve six-year terms, with half of the seats up for election every three years. The 280 members of the House of Representatives serve three-year terms, with 228 elected in single-member constituencies and the remainder elected by party list to represent ethnic minorities. Legislative coalitions are exceptionally fluid, and members of Congress often change party affiliation.

The Philippines' Commission on Elections (Comelec) is entirely appointed by the president, and with the president's permission, it has the authority to unseat military, police, and government officials. Comelec was widely discredited by the 2005 audiotape scandal regarding cheating in the 2004 elections, and the 2007 legislative elections were overseen by the same tainted officials. Moreover, Comelec chairman Benjamin Abalos resigned in October 2007, after being accused of bribing a government official to approve the broadband deal with China's ZTE Corporation. However, during the 2010 elections, the commission was led by the respected lawyer José Melo, and its push to switch from a manual to a fully automated election system was seen as an effort to restore the commission's reputation. According to international observers, polling stations encountered some problems with the new

voting machines, resulting in delays and long lines. Other complications included inaccurate voter lists, some campaigning in polling stations, and security concerns, particularly in the southern provinces. Media bias tended to favor wealthier candidates, and vote buying was noted among the most serious and persistent problems. In a positive step for human rights, detainees were permitted to vote for the first time.

One of the most significant areas of improvement in the 2010 elections was the reduction in political violence, aided by restrictions on firearms. Such bloodshed is typically tied to local rivalries and clan competition, but it is especially common in the ARMM. Under Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo's administration, violence increasingly targeted leaders of legitimate left-wing parties that are perceived to be associated with leftist guerrillas. The campaign period and voting for the May elections were judged to be considerably less violent than in years past, though widespread intimidation, bombing incidents, and low-level violence remained prevalent in the ARMM during both the national elections and the barangay elections held nationwide in October. Unlike the May voting, the latter polls were still conducted manually.

Corruption and cronyism are rife in business and government. Despite recent economic reforms, a few dozen leading families continue to hold an outsized share of land, corporate wealth, and political power. Local bosses often control their respective areas, limiting accountability and encouraging abuses of power. High-level corruption also abounds. President Benigno Aquino pledged to make combating corruption a centerpiece of his administration. On entering office in 2010, he ordered the establishment of a Truth Commission, headed by former Supreme Court justice Hilario Davide, to look into Arroyo's corruption record; while a meaningful step, the commission was ultimately bogged down in a court challenge by year's end. It remains to be seen whether the new president will pursue corruption allegations against allies as well as opponents. Aquino took no action during the year against Rico Puno, the undersecretary of the interior, who was accused in September of having ties to an illegal numbers racket, in addition to his alleged involvement in the mishandling of the August hostage crisis.

A culture of impunity, stemming in part from a case backlog in the judicial system, hampers the fight against corruption. More high-profile cases have been filed in recent years, and several civic organizations have emerged to combat corruption, but cases take an average of six to seven years to be resolved in the Sandiganbayan anticorruption court. The country's official anticorruption agencies, the Office of the Ombudsman and the Presidential Anti-Graft Commission (PAGC), have mixed records. Many observers maintain that the former was compromised under the Arroyo administration, as convictions declined, while the PAGC lacks enforcement capabilities. The Philippines was ranked 134 out of 178 countries surveyed in Transparency International's 2010 Corruption Perceptions Index.

The constitution provides for freedoms of expression and the press. The private media are vibrant and outspoken, although newspaper reports often consist more of innuendo and sensationalism than substantive investigative reporting. The country's many state-owned television and radio stations cover controversial topics and are willing to criticize the government, but they too lack strict journalistic ethics. While the censorship board has broad powers to edit or ban content, government censorship is generally not a serious problem. The internet is widely available and uncensored.

Potential legal obstacles to press freedom include Executive Order 608, which established a National Security Clearance System to protect classified information, and the Human Security Act, which allows journalists to be wiretapped based on mere suspicion of involvement in terrorism. Libel is a criminal offense, and libel suits have been used frequently to quiet criticism of public officials. Despite persistent lobbying by press freedom groups, Congress has yet to pass a draft Freedom of Information Act.

The Philippines remains one of the most dangerous places in the world for journalists to work, and impunity for crimes against them is the norm. In addition to several other killings that year, a total of 29 journalists (and 3 additional media workers) were slain in the November 2009 massacre in Maguindanao province. Three journalists were murdered in the final week of Arroyo's presidency, bringing the total number killed during her tenure to 137, according to the Southeast Asian Press Alliance and the Center for Media Freedom and Responsibility. The Committee to Protect Journalists counted two journalists killed in 2010 in direct connection to their work and the third under unclear circumstances. Journalists also confronted some harassment, including a few threats while covering the 2010 elections, particularly in the ARMM.

Freedom of religion is guaranteed under the constitution and generally respected in practice. While church and state are separate, the population is mostly Christian, with a Roman Catholic majority. The Muslim minority is concentrated on the southern island of Mindanao and, according to the most recent census, represents 5 to 9 percent of the total population. Perceptions of relative socioeconomic deprivation and political disenfranchisement, and resentment toward Christian settlement in traditionally Muslim areas, have played a central role in the Muslim separatist movement.

Academic freedom is generally respected in the Philippines, and professors and other teachers can lecture and publish freely.

Citizen activism is robust, and demonstrations are common. However, permits are required for rallies, and antigovernment protests are often dispersed. The Philippines has many active human rights, social welfare, and other nongovernmental groups, as well as lawyers' and business associations. Various labor and farmers' organizations that are dedicated to ending extrajudicial killings and helping families of the disappeared face serious threats, and their offices are occasionally raided. Trade unions are independent and may align with international groups. However, in order to register, a union must represent at least 20 percent of a given bargaining unit. Moreover, large firms are stepping up the use of contract workers, who are prohibited from joining unions. Only about 5 percent of the labor force is unionized. Collective bargaining is common, and strikes may be called, though unions must provide notice and obtain majority approval from their members. Violence against labor leaders remains a problem and has been part of the broader trend of extrajudicial killings in recent years.

Judicial independence has traditionally been strong, particularly with respect to the Supreme Court. In 2007, the court spearheaded efforts to resolve the issue of extrajudicial killings and similar abuses, promulgating the writ of *amparo* (protection) to prevent the military from delaying cases by denying that it has a given person in custody. Human rights lawyers generally describe the new writ as a success. How-

ever, by early 2010, all members of the Supreme Court except outgoing chief justice Reynato Puno were Arroyo appointees. When Arroyo moved to appoint an ally, Associate Justice Renato Corona, as the new chief justice just after the May elections, despite a constitutional ban on such late appointments by outgoing presidents, the court ruled in favor of maintaining the nomination, and Corona took office.

Rule of law in the country is generally weak. A backlog of more than 800,000 cases in the court system contributes to impunity, and low pay encourages rampant corruption. The judiciary receives less than 1 percent of the national budget, and judges and lawyers often depend on local powers holders for basic resources and salaries, leading to compromised verdicts. At least 12 judges have been killed since 1999, but there have been no convictions for the attacks. According to Filipino news sources, there were four attacks on members of the judiciary in 2010, including two killings.

The Maguindanao massacre trial, widely seen as a major test for the country's judicial system, was moved to Manila to prevent local interference. Proceedings began in September 2010. Although the case was moving forward with unusual speed, a number of complications have been noted, including witness intimidation, flawed forensic investigations, and the fact that only 19 of the 196 suspects were on trial. A key prosecution witness, Suwaib Upham, was murdered in June.

Arbitrary detention, disappearances, kidnappings, and abuse of suspects continue to be reported. Mounting evidence has confirmed the military's responsibility for many of the numerous killings of leftist journalists, labor leaders, and senior members of legal left-wing political parties in recent years in the context of the Arroyo administration's counterinsurgency against the New People's Army (NPA), a communist rebel group. Military officers maintain that the killings are the result of purges within the communist movement. The lack of effective witness protection has been a key obstacle to investigations. About 90 percent of extrajudicial killing and abduction cases have no cooperative witnesses. Especially problematic is the fact that the Department of Justice oversees both the witness-protection program and the entity that serves as counsel to the military. Similarly, the Philippine National Police, tasked with investigating journalist murders, falls under the jurisdiction of the military.

Convictions for extrajudicial killings are extremely rare, and not a single member of the military was found guilty during Arroyo's presidency. Overall, numbers of extrajudicial killings have declined from an annual peak of 220 in 2006. However, there was a significant spike in death-squad killings at the local level in 2008 and 2009, especially in Davao. A study conducted by Attorney Al Parreno, titled *Report on the Philippine Extrajudicial Killings (2001 to August 2010)*, found that 305 extrajudicial killings were committed during this time, though the actual number is believed to be higher. The report also stated that a significant number of extrajudicial killing victims had been members or officers of leftist groups, elected government officials, journalists, peasant leaders, judges, and members of religious groups. Local officials are believed to keep lists of suspected criminals who are abducted or killed if they fail to heed warnings to reform or leave the area. The death squads responsible reportedly collect about 5,000 pesos (\$100) for each job. The Commission on Human Rights launched independent investigations into the death squads in March 2009, but Human Rights Watch has reported that local authorities,

powers, and courts are inhibiting investigations. There has also been a recent rise in kidnappings for ransom; authorities killed at least 47 suspected kidnappers during 2009, while 60 others were arrested in a government crackdown. Between January and June 2010, a group called the Movement for Restoration of Peace and Order reported 56 kidnap-for-ransom cases, while the Police Anti-Crime and Emergency Response counted only 12. Kidnappings are particularly prevalent in Mindanao.

The Muslim separatist conflict has caused severe hardship for many of the 15 million inhabitants of Mindanao and nearby islands, and has resulted in more than 120,000 deaths since it erupted in 1972. Both government and rebel forces have committed summary killings and other human rights abuses. The escalation of violence in the south in late 2008 displaced more than 600,000 people. A year after the 2009 ceasefire in hostilities, up to 5,000 displaced families were still believed to be living in camps and relocation sites, mostly in the Maguindano province. Clan violence has been on the rise since 2009 and is now believed to be the greatest source of displacement. Meanwhile, the communist NPA continues to engage in executions, torture, and kidnappings in the countryside, especially in central and southern Luzon.

Citizens may travel freely outside conflict zones, and there are no restrictions on employment or place of residence. The poor security situation inhibits individuals' ability to operate businesses.

Women have made many social and economic gains in recent years. The UN Development Programme notes that the Philippines is one of the few countries in Asia to have significantly closed the gender gap in the areas of health and education. Although more women than men now enter high school and university, women face some discrimination in private sector employment, and those in Mindanao enjoy considerably fewer rights in practice. Divorce is illegal in the Philippines, though the Family Code allows annulments under specified circumstances. In August 2009, the Philippines passed Republic Act 9710, otherwise known as the Magna Carta of Women, which was seen as a significant step toward codifying women's rights. Among other provisions, the law called for women to fill half of third-level government positions, required that each barangay has a "violence against women's desk," and recognized women's rights as human rights. The trafficking of women and girls abroad and internally for forced labor and prostitution remains a major problem, despite anti-trafficking efforts by the government and civil society. The fact that many women trafficked for illicit labor are heavily indebted by the time they begin working exacerbates the problem. There are reports of bonded labor, especially by children, in black-market trades such as prostitution and drug trafficking. The country's various insurgent groups have been accused of using child soldiers.

Poland

Political Rights: 1

Population: 38,200,000

Civil Liberties: 1

Capital: Warsaw

Status: Free

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline For Year Under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
1,2F	1,2F	1,2F	1,1F						

Overview: President Lech Kaczynski and dozens of other Polish dignitaries were killed in an April 2010 plane crash in Russia, but Poland's robust political institutions ensured the orderly and democratic replacement of all deceased officials. Former prime minister Jaroslaw Kaczynski, leader of the right-wing opposition Law and Justice party, took his late brother's place in the June presidential election. However, he lost to interim president Bronislaw Komorowski of the governing center-right Civic Platform party.

After being dismantled by neighboring empires in a series of 18th-century partitions, Poland enjoyed a window of independence from 1918 to 1939, only to be invaded by Germany and the Soviet Union at the opening of World War II. The country then endured decades of exploitation as a Soviet satellite state until the Solidarity trade union movement forced the government to accept democratic elections in 1989.

Fundamental democratic and free-market reforms were introduced between 1989 and 1991, and additional changes came as Poland prepared its bid for European Union (EU) membership. In the 1990s, power shifted between political parties rooted in the Solidarity movement and those with communist origins. Former Communist Party member Alexander Kwasniewski of the Democratic Left Alliance (SLD) replaced Solidarity's Lech Walesa as president in 1995 and was subsequently reelected by a large margin in 2000. A government led by the SLD oversaw Poland's final reforms ahead of EU accession, which took place in May 2004.

Promising to eliminate corruption and protect Polish values from erosion under EU pressure, the conservative Law and Justice (PiS) party, headed by twin brothers Lech and Jaroslaw Kaczynski, won the September 2005 parliamentary elections. Lech Kaczynski won the presidential contest in October, and Jaroslaw Kaczynski later became prime minister. PiS formed a fragile majority coalition with the leftist-populist, agrarian Self-Defense Party (Samoobrona) and the socially conservative, Catholic-oriented League of Polish Families (LPR). The coalition broke up briefly in late 2006, and finally collapsed in 2007, after the prime minister fired a number of senior officials, prompting legislative elections in October.

In the elections, the center-right Civic Platform (PO) party won 209 seats in the lower house (Sejm), followed by PiS with 166, an SLD-led coalition with 53, and the Polish People's Party (PSL) with 31. A representative of the German minority held the remaining seat. In the Senate, PO took 60 seats, PiS won 39, and the last

seat went to an independent. PO and the PSL formed a coalition government in November, with PO leader Donald Tusk as prime minister. The relationship between Tusk and Lech Kaczynski remained tense in 2008 and 2009, as the president resisted the government's generally pro-EU policy initiatives and its less antagonistic stance toward Russia.

In April 2010, President Kaczynski and a delegation of Poland's political, academic, and military elite flew to Russia to commemorate the 70th anniversary of the Soviet massacre of Polish officers in Katyn Forest. Their plane crashed during a landing attempt in Smolensk, leaving no survivors. The deceased officials were replaced in accordance with the constitution, and Sejm Speaker Bronislaw Komorowski of the PO served as interim president until elections could be held in June. Jarostaw Kaczynski took his brother's place as the PiS candidate, but lost to Komorowski, who took 53 percent in the second round of voting.

In the aftermath of the plane crash, Polish citizens were strongly divided over the decision to bury Lech Kaczynski at Wawel Cathedral, the final resting place of the country's most august historical figures. In July, a second wave of discontent erupted after Komorowski announced that a wooden cross erected to commemorate the crash victims would be moved from the presidential palace grounds to nearby St. Anne's Church. Komorowski's decision—based on the belief that the religious symbol was inappropriate for display on public grounds—led to PiS-backed vigils by self-described "defenders of the cross," as well as counterdemonstrations to insist on its removal. Palace security guards removed the cross from public view in September, and it was transferred to St. Anne's Church at the end of the year.

The PO government continued to improve relations with Russia in the second half of 2010. Domestically, it focused on meeting immediate economic challenges. Although the Polish economy maintained relatively strong growth during the year, the budget deficit reached nearly 8 percent of gross domestic product.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Poland is an electoral democracy. Voters elect the president for up to two five-year terms and members of the bicameral National Assembly for four-year terms. The president's appointment of the prime minister is subject to confirmation by the 460-seat Sejm, the National Assembly's lower house. While the prime minister is responsible for most government policy, the president's position also carries significant influence, particularly relating to defense and foreign policy. The 100-member Senate, the upper house, can delay and amend legislation but has few other powers.

Corruption remains a problem and often goes unpunished. In September 2010, Mariusz Kaminski, the former head of the Central Anticorruption Bureau, was formally charged with abuse of power after being suspended from his position in 2009 for allegedly encouraging his agents to engage in bribery and forgery. Such scandals have adversely affected Poland's ability to attract foreign investment. Poland was ranked 41 out of 178 countries surveyed in Transparency International's 2010 Corruption Perceptions Index.

The 1997 constitution guarantees freedom of expression and forbids censorship. Libel remains a criminal offense, though a 2009 amendment to the criminal code eased the possible penalties. Infringements on media freedom include gag orders and arbitrary judicial decisions concerning media investigations of individuals

affiliated with parties in power. Poland's print media are diverse, and most are privately owned. The state-owned Polish Television (TVP) and Polish Radio are dominant in their media, but they face growing competition from private domestic and foreign outlets. Control over TVP has been the subject of political disputes in recent years, as several bills on the station's funding have been passed by the parliament and then vetoed by the president. The government does not restrict internet access.

The state respects freedom of religion. Religious groups are not required to register with the authorities but receive tax benefits if they do. In May 2010, pop star Dorota "Doda" Rabczewska was charged with "offending religious sensibilities" for stating in a 2009 television interview that she believed more in dinosaurs than in the Bible. She faced up to two years in prison under Poland's blasphemy laws; the trial was pending at year's end. Academic freedom is generally respected.

Polish citizens can petition the government, assemble legally, organize professional and other associations, and engage in collective bargaining. However, complicated legal procedures and slow courts hinder workers' ability to strike. Public demonstrations require permits from local authorities. Poland has a robust labor movement, though certain groups—including the self-employed and those working under individual contracts—are barred from joining a union. Labor leaders have complained of harassment by employers.

Poland has an independent judiciary, but courts are notorious for delays in administering cases. State prosecutors have proceeded slowly on corruption investigations, contributing to concerns that they are subject to considerable political pressure. Prison conditions are fairly poor by European standards, and pretrial detention periods can be lengthy. A new human rights division was opened by the Justice Ministry in 2009 to properly address human rights abuses and support victims.

Ethnic minorities generally enjoy generous protections and rights under Polish law, including funding for bilingual education and publications. They also receive privileged representation in the parliament, as their political parties are not subject to the minimum vote threshold of 5 percent to achieve representation. Some groups, particularly the Roma, are subject to discrimination in employment and housing, racially motivated insults, and, less frequently, physical attacks. Poland's homosexual community also faces discrimination, and the constitution recognizes only heterosexual marriages. In March 2010, the European Court of Human Rights found that Poland had violated the rights of a homosexual man by denying his petition to inherit his deceased partner's tenancy agreement.

Women have made inroads in the professional sphere and are employed in a wide variety of occupations; several hold high positions in government and the private sector. Female lawmakers hold 20 percent of the seats in the Sejm and 8 percent in the Senate. However, domestic violence against women remains a serious concern. Trafficking in women and girls for the purpose of prostitution also remains a problem. A law stipulating that pedophiles convicted of certain crimes (such as incest) must be chemically castrated upon their release took effect in June 2010, drawing significant criticism from human rights groups. Women who undergo illegal abortions do not face criminal charges, but any person who assists in the termination of pregnancies—including medical staff—can face up to three years in prison.

Portugal

Political Rights: 1

Population: 10,700,000

Civil Liberties: 1

Capital: Lisbon

Status: Free

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline For Year Under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
1:1F									

Overview: A series of protests swept the nation in 2010, after the government announced a new austerity budget. Despite significant public opposition, the budget—which will raise taxes, cut wages for civil servants, and reduce spending on social security and health care—was passed in November. In May, Portugal became the sixth European nation to legalize same-sex marriage.

Portugal was proclaimed a republic in 1910, after King Manuel II abdicated during a bloodless revolution. António de Oliveira Salazar became prime minister in 1932 and ruled the country as a fascist dictatorship until 1968, when his lieutenant, Marcello Caetano, replaced him. During the "Marcello Spring," repression and censorship were relaxed somewhat, and a liberal wing developed inside the one-party National Assembly. In 1974, a bloodless coup by the Armed Forces Movement, which opposed the ongoing colonial wars in Mozambique and Angola, overthrew Caetano.

A transition to democracy began with the election of a Constitutional Assembly that adopted a democratic constitution in 1976. A civilian government was formally established in 1982, after a revision to the constitution brought the military under civilian control, curbed the president's powers, and abolished the unelected Revolutionary Council. Portugal became a member of the European Economic Community (later the European Union, or EU) in 1986, and adopted the euro currency in 2002. The country handed over its last colonial territory, Macao, to the People's Republic of China in 1999.

Anibal Cavaco Silva, a center-right candidate who had served as prime minister from 1985 to 1995, won the 2006 presidential election. For the first time in Portugal's recent history, the president and prime minister hailed from opposite sides of the political spectrum.

While holding the rotating EU presidency during the second half of 2007, Portugal oversaw the drafting of the Lisbon Treaty, which replaced the proposed EU constitution that had been rejected in 2005. Ratification of the treaty by the 27-country bloc was completed in November 2009.

In the September 2009 legislative elections, Prime Minister José Socrates's governing Socialist Party (PS) won a narrow victory with 38 percent of the vote. The center-right Social Democratic Party (PSD) captured 30 percent, followed by the Democratic and Social Centre/People's Party with 11 percent. After talks over building a coalition collapsed, the Socialists formed a minority government in October.

A series of protests swept the nation in 2010 after the government announced a new austerity budget in March. Nearly 300,000 protestors gathered in Lisbon in June to demonstrate against the impending changes, which included tax increases, wage cuts for civil servants, and a reduction in spending on health care and social security. In October, two of Portugal's largest trade unions, the General Confederation of Portuguese Workers (CGTP) and the General Workers' Union (UGT), joined forces to organize a strike for the first time since 1988. Another massive rally took place on November 24, which caused the closure of schools and disruption of public transportation. Despite significant public outcry, the budget passed on November 26, with the government refusing to alter its plan as of year's end.

Separately, large-scale protests broke out at the end of November just as Lisbon was scheduled to host the 22nd NATO summit. The government reinstated police patrols along the border with Spain as a security measure before the summit opened. By November 19, patrols had blocked over 100 protestors from entering the country. Approximately 40 protestors were detained on November 20 for blocking a roadway while protesting the summit.

Political Rights

and Civil Liberties:

Portugal is an electoral democracy. The 230 members of the unicameral legislature, the Assembly of the Republic, are elected every four years using a system of proportional representation. The president, elected for up to two five-year terms, holds no executive powers, though he can delay legislation through a veto and dissolve the Assembly to call early elections. The prime minister is nominated by the Assembly, and the choice is confirmed by the president. The constitution was amended in 1997 to allow resident noncitizens to vote in presidential elections.

The main political parties are the Socialist Party, the Social Democratic Party, and the Social Centre/People's Party. The autonomous regions of Azores and Madeira—two island groups in the Atlantic—have their own political structures with legislative and executive powers.

Portugal continued to struggle with corruption issues throughout 2010. In 2009, Prime Minister José Sócrates was accused of granting Freeport, a British developing company, permission in 2002 to build a shopping mall on protected land outside of Lisbon in exchange for bribes during his tenure as environment minister; he was cleared on any wrongdoing in 2010. Separately, Portuguese police had carried out a widespread operation in November 2009 to expose companies engaged in illicitly obtaining industrial waste contracts. Five state-run companies were identified in February 2010 as suspects in the scheme, referred to as "Hidden Face." Over 30 people were implicated though trials were still pending by year's end. Transparency International (TI) launched a contact group in Portugal in September 2010 to raise awareness and evaluate the country's anticorruption efforts, among other priorities. Portugal was ranked 32 out of 178 countries surveyed in TI's 2010 Corruption Perceptions Index.

Freedom of the press is constitutionally guaranteed, and laws against insulting the government or armed forces are rarely enforced. The poorly funded public broadcasting channels face serious competition from commercial television outlets. In February 2010, an executive at Portugal Telecom was forced to resign after being implicated in an alleged government scheme to gain control over the privately

owned television company TVI in 2009. The plot would purportedly have allowed Socrates to acquire media outlets deemed antipathetic to the Socialist government. In August 2010, the Lisbon-based weekly paper *Sol* was fined 1.5 million euros for defying a court injunction not to publish part of a phone conversation obtained through police surveillance regarding the TVI acquisition. *Sol's* editor and two journalists were fined over 50,000 euros each for their involvement in covering the story. Internet access in Portugal is generally not restricted.

Although the country is overwhelmingly Roman Catholic, the constitution guarantees freedom of religion and forbids religious discrimination. The Religious Freedom Act provides religions that have been established in the country for at least 30 years (or recognized internationally for at least 60 years) with a number of benefits formerly reserved only for the Catholic Church, such as tax exemptions, legal recognition of marriage and other rites, and respect for traditional holidays. Academic freedom is respected.

Freedoms of assembly and association are honored, and national and international nongovernmental organizations, including human rights groups, operate in the country without interference. Workers enjoy the right to organize, bargain collectively, and strike for any reason, including a political motive. Despite months of protest by labor organizations, a 2008 labor law eased employer regulations concerning the hiring and dismissal of employees. Throughout the latter half of 2010, unions organized large-scale strikes against the government's new austerity budget. Only 35 percent of the workforce is unionized.

The constitution provides for an independent court system, though staff shortages and inefficiency have contributed to a considerable backlog of pending trials. Human rights groups have expressed concern over unlawful police shootings and deaths in custody. Criticism also continues over poor prison conditions, including overcrowding, poor sanitary conditions, mistreatment of prisoners by police and prison guards, and high rates of HIV/AIDS among inmates. Portugal's prison population—as a percentage of the total population—is greater than the EU average.

The constitution guarantees equal treatment under the law. The government has taken a number of steps to combat racism, including passing antidiscrimination laws and launching initiatives to promote the integration of immigrants and Roma. A 2007 immigration law facilitates family reunification and legalization for immigrants in specific circumstances, such as those who apply under "immigration amnesty." According to a 2008 study by the Observatory for Immigration, immigrants pay discriminatorily high taxes, though little revenue is channeled to projects directly benefiting them.

Domestic violence against women and children remains a problem, and few cases are brought to trial; over 15,000 cases were reported in 2009. A 2008 report from the General Confederation of Portuguese Workers revealed that women earn four times less than men. Portugal is a destination and transit point for trafficked persons, particularly women from Eastern Europe and former Portuguese colonies in South America and Africa. In May 2010, Portugal became the sixth European nation to legalize same-sex marriage.

Qatar

Political Rights: 6

Population: 1,700,000

Civil Liberties: 5

Capital: Doha

Status: Not Free

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline For Year Under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
6.5NF									

Overview: Six years after agreeing to hold legislative elections for the Consultative Council, Qatar again failed to do so in 2010. In March, Qatar swore in its first woman judge. Five women journalists resigned from the Doha-based satellite television station Al-Jazeera after they came under criticism from the station's management for not dressing conservatively enough.

Qatar gained independence from Britain in 1971. The following year, Khalifa bin Hamad al-Thani deposed his cousin, Emir Ahmad bin Ali al-Thani, and ruled for 23 years as an absolute monarch. In 1995, the emir was deposed by his son, Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani, who began a program of gradual political, social, and economic reforms. Hamad dissolved the Ministry of Information shortly after taking power, an action designed to demonstrate his commitment to expanding press freedom.

In 1996, Hamad permitted the creation of Al-Jazeera, which has become one of the most popular Arabic-language satellite television channels in the Middle East. However, Al-Jazeera generally does not cover Qatari politics and focuses instead on regional issues.

Elections were held in 1999 for a 29-member Central Municipal Council, a body designed to advise the minister of municipal affairs and agriculture. The poll made Qatar the first state of the Gulf Cooperation Council to introduce universal suffrage for men and women over 18 years of age. Hamad also accelerated a program to strengthen Qatar's educational institutions, inviting foreign universities, including Georgetown University in Washington, D.C., to establish branches in the country.

Central Municipal Council elections were held again in 2003. Also that year, Qatari voters overwhelmingly approved a constitution that slightly broadened the scope of political participation without eliminating the ruling family's monopoly on power. Most rights in the new constitution do not apply to noncitizen residents, who form a majority of the population.

In 2007, citizens again voted for the Central Municipal Council, electing 29 members, including 1 woman, from 125 candidates. Turnout reached 51 percent, a considerable improvement over 2003, when just 30 percent of the eligible electorate voted. In July 2008, the emir appointed a new cabinet that included two women.

Qatar has hosted U.S. military forces for a number of years, and the U.S. presence grew significantly after 2001. The country has faced severe criticism in the region for its ties to the United States and its tentative links with Israel.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Qatar is not an electoral democracy. The head of state is the emir, whose family holds a monopoly on political power. The emir appoints a prime minister and cabinet. The constitution states that the emir appoints an heir after consulting with the ruling family and other notables. Voters elect local government representatives with limited powers over municipal services; these representatives report to the appointed minister of municipal affairs and agriculture. Under the constitution, which was ratified by public referendum in 2003 and promulgated by the emir in 2004, elections are to be held for 30 of the 45 seats in a new Consultative Council; the emir has the power to appoint the other 15 members. Although new elections were scheduled for 2010, Emir Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani extended the Council's current session until 2013, effectively postponing elections for three more years. The existing 35-member Consultative Council is entirely appointed.

Only a small percentage of the country's population is permitted to vote or hold office. The government does not permit the existence of political parties.

Critics continue to complain of a lack of transparency in government procurement. However, Qatar was ranked 19 out of 178 countries surveyed in Transparency International's 2010 Corruption Perceptions Index, making it the best performer in the Middle East.

Although the constitution guarantees freedom of expression, both print and broadcast media content are influenced by leading families. In 2009, the director of the Doha Center for Media Freedom, Robert Ménard, resigned under alleged government pressure. Journalists practice a high degree of self-censorship and face possible jail sentences for slander. The top five daily newspapers are privately owned, but their owners and boards include members of the ruling family. Although the satellite television channel Al-Jazeera is privately held, the government has reportedly paid for the channel's operating costs since its inception. As a result, Al-Jazeera rarely criticizes the ruling family. Qataris have access to the internet, but the government censors content and blocks access to sites that are deemed pornographic or politically sensitive.

Islam is Qatar's official religion. Nevertheless, the 2004 constitution explicitly provides for freedom of worship. The Ministry of Islamic Affairs regulates clerical matters and the construction of mosques. The first two churches to be built for Qatar's Christian community were opened in Doha in 2008 and 2009, while another three remained in the planning or construction phase in 2010. The constitution guarantees freedom of opinion and academic research, but scholars often practice self-censorship on politically sensitive topics.

While the constitution grants freedom of assembly and the right to form nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), these rights are limited in practice. Protests are rare, with the government restricting the public's ability to organize demonstrations. All NGOs need state permission to operate, and the government closely monitors the activities of these groups. After hosting the 2007 Conference on Democracy and Reform in Doha, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs established the Arab Foundation for Democracy to monitor progress on reform in the region. Sheikh Hamad has contributed \$10 million to the foundation. There are no independent human rights organizations, but a National Human Rights Committee (NHRC), consisting of members of civil society and government ministries, has done some work on investigating alleged abuses.

A 2005 labor law expanded some protections for citizens, but it prohibits noncitizen workers from forming labor unions. Foreign nationals make up most of the workforce, but fear of job loss and deportation often prevents them from exercising what few rights they have. Many foreign workers face economic abuses, like the withholding of salaries or contract manipulation, while others endure poor living conditions and excessive work hours. Worker complaints have included charges as serious as torture, imprisonment, and forced labor. Foreign construction workers have repeatedly demonstrated against poor living and working conditions. In September 2010, the Qatari government deported 89 Nepalese construction workers for protesting against their employer's refusal to increase salaries. Female domestic servants are particularly vulnerable to abuse and are often lured or forced into prostitution.

Despite constitutional guarantees, the judiciary is not independent in practice. The majority of Qatar's judges are foreign nationals who are appointed and removed by the emir. The judicial system consists of Sharia (Islamic law) courts, which have jurisdiction over a narrow range of issues including family law, and civil law courts, which have jurisdiction over criminal cases as well as commercial and civil suits. The Supreme Judiciary Council regulates the judiciary. The constitution protects individuals from arbitrary arrest and detention and bans torture. However, a 2002 law allows the suspension of these guarantees for the "protection of society." The law empowers the minister of the interior to detain a defendant for crimes related to national security on the recommendation of the director-general of public security.

The government discriminates against noncitizens in education, housing, health care, and other services that are offered free of charge to citizens. The U.S. State Department's 2010 Trafficking in Persons Report placed Qatar on the Tier 2 Watch List, noting that the country remains a transit point and destination for the trafficking of men and women, particularly for forced labor and prostitution. Qatar has attempted to restrict visas for suspected prostitutes trying to enter the country, but enforcement remains inconsistent.

The constitution treats women as full and equal persons, and discrimination based on sex, country of origin, language, or religion is banned. In March 2010, Qatar swore in Sheikha Maha Mansour Salman Jassim al-Thani as its first woman judge. In 2006, Qatar implemented a codified family law, which regulates issues important for women, including inheritance, child custody, marriage, and divorce. While this law offers more protections for women than they enjoyed previously, they continue to face some disadvantages, including societal discrimination, and few effective legal mechanisms are available for them to contest incidents of bias. Five women resigned from their posts at Al-Jazeera in June 2010, after they came under criticism from the television station's management for failing to dress conservatively enough.

Romania

Political Rights: 2
Civil Liberties: 2
Status: Free

Population: 21,500,000
Capital: Bucharest

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline For Year Under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
2,2F	2,2F	2,2F	3,2F	2,2F	2,2F	2,2F	2,2F	2,2F	2,2F

Overview: Prime Minister Emil Boc of the ruling Democratic Liberal Party implemented sharp spending cuts and tax increases in 2010, aiming to reduce the budget deficit and comply with a 2009 international loan agreement. The measures prompted repeated protests by public sector workers, but the government survived a series of no-confidence motions brought by the opposition. Separately, a European Union progress report in July criticized Romania for showing a lack of commitment on anti-corruption and judicial reforms.

In 1989, longtime dictator Nicolae Ceausescu was overthrown and executed by disgruntled Communists. A provisional government was formed, and regular multiparty elections soon followed, with power changing hands between right-leaning parties and the former Communist Party, renamed the Social Democratic Party (PSD), during the 1990s. The PSD returned to power in the 2000 parliamentary elections, with Adrian Nstase as prime minister.

In 2004, Traian Basescu of the Alliance for Truth and Justice (comprising the National Liberal Party, or PNL, and the Democratic Party, or PD) defeated Nastase in a presidential runoff. The PNL and PD then formed a coalition government with the Humanist Party (later renamed the Conservative Party, or PC), and the Democratic Union of Hungarians in Romania (UDMR). Calin Popescu-Tariceanu of the PNL became prime minister.

The ruling coalition proved rather unstable, and after Romania's accession to the European Union (EU) in January 2007, Popescu-Tariceanu ousted the Basescu-allied PD from the cabinet in April. At the PSD's urging, Parliament voted to suspend Basescu and organize a referendum on his removal, but he easily won the vote in May.

The new Democratic Liberal Party (PDL), a union of the PD and a PNL splinter faction, won parliamentary elections in November 2008, narrowly defeating a PSD-PC alliance in the lower house, 115 seats to 114, and in the Senate, 51 seats to 49. The rivals then formed a grand coalition in December. Meanwhile, the PNL was left with 65 seats in the lower house and 28 seats in the Senate, followed by the UDMR with 22 and 9. The remaining 18 lower-house seats were set aside for ethnic minorities. Voter turnout was less than 40 percent; unlike in previous years, no major fraud allegations were reported. PDL leader Emil Boc was confirmed by Parliament as the new prime minister.

The grand coalition broke down in October 2009, when the PSD withdrew and

Boc's resulting minority government was toppled in a no-confidence vote, though it remained in place in a caretaker capacity as the presidential election campaign began.

Basescu and his PSD challenger, Mircea Geoana, led the first round in November with 32 percent and 31 percent, respectively. Although the PNL and UDMR then endorsed Geoana, Basescu won the December runoff by some 70,000 votes amid 58 percent turnout, and the Constitutional Court confirmed the results after the PSD forced a partial recount. Parliament subsequently approved a new PDL-UDMR coalition government led by Boc.

The government struggled throughout 2010 to implement a harsh fiscal austerity package as part of the previous year's \$27 billion emergency loan agreement with the International Monetary Fund. The budgetary measures, which included a five-point increase in the value-added tax and a 25 percent public sector pay cut that took effect in July, drew repeated protests by workers and criticism from opposition parties. Although the government narrowly survived a parliamentary confidence vote in June, Boc replaced six ministers in a September reshuffle, and Interior Minister Vasile Blaga resigned later that month, after what he called an illegal wage-related protest by thousands of police officers. Boc's government remained in office at year's end, after surviving three more confidence votes in October and December.

Political Rights

and Civil Liberties:

Romania is an electoral democracy. Elections since 1991 have been considered generally free and fair. The president is directly elected for up to two five-year terms and appoints the prime minister with the approval of Parliament. Members of the bicameral Parliament, consisting of the 137-seat Senate and 334-seat Chamber of Deputies, are elected for four-year terms. New rules governing the 2008 parliamentary elections replaced the old party-list voting system with single-member districts, although all districts with no majority winner were allotted based on collective proportional representation. In a referendum held concurrently with the 2009 presidential election, voters overwhelmingly endorsed a plan by President Traian Basescu to create a unicameral legislature with no more than 300 seats. However, the necessary constitutional revisions had yet to pass at the end of 2010.

The constitution grants 1 lower-house seat to each national minority whose representative party or organization fails to win any seats under the normal rules, and 18 such seats were allotted in 2008. The UDMR has long represented the ethnic Hungarian minority. Political participation and representation of Roma are very weak.

Romania has struggled to meet EU anticorruption requirements since joining the bloc in 2007. The latest EU progress report in July 2010 criticized the country for a lack of political will to reform, and particularly faulted the effective suspension of the new National Integrity Agency (ANI), which vetted and released public officials' asset declarations. The Constitutional Court struck down the law governing the ANI in April, arguing that its activities violated privacy rights and illegally took on judicial functions. Notably, seven of the court's nine judges were themselves being investigated by the ANI. Lawmakers then passed a revised ANI law, but the EU rebuked it for unduly weakening the agency, and it was again rejected by the Constitutional Court in July. A new version was passed in late August, and the ANI had

resumed operations by year's end. The EU progress report praised the National Anticorruption Directorate (DNA) for its high-level investigations and indictments, but noted that trials were still plagued by delays and that final judgments often yielded low or suspended sentences. The government's lack of effective conflict-of-interest safeguards and procurement procedures were also cited in the report. Among several other ongoing cases against senior law enforcement and political figures, prosecutors in May charged former prime minister Adrian Nastase with taking bribes during his time in office. Parliament had agreed to waive his immunity in 2009, after previously refusing to do so. Romania was ranked 69 out of 178 countries surveyed in Transparency International's 2010 Corruption Perceptions Index, making it one of the worst performers in the EU.

The constitution protects freedom of the press, and the media are characterized by considerable pluralism. However, a weakening newspaper market led some foreign media companies to withdraw from the country in 2010. Political bias at state-owned media is a concern, and private outlets are heavily influenced by the political and economic interests of their owners. In April 2010, Prime Minister Emil Boc engaged in a minor altercation with a Realitatea TV reporter, accusing his station and one other, Antena 3, of antigovernment bias. The PDL then called on its members to boycott the two stations' programs. Media mogul Sorin Ovidiu Vantu, who owned Realitatea and several other outlets, was arrested and briefly detained in September for allegedly aiding a man who had been convicted of running an illegal investment scheme. He claimed the case was politically motivated. The government does not restrict access to the internet.

Religious freedom is generally respected, but "nontraditional" religious organizations encounter both difficulties in registering with the state and discrimination by some local officials and Orthodox priests. The government formally recognizes 18 religions, each of which is eligible for proportional state support. The Romanian Orthodox Church remains dominant and politically powerful. The government does not restrict academic freedom, but the education system is weakened by unchecked corruption.

The constitution guarantees freedoms of assembly and association, and the government respects these rights in practice. Workers have the right to form unions and a limited right to strike, but in practice, many employers work against unions, and illegal antiunion activity is rarely punished. Labor protests took place throughout 2010, as public employees and others attempted to block budget cuts.

The judiciary is one of the most problematic institutions in Romania. The 2010 EU progress report hailed the enactment of new criminal and civil procedural codes in June, but noted that they were not expected to take effect until late 2011. The courts continue to suffer from serious staffing shortages, and criminal defendants have been able to initiate lengthy delays in their cases, though legislation passed during 2010 eliminated some common stalling mechanisms. The EU report criticized the judicial disciplinary system, citing lenient sanctions and the paucity of cases opened. Conditions in Romanian prisons remain poor. The country has the highest tuberculosis rate in the EU, with prisons serving as a central source of infection, though efforts to combat the problem have yielded some progress in recent years.

Roma, homosexuals, people with disabilities, and HIV-positive children and adults face discrimination in education, employment, and other areas. Romania is

home to the EU's largest population of Roma, but has reportedly failed to apply for and spend EU funding dedicated to improving their living conditions.

The constitution guarantees women equal rights, but gender discrimination is a problem. Only about 10 percent of the seats in Parliament are held by women. Trafficking of women and girls for forced prostitution has become a major concern, with Romania reportedly ranking as the leading source of migrant sex workers in the EU. However, some advances in law enforcement and victim protection have been reported in recent years. The criminal code does not provide for restraining orders in domestic violence cases.

Russia

Political Rights: 6
Civil Liberties: 5
Status: Not Free

Population: 141,900,000
Capital: Moscow

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline For Year Under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
3,5PF	3,5PF	3,5PF	6,5NF						

Overview: The executive branch maintained its tight controls on the media, civil society, and the other branches of government in 2010. The removal of longtime Moscow mayor Yury Luzhkov in September and stage-managed local elections in April and October demonstrated the supremacy of the federal elite. Similarly, the extension of jailed former oil tycoon Mikhail Khodorkovsky's prison term in December, following a politicized trial based on contradictory new charges, confirmed the political leadership's control over the justice system. In the latest prominent example of violence against critical journalists, *Kommersant* reporter Oleg Kashin was brutally beaten in November. Insurgent and other violence originating in the North Caucasus continued during the year, with high-profile attacks on the Moscow subway and the Chechen parliament. Despite these harsh conditions, civil society found a stronger voice during the year, with large antigovernment protests in Kaliningrad and popular efforts to protect environmental assets and combat an outbreak of summer wildfires.

With the collapse of the Soviet Union in December 1991, the Russian Federation emerged as an independent state under the leadership of President Boris Yeltsin. In 1993, Yeltsin used force to thwart an attempted coup by parliamentary opponents of radical reform, after which voters approved a new constitution establishing a powerful presidency and a bicameral national legislature, the Federal Assembly. The 1995 parliamentary elections featured strong support for the Communist Party and ultranationalist forces. Nevertheless, in the 1996 presidential poll, Yeltsin defeated Communist leader Gennady Zyuganov with the financial backing of powerful business magnates, who used the media empires they controlled to ensure victory.

In 1999, Yeltsin appointed Vladimir Putin, then the head of the Federal Security Service (FSB), as prime minister.

Conflict with the separatist republic of Chechnya, which had secured de facto independence from Moscow after a brutal 1994-96 war, resumed in 1999. Government forces reinvaded the breakaway region after Chechen rebels led an incursion into the neighboring Russian republic of Dagestan in August and a series of deadly apartment bombings—which the Kremlin blamed on Chechen militants—struck Russian cities in September. The second Chechen war dramatically increased Putin's popularity, and after the December 1999 elections to the State Duma, the lower house of the Federal Assembly, progovernment parties were able to form a majority coalition.

An ailing and unpopular Yeltsin—who was constitutionally barred from a third presidential term—resigned on December 31, 1999, transferring power to Putin. The new acting president subsequently secured a first-round victory over Zyuganov, 53 percent to 29 percent, in the March 2000 presidential election. After taking office, Putin moved quickly to reduce the influence of the legislature, tame the business community and the news media, and strengthen the FSB. He considerably altered the composition of the ruling elite through an influx of personnel from the security and military services. Overall, Putin garnered enormous personal popularity by overseeing a gradual increase in the standard of living for most of the population; the improvements were driven largely by an oil and gas boom and economic reforms that had followed a 1998 financial crisis.

In the December 2003 Duma elections, the Kremlin-controlled United Russia party captured 306 out of 450 seats. With the national broadcast media and most print outlets favoring the incumbent, no opponent was able to mount a significant challenge in the March 2004 presidential election. Putin, who refused to debate the other candidates, received 71.4 percent of the vote in a first-round victory, compared with 13.7 percent for his closest rival, the Communist-backed Nikolai Kharitonov.

Putin introduced legislative changes in 2004 that eliminated direct gubernatorial elections in favor of presidential appointments, citing a need to unify the country in the face of terrorist violence. The government also began a crackdown on democracy-promotion groups and other nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), especially those receiving foreign funding. The authorities removed another possible threat in 2005, when a court sentenced billionaire energy magnate Mikhail Khodorkovsky, founder of the oil firm Yukos, to eight years in prison for fraud and tax evasion. A parallel tax case against Yukos itself led to the transfer of most of its assets to the state-owned Rosneft. Khodorkovsky had antagonized the Kremlin by bankrolling opposition political activities.

A law enacted in 2006 handed bureaucrats wide discretion in shutting down NGOs that were critical of official policy. In another sign that safe avenues for dissent were disappearing, an assassin murdered investigative journalist Anna Politkovskaya in October of that year. She had frequently criticized the Kremlin's ongoing military campaign in Chechnya and the excesses of Russian troops in the region.

The heavily manipulated December 2007 parliamentary elections gave the ruling United Russia party 315 of the 450 Duma seats, while two other parties that generally support the Kremlin, Just Russia and the nationalist Liberal Democratic Party, took 38 and 40 seats, respectively. The opposition Communists won 57 seats in the effectively toothless legislature.

Putin's handpicked successor, First Deputy Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev, won the March 2008 presidential election with 70.3 percent of the vote and nearly 70 percent voter turnout. As with the 2007 parliamentary elections, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) refused to monitor the voting due to government constraints on the number of monitors and the amount of time they could spend in the country. Medvedev immediately appointed Putin as his prime minister, and the former president continued to play the dominant role in government. At the end of 2008, the leadership amended the constitution for the first time since it was adopted in 1993, extending future presidential terms from four to six years.

In 2009, assassins continued to target the regime's most serious critics, murdering, among others, human rights activists Stanislav Markelov in January and Natalia Estemirova in July. In Chechnya, President Ramzan Kadyrov continued to use of harsh tactics to suppress rebel activity with Putin's backing.

Medvedev replaced key regional leaders during 2010, including longtime Moscow mayor Yury Luzhkov, but he left the top ranks of the law enforcement and security services largely unchanged, and there was little progress on much-needed police reform. United Russia dominated the April and October rounds of local elections, which were marred by widespread violations, including failure to register opposition candidates, ballot stuffing, and restrictions placed on election monitors.

While the political system showed signs of stagnation, civil society became more active. Early in the year, some 10,000 antigovernment protesters took to the streets in Kaliningrad, eventually forcing Medvedev to replace the governor. Numerous other protests during the year sought protection for the right to assemble and to block the destruction of treasured environmental assets. Under public pressure, Medvedev temporarily halted construction of a road through the Khimki forest near Moscow. At the same time, Putin openly expressed hostility toward demonstrators, and his government allowed construction to proceed. Many citizens simply sidestepped their ineffective public institutions: when devastating wildfires raged in many parts of the country in August, volunteers organized to help neighbors in need. However, activism also had a dark side. In December, ultranationalists gathered 10,000 supporters for a demonstration near the Kremlin, beating passersby who appeared non-Slavic.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Russia is not an electoral democracy. The 2007 State Duma elections were carefully engineered by the administration, handing pro-Kremlin parties a supermajority in the lower house, which is powerless in practice. In the 2008 presidential election, state dominance of the media was on full display, debate was absent, and incumbent Vladimir Putin was able to pass the office to his handpicked successor, Dmitry Medvedev.

The 1993 constitution established a strong presidency with the power to dismiss and appoint, pending parliamentary confirmation, the prime minister. However, the current *de facto* political system no longer represents the constitutional arrangement, since Prime Minister Putin's personal authority and power base among the security services make him the dominant figure in the executive branch. The Federal Assembly consists of the 450-seat State Duma and an upper chamber, the 166-seat Federation Council. Beginning with the 2007 elections, all Duma seats were elected

on the basis of party-list proportional representation. Parties must gain at least 7 percent of the vote to enter the Duma. Furthermore, parties cannot form electoral coalitions, and would-be parties must have at least 50,000 members and organizations in half of the federation's 83 administrative units to register. These changes, along with the tightly controlled media environment and the misuse of administrative resources, including the courts, make it extremely difficult for opposition parties to win representation. Half the members of the upper chamber are appointed by governors and half by regional legislatures, usually with strong federal input in all cases. As of January 2011, only locally elected politicians will be eligible to serve in the Federation Council; the change will mainly benefit United Russia, as most local officeholders are party members. Although governors were previously elected, a 2004 reform gave the president the power to appoint them. Under constitutional amendments adopted in 2008, future presidential terms will be six years rather than the current four, though the limit of two consecutive terms will remain in place. The terms for the Duma will increase from four years to five.

Corruption in the government and business world is pervasive. A growing lack of accountability within the government enables bureaucrats to act with impunity. Although Medvedev enacted a package of anticorruption reforms at the end of 2008, he has made little progress on the issue. Russia was ranked 154 out of 178 countries surveyed in Transparency International's 2010 Corruption Perceptions Index. Polling data from the Levada Center indicate that nearly 80 percent of Russians consider corruption to be a major problem and believe it is much worse than 10 years ago. Prosecutor General Yury Chaika claimed in 2010 that the average bribe had increased by a third in the past year, from approximately \$770 to \$1,000. In October, Medvedev called for a cleanup of the state tender process, through which the state loses up to \$33 billion each year, or one-tenth of federal spending.

Although the constitution provides for freedom of speech, the authorities continue to put pressure on the dwindling number of critical media outlets. Since 2003, the government has controlled, directly or through state-owned companies, all of the national television networks. Only a handful of radio stations and publications with limited audiences offer a wide range of viewpoints. Discussion on the internet is ostensibly free, but the government devotes extensive resources to manipulating the information and analysis available there. At least 19 journalists have been killed since Putin came to power, including three in 2009, and in no cases have the masterminds been prosecuted. The brutal attack on *Kommersant* journalist and blogger Oleg Kashin in November 2010 was only one of many such incidents during the year, and demonstrated the dangerous conditions for reporters in Russia. The authorities have further limited free expression by passing vague laws on extremism that make it possible to crack down on any speech, organization, or activity that lacks official support.

Freedom of religion is respected unevenly. A 1997 law on religion gives the state extensive control and makes it difficult for new or independent religious groups to operate. Orthodox Christianity has a privileged position, and in 2009, the president authorized religious instruction in the public schools. Regional authorities continue to harass nontraditional groups, such as Jehovah's Witnesses and Mormons. In February 2009, the Justice Ministry empowered an Expert Religious Studies Council to investigate religious organizations for extremism and other possible offenses.

Academic freedom is generally respected, though the education system is marred by corruption and low salaries. The arrest and prosecution of scientists and researchers on charges of treason, usually for discussing sensitive technology with foreigners, has effectively restricted international contacts in recent years. In its treatment of history, the Kremlin has sought to emphasize the positive aspects of Soviet leader

Joséph Stalin's dictatorship, while scholars who examine his crimes have faced accusations that they are unpatriotic, casting a chill over objective efforts to examine the past. In 2009, Medvedev established a Commission for Countering Attempts to Falsify History to the Detriment of Russia's Interests, tasked with exposing "falsifications" that could hurt the country.

The government has consistently reduced the space for freedoms of assembly and association. Overwhelming police responses and routine arrests have discouraged unsanctioned protests, though pro-Kremlin groups are able to demonstrate freely. In 2010, police used force to break up demonstrations protesting road construction in the Khimki forest and those asserting the right to assemble. The latter protests were held on the 31st of each month with as many days, a reference to Article 31 of the constitution, which guarantees freedom of assembly. A 2006 law imposed onerous new reporting requirements on NGOs, giving bureaucrats extensive discretion in deciding which organizations could register and hampering activities in subject areas that the state deemed objectionable. The law also places tight controls on the use of foreign funds, and in July 2008, Putin lifted the tax-exempt status of most foreign foundations and NGOs. The state has sought to provide alternative sources of funding to local NGOs, including a handful of organizations that are critical of government policy, though such support generally limits the scope of the recipient groups' activities. In 2009, Medvedev amended the NGO law to make it less burdensome, but overall conditions for civil society groups remain difficult. In mid-September 2010, police visited more than 40 NGOs to demand documents in what they claimed was an effort to ensure that the groups were obeying the law.

While trade union rights are legally protected, they are limited in practice. Strikes and worker protests have occurred in prominent industries, such as automobile manufacturing, but antiunion discrimination and reprisals for strikes are not uncommon, and employers often ignore collective-bargaining rights. With the economy continuing to change rapidly after emerging from Soviet-era state controls, unions have been unable to establish a significant presence in much of the private sector. The largest labor federation works in close cooperation with the Kremlin.

The judiciary lacks independence from the executive branch, in part because judges are often dependent on court chairmen for promotions and bonuses, and must follow Kremlin preferences in order to advance. The justice system has also been tarnished by politically fraught cases, such as those of jailed former oil magnate Mikhail Khodorkovsky, whose prison term was extended until 2017 after a conviction on new charges in December 2010, and slain journalist Anna Politkovskaya, whose 2006 murder has yet to be solved.

After judicial reforms in 2002, the government has made gains in implementing due process and holding timely trials, though Medvedev has complained that this progress is not adequate. Since 2003, the criminal procedure code has allowed jury trials in most of the country. While juries are more likely than judges to acquit defendants, such verdicts are frequently overturned by higher courts, which can order

retrials until the desired outcome is achieved. Russia ended the use of jury trials in terrorism cases in 2008. Russian citizens often feel that domestic courts do not provide a fair hearing and have increasingly turned to the European Court of Human Rights. In December 2010, Medvedev signed a reform that made the prosecutor general's Investigation Committee a separate agency that answers directly to the president; it remained unclear how this would affect the handling of major criminal cases.

Critics charge that Russia has failed to address ongoing criminal justice problems, such as poor prison conditions and the widespread use of illegal detention and torture to extract confessions. The circumstances surrounding the 2009 death of lawyer Sergei Magnitsky in pretrial detention, after he accused government employees of embezzling millions of dollars, suggested that the authorities had deliberately denied him medical treatment. In some cases, there has also been a return to the Soviet-era practice of punitive psychiatric treatment.

Parts of the country, especially the North Caucasus area, suffer from high levels of violence. Chechen president Ramzan Kadyrov's success in suppressing major rebel activity in his domain has been accompanied by numerous reports of extrajudicial killings and collective punishment. Moreover, related rebel movements have appeared in surrounding Russian republics, including Ingushetia, Dagestan, and Kabardino-Balkaria. Hundreds of officials, insurgents, and civilians die each year in bombings, gun battles, and assassinations. In 2010, suicide bombers attacked the Moscow subway system in March, while insurgents attacked Kadyrov's hometown in August and the Chechen parliament in October. Medvedev appointed Aleksandr Khloponin, a successful businessman and Siberian governor, as his envoy to the new North Caucasus Federal District, but federal policy continues to favor the use of armed force over economic and political development to address the area's problems.

Immigrants and ethnic minorities—particularly those who appear to be from the Caucasus or Central Asia—face governmental and societal discrimination and harassment. While racially motivated violence has increased in recent years, the number of murders and injuries fell in both 2009 and 2010, according to Sova, a group that tracks ultranationalist activity in the country. Homosexuals also encounter discrimination and abuse, and gay rights demonstrations are often attacked by counterdemonstrators or suppressed by the authorities.

The government places some restrictions on freedom of movement and residence. Adults must carry internal passports while traveling and to obtain many government services. Some regional authorities impose registration rules that limit the right of citizens to choose their place of residence. In the majority of cases, the targets are ethnic minorities and migrants from the Caucasus and Central Asia.

State takeovers of key industries, coupled with large tax penalties imposed on select companies, have illustrated the precarious nature of property rights in the country, especially when political interests are involved.

Women have particular difficulty achieving political power. They hold 14 percent of the Duma's seats and less than 5 percent of the Federation Council's. Only 3 of 19 federal ministers are women, and the female governor of St. Petersburg is the main exception at the regional level. Domestic violence continues to be a serious problem, and police are often reluctant to intervene in what they regard as internal family matters. Economic hardships contribute to widespread trafficking of women abroad for prostitution.

Rwanda

Political Rights: 6
Civil Liberties: 5
Status: Not Free

Population: 10,400,000
Capital: Kigali

Trend Arrow: Rwanda received a downward trend arrow due to a severe crackdown on opposition politicians, journalists, and civil society activists in the run-up to a deeply flawed August 2010 presidential election.

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline For Year Under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
7.5NF	7.5NF	6.5NF							

Overview: In the lead-up to the August 2010 presidential election, the ruling Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) tightened its control over civic and political life. The government seriously increased restrictions on press freedom and party activity, while extralegal violence had a chilling effect on dissent. Journalists were threatened and assassinated, and some 30 newspapers, journals, and radio stations were suspended. All serious challengers for the presidency were prevented from running, leading to incumbent Paul Kagame's reelection.

Belgian colonial rule in Rwanda, which began after World War I, exacerbated and magnified tensions between the minority Tutsi ethnic group and the majority Hutu. A Hutu rebellion beginning in 1959 overthrew the Tutsi monarchy, and independence from Belgium followed in 1962. Hundreds of thousands of Tutsi were killed or fled the country in recurring violence over the subsequent decades. In 1990, the Tutsi-dominated Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) launched a guerrilla war from Uganda to force the Hutu regime, led by President Juvenal Habyarimana, to accept power sharing and the return of Tutsi refugees.

Habyarimana was killed when his plane was shot down near Kigali in April 1994. Hutu extremists immediately pursued the complete elimination of the Tutsi. During the genocide, which lasted approximately three and a half months, as many as a million Tutsi and moderate Hutu were killed. By July, however, the RPF had succeeded in taking control of Kigali and establishing an interim government of national unity.

The Hutu-dominated army and militia, along with as many as two million Hutu refugees, fled into neighboring countries, especially the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). These forces were able to retrain and rearm in the midst of international relief efforts to assist the refugees. The RPF responded by attacking refugee camps in the DRC in 1996.

Nearly three million refugees returned to Rwanda between 1996 and 1998 and were reintegrated into society. Security improved considerably after 1997, although isolated killings and disappearances continued. The RPF-led government closely directed the country's political life. In 2000, President Pasteur Bizimungu, a moder-

ate Hutu installed by the RPF, resigned and was replaced by Vice President Paul Kagame, a Tutsi.

Rwanda's extended postgenocide political transition officially ended in 2003 with a new constitution and national elections. The RPF's preeminent position—combined with a short campaign period, the advantages of incumbency, and a pliant political culture traumatized by the effects of the genocide—ensured victory for Kagame in the presidential vote and for the RPF and its allies in subsequent parliamentary elections. The largest opposition party, the Hutu-based Democratic Republican Movement (MDR), was declared illegal by the authorities before the elections for allegedly promoting ethnic hatred, as was a party created by Bizimungu in 2001.

A series of four parliamentary commissions between 2003 and 2008 investigated allegations of "genocide ideology" and "divisionism" in domestic and international nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), opposition political parties, the media, and schools. These commissions equated criticism of the RPF-led government with denial of the genocide, and made accusations against numerous individuals and organizations without recourse to due process, driving a number of government critics into exile and pushing some NGOs and political parties to curtail their activities. An August 2010 Amnesty International report on a 2004 law against "divisionism" and a 2008 law against "genocide ideology" indicated that they were overly broad and effectively criminalized legitimate dissent.

The RPF-led coalition handily won the 2008 parliamentary elections, taking 42 out of 53 elected seats in the lower house. Monitoring by a European Union observer team indicated that the actual RPF share of the vote was higher than reported, suggesting an attempt to make the elections appear more democratic.

In advance of the August 2010 presidential election, the government prevented two new political parties, the Democratic Green Party of Rwanda (DGPR) and the United Democratic Forces-Inkingi (FDU-Inkingi), from registering, keeping their presidential candidates off the ballot. The FDU-Inkingi's presidential candidate, Victoire Ingabire, and the party's general secretary and treasurer were arrested in March. The Social Party-Imberakuri was allowed to register, but its president and general secretary were also arrested in June. In July, DGPR vice president Andre Kagwa Rwisereka was assassinated. Although Kagame's name was not the only one to appear on the ballot, all serious challengers for the presidency were prevented from running. Kagame ultimately won reelection, with 93 percent of the vote.

Special genocide courts continued to operate in 2010, trying those accused of more serious crimes that fell outside the jurisdiction of grassroots gacaca courts, which had officially completed their genocide-related cases in 2009. Thousands of accused remained in detention, awaiting trial in the special genocide courts. By the end of 2010, the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) had arrested 81 individuals and completed cases against 50, with cases against 24 individuals ongoing. Meanwhile, charges against RPF officials have been leveled in both Spain and France for war crimes allegedly committed during the genocide. The February 2010 attempted assassination in South Africa of exiled Rwandan general Faustin Kayumba Nyamwasa, a former Kagame ally, strained relations between the two countries, though the RPF denied involvement.

With considerable international aid, Rwanda has improved earnings from coffee exports and increased grain and potato production, helping to maintain an economic

growth rate of 7.5 percent in 2010. However, economic development has been unevenly distributed.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Rwanda is not an electoral democracy. International observers noted that the 2010 presidential and 2008 parliamentary elections, while administratively acceptable, presented Rwandans with only a limited degree of political choice. The 2003 constitution grants broad powers to the president, who can serve up to two seven-year terms and has the authority to appoint the prime minister and dissolve the bicameral Parliament. The 26-seat upper house, the Senate, consists of 12 members elected by regional councils, 8 appointed by the president, 4 chosen by a forum of political parties, and 2 representatives of universities, all serving eight-year terms. The Chamber of Deputies, or lower house, includes 53 directly elected members, 24 women chosen by local councils, 2 from the National Youth Council, and 1 from the Federation of Associations of the Disabled; all serve five-year terms.

The constitution officially permits political parties to exist, but only under strict controls. The charter's emphasis on "national unity" effectively limits political pluralism. The RPF dominates the political arena, and parties closely identified with the 1994 genocide are banned, as are parties based on ethnicity or religion. These restrictions have been used to ban other political parties that might pose a challenge to RPF rule. In effect, only parties closely allied with the RPF are allowed to function. The constitutionally mandated Political Party Forum vets proposed policies and draft legislation before they are introduced in Parliament. All parties must belong to the forum, which operates on the principle of consensus, though in practice the RPF guides its deliberations. Parliament generally lacks independence, merely endorsing government initiatives. However, parliamentary committees have begun to question ministers and other executive branch officers more energetically, and some of these deliberations are reported in the local press.

Government countermeasures have helped limit corruption, though graft remains a problem. A number of senior government officials in recent years have been fired and faced prosecution for alleged corruption, embezzlement, and abuse of power, including the director of the National Institute of Statistics and permanent secretaries in the ministries of Infrastructure and Education. Government institutions focused on combating corruption include the Office of the Ombudsman, the auditor general, and the National Tender Board. Rwanda was ranked 66 out of 178 countries surveyed in Transparency International's 2010 Corruption Perceptions Index.

The RPF has imposed numerous legal restrictions and informal controls on the media, and press freedom groups have accused the government of intimidating independent journalists. In April 2010, the two most important independent newspapers, *Umuco* and *Umuwugizi*, were banned for six months; their editors subsequently fled the country following death threats. In June, the deputy editor of *Umuwugizi*, Jean-Leonard Rugambage, was murdered outside his home after he reported in the newspaper's online edition about the assassination attempt on General Faustin Kayumba Nyamwasa. Two journalists from *Umurabyo* were arrested in July on charges of insulting the president and denying the genocide. Later that month, the High Council of the Media—a quasi-governmental regulatory body—suspended almost 30 newspapers, journals, and radio stations, some of which did not subsequently reopen. By

year's end, the government no longer allowed any independent media capable of criticizing it to function in Rwanda. Authorities do not restrict access to the internet, and while access is limited by cost and infrastructure, internet penetration is growing.

Religious freedom is generally respected, though relations between religious leaders and the government are sometimes tense, in part because of the involvement of clergy in the 1994 genocide.

Fear among teachers and students of being labeled "divisionist" restrains academic freedom. After the 2004 and 2008 parliamentary commission reports on "divisionism," numerous students and teachers were expelled or dismissed without due process. An August 2010 Amnesty International report indicated that the 2008 law against "genocide ideology" continued to stifle academic freedom. The crackdown ahead of the 2010 presidential election also severely stifled general free discussion, with the Department of Military Intelligence closely monitoring the population.

Although the constitution codifies freedoms of association and assembly, in reality these rights are limited. Only progovernment demonstrations were allowed in the period before the 2010 presidential poll. Some NGOs have complained that registration and reporting procedures are excessively onerous, and activities that the government defines as "divisive" are prohibited. Several organizations have been banned in recent years, leading others to refrain from criticizing the RPF. However, most civil society organizations that are not focused on sensitive subjects, such as democracy and human rights, function without direct government interference.

The constitution provides for the rights to form trade unions, engage in collective bargaining, and strike. Public workers are not allowed to unionize, and the list of "essential services," in which strikes are not allowed, is excessively long. The 2009 labor code improved worker rights, though the government continues to pressure unions in subtle and indirect ways. Despite these problems, the International Trade Union Confederation reported in 2010 that relations between the government and unions had improved since the first union elections in 2007.

The judiciary has yet to secure full independence from the executive, though recent improvements in the judicial system include an increased presence of defense lawyers at trials, improved training for court staff, and revisions to the legal code. The gacaca courts have faced criticism from legal experts because of government interference and their failure to address genocide-era crimes allegedly committed by the RPF. An estimated 1.5 million cases were tried in the gacaca courts between 2002 and 2010. These courts routinely try politically motivated cases against journalists, civil society activists, and opposition politicians. While their behavior does not appear to reflect official policy, individual police officers sometimes use excessive force, and local officials periodically ignore due process protections.

Equal treatment under the law is guaranteed, and legal protections against discrimination have increased in recent years. A national identity card is required when Rwandans wish to move within the country, but these are issued regularly.

The 2003 constitution requires women to occupy at least 30 percent of the seats in each chamber of Parliament. Women won 56 percent of seats in the lower house in the 2008 elections. Both the speaker of the lower house and chief justice of the Supreme Court are women. Legislation has strengthened women's rights to inherit land. Despite these improvements, de facto discrimination against women continues.

Saint Kitts and Nevis

Political Rights: 1
Civil Liberties: 1
Status: Free

Population: 50,000
Capital: Basseterre

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline For Year Under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
1,2F	1,2F	1,2F	1,2F	1,1F	1,1F	1,1F	1,1F	1,1F	1,1F

Overview: Despite multiple legal challenges from the opposition, parliamentary elections took place in January 2010. The Saint Kitts and Nevis Labour Party retained power, and Prime Minister Denzil Douglas was reappointed as prime minister for his fourth consecutive term. Prior to the elections, major reforms had been made to the country's election laws, including the issuance of voter identification cards. The introduction of a value added tax (VAT) in November and a bill authorizing the government to intercept communications sparked new confrontations with the opposition at year's end.

Saint Kitts and Nevis gained independence from Britain in 1983 but remains a member of the Commonwealth. Denzil Douglas of the ruling Saint Kitts and Nevis Labour Party (SKNLP) has been prime minister since 1995. In the 2002 elections, the SKNLP won all eight Saint Kitts seats in the National Assembly, shutting out the opposition People's Action Movement (PAM).

In early elections held in October 2004, the PAM captured one of the Saint Kitts seats while the SKNLP took seven. The Concerned Citizens Movement (CCM), a proindependence party that headed Nevis's local government, retained two of Nevis's three parliamentary seats. The Nevis Reformation Party (NRP), which has also historically favored secession from Saint Kitts, captured one seat.

Parliamentary elections took place in January 2010, despite multiple legal challenges from the opposition PAM, including allegations of voter padding by the SKNLP, the registration of voters outside their legal districts, and a push by the SKNLP to redraw district lines shortly before the election. These were the first elections to take place under a new electoral law that had created a voter identification system—including the issuance of voter identification cards—under which all existing voters were required to reregister. However, implementation of the new law proved slow and faced operational and political obstacles. International monitors found the elections to be generally free and fair, but noted that several important issues, including campaign finance, media access, and civil society participation, had not been addressed in the reformed electoral law and thus required improvements. The PAM gained an additional Saint Kitts seat for a total of two, while the SKNLP won six seats. The CCM and NRP retained two and one Nevis seats, respectively. Douglas was reappointed to his fourth consecutive term as prime minister.

In June, the Douglas government pursued a variety of initiatives to shore up public finances and boost the economy. Measures included the introduction of a

new value added tax (VAT), the streamlining of tax exemptions, and a public wage and hiring freeze. The first initiative, the VAT, was implemented in November against private sector wishes.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Saint Kitts and Nevis is an electoral democracy. The 2004 elections were free and fair. The federal government consists of the prime minister, the cabinet, and the unicameral National Assembly. A governor-general represents Britain's Queen Elizabeth II as ceremonial head of state. Elected National Assembly members—eight from Saint Kitts and three from Nevis—serve five-year terms. Senators are appointed to the body, and their number may not exceed two-thirds of the elected members, with one chosen by the leader of the parliamentary opposition for every two chosen by the prime minister.

Saint Kitts's main political parties are the SKNLP and the PAM. On Nevis, the two main parties are the CCM, which had long been the majority party there, and the NRP, which won a majority of seats in the Nevis Island Assembly elections in 2006. Nevis's assembly is composed of five elected and three appointed members, and the local government pays for all of its own services except for those involving police and foreign relations. Saint Kitts has no similar body.

The constitution grants Nevis the option to secede if two-thirds of the elected legislators in Nevis's local assembly and two-thirds of Nevisian referendum voters approve. Though a 1998 referendum on independence failed, Nevisians continue to feel neglected by the central government.

Saint Kitts and Nevis has generally implemented its anticorruption laws effectively. However, government officials are not required to disclose financial assets. In 2010, Denzil Douglas's government sought to conclude a number of tax information exchange agreements with Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) member states to avoid being blacklisted as a tax haven. In December, Saint Kitts and Nevis entered into the Mechanism for Follow-up on the Implementation of the Inter-American Convention against Corruption (MESICIC), which allows greater civil society participation in anticorruption initiatives and monitoring. Saint Kitts was among the last countries in the hemisphere to join the mechanism.

Constitutional guarantees of free expression are generally respected. The sole local television station is government owned, but managed by a Trinidadian company. There are some restrictions on opposition access to the medium. The country has 15 radio stations, which are operated by state and private broadcasters; there is one weekly newspaper, and one daily, both of which are privately owned. Foreign media are available, and internet access is not restricted.

Freedom of religion is constitutionally protected, and academic freedom is generally honored.

The right to form civic organizations is generally respected, as is freedom of assembly. An estimated 10 percent of the workforce is unionized. The right to strike, while not specified by law, is recognized and generally respected in practice. The main labor union, the Saint Kitts Trades and Labour Union, is associated with the ruling SKNLP.

The judiciary is largely independent, and legal provisions for a fair and speedy trial are generally observed. Capital punishment is legal, and was most recently

carried out in 2008. The highest court is the Eastern Caribbean Supreme Court on Saint Lucia, but under certain circumstances, there is a right of appeal to the Trinidad-based Caribbean Court of Justice. Additionally, an appeal may be made to the Privy Council in Britain.

The islands' traditionally strong rule of law continues to be tested by the prevalence of drug-related crime and corruption. The intimidation of witnesses and jurors also remains a problem. The government reported 2,048 criminal cases in 2008, a 10 percent increase over the previous year. According to the UN Office on Drugs and Crime, the murder rate in 2008 in Saint Kitts was 35.2 per 100,000 inhabitants, one of the highest in the Caribbean. In an effort to address the country's growing crime problem, the Douglas administration in August 2010 introduced a controversial law allowing officials to intercept communications related to criminal investigations, expanding the provisions of a 2002 bill that had authorized wiretaps only in terrorism-related cases. The national prison is overcrowded, housing over 270 prisoners in a space intended for 150. In addition to domestic criminal activity, the repatriation of felons from the United States has served to further overwhelm the country's law enforcement agencies. In November 2010, gunmen attacked a bus carrying cruise ship tourists, demonstrating that crime is starting to affect the island's most important industry.

While domestic violence was criminalized in 2000, violence against women remains a problem. The Ministry of Gender Affairs records an average of 25 to 30 reports of domestic violence per year and has offered counseling for abuse victims. However, there are no laws against sexual harassment or spousal rape. Legislation passed in 2008 increased the age of consent for sexual activity from 16 to 18. Only one woman serves in the National Assembly.

Saint Lucia

Political Rights: 1

Civil Liberties: 1

Status: Free

Population: 180,000

Capital: Castries

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline For Year Under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
1;2F	1;2F	1;2F	1;2F	1;1F	1;1F	1;1F	1;1F	1;1F	1;1F

Overview: Saint Lucia's economy showed signs of recovery in 2010, propelled by increases in tourism and investments in transportation infrastructure. However, Hurricane Tomas, the strongest hurricane to ever hit the country, caused major economic setbacks in October. Rising crime and high unemployment rates remained significant problems for Prime Minister Stephenson King's government ahead of the 2011 general elections.

Saint Lucia, a member of the Commonwealth, achieved independence from Britain in 1979. Kenny Anthony led the Saint Lucia Labour Party (SLP) to victory

in the 1997 legislative elections, defeating the United Workers' Party (UWP). As prime minister, Anthony began to address the concerns of an electorate that was weary of economic distress and reports of official corruption. In the 2001 general elections, the SLP retained a majority of seats in the House of Assembly, and Anthony returned to the premiership.

John Compton, Saint Lucia's first prime minister after independence, came out of retirement to lead the UWP to an unexpected victory in the December 2006 elections; he was sworn in again as prime minister at the age of 81. His party won 11 seats in the House of Assembly, but he pledged to, "govern in a spirit of cooperation," with the SLP. Compton was soon sidelined by illness and died in September 2007. He was replaced by Stephenson King, a UWP cabinet member, who had served as acting prime minister for several months before Compton's death.

During 2008, the opposition SLP repeatedly threatened to mount public demonstrations and called for King's resignation. The SLP was particularly critical of the government's intention to ratify the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC), while opting out of a drug interdiction agreement with Britain. The Rome Statute was eventually ratified in August 2010.

In 2009, King reshuffled his cabinet for the second time since taking office in an effort to regain political momentum in the face of a deteriorating economic situation. The year saw a 12 percent decline in the tourism sector, precipitating an economic slowdown across most sectors. The country's economy started to recover in 2010, due in part to an increase in tourism and investments in transportation infrastructure. Reconstruction efforts after Hurricane Tomas, which devastated the island in October, were responsible for much of the country's economic expansion during this year. Some infrastructure investments, including the expansion of Hewanorra International Airport, had been approved before the hurricane's onslaught. However, lost revenues in agriculture and tourism following the hurricane led to an increase in Saint Lucia's budget deficit by year's end. This weak economic growth and an unemployment rate of 20 percent emboldened opposition leaders, as the country prepared for the 2011 general elections.

The King administration faced increasing public scrutiny in 2010 over a major crime wave that has rocked the island since early 2010. Reports indicated a serious escalation in gang warfare activity as drug trafficking increases. Drive-by shootings, armed robbery, and homicide rates were also on the rise. In April, a judge was shot multiple times outside her home by unknown gunmen, while an armed break-in at the country's main prison in September led to the escape of three inmates. Following these high-profile attacks, the prime minister issued a special address to the nation at the end of May, announcing that new strategies would be adopted to combat rising levels of violence and crime.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Saint Lucia is an electoral democracy. The 2006 elections were deemed free and fair, marking the first time that observers from the Caribbean Community and the Organization of American States were invited to observe. A governor-general represents the British monarch as head of state. Under the 1979 constitution, the bicameral Parliament consists of the 17-member House of Assembly, elected for five years, and an 11-member Senate. The prime minister is chosen by the majority party in

the House of Assembly. Six members of the Senate are chosen by the prime minister, three by the leader of the parliamentary opposition, and two in consultation with civic and religious organizations. The island is divided into 11 regions, each with its own elected council and administrative services. Political parties are free to organize, but two parties—the UWP and the SLP—dominate politics.

According to the Worldwide Governance Indicators (WGI) project, Saint Lucia generally scores well on corruption and in 2009, received the highest ranking in the Caribbean region on government accountability. Government officials are required by law to present their financial assets annually.

The constitution guarantees freedom of speech, which is respected in practice. Libel offenses were removed from the criminal code in 2006. The media carry a wide spectrum of views and are largely independent of the government. There are five privately owned newspapers, three privately held radio stations, and one government-funded radio station. Three privately owned television stations and one government-owned television station also operate. Internet access is not restricted. The constitution guarantees free exercise of religion, and that right is respected. Academic freedom is generally honored.

Constitutional guarantees regarding freedoms of assembly and association are largely upheld. Civic groups are well organized and politically active, as are labor unions, which represent the majority of wage earners.

The judicial system is independent and includes a high court under the Saint Lucia-based Eastern Caribbean Supreme Court. In recent years, the record of Saint Lucia's police and judicial system has been blemished by a series of high-profile incidents, including severe beatings of inmates by police and cases of police assault. Amid other high-profile crimes in 2010, the alleged rape of a woman by a group of police officers in August became a public scandal. At year's end, the case remained unsolved, as investigations moved back and forth between the police and judiciary with no formal action taken.

Citizens have traditionally enjoyed a high degree of personal security, though rising levels of crime—including drug-related offenses—have caused widespread concern. In 2010, the island experienced 44 murders, the bloodiest year on record. Saint Lucia has become a transit point for drugs destined for Britain. Prison overcrowding remains a problem, with major backlogs in the judicial system leading to prolonged pretrial detentions.

Women are underrepresented in politics and other professions. Domestic violence is a serious concern, especially among women from low-income groups. Homosexuals are occasionally the target of hate crimes.

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines

Political Rights: 1 *

Population: 110,000

Civil Liberties: 1

Capital: Kingstown

Status: Free

Ratings Change: Saint Vincent and the Grenadines' political rights rating improved from 2 to 1 due to the opposition's ability to challenge the ruling party and gain a significant number of seats in the December 2010 parliamentary elections.

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline For Year Under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
2.1F	1.1F								

Overview: **Ralph Gonsalves won his third consecutive term as prime minister in the December 2010 elections. His Unity Labour Party (ULP) won only 8 of 15 seats, while the New Democratic Party (NDP) more than doubled their representation, capturing 7 seats. In October, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines was hit hard by Hurricane Tomas, and the damage to agriculture was expected to impact severely the country's economy.**

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines achieved independence from Britain in 1979, with jurisdiction over the northern Grenadine islands of Bequia, Canouan, Mayreau, Mustique, Prune Island, Petit Saint Vincent, and Union Island.

In the 2001 elections, the social-democratic Unity Labour Party (ULP) captured 12 of the 15 contested legislative seats, and Ralph Gonsalves became prime minister. The incumbent, conservative New Democratic Party (NDP) was reduced to three seats. The elections were preceded by the first serious political unrest in the country's history.

In the 2005 polls, Gonsalves led the ULP to reelection, again taking 12 seats. The NDP, which captured the remaining 3 seats, vowed to take legal action over alleged electoral irregularities, but the party's effort stalled after the Organization of American States (OAS) gave the elections its stamp of approval.

In 2009, the country's politics were polarized over the November national referendum to replace the country's 1979 constitution with one produced by a government-appointed Constitution Review Commission. Among other changes, the proposed constitution would make the country a republic, open national elections to members of the clergy and dual citizens, and permit marriage only between a biological man and a biological woman. The opposition strongly opposed the new constitution for falling short of fully reforming the government. The constitutional reform failed to pass, receiving support from only 43 percent of voters. The apparent unpopularity of the constitutional reform, which would have required approval from a two-thirds majority, placed the ruling ULP in a tough position ahead of 2010 elections.

Hurricane Tomas, which struck the island in late October 2010, led to the temporary displacement of around 1,200 people and resulted in approximately \$25 million in damages to the agriculture sector.

In the December 2010 general elections, the ULP won a slim majority of eight-seats, and Gonsalves was returned to the premiership. Meanwhile, the NDP more than doubled its representation, taking seven seats. NDP leader Arnhim Eustace challenged the elections results, alleging vote rigging and other irregularities. However, the elections were deemed free and fair by Caribbean Community (CARICOM) and OAS observers. In the lead-up to elections, Gonsalves accused the leader of the Saint Vincent and the Grenadines Human Rights Association (SVGHRA)—who was involved in monitoring the election—of being biased. Legal disputes over this accusation ensued, though the National Monitoring and Consultative Mechanism (NMCM) stated that the voting had taken place freely.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Saint Vincent and the Grenadines is an electoral democracy. The constitution provides for the election of 15 representatives to the unicameral House of Assembly. Six senators are also appointed to the chamber, four chosen by the government and two by the opposition; all serve five-year terms. The prime minister is the leader of the majority party. A governor-general represents the British monarch as head of state.

In recent years, there have been allegations of money laundering through Saint Vincent banks and drug-related corruption within the government and the police force.

The press is independent. There are two privately owned, independent weeklies and several smaller, partisan papers. The only television station is privately owned and free from government interference. Satellite dishes and cable television are available. The main news radio station is government owned, and call-in programs are prohibited. Equal access to radio is mandated during electoral campaigns, but there have been allegations that the ruling party has taken advantage of state control over programming. Some journalists also allege that government advertising is used as a political tool. Internet access is not restricted, and new network capabilities introduced in 2010 brought the promise of increased access.

Freedom of religion is constitutionally protected and respected in practice, and academic freedom is generally honored. Access to higher education is limited but improving, as the University of the West Indies initiates degree programs with community colleges in Saint Vincent and throughout the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States.

There are constitutional protections for freedoms of assembly and association, and nongovernmental organizations are free from government interference. Labor unions are active and permitted to strike.

The judicial system is independent. The highest court is the Saint Lucia-based Eastern Caribbean Supreme Court, which includes a court of appeals and a high court. Under certain circumstances, litigants have a right of ultimate appeal to the Trinidad-based Caribbean Court of Justice. The independent SVGHRA has criticized long judicial delays and a large backlog of cases caused by personnel shortages in the local judiciary. It has also charged that the executive branch at times exerts inordinate influence over the courts.

Although the country remains one of the safest in the Caribbean, violent crime does occasionally occur. Prison conditions remain poor. The Belle Isle Correctional Facility opened in October 2009, easing the pressure on other long-overcrowded

facilities. Murder convictions carry a mandatory death sentence, though executions have not taken place in over 15 years.

Violence against women, particularly domestic violence, is a major problem. The Domestic Violence Summary Proceedings Act, which provides for protective orders, offers some tools that benefit victims. Women hold approximately 18 percent of seats in the elected House of Assembly and the appointed Senate. Homosexuality remains a criminal offense.

Samoa

Political Rights: 2
Civil Liberties: 2
Status: Free

Population: 190,000
Capital: Apia

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline For Year Under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
2,2F									

Overview: In October 2010, the parliament legalized the operation of casinos—which would not be open to local Samoans—at hotels in an effort to raise state revenue, despite considerable opposition from the general public and the church in particular. Revelations of high spending by members of parliament and the police led to further public discontent during the year.

Germany controlled what is now Samoa between 1899 and World War I. New Zealand then administered the islands under a League of Nations mandate, which became a UN mandate after World War II. The country gained independence in 1962.

The centrist Human Rights Protection Party (HRPP) has dominated politics since independence. Tuila'epa Aiono Sailele Malielegaoi of the HRPP won a second term as prime minister in the 2006 general elections. The HRPP won 35 seats in the 49-member Legislative Assembly, the Samoa Democratic United Party (SDUP) captured 10, and independents took the remainder. Former prime minister Tuiatua Tupua Tamasese Efi was elected head of state by the legislature in June 2007 to serve a five-year term. The next general elections were scheduled for March 2011.

In September 2009, Samoa was hit by a massive tsunami that killed more than 170 Samoans and caused \$58 million in damages. Uncertainty over land titles hindered reconstruction efforts in 2010.

The role and powers of village chiefs continued to stir controversy in 2010. Matai, or chiefs of extended families, control local government and churches through the village fono, or legislature, which is open only to them. The Supreme Court ruled in 2000 that the village fono may not infringe on freedom of religion, speech, assembly, or association. However, entire families have been forced to leave their villages for allegedly insulting a matai, embracing a different religion, or voting

for political candidates not endorsed by the matai. In March 2010, the government formed two commissions to review freedom of religion and the awarding of matai titles, but the commissions had not completed their work by year's end.

Public discontent towards politicians deepened in May, following revelations that members of parliament received inflated per diem payments and that the police had spent \$1 million in 2009 on extravagant travel expenses. In October, the parliament approved the operation of hotel casinos, which would be open only to foreigners. The government claimed the casinos would increase state revenue, while opponents—and the church in particular—argued that their operation would lead to a more corrupt society.

Samoa—which depends heavily on remittances from some 100,000 Samoans living abroad—has recently started building closer ties with China to benefit from financial aid, development loans, and the sale of fishing licenses. In January 2010, a new courthouse, financed by China, was officially opened in the capital. The United Nations continued to designate Samoa as a "least developed country," allowing Samoa to qualify for more international assistance from the United Nations, multilateral development banks, and bilateral assistance agencies.

With continuing suppression of the media by the interim government in Fiji, Pacific Island journalists formed a new regional media association in Samoa in August to encourage dialogue on media issues and to advocate for journalists.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Samoa is an electoral democracy. The 2006 legislative elections were deemed free and fair. Executive authority is vested in the head of state, who is elected for five-year terms by the Legislative Assembly. The head of state appoints the prime minister, who leads the government and names his own cabinet. All laws passed by the 49-member, unicameral Legislative Assembly must receive approval from the head of state to take effect. Although candidates are free to propose themselves for electoral office, the approval of the matai is essential. Two legislative seats are reserved for at-large voters, mostly citizens of mixed or non-Samoan heritage who have no ties to the 47 village-based constituencies. All lawmakers serve five-year terms. The main political parties are the HRPP and the SDUP.

Official corruption and abuses occur but are generally not as serious as in some other states in the region. In August 2010, one member of parliament and four other people were dismissed from the board of the Red Cross over allegations of financial abuse. Samoa was ranked 62 out of 178 countries surveyed in Transparency International's 2010 Corruption Perceptions Index.

Freedoms of speech and the press are generally respected. Despite continued criticism of the 1982 Printers and Publishers Act and the Law of Criminal Libel, there have been no reports of intimidation or lawsuits against journalists in recent years. Also, while journalists are legally required to reveal their sources in defamation suits against them, none have been charged. The government operates one of three television stations, and there are several English-language and Samoan newspapers. A new newspaper, *Weekender*, was launched in October 2010. A state monopoly provides telephone and internet services, though the government decided in December 2010 to privatize telephone service.

The government respects freedom of religion in practice, and relations among

religious groups are generally amicable. There were no reports of restrictions on academic freedom.

Freedoms of assembly and association are respected in practice, and human rights groups operate freely. Approximately 60 percent of adults work in subsistence agriculture, and about 20 percent of wage earners belong to trade unions. Workers, including civil servants, can strike and bargain collectively.

The judiciary is independent and upholds the right to a fair trial. The Supreme Court is the highest court, with full jurisdiction over civil, criminal, and constitutional matters. The head of state, on the recommendation of the prime minister, appoints the chief justice. Prisons generally meet minimum international standards.

Samoa has no military, and the small police force has little impact in the villages, where the fono settles most disputes. The councils vary considerably in their decision-making styles and in the number of matai involved. Light offenses are usually punished with fines in cash or kind; serious offenses result in banishment from the village.

Domestic violence against women and children is common. Spousal rape is not illegal, and social pressure and fear of reprisal inhibit reporting of domestic abuse. Sexual abuse of young girls and illegal drug use are both increasing.

San Marino

Political Rights: 1

Population: 30,000

Civil Liberties: 1

Capital: San Marino

Status: Free

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline For Year Under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
1:1F									

Overview: In 2010, San Marino continued to feel the reverberations of a 2009 banking scandal, including heightened economic uncertainty and closer government attention to money-laundering systems operating within the country. In August, San Marino became the 48th member of the Council of Europe's Group of States against Corruption (GRECO).

Founded in the year 301, according to tradition, San Marino is considered the world's oldest existing republic and is one of the world's smallest states. The papacy recognized San Marino's independence in 1631, as did the Congress of Vienna in 1815. In 1862, Italy and San Marino signed a treaty of friendship and economic cooperation. Despite its dependence on Italy, from which it currently receives budget subsidies, San Marino maintains its own political institutions. It became a member of the Council of Europe in 1988 and a member of the United Nations in 1992. Tourism and banking dominate the country's economy.

In June 2008, the left-wing governing coalition—consisting of the Party of So-

cialists and Democrats (PSD), the Popular Alliance of Democrats (AP), the United Left (SU), and the new Democrats of the Center party (DdC)—collapsed when the AP withdrew its delegates. The move forced the Grand and General Council, San Marino's parliament, to call early elections for November, in which the centre-right Pact for San Marino coalition—composed of the San Marino Christian Democratic Party (PDCS), the AP, the Freedom List, and the Sammarinese Union of Moderates—won 54 percent of the vote and 35 parliamentary seats.

In May 2009, five top executives from San Marino's largest bank, Cassa di Risparmio della Repubblica di San Marino, were arrested on charges of money laundering but were released six months later. Criminal investigations into the possible involvement of other actors in the scandal continued throughout 2010. After Italy placed the bank's consumer finance group, Delta, under bankruptcy proceedings in 2009, several of its branches were sold to the Milan-based banking group, Intesa, in September 2010. The deal excluded Cassa di Risparmio's toxic assets and bad loans and required that the bank assume its own losses. In January 2010, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) released a report criticizing San Marino's ability to combat money laundering. The scandal has led to an increase in economic uncertainty in San Marino, but has also focused government attention on money-laundering operations within the country in an attempt to shed its image as a corrupt financial center.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: San Marino is an electoral democracy. The 60 members of the Great and General Council, the unicameral legislature, are elected every five years by proportional representation. Executive power rests with the 10-member Congress of State (cabinet), which is headed by two captains-regents. As the joint heads of state, the captains-regents are elected every six months by the Great and General Council from among its own members. Although there is no official prime minister, the secretary of state for foreign and political affairs is regarded as the head of government; Antonella Mularoni was elected to the post in December 2008. Under changes made to the electoral law in 2008, the winning coalition must capture a majority of 50 percent plus 1 and at least 30 of the 60 parliamentary seats. The reforms also made it easier for Sammarinese living abroad to vote in elections.

The PDCS, the PSD, and the AP are the three dominant political groups in the country. There are several smaller groups, however, and majority governments are usually formed by a coalition of parties.

There are few problems with government corruption in the country, though financial corruption stirred political and economic concerns throughout 2010. In August, San Marino became the 48th state to join the Council of Europe's Group of States against Corruption (GRECO). An international evaluation of San Marino's ability to fight corruption released in October 2010 revealed that the Sammarinese government has adopted a sufficient number of new regulations to combat corruption but does not have the resources to adequately enforce its laws.

Freedoms of speech and the press are guaranteed. There are three daily private newspapers and one weekly paper, a state-run broadcast system for radio and television called RTV, and a private FM station, Radio Titiano. The Sammarinese have access to all Italian print media and certain Italian broadcast stations. Access to the internet is unrestricted.

Religious discrimination is prohibited by law. Roman Catholicism is the dominant, but not the state, religion. Academic freedom is respected.

Residents are free to assemble, demonstrate, and conduct open public discussions. Civic organizations are active. Workers are free to strike, organize trade unions, and bargain collectively, unless they work in military occupations. Approximately half of the country's workforce is unionized.

The judiciary is independent. Lower-court judges are required to be noncitizens—generally Italians—to assure impartiality. The final court of review is the Council of Twelve, a group of judges chosen for six-year terms from among the members of the Grand and General Council. The country's prison system generally meets international standards, and civilian authorities maintain effective control over the police and security forces.

The population is generally treated equally under the law, although the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance has raised some concerns in the past about the status of foreigners in the country. San Marino has no formal asylum policy, and a foreigner must live in the country for 30 years to be eligible for citizenship. The European Convention on Nationality recommends that such residence requirements not exceed 10 years.

Women are given legal protections from violence and spousal abuse, and gender equality exists in the workplace and elsewhere. There are, however, slight differences in the way men and women can transmit citizenship to their children. Abortion is permitted only to save the life of the mother. Under the new 2008 electoral law, no more than two-thirds of candidates from each party can be of the same gender. Nine women were elected to the Great and General Council in 2008 and 2 to the 10-member Congress of State.

São Tomé and Príncipe

Political Rights: 2

Civil Liberties: 2

Status: Free

Population: 160,000

Capital: São Tomé

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline For Year Under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
1,2F	1,2F	2,2F							

Overview: The ruling Movement for the Liberation of São Tomé and Príncipe/Social Democratic Party won regional and municipal elections held in July 2010, while the opposition Independent Democratic Action (ADI) party captured the most seats in the August parliamentary elections. ADI leader Patrice Trovoada was appointed prime minister, though his party did not hold an absolute majority in the National Assembly. In January, President Fradique de Menezes pardoned one of the two people convicted in connection to an alleged coup plot uncovered in February 2009.

São Tomé and Príncipe gained independence from Portugal in 1975. President Manuel Pinto da Costa's Movement for the Liberation of São Tomé and Príncipe—later the Movement for the Liberation of São Tomé and Príncipe/Social Democratic Party (MLSTP-PSD)—was the only legal political party until a 1990 referendum established multiparty democracy. Former prime minister Miguel dos Anjos Trovoada returned from exile and won the first democratic presidential election in 1991. He was reelected for a final term in 1996.

Fradique de Menezes, backed by Trovoada's Independent Democratic Action (ADI) party, won the 2001 presidential election. In 2003, a group of military officers briefly ousted Menezes, but he was returned to power one week later.

The Force for Change Democratic Movement-Liberal Party (MDFM-PL), in coalition with the Democratic Convergence Party (PCD), captured more seats than any other party in the 2006 parliamentary election. While peaceful protesters had prevented thousands from voting in several parts of the country, a rerun for affected districts was subsequently held without incident. Negotiations on the formation of a new coalition government led to the appointment of a new prime minister, MDFM leader Tomé Soares da Vera Cruz. In the July presidential elections, Menezes was reelected to a second term.

Following growing criticism over price increases and the handling of a police mutiny in 2007, the government collapsed twice in 2008. A new ruling coalition was formed in June with Joaquim Rafael Branco, leader of the MLSTP-PSD, as prime minister. The ADI refused to join, but the government gained a majority of seats in the National Assembly.

Eighteen individuals were brought to trial in October 2009 for their involvement in an alleged coup plot uncovered in February. Two of the defendants were convicted on charges of illegal weapons possession, including Arlecio Costa, the leader of the Christian Democratic Front, an opposition party. Costa received a five-year prison sentence, but was pardoned by the president in January 2010.

The MLSTP-PSD won regional and municipal elections held in July 2010, though the opposition ADI gained control over two of the largest districts. In the August parliamentary elections, the ADI received 43 percent of the vote and captured 26 seats. The MLSTP-PSD won 21 seats, and the PCD took 7, while the president's MDFM-PL captured only 1 seat. Approximately 90 percent of the nearly 80,000 registered voters cast ballots. The Supreme Court validated the results, and ADI leader Patrice Trovoada was appointed prime minister.

Large oil and natural gas deposits are thought to lie off the nation's coast. A 2001 agreement with Nigeria created the Joint Development Zone (JDZ), which provides São Tomé and Príncipe with 40 percent of oil and gas revenues. However, corruption allegations have surrounded the process by which exploration blocks in the JDZ are awarded, and bonus funds intended for São Tomé's oil account were allegedly transferred to a Nigerian bank in 2008. Despite its potential wealth, the country faces serious poverty; São Tomé and Príncipe ranked 127 out of 169 countries in the 2010 UN Development Programme's Human Development Report. Donor aid constitutes almost 80 percent of the country's revenue.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: São Tomé and Príncipe is an electoral democracy. The 2010 parliamentary elections were free and fair, as were

the presidential and parliamentary elections in 2006. The president is elected for up to two five-year terms. Members of the unicameral, 55-seat National Assembly are elected by popular vote to four-year terms. Four party blocs currently hold seats in the legislature, but a number of other parties exist.

Development aid and potential oil wealth have fueled corruption among the ruling elite. In November 2010, the president was implicated in a scandal involving the sale of oil after the records of revenues from these sales in the Treasury could not be located. The state prosecutor began an investigation into the matter in December 2010. The National Assembly removed the national audit office's oversight of the sale of public property and goods in 2009. The office initiated trials against five former government officials charged with the misappropriation of social welfare money in late 2009, though Menezes pardoned 10 former officials imprisoned for embezzling food aid funds in January 2010. Sao Tome and Principe was ranked 101 out of 178 countries surveyed in Transparency International's 2010 Corruption Perceptions Index.

Freedom of expression is guaranteed and respected. While the state controls a local press agency and the only radio and television stations, no law forbids independent broadcasting. Opposition parties receive free airtime, and newsletters and pamphlets criticizing the government circulate freely. Residents also have access to foreign broadcasters. Internet access is not restricted, though a lack of infrastructure limits penetration.

Freedom of religion is respected within this predominantly Roman Catholic country. The government does not restrict academic freedom.

Freedoms of assembly and association are respected. Citizens have the constitutional right to demonstrate with two days' advance notice to the government. Workers' rights to organize, strike, and bargain collectively are guaranteed and respected. During 2010, strikes were held by workers at the national television station, the airport, and the national water and electric company.

The judiciary is independent, though occasionally subject to manipulation. The Supreme Court has ruled in the past against both the government and the president. The court system is understaffed and inadequately funded. Prison conditions are harsh.

There is societal discrimination against homosexuals. While testing is free and antiretroviral drugs are available, persons with HIV/AIDS have been shunned by their communities and families.

The constitution provides equal rights for men and women, but women encounter discrimination in all sectors. Women have been appointed to cabinet positions, including the premiership. Currently, 10 women serve in the 55-seat National Assembly. Domestic violence is common and rarely prosecuted.

Saudi Arabia

Political Rights: 7

Population: 29,200,000

Civil Liberties: 6

Capital: Riyadh

Status: Not Free

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline For Year Under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
7,7NF	7,7NF	7,7NF	7,7NF	7,6NF	7,6NF	7,6NF	7,6NF	7,6NF	7,6NF

Overview: After several months of violent clashes, Saudi Arabia and Yemeni rebels agreed to a ceasefire in January. Saudi authorities in March seized several books written by the prominent Saudi reformer, Abdullah al-Hamed, at the Riyadh International Book Fair. In May, King Abdullah ordered the prosecution of over 40 officials on corruption charges for their mismanagement of widespread flooding in Jeddah in November 2009, which resulted in the deaths of 122 people. That same month, Jamal Khashoggi resigned as editor of *Al-Watan* newspaper after coming under pressure for publishing an opinion piece criticizing conservative Islamic beliefs. Human rights activist Mikhlif bin Dahham al-Shammari was arrested in June for complaining about anti-Shiite discrimination in the kingdom. In August, King Abdullah issued a decree restricting clerics' power to issue religious edicts.

Since its unification in 1932 by King Abdul Aziz Ibn Saud, Saudi Arabia has been governed by the Saud family in accordance with a conservative school of Sunni Islam. In the early 1990s, Saudi Arabia embarked on a limited program of political reform, introducing an appointed Consultative Council, or Majlis al-Shura. However, this did not lead to any substantial shift in political power. In 1995, King Fahd bin Abdul Aziz al-Saud suffered a stroke, and his halfbrother, Crown Prince Abdullah, took control of most decision making in 1997.

Following a series of terrorist attacks in 2003 and 2004, Saudi authorities intensified their counterterrorism efforts, killing dozens of suspects and detaining thousands of others over the subsequent years. Officials also attempted to stem financial support for terrorist groups through new checks on money laundering and oversight of charitable organizations. Nevertheless, thousands of Saudis went to Iraq in the years following the U.S.-led invasion in 2003 to participate in what they saw as an anti-American and anti-Shiite jihad.

The formal transfer of power from King Fahd, who died in 2005, to King Abdullah led to increased expectations of political reform. However, Abdullah enacted few significant changes. The 2005 municipal council elections gave Saudi men a limited opportunity to select some of their leaders at the local level, but women were completely excluded. The eligible electorate consisted of less than 20 percent of the population: male citizens who were at least 21 years old, not serving in the military, and resident in their district for at least 12 months. Half of the council seats were open for election, and the other half were appointed by the monarchy.

Candidates supported by conservative Muslim scholars triumphed in the large cities of Riyadh and Jeddah, and minority Shiite Muslim voters participated in large numbers. The government ultimately determined that the councils would serve only in an advisory capacity.

In 2007, Abdullah announced bylaws for the Allegiance Institution, a new body composed of the sons (or grandsons in the event of their deaths) of the founding king. The committee, chaired by the oldest surviving son, would make decisions on the succession by majority vote using secret ballots, and would require a quorum of two-thirds of the members. The arrangement would not apply until after the current crown prince, Sultan bin Abdul Aziz al-Saud, became king. The committee would also have the authority to deem a king or crown prince medically unfit to rule, based on the advice of an expert panel.

A cabinet shake-up in 2009 resulted in the appointment of the first-ever female cabinet member, Noura al-Fayez. The king also fired two controversial religious figures, one of whom headed the religious police force. The move was interpreted as a sign that the monarchy felt less beholden to hard-line religious leaders and was seeking to promote more moderate clerics. This trend continued in 2010, with King Abdullah decreeing in August that the issuing of religious edicts (fatwas) would be restricted to the Official Council of Senior Clergy. The decree was intended to outlaw the declaration of controversial fatwas and rein in radicalism. In September, the Communications and Information Technology Commission shut down several websites for violating the decree.

In January 2010, Saudi military forces and the Yemeni-based Houthi rebel group agreed to a ceasefire after several months of bloody fighting along the Saudi-Yemeni border. The Shiite guerrillas had been engaged in a bloody conflict with the Yemeni government since 2004, raising Saudi concerns about instability along the border and broader Shiite militancy.

Saudi Arabia's growing youth population has placed additional pressure on the government to create new jobs. In response, it has deployed its immense oil wealth to strengthen the nonpetroleum sector and sought to encourage private investment, though the results of these efforts remain unclear. The global economic downturn that began in late 2008 placed new stresses on the kingdom, but careful budgeting allowed it to avoid any significant political fallout. The kingdom enjoyed moderate economic growth in 2009 and 2010.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Saudi Arabia is not an electoral democracy. The 1992 Basic Law declares that the Koran and the Sunna (the guidance set by the deeds and sayings of the prophet Muhammad) are the country's constitution. The cabinet, which is appointed by the king, passes legislation that becomes law once ratified by royal decree. The king also appoints a 150-member Majlis al-Shura (Consultative Council) every four years, though it serves only in an advisory capacity. Limited elections for advisory councils at the municipal level were introduced in 2005, but women were excluded. Initially scheduled for 2009, authorities announced that year that the next round of municipal elections would be postponed until at least 2011. The government cited the need to establish mechanisms to involve more voters, although it remained unclear whether women would be allowed to participate. In addition to the advisory councils, the

monarchy has a tradition of consulting with select members of Saudi society, but the process is not equally open to all citizens. Political parties are forbidden, and organized political opposition exists only outside the country, with many London-based activists.

Corruption remains a significant problem. In May 2010, King Abdullah ordered the prosecution of over 40 officials in the city of Jeddah on charges of corruption and mismanagement after widespread floods killed over 120 people in November 2009.

The government tightly controls domestic media content and dominates regional print and satellite-television coverage, with members of the royal family owning major stakes in news outlets in multiple countries. Government officials have banned journalists and editors who publish articles deemed offensive to the religious establishment or the ruling authorities. The regime has also taken steps to limit the influence of new media, blocking access to over 400,000 websites that are considered immoral or politically sensitive. In May 2010, Jamal Khashoggi resigned as editor of the daily *Al-Watan* after coming under pressure for publishing an opinion piece critical of conservative Islam. Khashoggi had previously been fired from the same position at *Al-Watan* in 2003 after criticizing the country's religious police and engaging in a dispute with the interior minister; he returned as editor in 2007.

Islam is the official religion, and all Saudis are required by law to be Muslims. The government prohibits the public practice of any religion other than Islam and restricts the religious practices of the Shiite and Sufi Muslim minority sects. Although the government recognizes the right of non-Muslims to worship in private, it does not always respect this right in practice. In 2009, authorities instituted a ban on the building of Shiite mosques, marking a significant reversal of policies that had offered Shiites some religious freedom in recent years.

Academic freedom is restricted, and informers monitor classrooms for compliance with curriculum rules, such as a ban on teaching secular philosophy and religions other than Islam. In March 2010, authorities seized books published by the prominent Saudi political reform activist and critic of the government, Abdullah al-Hamed, at the Riyadh International Book Fair. Despite changes to textbooks in recent years, intolerance in the classroom remains an important problem, as some teachers continue to espouse discriminatory and hateful views of non-Muslims and Muslim minority sects. In an effort to eliminate extremist religious instruction, the Interior Ministry had fired or transferred approximately 2,000 teachers accused of disseminating dangerous views to students as of July 2010. The education ministry announced plans in October to establish several new research institutes at Saudi universities, pursue stronger relationships with other Arab educational institutions, and provide funding for Saudi university students traveling within Saudi Arabia for research purposes.

Freedoms of association and assembly are not upheld. The government frequently detains political activists who stage demonstrations or engage in other civic advocacy. Despite the ban, 200 unemployed Saudi university graduates held a demonstration in August 2010 demanding jobs.

A 2005 labor law extended various protections and benefits to previously unregulated categories of workers. The legislation also banned child labor, set provisions for resolving labor disputes, and established a 75 percent quota for Saudi

citizens in each company's workforce. However, the more than six million foreign workers in the country have virtually no legal protections. Many are lured to the kingdom under false pretenses and forced to endure dangerous working and living conditions. In August 2010, over 150 employees at Jadawel International, a Saudi company that builds and manages housing compounds in the kingdom, reported having gone more than six months without pay. Female migrants employed in Saudi homes as domestic workers report regular physical, sexual, and emotional abuse.

In 2007, Abdullah established a new Supreme Court and an Appeals Court, whose members are appointed by the king. The new higher courts replaced the old judiciary council, which was widely considered reactionary and inconsistent. A Special Higher Commission of judicial experts was formed in 2008 to write laws that would serve as the foundation for verdicts in the court system, which is grounded in Sharia (Islamic law). While Saudi courts have historically relied on the Hanbali school of Islamic jurisprudence, the commission would incorporate all four Sunni Muslim legal schools in drafting the new laws. In 2009, the kingdom began a judicial training program and initiated the construction of new courts.

The penal code bans torture, but allegations of torture by police and prison officials are common, and access to prisoners by independent human rights and legal organizations is strictly limited.

Substantial prejudice against ethnic, religious, and national minorities prevails. Shiites represent 10 to 15 percent of the population and are underrepresented in major government positions; no Shiite has ever served as a government minister. Shiites have also faced physical assaults. In June 2010, authorities arrested the human rights activist Mikhlif bin Dahham al-Shammari for publishing articles complaining about anti-Shiite discrimination in the kingdom; he remained in prison in December.

Freedom of movement is restricted in some cases. The government punishes activists and critics by limiting their ability to travel outside the country. Reform advocates are routinely stripped of their passports.

Saudis have the right to own property and establish private businesses. While a great deal of business activity is connected to members of the government, the ruling family, or other elite families, officials have given assurances that industrial and commercial zones currently being built will be free from royal-family interference.

Women are not treated as equal members of society, and many laws discriminate against them. They were not permitted to vote in the 2005 municipal elections, they may not legally drive cars, and their use of public facilities is restricted in some cases when men are present. By law and custom, Saudi women cannot travel within or outside of the country without a male relative. Unlike Saudi men, Saudi women cannot pass their citizenship to their children or foreign-born husbands. According to interpretations of Sharia in Saudi Arabia, daughters generally receive half the inheritance awarded to their brothers, and the testimony of one man is equal to that of two women. Moreover, Saudi women seeking access to the courts must be represented by a male. In January 2010, Sawsan al-Salim was sentenced to 18 months in prison and sentenced to 300 lashes for appearing in court without a male guardian. The religious police enforce a strict policy of gender segregation and often harass women, using physical punishment to ensure that they meet conservative standards of dress in public.

Education and economic rights for Saudi women have improved somewhat in recent years. More than half of the country's university students are now female, though they do not have equal access to classes and facilities. Women gained the right to hold commercial licenses in 2004, and Saudi state television began using women as newscasters in 2005. That same year, two women became the first females elected to Jeddah's chamber of commerce. In 2008, the Saudi Human Rights Commission established a women's branch to investigate cases of human rights violations against women and children; it has not yet conducted any serious investigations or brought cases against violators. A 2009 law imposes fines of up to \$266,000 for those found guilty of human trafficking.

Senegal

Political Rights: 3

Population: 12,500,000

Civil Liberties: 3

Capital: Dakar

Status: Partly Free

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline For Year Under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
3,4PF	2,3F	2,3F	2,3F	2,3F	2,3F	2,3F	3,3PF	3,3PF	3,3PF

Overview: President Abdoulaye Wade's appointment of a new Constitutional Council president in August 2010 was viewed as an attempt to preempt any legal challenges to his intention to run for a third term in the 2012 elections. The revelation of cases of wasteful government spending and ongoing social problems led to growing public discontent throughout the year.

Since independence from France in 1960, Senegal has avoided military or harsh authoritarian rule and has never suffered a successful coup d'etat. President Leopold Senghor exercised de facto one-party rule through the Socialist Party (PS) for nearly two decades after independence. Most political restrictions were lifted after 1981, when Abdou Diouf of the PS succeeded Senghor. Diouf went on to win large victories in unfair elections in 1988 and 1993.

Four decades of PS rule ended when Abdoulaye Wade, the leader of the Senegalese Democratic Party (PDS), defeated Diouf in the 2000 presidential runoff vote, which was deemed free and fair by international observers. A new constitution was approved in 2001, reducing presidential terms from seven to five years, setting the maximum number of terms at two, and abolishing the Senate created in 1999. A coalition led by the PDS won a majority of seats in that year's legislative elections. Wade secured a second term in the 2007 presidential election, which saw 70.5 percent turnout and fervent opposition accusations of vote rigging. The opposition coalition, including the PS and 11 other parties, boycotted legislative polls later that year, leading to an overwhelming victory for the PDS, whose Sopi (Change) coalition secured 131 of 150 seats, with a record low turnout of 35 percent.

After taking office in 2000, Wade worked to increase the power of the presidency and demonstrated a willingness to persecute those threatening his authority. In a move approved by the National Assembly in 2006, he amended the constitution to postpone legislative elections by a year and reestablish the Senate, where over half of the members would be appointed by the president. The National Assembly also approved his 2008 measure to restore the seven-year presidential term beginning in 2012, as well as his 2009 decision to create the unelected position of vice president.

Meanwhile, leading politicians faced corruption allegations when they challenged Wade's dominance within the PDS. Idrissa Seek was dismissed as prime minister in 2004 based on accusations of embezzlement and threatening national security. Former National Assembly president Macky Sail was removed from office in 2008, when his term was shortened from five years to one. Sail resigned from the PDS in 2008, losing both his seat in the parliament and his position as mayor of Fatick. In 2009, Sail was charged with money laundering, although he was not prosecuted due to lack of evidence. Charges against Seek were dropped in May 2009, and he began working to reclaim his place in the ruling party.

Following nearly two years of delays, municipal elections were held in March 2009 amid free and fair conditions. The PS and its opposition coalition, United to Boost Senegal (BSS), performed well. BSS members won in the majority of the main towns, including Saint Louis and Dakar, where Wade's son Karim was defeated. Despite the postponements and unfavorable results, the ruling coalition accepted its losses peacefully.

In September 2009, Wade announced his intention to run for a third term in 2012. Critics argue that this move violates the constitution, which sets a two-term limit. Supporters contend that Wade's current term is his first under the 2001 constitution, which introduced term limits, making his run for a possible a third term legal. Wade's appointment of a new Constitutional Council president in August 2010 was seen as an attempt to preempt legal challenges to his bid for another term. Some believe that Wade publicly stated his intention to run for reelection as a ploy designed to stave off rivals within the ruling party until he can position his son as his successor. In October 2010, fears of Karim Wade's succession were reignited when he was named energy minister in addition to his existing role as minister of international cooperation, national planning, air transport, and infrastructure.

The separatist conflict in the Casamance region remained unresolved at the end of 2010. The peace process has wavered since the 2007 death of the head of the separatist Movement of the Democratic Forces of Casamance (MFDC), Augustine Diamacoune Senghor, which left the group's leadership in disarray. Sporadic violence began in May 2009, when separatists attacked a military convoy near the Gambian border. Since then, clashes between the rebels and the army have continued. In April 2010, an MFDC leader issued a statement calling for negotiations with the government. The government agreed to meet, but refused to concede to the MFDC's demand to hold talks in a neutral country. In December, seven Senegalese soldiers were killed in clashes with suspected separatist rebels.

In 2009, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) offered its qualified approval of Senegal's financial performance, while the U.S. Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) announced that it had approved a five-year, \$540 million grant to Senegal

for poverty reduction. However, the U.S. ambassador to Senegal warned in May 2010 that Senegal had to reduce corruption in order to maintain MCC assistance, a statement Wade described as an "insult."

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Senegal is an electoral democracy. The National Observatory of Elections has credibly overseen legislative and presidential polls since its creation in 1997. The president is elected by popular vote for up to two terms, and the length of the term was extended from five to seven years by a constitutional amendment in 2008. The president appoints the prime minister. In recent years, President Abdoulaye Wade has repeatedly replaced the prime minister. In April 2009, he shuffled his cabinet and appointed Souleymane Ndéné Ndiaye—Wade's former spokesman—to the premiership.

Constitutional amendments that were put into effect in 2007 converted the National Assembly into a 150-seat lower house and created an upper house, the 100-member Senate. Members of the National Assembly are popularly elected every five years, though the most recent vote was postponed from 2006 to 2007 as part of the amendments. The Senate consists of 65 members appointed by the president and 35 members elected by public officials.

There are more than 75 legally registered political parties in Senegal. Major parties include the ruling PDS and the opposition PS. The PDS currently controls most national political offices, but the opposition performed well in the 2009 municipal elections. Many of the smaller parties revolve around individual personalities rather than firm party structures or policy platforms.

Corruption remains a serious problem. While the government pledged to improve transparency and management of public expenditures, it was revealed in February 2010 that Senegalese officials had demanded \$200 million from a telecommunications company in exchange for an operating license. Wade sparked additional controversy in August, when he asserted his right to royalties on a \$27 million monument recently constructed in Dakar in celebration of Senegal's 50th anniversary of independence; the monument itself was viewed by many as an abuse of public funds. In response to chronic power outages and public criticism, Wade called for an audit of the state-run electricity company in October. Senegal was ranked 105 out of 178 countries surveyed in Transparency International's 2010 Corruption Perceptions Index.

Freedom of expression is generally respected, and members of the independent media are often highly critical of the government despite the risk of criminal defamation charges. There are approximately 20 independent radio stations and many independent print outlets, but the government owns the only national television station. In May 2010, Senegalese singer Youssou N'Dour was finally allowed to launch his station, Télévision Futurs Media, under the condition that it covers cultural issues rather than politics. Commentators argue that the restriction is aimed at silencing N'Dour's outspoken criticism of Wade's regime. In November, Abdou Latif Coulibaly, the editor of a weekly newspaper and a frequent critic of Wade, was found guilty of defamation against a special adviser to the president over stories accusing the government of malfeasance in a mobile telephone deal. Coulibaly, along with two colleagues, were sentenced to one month in prison. Access to the internet is not restricted.

Religious freedom is respected, and the government continues to provide free airline tickets to Senegalese Muslims and Christians undertaking pilgrimages overseas. Senegal is a predominantly Muslim country, with 94 percent of the population practicing Islam. The country's Sufi Muslim brotherhoods are very influential; Wade has close ties with the most powerful brotherhood, the Mouride. Academic freedom is legally guaranteed and respected in practice.

Freedoms of association and assembly are guaranteed. The number of street protests and demonstrations has been on the rise in recent years, and the government has taken action to repress some of them. Public unrest over electricity outages, floodwater, and food prices increased in 2010. In July, protests over electricity cuts grew violent, resulting in one death. In August, peaceful protests in Dakar against the Wade administration drew some 2,000 people.

Human rights groups and other nongovernmental organizations operate freely in Senegal. Although workers' rights to organize, bargain collectively, and strike are legally protected for all except security employees, the labor code requires the president's approval for the initial formation of a trade union. In August 2010, union members working for SONATEL, the national telecommunications company, went on a one-day strike, severely crippling inbound and outbound telecommunications. The workers were protesting a government contract with U.S. telecommunications company Global Voice, which would provide for the monitoring of international calls and allow the state to place a surtax on call volumes. Following protests, the contract was canceled.

The judiciary is independent by law, but poor pay and lack of tenure expose judges to external influences and prevent the courts from providing a proper check on the other branches of government. Uncharged detainees are incarcerated without legal counsel far beyond the lengthy periods already permitted by law. Prisons are overcrowded, often leading to hygiene and health issues for the inmates.

Women's constitutional rights are often disregarded, especially in rural areas, and women enjoy fewer opportunities than men for education and formal employment. In May 2010, the National Assembly passed legislation requiring parity between men and women on candidate lists for public office. In June, Wade created nine new cabinet posts, 30 percent of which were given to women, although this move was seen by some as an attempt to strengthen his position within the party. Women hold 34 seats in the 150-seat National Assembly. Many elements of Islamic and local customary law, particularly regarding inheritance and marital relations, discriminate against women.

Child trafficking is a problem in Senegal. In particular, boys are often drawn in by Koranic teachers' promises to provide religious education; however, the boys are then subjected to physical abuse and forced to beg in the streets instead. According to an April 2010 Human Rights Watch report, approximately 50,000 child beggars lived under these circumstances in Senegal. In August, Prime Minister Ndiaye issued an edict requiring authorities to round up beggars, including children. In September, seven Koranic teachers were arrested and convicted of using children to beg, marking the first application of a 2005 law banning organized child begging.

Serbia

Political Rights: 2

Population: 7,300,000

Civil Liberties: 2

Capital: Belgrade

Status: Free

Note: The ratings through 2002 are for the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, of which Serbia was a part, and those from 2003 through 2005 are for the State Union of Serbia and Montenegro. Kosovo is examined in a separate report.

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline For Year Under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
3:3PF	3:2F	2:2F	2:2F						

Overview: President Boris Tadic and his Democratic Party-led government continued to pursue regional reconciliation efforts in 2010, but Serbia suffered a diplomatic defeat in July, when the International Court of Justice found that Kosovo's declaration of independence had not violated international law. Also during the year, police went to significant lengths to protect participants in Belgrade's October gay pride parade from violent counterdemonstrators.

Serbia was recognized as an independent state in 1878, after several centuries under Ottoman rule. It formed the core of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes, proclaimed in 1918. After World War II, Serbia became a constituent republic of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, under the communist rule of Josip Broz Tito. Within the boundaries of the Serbian republic as drawn at that time were two autonomous provinces: the largely Albanian-populated Kosovo in the south, and Vojvodina, with a significant Hungarian minority, in the north.

Following the disintegration of socialist Yugoslavia in 1991, the republics of Serbia and Montenegro in 1992 formed the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY). Slobodan Milosevic and his Socialist Party of Serbia (SPS, the former League of Communists of Serbia) ruled Serbia throughout the 1990s by controlling the country's security forces, financial institutions, and state-owned media. An avowed Serb nationalist, Milosevic oversaw extensive Serbian involvement in the 1991-95 wars that accompanied the old federation's breakup, supporting local Serb forces both in Bosnia and Herzegovina and in Croatia.

In 1998-99, an ethnic Albanian insurgency in Kosovo provoked increasingly violent reprisals by state forces against the guerrillas and the civil population. In March 1999, NATO launched a 78-day bombing campaign to force the withdrawal of FRY and Serbian forces from the province. A NATO-led force then occupied Kosovo, and the United Nations oversaw institution-building efforts there.

Milosevic was forced from office in October 2000, after his attempt to steal the September Yugoslav presidential election from opposition candidate Vojislav Kostunica of the Democratic Party of Serbia (DSS) triggered massive protests. An anti-Milošević coalition took power following Serbian parliamentary elections in

December, and Zoran Dindic of the Democratic Party (DS) became Serbia's prime minister. The FRY was replaced with a looser State Union of Serbia and Montenegro in 2003, and each republic was granted the option of holding an independence referendum after three years.

Dindic was assassinated by organized crime groups allied with Milosevic-era security structures in March 2003, and after parliamentary elections in December, Koštunica became Serbia's prime minister at the head of a fragile coalition government. The new DS leader, Boris Tadic, won the Serbian presidency in a June 2004 election.

Montenegro held a successful referendum on independence in May 2006, and formally declared independence the following month. This necessitated new Serbian elections, and in January 2007, the main anti-Milošević parties—including the DS, the DSS, and the liberal G17 Plus—managed to collectively outpoll the ultranationalist Serbian Radical Party (SRS) and the SPS. In May 2007, Kostunica formed another coalition government. Tadic won a second term as president in early February 2008, taking 51 percent of the vote.

Later that month, Kosovo unilaterally declared its independence from Serbia. Debate over the proper response increased tensions in the Kostunica government, which ultimately resigned in March, prompting new elections. The May balloting resulted in an undisputed victory for the DS and its smaller allies, which favored economic reform and European Union (EU) integration. The DS-led electoral bloc won 102 of 250 seats, and it formed a coalition government with an SPS-led bloc (20 seats), the Hungarian Coalition (4 seats), and the Bosniak List for European Sandzak (2 seats). The SRS took 78 seats, followed by the DSS with 30; the smaller Liberal Democratic Party took 13 seats, and the Coalition of Albanians of the Preševo Valley won the remaining seat.

The new government, led by Mirko Cvetkovic, was the first since 2000 to include the SPS, which was trying to reinvent itself as a mainstream center-left party. The election outcome also marked the first time since 2000 that a single party, the DS, controlled the presidency, the premiership, and a working majority in the parliament. In another sign of political normalization, hard-liners in the SRS were further isolated when the moderate wing of the party broke off to form the Serbian Progressive Party (SNS) in September.

The government successfully passed a number of important laws in 2009, including legislation to improve conditions for nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) in July, and a long-awaited statute that defined and expanded Vojvodina's autonomy in November. The country also made progress in improving relations with the United States and the EU. It received praise for its cooperation with the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY); and in December, the EU eliminated visa requirements for Serbians and cleared the way for implementation of a 2008 trade agreement. Later that month, Serbia formally submitted its application for EU membership.

The government focused on improving relations with regional neighbors in 2010. In March, the parliament passed a resolution that condemned the 1995 Srebrenica massacre, in which thousands of Bosniak men and boys were killed by Serb forces. In October, Tadic paid his respects to war victims in the Croatian city of Vukovar, the site of atrocities committed by Serb troops in 1991.

Serbia suffered a major diplomatic defeat in July 2010, when the International Court of Justice (ICJ) ruled that Kosovo's declaration of independence did not violate international law. The case had been the centerpiece of Serbia's strategy to challenge Kosovo's secession through legal and diplomatic means. However, the ICJ decision did not have a significant impact on the international stalemate that has developed over Kosovo, motivating only a handful of minor states to recognize its sovereignty. By the end of 2010, about one-third of the international community had granted recognition.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Serbia is an electoral democracy. The president, elected to a five-year term, plays a largely ceremonial role. The National Assembly is a unicameral, 250-seat legislature, with deputies elected to four-year terms according to party lists. The prime minister is elected by the assembly. Both the presidential and parliamentary elections in 2008 were deemed free and fair by international monitoring groups.

In addition to the main political parties, numerous smaller parties compete for influence. These include factions representing Serbia's ethnic minorities, two of which belong to the current coalition government. The 2009 Law on Political Parties increased the number of signatures needed to form a party to 10,000, or 1,000 for parties representing ethnic minorities.

Corruption remains a serious concern. A new Anti-Corruption Agency that began operating in January 2010 is tasked with conflict-of-interest monitoring, oversight of political party funding, and other preventive activities. Official corruption usually involves sectors such as public procurement, privatization, taxation, customs, and licensing. Serbia was ranked 78 out of 178 countries surveyed in Transparency International's 2010 Corruption Perceptions Index.

The press is generally free and operates with little government interference, although most media outlets are thought to be aligned with specific political parties. Libel is a criminal offense punishable by fines, but not imprisonment. The Law on Electronic Communications, adopted by the parliament in June 2010, allows police and security services to view personal electronic communications, which press freedom groups criticized as a threat to the confidentiality of journalists' sources. Journalists continue to encounter threats and physical violence. In July, well-known columnist Teofil Pancic was beaten on a city bus in Belgrade. Also that month, the Constitutional Court struck down several 2009 amendments to the Public Information Law that had imposed heavy penalties on media outlets for a range of offenses, such as operating without registration and violating criminal suspects' presumption of innocence. There were no reports of the government restricting access to the internet.

The constitution guarantees freedom of religion, which is generally respected in practice. However, increases in ethnic tension often take the form of religious intolerance. Critics charge that the 2006 Law on Churches and Religious Communities privileges seven "traditional" religious communities by giving them tax-exempt status and forcing other groups to go through cumbersome registration procedures. Application of many aspects of the law is considered to be arbitrary. Relations between factions within the Islamic community in the Sandžak region, and between one of the factions and the Serbian government, have been deteriorating in recent years. There were no reports of government restrictions on academic freedom in 2010.

Citizens enjoy freedoms of assembly and association, though a 2009 law banned meetings of fascist organizations and the use of neo-Nazi symbols. An October 2010 gay pride parade in Belgrade was attacked by several thousand counterdemonstrators, but police successfully protected the marchers. Foreign and domestic NGOs are generally free to operate without government interference, and the 2009 Law on Associations clarified their legal status. The laws and constitution allow workers to form or join unions, engage in collective bargaining, and strike, but the International Confederation of Trade Unions (ITUC) has reported that organizing efforts and strikes are substantially restricted in practice.

Serbia's judicial structure underwent major changes in 2010, including the merger of 138 municipal courts into 34 basic courts, but observers expressed concern about the degree to which the overhaul would improve judicial independence. The total number of judges and prosecutors in the system was reduced by 20 to 25 percent, and the European Commission's 2010 progress report found that the reappointment procedure for judges and prosecutors was not transparent. The court system suffers from a large backlog of cases, including some 7,000 at the Constitutional Court alone. Prisons are generally considered to meet international standards, but overcrowding remains a serious problem and a contributing factor behind inmate riots and protests. As of 2010, Serbia had turned over 44 out of 46 suspects indicted by the ICTY, leaving only former Bosnian Serb military commander Ratko Mladic and a former Croatian Serb leader at large.

Ethnic minorities have access to media in their own languages, their own political parties, and other types of associations. Nevertheless, they are underrepresented in government. The country's main minority groups are the Bosniaks (Muslim Slavs), concentrated in the Sandžak region adjacent to Montenegro; an ethnic Albanian population in the Preševo Valley adjacent to Kosovo; and the Hungarian community in Vojvodina. Tensions in Kosovo have threatened to spill into Preševo, and there is concern about the spread of extreme forms of Islam in the Sandžak. Discrimination against the Romany community is common.

Women make up about 22 percent of the parliament, and five women currently serve as cabinet ministers. According to electoral regulations, women must account for at least 30 percent of a party's candidate list. Although women are legally entitled to equal pay for equal work, traditional attitudes often limit their roles in the economy, with single mothers, older women, and disabled women facing particular discrimination. In December 2009, parliament adopted a new law on gender equality, which provides for a wide range of protections in the fields of employment, health, education, and politics. It also included measures aimed at eliminating gender-based discrimination and providing protections for persons subject to such discrimination. Domestic violence remains a serious problem. Some towns in southern Serbia have become transit points for the trafficking of women from the former Soviet Union to Western Europe for the purpose of forced prostitution.

Seychelles

Political Rights: 3
Civil Liberties: 3
Status: Partly Free

Population: 90,000
Capital: Victoria

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline For Year Under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
3,3PF									

Overview: In 2010, the Seychelles' economy improved due in part to increased tourism and direct foreign investment. The government also made efforts to counter piracy on the Indian Ocean. In July, the Supreme Court convicted 11 Somali men on piracy charges, the first ruling of its kind in any Indian Ocean nation.

The Seychelles gained independence from Britain in 1976 as a multiparty democracy and remained a member of the Commonwealth. In 1977, Prime Minister France-Albert René seized power from President James Mancham. René then made his Seychelles People's Progressive Front (SPPF) the sole legal party. In 1992, however, the SPPF passed a constitutional amendment legalizing opposition parties, and many exiled leaders returned. René won multiparty elections in 1993.

The Seychelles National Party (SNP), led by Wavel Ramkalawan, emerged as the strongest opposition group in 1998 elections. René won a narrow victory in the 2001 presidential election, engendering opposition complaints of fraud. René dissolved parliament in 2002 and called for early legislative elections. Although the SPPF won, the SNP made significant gains.

James Michel. The Indian Ocean tsunami struck later that year, causing about \$30 million in damage to public infrastructure; the vital tourism and fishing industries also suffered. Michel defeated Ramkalawan in the July 2006 presidential election. The SPPF's majority of 23 seats was left unchanged by the May 2007 legislative elections, and the SNP took the remaining 11 seats. Michel subsequently restructured his government, placing an emphasis on environmental issues that could affect the country's reputation as a tourist destination.

In recent years, the Seychelles' economy has been harmed by rising food and fuel costs, as well as the expanding reach and incidence of piracy on the Indian Ocean. Recent International Monetary Fund (IMF) missions have found that the country has one of the highest debt burdens in Africa and continues to suffer from rising inflation and depletion of the central bank's foreign reserves. However, the economy improved in 2010, due in part to increased tourism and direct foreign investment. According to the IMF, the Seychelles' economic growth exceeded 6 percent in 2010.

In July 2010, the Supreme Court convicted eight Somali men of piracy and three others of aiding and abetting the act of piracy. Their trials marked the first successful prosecutions of piracy in any Indian Ocean nation. Another 29 Somali men were awaiting trial as of December.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: The Seychelles is an electoral democracy. The 2006 presidential election and the 2007 parliamentary polls were generally viewed as having met basic international norms. However, the ruling SPPF's control over state resources and most media gives its candidates a significant advantage. The president and the unicameral National Assembly are elected by universal adult suffrage for five-year terms. The head of government is the president, who appoints the cabinet. Of the National Assembly's 34 members, 25 are directly elected, and 9 are allocated on a proportional basis to parties gaining at least 10 percent of the vote.

The SPPF remains the dominant party, and the opposition SNP has claimed that its sympathizers are harassed by police and victimized by job-related security investigations in the public sector.

Concerns over government corruption have focused on the lack of transparency in the privatization and allocation of government-owned land. Seychelles was ranked 49 out of 178 countries surveyed in Transparency International's 2010 Corruption Perceptions Index.

The government controls much of the islands' media, operating radio and television stations. The daily newspaper, the *Nation*, is government owned, and at least two other newspapers support, or are published by, the SPPF. The opposition weekly, *Regar*, has been sued for libel by government officials under broad constitutional restrictions on free expression. The other major independent newspaper, *Le Nouveau Seychelles Weekly*, has also faced state interference in its functioning. The board of directors of the officially multipartisan Seychelles Broadcasting Corporation includes several non-SPPF members. A controversial 2006 law restricts private radio station ownership. High licensing fees have also discouraged the development of privately owned broadcast media. The government does not limit internet access.

Religious freedom is constitutionally protected and respected in practice. Churches in this predominantly Roman Catholic country have been strong voices for human rights and democratization, and they generally function without government interference.

The constitution endorses freedoms of assembly and association. Private human rights groups and other nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) operate in the country. Public demonstrations are generally tolerated, although the government has occasionally impeded opposition gatherings. Workers have the right to strike. However, the Seychelles Federation of Workers' Unions, which is associated with the ruling party, has been the only active trade union since the Seychelles National Trade Union ceased operations in 2007.

Judges generally decide cases fairly but face interference in those involving major economic or political interests. The majority of the members of the Seychellois judiciary are foreign nationals, and the impartiality of the non-Seychellois magistrates can be compromised by the fact that they are subject to contract renewal. In September 2009, newly appointed Chief Justice Frederick Egonda-Ntende from Uganda outlined a policy to reduce the number of pending court cases and accelerate judgment of new cases; in 2010, he committed to resolving cases within six months. Security forces have at times been accused of using excessive force, including torture and arbitrary detention.

Nearly all of the country's political and economic life is dominated by people of European and South Asian origin. Islanders of Creole extraction face de facto discrimination, and prejudice against foreign workers has been reported. The government does not restrict domestic travel but may deny passports for unspecified reasons of "national interest."

The Seychelles in recent years has boasted one of the highest percentages of women in parliament in Africa at 24 percent, despite the lack of a quota system. Inheritance laws do not discriminate against women. In general, however, women are less likely than men to be literate, as they enjoy fewer educational opportunities. While nearly all adult females are classified as "economically active," most are engaged in subsistence agriculture. Domestic violence remains a widespread problem. The government adopted a National Strategy on Domestic Violence in 2008 aimed at decreasing its incidence, but it has had little success to date. According to Family Tribunal, a local NGO, 473 cases of domestic violence were reported in 2009.

Sierra Leone

Political Rights: 3

Population: 5,800,000

Civil Liberties: 3

Capital: Freetown

Status: Partly Free

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline For Year Under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
4,5PF	4,4PF	4,3PF	4,3PF	4,3PF	4,3PF	3,3PF	3,3PF	3,3PF	3,3PF

Overview: During 2010, efforts were made to establish collaborative and tolerant interparty politics. However, the government in May announced a controversial plan to launch an inquest into the military junta's 1992 executions of the former police inspector-general and 27 others. A free health-care initiative was launched in April, aimed at reducing infant and maternal mortality rates, and the government in June inaugurated a five-year plan to implement UN Security Council Resolutions 1325 and 1820 for women's rights. In September, the United Nations lifted the arms embargo and remaining sanctions that had been in effect since 1997.

Founded by Britain in 1787 as a haven for liberated slaves, Sierra Leone achieved independence in 1961. Siaka Stevens, who became prime minister in 1967 and then president in 1971, transformed Sierra Leone into a one-party state under his All People's Congress (APC) party. In 1985, Stevens retired and handed power to his designated successor, General Joséph Momoh. The Revolutionary United Front (RUF) launched a guerrilla insurgency from Liberia in 1991, sparking a civil war that would last for more than a decade. Military officer Valentine Strasser ousted Momoh the following year, but failed to deliver on the promise of elections. General Julius Maada-Bio deposed Strasser in 1996, and elections were held despite

military and rebel intimidation. Voters chose former UN diplomat Ahmad Tejan Kabbah of the Sierra Leone People's Party (SLPP) as president.

In 1997, Major Johnny Paul Koroma toppled the Kabbah government and invited the RUF to join his ruling junta. Nigerian-led troops under the aegis of the Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) restored Kabbah to power in 1998, and the 1999 Lomé peace agreement led to the beginning of disarmament and the deployment of UN peacekeepers. British paratroopers were called in to restore order after 500 peacekeepers were taken hostage amid renewed violence in 2000. By 2002, the 17,000-strong UN peacekeeping force had started disarmament in rebel-held areas, and the war was declared over.

Kabbah won a new term in the 2002 presidential elections, defeating the APC's Ernest Koroma (no relation to Johnny Paul Koroma). The SLPP took 83 of 112 available seats in parliamentary elections that month. However, the SLPP government failed to address adequately the country's entrenched poverty, dilapidated infrastructure, and endemic corruption, and in 2007, Ernest Koroma won a presidential runoff election with 55 percent of the vote, leaving SLPP candidate Solomon Berewa with 45 percent. In the legislative polls, the APC led with 59 seats, followed by the SLPP with 43 and the People's Movement for Democratic Change (PMDC) with 10.

The 2008 local council elections were held without incident, but violence between APC and SLPP supporters broke out ahead of a local by-election in Pujehun district in March 2009. The fighting, which spread to Freetown, caused serious injuries and damage to SLPP offices and city council buildings. The APC and SLPP issued a joint communiqué in April 2009, calling for an end to all acts of political intolerance, the tempering of hostility between the party youth wings, and the establishment of independent mechanisms to investigate the March events. The communiqué also provided a framework for bipartisan consensus-building.

In July 2009, Ernest Koroma swore in the Commission of Inquiry to investigate allegations of rape and sexual violence during the March attacks. While the commission found no evidence to sustain the rape allegations, it noted that insults to personal dignity and inhumane conduct had occurred. In July 2010, an independent review panel established to investigate the causes of political violence submitted its report, though its findings had not been released by year's end.

Chieftaincy elections were held in December 2009 and January 2010 amid reports of violence. Parliamentary and local council by-elections held between February and June 2010 were marred by allegations that both the APC and SLPP instructed former combatants to intimidate voters. Clashes between APC and SLPP supporters were also reported in Pujehun and Kenema districts. Results of the by-elections confirmed that the APC enjoys support in the north and west, while the SLPP dominates the south and east.

In May 2010, the government announced plans to launch an inquest into the military junta's 1992 executions of former police inspector-general Bambay Kamara and 27 others. Civil society representatives, the National Human Rights Commission, and the United Nations expressed concerns that the inquest may be politically motivated, as it would investigate numerous current members of the SLPP who had previously served with the military junta. They also warned that the probe could undermine efforts to establish political tolerance and national cohesion in the lead-up

to the 2012 general elections. The SLPP also protested against the inquest, arguing that it would violate amnesty conditions of the 1999 Lomé peace agreement.

Sierra Leone has vast natural resources, including diamonds, minerals, and unexploited offshore oil wells. However, due to the legacies of war, the country continues to be one of the least developed in the world. Youth unemployment, which was approximately 70 percent at year's end, remains the biggest potential threat to peace consolidation. In December 2010, following a cabinet reshuffle, President Koroma established a new Ministry of Youth Employment and Sports. While numerous large-scale foreign investment agreements were ratified in 2010, they had yet to significantly reduce the unemployment rate.

In September 2010, the UN Security Council lifted the remaining sanctions against Sierra Leone that had been in effect since 1997—an arms embargo and travel ban against former rebels. Oil sanctions imposed in 1997 were lifted in 1998, while diamond sanctions imposed in 2002 were lifted in 2003.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Sierra Leone is an electoral democracy. International observers determined that the 2007 presidential and parliamentary elections were free and fair, and power was transferred peacefully to the opposition. Of the unicameral Parliament's 124 members, 112 are chosen by popular vote and 12 are reserved for indirectly elected paramount chiefs. Parliamentary and presidential elections are held every five years, and presidents may seek a second term.

The APC, SLPP, and PMDC are the main political parties. The women's wings of the three main parties held interparty dialogues throughout 2010 in an effort to diffuse political tensions.

While corruption remains a serious problem, the government has maintained its anticorruption efforts. President Ernest Koroma has actively encouraged and supported the work of the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC), which continues to pursue its mandate with vigor. The ACC investigated 86 corruption allegations in 2008, 122 in 2009, and 177 in the first half of 2010. By August 2010, four cases had been recommended for prosecution. In July, Joseph Kamara, the former deputy prosecutor of the Special Court for Sierra Leone (SCSL), was appointed as the new chief of the ACC. The trial of the former minister of fisheries and marine resources, who was charged with misappropriating public funds and abuse of office, remained ongoing at year's end. Sierra Leone ranked 134 out of 178 countries surveyed in Transparency International's 2010 Corruption Perceptions Index.

Freedoms of speech and the press are constitutionally guaranteed, but these rights are occasionally restricted. After the government in 2010 announced its intention to conduct an inquest into the 1992 executions by the military junta, local media outlets launched ethnically based inflammatory attacks on both the government and the SLPP. In June, the Sierra Leone Broadcasting Corporation was officially launched as the independent national broadcaster, and UN radio assets were transferred thereto. Numerous independent newspapers circulate freely, and there are dozens of public and private radio and television outlets. In February, the Independent Media Commission stated that the Freetown City Council, under APC leadership, would not be permitted to operate a radio station. The government does not restrict internet access, though the medium is not widely used.

Freedom of religion is protected by the constitution and respected in practice. Academic freedom is similarly upheld. A commission established to review Sierra Leone's education system submitted its report in March 2010. Subsequently, the government established a Teaching Service Commission, tasked with raising educational standards in the country, and recruited several thousand new teachers. Additionally, financial aid was offered to female university students studying science and to all disabled students who meet university admission requirements.

Freedoms of assembly and association are constitutionally guaranteed and generally observed in practice. Workers have the right to join independent trade unions, but serious violations of core labor standards occur regularly. Nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and civic groups operate freely, though a 2008 law requires NGOs to submit annual activity reports and renew their registration every two years.

The judiciary has demonstrated a degree of independence, and a number of trials have been free and fair. However, corruption, poor salaries, police unprofessionalism, prison overcrowding, and a lack of resources threaten to impede judicial effectiveness. Arbitrary arrests are common, as are lengthy pretrial detentions under harsh conditions. In 2010, the government approved a plan to restructure the prison services, and a legal aid program launched in 2009 has made great gains. By the end of August 2010, the program had processed a total of 1,020 cases, and participating lawyers secured the discharge of over 500 people.

Drug trafficking and other crimes, including armed robbery, pose a threat to the rule of law. The Military Assistance to Civil Power Act—invoked by the President in 2009 to provide for joint military-police operations to combat crime—remained in effect at the end of 2010, as the country had experienced a dramatic drop in crime during the year. The Transnational Crime Unit continues to work closely with the United Nations and other partners to address the security threat that drug trafficking poses to Sierra Leone and the wider Mano River region.

The SCSL, a hybrid international and domestic war crimes tribunal, has been working since 2004 to convict those responsible for large-scale human rights abuses during the civil war. To date, the court has convicted a total of eight persons from the three main factions that participated in the conflict. Former Liberian president Charles Taylor, accused of fostering the RUF insurgency, has been on trial since 2007. The government and the United Nations agreed in late 2010 to establish a residual special court, to be based in The Hague, as a follow-up mechanism to the SCSL. The residual special court, which would take over from the SCSL once it has completed its judicial activities, would try Johnny Paul Koroma, who remains the sole outstanding indictee.

The National Human Rights Commission continued to implement the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's reparations program in 2010, despite funding shortfalls. Under this program, over 13,000 war victims have received micro-grants to date, more than 700 child victims have received financial support for education, and over 200 female victims of sexual violence have received rehabilitative surgeries.

Laws passed in 2007 prohibit domestic violence, grant women the right to inherit property, and outlaw forced marriage. Despite these laws and constitutionally guaranteed equality, gender discrimination remains widespread, and female

genital mutilation is common. In 2010, the government established committees throughout the country to enforce laws that prohibit gender-based violence and to address these laws' persistent shortcomings. In an effort to combat maternal and child mortality rates—which are among the highest in the world—the government in April launched a free health-care initiative for pregnant women, new mothers, and children under the age of five. Additionally, maternity wards were established during the year in five major towns outside of Freetown. In June, the president launched a five-year national action plan to implement Security Council resolutions 1325 and 1820, which recognize wartime sexual violence as an international security issue and aim to address the impact of war on women and define their role in fostering sustainable peace. In commemoration of International Women's Day and in accordance with a Truth and Reconciliation Commission's recommendation, President Koroma offered an official apology in March to women for the suffering inflicted on them during the civil war.

Singapore

Political Rights: 5

Population: 5,100,000

Civil Liberties: 4

Capital: Singapore

Status: Partly Free

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline For Year Under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
5,5PF	5,4PF								

Overview: The authorities continued to restrict freedom of speech in 2010. Among other prominent cases during the year, officials ordered the removal of a politically sensitive film from the internet, convicted a British author of defamation for his criticism of Singapore's justice system, and drove the *International Herald Tribune* to apologize and pay fines for an article associating the prime minister with a broader phenomenon of dynastic politics in Asia.

The British colony of Singapore obtained home rule in 1959, entered the Malaysian Federation in 1963, and gained full independence in 1965. During his three decades as prime minister, Lee Kuan Yew and his People's Action Party (PAP) transformed the port city into a regional financial center and exporter of high-technology goods but restricted individual freedoms and stunted political development.

Lee transferred the premiership to Goh Chok Tong in 1990 but stayed on as "senior minister," and the PAP retained its dominance. Lee's son, Lee Hsien Loong, became prime minister in 2004, and the elder Lee assumed the title of "minister mentor." In 2005, President Sellapan Ramanathan, also known as S. R. Nathan, began a second term as the largely ceremonial head of state.

Despite his expressed desire for a, "more open society," Lee Hsien Loong

did little to change the authoritarian political climate. He called elections in May 2006, a year early, to secure a mandate for his economic reform agenda. The polls resembled past elections in serving more as a referendum on the prime minister's popularity than as an actual contest for power. The PAP retained 82 of the 84 elected seats, although the opposition offered candidates for a greater number of seats and secured a larger percentage of the vote than in previous years. The opposition Workers' Party and Singapore Democratic Alliance (SDA) each won a single seat, despite receiving 16.3 percent and 13 percent of the vote, respectively.

Lee continued to pursue his economic agenda, while using the legal system and other tools to keep the opposition in check. The government maintained that racial sensitivities and the threat of Islamist terrorism justified draconian restrictions on freedoms of speech and assembly. Such rules were repeatedly used to silence criticism of the authorities. Singapore Democratic Party (SDP) leader Chee Soon Juan faced multiple convictions and heavy fines for defamation and other crimes in 2007 and 2008. The *Far Eastern Economic Review*, owned by the U.S.-based News Corporation, was forced to pay some US\$300,000 in 2009 to settle a defamation case brought by the Lees. In March 2010, the *International Herald Tribune* apologized and paid US\$122,400 in fines for an article on dynastic politics in Asia. While there was no direct mention of the Lee family in the article, the Lees argued that readers would infer that Lee Hsien Loong rose to power only because of his father's influence.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Singapore is not an electoral democracy. The country is governed through a parliamentary system, and elections are free from irregularities and vote rigging, but the ruling PAP dominates the political process. The prime minister retains control over the Elections Department, and the country lacks a structurally independent election authority. Opposition campaigns are hamstrung by a ban on political films and television programs, the threat of libel suits, strict regulations on political associations, and the PAP's influence on the media and the courts.

The largely ceremonial president is elected by popular vote for six-year terms, and a special committee is empowered to vet candidates. The prime minister and cabinet are appointed by the president. Singapore has had only three prime ministers since independence. Of the unicameral legislature's 84 elected members, who serve five-year terms, 9 are elected from single-member constituencies, while 75 are elected in Group Representation Constituencies (GRCs), a mechanism intended to foster minority representation. However, the winner-take-all nature of the system limits the extent to which GRCs actually facilitate minority representation and effectively helps perpetuate the return of incumbents. Up to nine additional, nonpartisan members can be appointed by the president, and up to three members can be appointed to ensure a minimum of opposition representation.

Singapore has traditionally been lauded for its relative lack of corruption, and was ranked 3 out of 178 countries surveyed in Transparency International's 2010 Corruption Perceptions Index. However, since 2007, questions have arisen over the management of state funds and the revolving door between politics and state entities, particularly the state's investment agencies.

Singapore's media remain tightly constrained. All domestic newspapers, radio

stations, and television channels are owned by companies linked to the government. Although editorials and news coverage generally support state policies, newspapers occasionally publish critical pieces. Self-censorship is common among journalists. The Sedition Act, in effect since the colonial period, outlaws seditious speech, the distribution of seditious materials, and acts with "seditious tendency." Popular videos, music, and books that reference sex, violence, or drugs are also subject to censorship.

Several high-profile cases in 2010 illustrated the reach of Singapore's defamation and censorship laws, and the government's broader efforts to restrict speech. Vincent Cheng, a social worker and Catholic activist who was arrested in 1987 for Marxist activity, was invited to participate in a history conference held at the National Library in June, but the state-affiliated National Library Board intervened, insisting that he be removed from the speakers list. In July, Martyn See's short film *Ex-Political Prisoner Speaks Out in Singapore* was banned by the Media Development Authority (MDA) for being, "against public interest." The film, in which leftist dissident Lim Hock Siew discusses his arrest and 18-year detention under the Internal Security Act (ISA), was widely circulated online, after See complied with the MDA's order to remove copies within his control from the internet. In November, British author Alan Shadrake was convicted of defamation for his book *Once a Jolly Hangman: Singapore Justice in the Dock*, which questions the judicial system's impartiality in meting out capital punishment. The book, while not banned outright, is unavailable in Singapore's libraries or major bookstores, but is widely available online. Shadrake was sentenced to six weeks in prison, fined approximately US\$16,000, and held accountable for the opposing council's fees of more than US\$38,000. His appeal was pending at year's end.

Foreign broadcasters and periodicals can be restricted for engaging in domestic politics, and all foreign publications must appoint legal representatives and provide significant financial deposits. The leadership's practice of using defamation suits and license revocations to silence critical media is often applied to foreign-owned outlets.

The internet is widely accessible, but the authorities monitor online material and block some content through directives to licensed service providers. Recent cases have signaled the government's concern about the internet's potential as a forum for political dissent and other controversial speech. In 2010, pastor Rony Tan of the Lighthouse Evangelical Church made insulting statements against Buddhists and Taoists, and his remarks circulated on the web through the video-sharing site YouTube and other outlets. The Internal Security Department, citing a need to maintain racial and religious harmony, forced Tan to retract his statements and issue a public apology. Political activists are hopeful that youths' increased use of Facebook and Twitter, among other social-networking websites, will spark interest in social activism and opposition parties, such as the SDP and the Workers' Party.

The constitution guarantees freedom of religion, as long as its practice does not violate any other regulations, and most groups worship freely. However, religious actions perceived as threats to racial or religious harmony are not tolerated, and unconventional groups, like the Jehovah's Witnesses and the Unification Church, are banned. All religious groups are required to register with the government under the 1966 Societies Act. Adherents of the Falun Gong spiritual movement have been

arrested and prosecuted on vandalism charges in recent years for displaying posters in a public park that detail the persecution of their fellow practitioners in China.

All public universities and political research institutions have direct government links that bear at least some influence. Academics engage in political debate, but their publications rarely deviate from the government line on matters related to Singapore.

The Societies Act restricts freedom of association by requiring most organizations of more than 10 people to register with the government, and only registered parties and associations may engage in organized political activity. Political speeches are tightly regulated, and public assemblies must be approved by police. A 2009 law eliminated a previous threshold requiring permits for public assemblies of five or more people, meaning political events involving just one person could require official approval. Permits are not needed for private, indoor gatherings as long as the topic of discussion does not relate to race, politics, or religion.

Unions are granted fairly broad rights under the Trade Unions Act, though restrictions include a ban on government employees joining unions. A 2004 amendment to the law prohibits union members from voting on collective agreements negotiated by union representatives and employers. Strikes are legal for all except utility workers, but they must be approved by a majority of a union's members as opposed to the internationally accepted standard of at least 50 percent of the members who vote. In practice, many restrictions are not applied. All but 5 of the country's 64 unions are affiliated with the National Trade Union Congress, which is openly allied with the PAP. Singapore's 180,000 domestic workers are excluded from the Employment Act and regularly exploited. A 2006 standard contract for migrant domestic workers addresses food deprivation and entitles replaced workers to seek other employment in Singapore, but it fails to provide other basic protections, such as rest days.

The government's overwhelming success in court cases raises questions about judicial independence, particularly because lawsuits against opposition politicians and parties often drive them into bankruptcy. Many judges have ties to PAP leaders, but it is unclear whether the government pressures judges or simply appoints those who share its conservative philosophy. The judiciary is efficient, and defendants in criminal cases enjoy most due process rights.

The government generally respects citizens' right to privacy, but the ISA and the Criminal Law Act (CLA) permit the authorities to conduct warrantless searches and arrests to preserve national security, order, and the public interest. The ISA, previously aimed at communist threats, is now used against suspected Islamist terrorists. Suspects can be detained without charge or trial for an unlimited number of two-year periods. A 1989 constitutional amendment prohibits judicial review of the substantive grounds for detention under the ISA and of the constitutionality of the law itself. The CLA is mainly used to detain organized crime suspects; it allows preventive detention for an extendable one-year period. The Misuse of Drugs Act empowers authorities to commit suspected drug users, without trial, to rehabilitation centers for up to three years. The penal code mandates caning, in addition to imprisonment, for about 30 offenses. Caning is reportedly common in practice, including for offenses like overstaying a visa, though it is applied inconsistently.

There is no legal racial discrimination. Despite government efforts, ethnic

Malays have not on average reached the schooling and income levels of ethnic Chinese or ethnic Indians, and they reportedly face discrimination in both private and public sector employment.

Citizens enjoy freedom of movement, although the government occasionally enforces its policy of ethnic balance in public housing, in which most Singaporeans live, and opposition politicians have been denied the right to travel.

Women enjoy the same legal rights as men on most issues, and many are well-educated professionals. Few women hold top positions in government and the private sector. Of the current Parliament's 84 elected seats, 17 are held by women, all of whom belong to the PAP. Lim Hwee Hua became the first woman to serve as a full cabinet minister in April 2010. Despite the presence of an open gay community, Parliament voted in 2007 to maintain provisions of the penal code that make acts of "gross indecency" between men punishable by up to two years in prison.

Slovakia

Political Rights: 1

Population: 5,400,000

Civil Liberties: 1

Capital: Bratislava

Status: Free

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline For Year Under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
1:2F	1:2F	1:2F	1:1F						

Overview: The ruling populist Smer party won a plurality in June 2010 parliamentary elections, but the center-right Slovak Democratic and Christian Union-Democratic Party (SDKU-DS) formed a majority coalition with three smaller partners, and Ivetta Radicová of the SDKU-DS became the country's first female prime minister. Supreme Court president Štefan Harabin resisted efforts at judicial reform during the year and continued his attacks on the press, filing a \$290,000 libel suit against *Rádio Expres*. Meanwhile, the Radicová's government took steps to address corruption, including requiring that information related to state contracts be published online.

Czechoslovakia was created in 1918 amid the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, and Soviet forces helped establish a communist government after World War II. A series of peaceful anticommunist demonstrations in 1989 brought about the collapse of the communist regime, and open elections were held the following year. After another round of elections in 1992, negotiations began on increased Slovak autonomy within the Czech and Slovak Federative Republic. This process led to a peaceful dissolution of the federation and the establishment of an independent Slovak Republic in 1993.

From 1993 to 1998, Vladimir Meciar—who served twice as prime minister during this period—and his Movement for a Democratic Slovakia (HZDS) dominated

politics, flouted the rule of law, and intimidated independent media. In the 1998 parliamentary elections, voters rejected Meciar's rule and empowered a broad right-left coalition. The new parliament selected Mikulaš Dzurinda as prime minister and worked to enhance judicial independence, combat corruption, undertake economic reforms, and actively seek membership in the European Union (EU) and NATO. The HZDS led the 2002 parliamentary elections, but Dzurinda's Slovak Democratic and Christian Union (SDKU) formed a center-right government with three other parties, allowing the country to complete reforms associated with EU and NATO membership. Slovakia formally joined both organizations in 2004.

Meciar lost the 2004 presidential election to a former HZDS ally, Ivan Gašparovic. The governing coalition fractured in February 2006 amid unpopular economic reforms, prompting early parliamentary elections in June. The leftist, populist Smer (Direction-Social Democracy) led the voting and formed an unusual coalition with the HZDS—now allied with the People's Party (LS)—and the far-right Slovak National Party (SNS), raising concerns abroad that a government consisting of the left and right wings of Slovak politics could adopt destabilizing policies.

Following a corruption scandal involving the Slovak Land Fund in November 2007, Prime Minister Robert Fico of Smer dismissed the deputy director of the fund and the agriculture minister, who had been selected by the LS-HZDS. The ensuing conflict between Fico and Meciar almost broke up the coalition. In January 2008, the three opposition parties brought an unsuccessful no-confidence motion against Fico, accusing him of complicity in the corruption case.

Supported by Smer and the SNS, President Gašparovic won a second term in a two-round election held in March and April 2009, defeating sociologist Iveta Radicová of the SDKU (now allied with the Democratic Party, or DS) with 55 percent of the vote in the runoff.

Smer won the largest share of votes in parliamentary elections held in June 2010, taking 62 of the 150 seats. The SDKU-DS placed a distant second with 28 seats, followed by the center-right Freedom and Solidarity (SaS) with 22, the Christian Democratic Movement (KDH) with 15, the new ethnic Hungarian party Most-Híd with 14, and the SNS with 9. For the first time since 1991, Meciar's party did not win any seats, having failed to reach the 5 percent vote threshold for representation. Despite Smer's plurality, the SDKU-DS was able to form a center-right majority in July with the SaS, the KDH, and Most-Híd, and Radicová became the country's first female prime minister. The new government pledged to tackle unemployment and reduce the large budget deficit.

**Political Rights
and Civil Liberties:**

Slovakia is an electoral democracy. The presidential election in 2009 and parliamentary elections in 2010 were considered free and fair. Voters elect the president for up to two five-year terms and members of the 150-seat, unicameral National Council (parliament) for four-year terms. The prime minister is appointed by the president but must have majority support in the parliament to govern. Slovakia's political party system is fragmented. The current governing parties are the SDKU-DS, the SaS, the KDH, and Most-Híd, while the opposition consists of Smer and the SNS. In response to a law enacted in Hungary allowing Hungarians living abroad to apply

for citizenship as of January 2011, the Slovak parliament amended the Citizenship Act in May 2010, pledging to revoke Slovak citizenship from those holding another citizenship. Ethnic Hungarians make up roughly 10 percent of Slovakia's population.

Corruption remains a problem in Slovakia, and protection for whistle-blowers is poor. A new anticorruption law adopted in March 2010 allows state police and prosecutors to investigate the origin of anyone's assets if they amount to more than \$630,000; assets of undetermined origin can be confiscated by the courts. The law drew criticism for placing the burden of proof on the defendant. A judge was convicted in April for accepting bribes during a 2005 real-estate dispute and was sentenced to three years and six months in prison, marking the country's first successful prosecution of a judge for corruption. Multiple cases of corruption were exposed after Prime Minister Iveta Radicová took office in July 2010, including alleged misuse of EU and regional aid funds. The new government took some steps to correct its predecessor's lack of transparency regarding public procurement processes, initiating the online publication of information related to state contracts. Transportation Minister Ivan Švejna of Most-Híd resigned in October over an apparent conflict of interest involving state contracts awarded to his private consulting firm, Hayek Consulting. Radicová ordered the dismantling of the National Agency for the Development of Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (NADSME), which is accused of misplacing millions of dollars in state funds, and at year's end, the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF) was investigating NADSME's use of 50 million euros (approximately \$72 million) in EU funding. Slovakia was ranked 59 out of 178 countries surveyed in Transparency International's 2010 Corruption Perceptions Index.

Slovakia's media are largely free but remain vulnerable to political interference. Journalists have faced an increasing number of verbal attacks and libel suits by public officials. In the run-up to the 2010 parliamentary elections, Prime Minister Robert Fico's government continued to pressure the state-owned public broadcaster, Slovak Television (STV), to provide favorable coverage of official events. In March, Slovakia's largest financial group, J&T, purchased *Pravda*, the country's second-largest daily; the firm had acquired a popular television station in 2007, raising concerns about ownership concentration. In May, the president of the Supreme Court, Štefan Harabin, sued Rádio Expres for approximately \$293,000, accusing the station of falsely reporting that \$47,900 in renovations had been made to his office restroom. The government does not limit access to the internet.

The government respects religious freedom. Registered religious organizations are eligible for tax exemptions and government subsidies. The Roman Catholic Church is the largest denomination and consequently receives the largest share of subsidies. A 2007 law requires religious groups to have at least 20,000 members to register, effectively excluding the small Muslim community and other groups. Academic freedom is respected in Slovakia.

Authorities uphold the rights to assemble peacefully, petition state bodies, and associate in clubs, political parties, and trade unions. In May 2010, Slovakia's first gay rights rally was attacked by neo-Nazi counterdemonstrators, and the police were widely criticized for failing to provide adequate security. In October, nearly 3,000 union members protested the government's proposed spending cuts and tax increases.

The constitution provides for an independent judiciary, and an independent Judicial Council oversees the assignment and transfer of judges. However, the court system suffers from corruption, intimidation of judges, and a significant backlog of cases. Harabin, the Supreme Court president, has been criticized for intimidating the media and unfairly disciplining reformist judges. In November 2010, Justice Minister Lucia Žitnanska filed a complaint against Harabin with the Constitutional Court, accusing him of obstructing the Finance Ministry's efforts to carry out an audit of the Supreme Court. In response, the Supreme Court launched a criminal petition against Žitnanska for abuse of power, libel, and meddling with the court's independence. Both cases were pending at year's end.

Slovakia was criticized for its handling of high-profile immigration cases in early 2010. The country accepted three Guantanamo Bay detainees for resettlement in January 2010, but they were subsequently held in isolation under poor conditions in a camp for asylum seekers. Following a hunger strike by the three men in mid-June, they were awarded residency permits in July. Separately, in May, the government extradited Mustapha Labsi to his native Algeria, where he had been sentenced in absentia to life imprisonment on terrorism charges. Having already completed terrorism sentences in Britain and France, Labsi had sought political asylum in Slovakia, but was arrested in 2007 at Algeria's request. Both Slovakia's Constitutional Court and the European Court of Human Rights had ruled against the repatriation, citing the likelihood that Labsi would face torture or other mistreatment in Algeria.

Roma, who make up some 10 percent of Slovakia's population, continue to experience widespread discrimination and inequality in education, housing, employment, public services, and the criminal justice system. Discriminatory practices include forced evictions and improper placement of Romany children in special education programs. Roma also face the persistent threat of racially motivated violence. In August 2010, six members of a Romany family were shot to death in their Bratislava apartment, apparently targeted for their ethnicity.

Although women enjoy the same legal rights as men, they continue to be underrepresented in senior-level business positions and in the government. Only 23 women hold seats in the 150-seat parliament, though Radicová became Slovakia's first female prime minister in 2010. Domestic violence is punishable by imprisonment but remains widespread. Romanian women have been sterilized by doctors without their consent. Human trafficking from and through Slovakia, mainly for the purpose of sexual exploitation, is also a problem.

Slovenia

Political Rights: 1

Population: 2,100,000

Civil Liberties: 1

Capital: Ljubljana

Status: Free

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline For Year Under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
1,2F	1,1F								

Overview: The Slovenian Parliament amended legislation in March 2010 to allow thousands of people who had been removed from official records in 1992 to apply for permanent residency. In June, a majority of Slovenians voted in favor of a 2009 agreement between Slovenia and Croatia that would allow an international arbitration panel to resolve a long-running border dispute between the two countries. Local polls in October proceeded smoothly, and the first black mayor in Eastern Europe was elected in the town of Piran. Large-scale strikes staged in September by public servants over cuts to wages, pensions, and social benefits reflected the country's ongoing economic troubles.

The territory of modern Slovenia, long ruled by the Austro-Hungarian Empire, became part of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes (renamed the Kingdom of Yugoslavia in 1929) after World War I, and a constituent republic of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia following World War II. After decades of relative prosperity in Josip Broz Tito's Yugoslavia, various elements in Slovene civil society began to part ways with the communist system in the 1980s. In 1990, the Democratic United Opposition (DEMOS) defeated the ruling League of Communists in democratic elections, although former Communist leader Milan Kucan was elected president. The country declared independence in June 1991 and secured its status after a short 10-day conflict.

After 1990, Slovenia was generally ruled by center-left governments, the most important component of which was Janez Drnovšek's Liberal Democracy of Slovenia party (LDS). Drnovšek served as prime minister almost continuously from 1992 to 2002, when he was elected president. In the 2004 parliamentary elections, Janez Janša's center-right Slovenian Democratic Party (SDS) finally unseated the LDS-led government, and Janša became prime minister.

Slovenia has widely been considered one of Eastern Europe's success stories in the postcommunist period. In 2004, Slovenia joined both the European Union (EU) and NATO, and became the first of the former communist bloc states to adopt the euro as its official currency in 2006. The country was also the first former communist bloc state to hold the EU's rotating presidency in 2008.

In the 2007 presidential election, Danilo Türk, a law professor and former diplomat, ran as an independent with the backing of the Social Democrats (SD) and several other parties. He won the November runoff with 68 percent of the vote, defeating the government's candidate, Alojz Peterle, who took 32 percent.

In the September 2008 parliamentary elections, the SD captured 29 seats, followed by the SDS with 28 seats. SD leader Borut Pahor, who became prime minister, formed a coalition government with three small parties: the center-left Zares (9 seats), the Democratic Party of Pensioners of Slovenia (7 seats), and the once-powerful LDS (5 seats). The remaining seats in the 90-member lower house went to the far-right Slovene National Party (5 seats), an alliance of the Slovene People's Party and the Slovene Youth Party (5 seats), and the Hungarian and Italian ethnic minorities (1 seat each).

Due in part to the global economic crisis, the popularity of Pahor and his government suffered considerably in 2010. The October local municipal elections resulted in strong showings for the SDS, increasing its chances of returning to power in the next parliamentary elections, scheduled for 2012. One of the most notable developments of the October polls was the election of a Ghanaian-born doctor, Peter Bossman, as the mayor of Piran, making him the first black mayor of an Eastern European city.

After nearly two decades, a contentious border dispute with neighboring Croatia has remained Slovenia's most important foreign policy issue. The dispute concerns the delineation of the two countries' maritime border in the Bay of Piran, and parts of their common territorial border. In 2009, Pahor and his Croatian counterpart, Jadranka Kosor, agreed that Slovenia would lift its veto of Croatia's EU accession, and an international arbitration panel would be allowed to settle the dispute, pending ratification by both states' parliaments. Slovenia's Parliament ratified the agreement in April 2010, but later decided to hold a national referendum on the issue at the opposition's request. The agreement was narrowly approved in a June referendum, with just 51.54 percent of Slovenians voting in favor of the deal. The agreement came into force November.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Slovenia is an electoral democracy. Elections since independence have been considered free and fair. The country has a bicameral Parliament. Members of the 90-seat National Assembly, which chooses the prime minister, are elected to four-year terms. Members of the 40-seat National Council, a largely advisory body representing professional groups and local interests, are elected to five-year terms. The president is directly elected for up to two five-year terms. One seat each is reserved in the National Assembly for Slovenia's Hungarian and Italian minorities, and Roma are automatically given seats on 20 municipal councils.

Corruption, while less extensive than in some other Central and Eastern European countries, remains a problem in Slovenia, usually taking the form of conflicts of interest and contracting links between government officials and private businesses. In August 2010, former prime minister Janez Janša was indicted on corruption charges stemming from a controversy over military procurement orders during his tenure in office. Only 5,000 of the country's 80,000 public servants are subject to financial disclosure laws. Slovenia was ranked 27 out of 178 countries surveyed in Transparency International's 2010 Corruption Perceptions Index.

Freedoms of speech and of the press are constitutionally guaranteed. However, newspapers that are critical of the government have faced difficulty securing advertisers. In an effort to avoid problems with their employers, journalists

reportedly practice self-censorship and refrain from writing critical articles that could complicate relations with advertisers. In February 2010, Janša sued the Finnish public broadcaster YLE and several YLE employees for Euro 1.5 million for a 2008 documentary, which implicated Janša in corrupt arms deals. In August, Slovenian prosecutors formally filed corruption charges against Janša, although he has denied any wrongdoing. In December, a government-sponsored law on the state public broadcaster, RTV Slovenia, was rejected by over 72 percent of voters in a national referendum. The government had argued that the law would reduce political interference in state broadcasting, while the opposition claimed that the legislation would have made it ultimately easier to privatize RTV Slovenia. There were no reports of government attempts to restrict internet access during the year.

The constitution guarantees freedom of religion, and contains provisions that prohibit incitement to religious intolerance or discrimination. Approximately 58 percent of Slovenians identify themselves as Roman Catholics, although the number of practicing Catholics has dropped in recent years. In June 2010, the Constitutional Court annulled certain provisions of the 2007 Religious Freedoms Law, including the legal registration of religious communities and the payment of social security contributions to priests working in prisons and hospitals. Societal discrimination against the small Muslim community remains a problem. A 40-year effort to build a mosque in Ljubljana continues to face various legal challenges. There were no reports of government restrictions on academic freedom during the year.

The government respects freedoms of assembly and association. Numerous nongovernmental organizations operate freely, and the government generally supports the role they play in the policymaking process. Workers have the right to establish and join trade unions, strike, and bargain collectively; these rights do not apply to certain public sector employees, primarily police and the military. The Association of Free Trade Unions of Slovenia (ZSSS) has some 300,000 members and controls the four trade union seats in the National Council. A wave of strikes hit Slovenia in September 2010, as public sector workers protested against government-sponsored efforts to reduce wages, raise the retirement age, and place further limitations on pensions and social benefits. The country requires serious labor reforms, but Slovenian politicians are unlikely to address the issue before the next parliamentary elections due to the country's poor economic conditions.

The constitution provides for an independent judiciary, and judicial freedom is generally respected by the government. However, the judiciary is plagued by a very large backlog of cases; as of June 2010, there were some 266,221 cases. Political infighting over the appointment of judges also remains a problem. Prison conditions are in line with international standards, although overcrowding has been reported.

Incitement to racial hatred is a criminal offense. However, Slovenia has had persistent problems in dealing with various minorities—Italians, Muslim residents and guest workers, and citizens of the former Yugoslavia. Police harassment of Roma and residents from other former Yugoslav republics, the so-called new minorities, remains a problem. Some 18,000 non-Slovene citizens of the former federation who remained in Slovenia after independence had been removed from official records after they failed to apply for citizenship or permanent residency during a brief window of opportunity in 1992. However, in 2009, Borut Pahor's

government began enforcing a 2003 Constitutional Court ruling intended to provide retroactive permanent residency status to the estimated 4,000 to 6,000 people who remained in the category of "the erased." In March 2010, Parliament adopted legislation meant to reinstate the legal status of those "erased" in 1992. The Slovenian newspaper *Vecer* called entire story of, "the erased ... the most serious breach of human rights in the history of independent Slovenia."

Women hold the same legal rights as men but remain underrepresented in political life. There are currently 13 women in the 90-seat National Assembly, 1 in the 40-seat National Council, and 6 in Pahor's 18-member government. By law, 40 percent of the electoral lists for Slovenia's European parliamentary elections must be reserved for women. Some 60 percent of Slovenia's women are in the workforce, the largest proportion of any of the 10 countries that joined the EU in 2004. On average, Slovenian women receive 93 percent of the pay of their male counterparts.

Domestic violence remains a concern. Prostitution has been decriminalized in Slovenia. International human rights groups have named Slovenia as a transit point and destination for women and girls trafficked from other Eastern European nations for the purpose of prostitution. According to the U.S. State Department's 2010 Trafficking in Persons Report, the Slovenian government complies with the minimum standards of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act.

Solomon Islands

Political Rights: 4

Population: 550,000

Civil Liberties: 3

Capital: Honiara

Status: Partly Free

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline For Year Under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
4,4PF	3,3PF	3,3PF	3,3PF	3,3PF	4,3PF	4,3PF	4,3PF	4,3PF	4,3PF

Overview: General elections held in August 2010 were deemed largely free and fair by international observers, despite incidents of ballot burning and violence in some districts. Danny Philip, a veteran politician, was chosen as the new prime minister. In March, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission began its first hearings related to the 1998-2003 ethnic war. While Philips advocated pardoning crimes committed during the conflict, including murder, the opposition rejected broad forgiveness.

The Solomon Islands gained independence from Britain in 1978. Tensions between the two largest ethnic groups—the local Gwale people and the Malaitans—over jobs and land rights erupted into open warfare in 1998. Scores were injured or killed before peace was gradually restored through the 2000 Townsville Peace Agreement, brokered by Australia and New Zealand. Order was initially maintained by a UN mission and after 2003, by the Australian-led Regional Assistance Mission

to the Solomon Islands (RAMSI), which has continued to maintain a presence in the country.

In December 2007, Derek Sikua was elected prime minister and made political stability and national reconciliation priorities of his government. A Truth and Reconciliation Commission, modeled after South Africa's, was launched in 2009 to investigate crimes and address impunity connected to the 1998-2003 ethnic war. In March 2010, the commission began its first hearings, during which witnesses told stories of threats, torture, death, and loss of homes. While Prime Minister Danny Philip advocates pardoning crimes committed during the unrest, including murder, the opposition objects to such broad forgiveness.

In the August 2010 general elections, a total of 509 candidates, including 25 women, from 14 parties competed for 50 parliamentary seats. The main campaign issues were control over the Rural Constituency Development Fund (RCDF), which critics say legislators abuse for private gain, and whether to continue formal ties with Taiwan or switch allegiance to China to maximize economic benefits. Independents won 19 seats, the Solomon Islands Democratic Party (SIDP) claimed 13, the Reform Democratic Party (RDP) and the Ownership, Unity, and Responsibility Party each took 3, and smaller parties captured the remainder. Approximately 100 international observers and police officers monitored the elections and maintained order. As is common in the Solomon Islands, new parties formed before the elections and disbanded afterward; legislators aligned themselves with these parties, but the groupings were fluid. RDP leader Danny Philip was chosen as the new prime minister, narrowly defeating SIDP leader Steve Abana. Philip, who served in Parliament from 1994 to 2001, confirmed the country's ties with Taiwan and pledged to work with RAMSI, fight corruption, and promote gender equality and development.

The elections were deemed generally free and fair by international observers, though a few incidences of violence were reported. Ballots were destroyed, fighting broke out among supporters of competing candidates in some districts, and one person was killed by a warning shot fired by a Tongan soldier with RAMSI during a riot.

In November 2010, Jimmy Lusibaea, a leader of the Malaita Eagle Force—a militant group active during the civil war—was sentenced to two years and nine months in prison for attempted murder, assault on police, and discharging firearms in a public place during an incident in 2002. Lusibaea was elected to the Parliament in August to represent the north Malaita district and had been appointed minister of fisheries in the new government, though he will lose his seat if his appeal fails. Riots broke out in the capital when the sentence was announced, leading to 37 arrests.

Political Rights

and Civil Liberties:

The Solomon Islands are not an electoral democracy. A governor general, appointed on the advice of the National Parliament for a five-year term, represents the British monarch as head of state. Members of the 50-seat, unicameral National Parliament are elected for four-year terms. A parliamentary majority elects the prime minister, and the governor-general appoints the cabinet on the advice of the prime minister. While several political parties operate, political activity is driven more by person-

alities and clan identities than party affiliation. Also, shifting alliances within the Parliament remain a source of political instability.

Rampant corruption at all levels of government is a major source of public discontent and hinders economic development. In 2008, a new ombudsman was appointed to investigate alleged government abuses and an anticorruption taskforce was launched to develop a national anticorruption policy. In March 2010, the Leadership Code Commission—tasked with addressing official abuse and corruption according to the 1999 Leadership Code—stated that only half of some 800 government leaders had submitted statements declaring their assets and financial interests. In April, a group of citizens in Guadalcanal sued their representative in an effort to determine how he was spending \$ 1.2 million worth of constituent funds annually. In October, Prime Minister Danny Philip suspended the Commission on Inquiry into Land Dealings in Guadalcanal in order to investigate allegations of serious corruption within the commission. The country was ranked 110 out of 178 countries in Transparency International's 2010 Corruption Perceptions Index.

Freedoms of expression and the press are generally respected, but politicians and elites sometimes use legal and extralegal means to intimidate journalists. The print media include a privately owned daily, a weekly, and two monthly publications. The government operates the only radio station. There is no local television station, but foreign broadcasts can be received via satellite. Internet penetration is low, mainly due to technical and cost barriers. Telecommunications are privately owned and operated. In December 2010, the government called for a third mobile telephony operator to increase competition.

Freedom of religion is generally respected. Academic freedom is observed, but a lack of public funds severely undermines the quality of education. In January 2010, the government introduced a free basic education policy to increase school enrollment.

The constitution guarantees freedom of assembly, and the government generally recognizes this right. Organizers of demonstrations must obtain permits, which are typically granted. Civil society groups operate without interference. Workers are free to organize, and strikes are permitted.

Threats against judges and prosecutors have weakened the independence and rigor of the judicial system. Judges and prosecutors have also been implicated in scandals relating to corruption and abuse of power. A lack of resources limits the government's ability to provide legal counsel and timely trials. The ombudsman's office has far-reaching powers to investigate complaints of official abuse and unfair treatment, but generally lacks the funds to do so.

There is no military. Domestic security and law enforcement are provided by a civilian-controlled police force of about 1,000 people, but poor training, widespread abuse of power, and factional and ethnic rivalries have undermined public trust in the service.

Anti-Chinese sentiment had grown in reaction to their perceived economic dominance and influence over politicians. Discrimination limits the economic and political roles of women, who won no seats in Parliament in the 2010 elections. Rape and other forms of abuse against women and girls are widespread. While rape is illegal, no law prohibits domestic violence.

Somalia

Political Rights: 7

Population: 9,400,000

Civil Liberties: 7

Capital: Mogadishu

Status: Not Free

Note: The numerical ratings and status listed above do not reflect conditions in Somaliland, which is examined in a separate report.

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline For Year Under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
6,7NF	6,7NF	6,7NF	6,7NF	6,7NF	7,7NF	7,7NF	7,7NF	7,7NF	7,7NF

Overview: Somalia's Transitional Federal Government (TFG) clung to office in 2010 in the face of a sustained assault by Islamist insurgents. Internal rivalries between President Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed and Prime Minister Omar Abdirashid Ali Sharmarke, resulting in Sharmarke's resignation, further undermined the TFG's credibility. The main insurgent group, the Shabaab, tightened its grip over much of southern and central Somalia, enforcing a brutal form of Islamic law in areas under its control. The Shabaab launched terrorist attacks domestically and abroad, killing six members of parliament and hundreds of civilians in Mogadishu, as well as 74 people in a series of bombings in Uganda.

Somalia gained independence in 1960 as an amalgam of former British and Italian colonies populated largely by ethnic Somalis. A 1969 coup by General Siad Barre led to two decades of instability, civil strife, and the manipulation of clan loyalties for political purposes. After Barre's regime was finally toppled in 1991, the country descended into warfare between clan-based militias, and an effective national government was never restored.

Famine and fighting killed approximately 300,000 people in 1991 and 1992, prompting a UN humanitarian mission led by U.S. forces. The intervention soon deteriorated into urban guerrilla warfare with Somali militias. Over 100 UN peacekeepers, including 18 U.S. soldiers, were killed. International forces left by March 1995, and civil strife continued over the subsequent decade.

Attempts to revitalize the political process began in 2000 with a peace conference in Djibouti, where many of Somalia's factional leaders agreed to participate in a three-year transitional government. While this initiative quickly unraveled, a fresh effort in 2004 resulted in the establishment of a 275-seat Transitional Federal Assembly (TFA), in which the leading clans took an equal number of seats, and a new Transitional Federal Government (TFG). That year, TFA members elected the Ethiopian-backed warlord Abdullahi Yusuf Ahmed to serve a five-year term as president. By early 2005, however, sharp divisions emerged within the TFG between his supporters and an alliance of Islamists and clan leaders. The Islamic Courts Union (ICU), a broad coalition of Islamists, eventually emerged as the dominant force within Mogadishu, and the group gained control of most of southern Soma-

lia during 2006. The TFG retreated to the town of Baidoa, north of Mogadishu. Meanwhile, hard-liners within the ICU, backed by Eritrea, grew increasingly hostile toward neighboring Ethiopia. With tacit U.S. support, Ethiopia invaded Somalia to oust the ICU in December 2006, forcing the Islamists to the extreme south of the country.

The departure of the ICU prompted an insurgency against the Ethiopian-backed TFG by groups including the Shabaab (Arabic for "the youth"), a radical ICU faction. All sides in the conflict committed severe human rights abuses, and as many as 400,000 people were displaced from Mogadishu during 2007. Hopes for a political breakthrough were raised at the end of the year, when a group of moderate exiled ICU leaders joined forces with non-Islamist opposition members to form the Alliance for the Reliberation of Somalia (ARS).

UN-sponsored negotiations between the TFG and a faction of the ARS began in Djibouti in June 2008, and by year's end, a power-sharing arrangement was established that doubled the size of the TFA. The Shabaab did not participate in negotiations and vowed to fight on.

Ethiopian forces withdrew from Somalia in early 2009, and the expanded TFA was sworn in. It elected the chairman of the ARS, Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed, as Somalia's new president, and he appointed Omar Abdirashid Ali Sharmarke as prime minister, along with a 36-member cabinet. In response, radical Islamist forces, bolstered by foreign extremists, launched an offensive and seized much of southern and central Somalia.

Islamist insurgents kept up their bloody offensive in 2010, emboldened by a cadre of foreign jihadists. The fighting in Mogadishu was particularly intense, killing at least 2,000 civilians during the course of the year. The Shabaab struck at the heart of the government center, attacking a hotel located only a half-mile from the presidential palace in August. The attack, which began as a gun battle and ended with a suicide bombing, left 32 people dead, including 5 government officials and 6 members of parliament. The Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees estimated that there were approximately 1.5 million internally displaced Somalis, and another half million were believed to have left the country.

Despite ongoing assaults, the Shabaab was unable to oust the TFG from Mogadishu. With the support of almost 8,000 African Union (AU) troops and the financial backing of the international community, the TFG clung to strategic pockets of the capital, making some small advances by the end of the year. Meanwhile, accusations of corruption drained the TFG of much of its credibility, and its popularity was further diminished when infighting between President Sharif and Prime Minister Sharmarke paralyzed government business for months. Sharmarke resigned in September, and his replacement, Somali-American Mohamed Abdullahi Mohamed, was sworn in on November 1.

The Shabaab further alienated itself from the majority of Somalis by formally pledging its allegiance to Al-Qaeda in January and expanding its terrorist operations outside Somalia. Seventy-four people were killed in a series of bombings in the Ugandan capital, Kampala. The Shabaab said the attacks were a "message" to Uganda to end its contribution to the AU mission in Somalia.

The security situation in the semiautonomous region of Puntland in northeastern Somalia remained fragile during the year. Pirates based along the coast continued to

profit from the breakdown in law and order by capturing foreign ships and holding their crew members and cargo for ransom. A total of 49 vessels were hijacked off the coast of Somalia in 2010, with more than 1,000 crew members taken hostage. More than 600 of them were still being held at year's end. On land, the chaos in southern Somalia threatened to spill into Puntland. In July, government forces clashed with a Shabaab-linked warlord and his followers in the mountains outside Puntland's commercial capital, Bossaso, on the northeastern coast.

Somalia's ongoing conflict in combination with a persistent drought has created what Refugees International described as the world's worst humanitarian crisis, with more than 3.6 million people in need of assistance in 2010. The UN World Food Programme (WFP), however, halted aid to approximately one million people in southern Somalia in January 2010, citing threats and unreasonable demands from the Shabaab. The United Nations Monitoring Group on Somalia expressed concerns about the WFP, accusing it of operating through a cartel of corrupt suppliers that channeled profits to the insurgents.

**Political Rights
and Civil Liberties:**

Somalia is not an electoral democracy. The state has ceased to exist in many respects, and there is no governing authority with the ability to protect political rights and civil liberties. The TFG is recognized internationally but is deeply unpopular domestically, and its actual territorial control is minimal. The TFA was expanded from 275 to 550 seats in 2009, following a 2008 agreement between the TFG and a wing of the opposition ARS. Of the new seats, 200 are allocated to the ARS and the remaining 75 to civil society groups. The TFA elects the president, choosing the moderate Islamist Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed in 2009. The TFG was given a five-year mandate when it was established in 2004. A new constitution and national elections were to follow, but the TFA voted in 2009 to extend the TFG's mandate until 2011. No effective political parties exist, and the political process is driven largely by clan loyalty. A draft constitution was completed in July 2010 but had not been passed by the end of the year.

Since 1991, the northwestern region of Somaliland has functioned with relative stability as a self-declared independent state, though it has not received international recognition. The region of Puntland has not sought full independence, declaring only a temporary secession until Somalia is stabilized. Elections for Puntland's 66-member legislature were held in 2008. The new parliament elected former finance minister Abdirahman Muhammad Mahmud "Farole" for a four-year term as president in January 2009. The result was seen as a fair reflection of the will of the legislature, and power was transferred peacefully from the defeated incumbent. Relations between Puntland and the TFG sharply deteriorated in 2010, with frustration at the under-representation of Puntland interests in Mogadishu reflected by growing calls for full independence.

Corruption in Somalia is rampant and grew worse following the overthrow of the ICU in 2006. The UN Monitoring Group on Somalia reported "entrenched corruption" at all levels of the TFG, citing examples such as food aid being diverted, port revenues siphoned off, visas sold, and bribes taken in exchange for political favors. The monitoring group also found that the Shabaab were using foreign military equipment. President Sharif dismissed his military chief in September, following

allegations that he had sold tons of weapons from government facilities. Corruption is also pervasive in Puntland, where the authorities have been complicit in piracy. Somalia was ranked as the worst performer among the 178 countries surveyed in Transparency International's 2010 Corruption Perceptions Index.

Somalia's Transitional Federal Charter (TFC), which was written and approved in 2004, calls for freedoms of speech and the press, but these rights do not exist in practice. A TFG press law passed in 2008 allowed for significant government control over the media, and journalists have struggled to operate in areas controlled by Islamist insurgents. The Shabaab and Hizbul Islam, another militant group, seized control of two Mogadishu-based radio stations in September 2010. Gunmen entered the offices of Horn Afrik and GBC, beating staff members and removing equipment. In May, Shabaab gunmen killed a journalist with the state broadcaster, Radio Mogadishu. In August, an employee of Radio Hurma was killed, apparently by a stray bullet. Also in August, a radio journalist was stabbed to death by unknown assailants in the town of Galkaiyo. Journalists faced a difficult and dangerous media environment in Puntland. A reporter with the radio station Horseed FM was jailed for six years in August for interviewing a warlord accused of supplying arms to the Shabaab.

Despite the fragmented state of the Somali media environment, photocopied dailies and low-grade radio stations have proliferated since 1991. Radio is the primary news medium. There are at least eight independent FM stations operating in Somalia and another six in Puntland. Somalis living abroad maintain a rich internet presence, and internet and mobile-telephone services are widely available in large cities. Nevertheless, poverty, illiteracy, and the displacement of Somalis from urban areas limit access to these resources.

Nearly all Somalis are Sunni Muslims, but there is a very small Christian community. Both Somalia's TFC and Puntland's charter recognize Islam as the official religion. The TFC provides for religious freedom, though these rights are not respected in practice. The Shabaab and other radical Islamist groups have imposed crude versions of Islamic law in areas under their control, banning music, films, certain clothing, and any other items they deemed immoral or un-Islamic. Anyone accused of apostasy risks execution. Shabaab gunmen killed a Christian man near Mogadishu in May 2010, after accusing him of spreading religious discord. A man from the town of Afgoye was shot and killed and his children abducted in July, after he was accused of converting to Christianity. In August, a man was publicly executed at a stadium in Mogadishu for allegedly insulting the prophet. At least three similar killings were reported by the Christian nongovernmental organization (NGO), Compass Direct. The Shabaab also denied religious freedom to moderate Muslims and caused deep offense among many Somalis by destroying the graves of Sufi saints.

The education system is severely degraded due to the breakdown of the state, and no system of higher education exists outside Mogadishu and Puntland. The Shabaab interferes with schools in areas under its control, demanding that all classes be taught in Arabic and ordering the removal from schools of UN-distributed textbooks it considered to be "un-Islamic." Even the ringing of school bells has been banned in Shabaab-controlled areas on the grounds that they resemble those heard in churches. The bombing of a university graduation ceremony in December 2009,

which killed a number of medical students and four cabinet ministers, was widely seen as a direct attack on the education system itself.

Freedom of assembly is not respected amid the ongoing violence. The conflict has forced many NGOs and UN agencies operating in Somalia to either reduce or suspend their activities. According to the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, 48 aid workers have been killed since 2008. In January 2010, the body of an employee of a Mogadishu-based NGO was found a day after he was kidnapped by Shabaab gunmen. In December, an aid worker with Horn Relief was shot dead and a colleague wounded by armed men in the Sanaag region of Puntland. Two men working for the international NGO Save the Children were abducted by gunmen in the Galgudud region in October and held for several days before being released. Existing labor laws are not adequately enforced. With the exception of a journalists' association, unions in the country did not engage in activities during 2010.

There is no judicial system functioning effectively at the national level. The TFA passed a law to implement Sharia (Islamic law) in May 2009, but the government was unable to carry out the legislation in practice. In reality, authorities administer a mix of Sharia and traditional Somali forms of justice and reconciliation. The harshest codes are enforced in areas under the control of the Shabaab, where people convicted of theft or other minor crimes are flogged or have their limbs amputated, usually in public. Two teenage girls were killed by a firing squad of Shabaab gunmen in the town of Beledweyne in October 2010 after being accused of spying. A month later, four men accused of associating with a TFG-linked militia group were beheaded in Waradhumale in the Galgaduud region.

The TFG made some efforts to promote human rights, including appointing a human rights official to the Ministry of Justice. These initiatives had little effect on the ground, where the rights of Somali citizens are routinely abused by the various warring factions. The TFG, its allied forces from the AU, and militia groups have fired shells indiscriminately into neighborhoods in Mogadishu. Both sides have coerced people into joining their ranks and unlawfully recruited child soldiers.

Most Somalis share the same ethnicity and religion, but clan divisions have long fueled violence in the country. The larger, more powerful clans continue to dominate political life and are able to use their strength to harass weaker clans.

Women in Somalia face considerable discrimination. Although outlawed, female genital mutilation is still practiced in some form on nearly all Somali girls. Sexual violence is rampant due to lawlessness and impunity for perpetrators, and rape victims are often stigmatized. While the TFC stipulates that women should make up at least 12 percent of parliamentarians, the current TFP fails to meet this quota; there are just 37 women among the 550 members of parliament.

South Africa

Political Rights: 2

Population: 49,900,000

Civil Liberties: 2

Capital: Tshwane/Pretoria

Status: Free

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline For Year Under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
1,2FA	1,2F	1,2F	1,2F	1,2F	2,2F	2,2F	2,2F	2,2F	2,2F

Overview: South Africa successfully hosted soccer's 2010 World Cup tournament, despite concerns about criminal violence and the rule of law. In keeping with a recent trend, there were a number of threats to freedom of the press during the year, including proposed legislation for a statutory media council and a set of potentially wide-ranging regulations on the publication of "sensitive" information. In August, public sector workers staged a massive, three-week strike that shut down schools and hospitals throughout the country.

In 1910, the Union of South Africa was created as a self-governing dominion of the British Empire. The Afrikaner-dominated National Party (NP) came to power in 1948 on a platform of institutionalized racial separation, or "apartheid," that was designed to maintain white minority rule. Partly as a result, South Africa declared formal independence in 1961 and withdrew from the Commonwealth. The NP went on to govern South Africa under the apartheid system for decades. Mounting domestic and international pressure prompted President F. W. de Klerk to legalize the antiapartheid African National Congress (ANC) and release ANC leader Nelson Mandela from prison in 1990. Between then and 1994, when the first multiracial elections were held, almost all apartheid-related legislation was abolished, and an interim constitution was negotiated and enacted.

The ANC won the 1994 elections in a landslide, and Mandela was elected president. As required by the interim constitution, a national unity government was formed, including the ANC, the NP, and the Zulu-nationalist Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP). A Constitutional Assembly produced a permanent constitution, which was signed into law in 1996. The ANC claimed almost two-thirds of the vote in 1999 elections, and Thabo Mbeki, Mandela's successor as head of the ANC, won the presidency. In 2004, the ANC won an even greater victory, taking nearly 70 percent of the national vote and majorities in seven of nine provincial legislatures. Mbeki easily secured a second five-year term.

In late 2007, former deputy president Jacob Zuma defeated Mbeki in a heated battle for the presidency of the ANC, and Zuma's allies were elected to a majority of ANC executive positions; Mbeki had sacked Zuma in 2005, after he was implicated in the corruption trial of his financial adviser, Schabir Shaik. Relations between the ANC and Mbeki's government were strained throughout 2008, and in September—after a High Court judge set aside the remaining corruption charges against Zuma due to prosecutorial misconduct—the ANC's national executive committee

forced Mbeki to resign as state president. The party nominated its deputy president, Kgalema Motlanthe, to serve as interim state president, and he was quickly confirmed by the National Assembly. After Mbeki's ouster, recently resigned defense minister Mosiuoa "Terror" Lekota quit the ANC and formed a new opposition party. A series of ANC leaders—nearly all of them Mbeki allies—moved to the new party, which was formally registered as Congress of the People (COPE) in December 2008.

Despite the new competition from COPE, the ANC won another sweeping victory in the April 2009 elections, taking 65.9 percent of the national vote, 264 seats in the 400-seat National Assembly, and clear majorities in eight of nine provinces. The Democratic Alliance (DA) retained its status as the largest opposition party, winning 67 National Assembly seats and outright control of Western Cape Province. COPE won 30 seats, the IFP took 18, and a collection of smaller parties secured the remainder. Zuma was easily elected state president by the National Assembly the following month, winning 277 of the 400 votes.

Despite fears about criminal violence and lack of transport infrastructure, South Africa successfully hosted soccer's World Cup tournament in 2010, deploying some 40,000 additional police officers and establishing a special system of courts to deal with cases related to the competition. The year also featured increased government pressure on the independent press. In July, the Zuma government introduced a draft Protection of Information Bill that would allow state agencies to classify a wide range of information—including, "all matters relating to the advancement of the public good," and, "the survival and security of the state"—as in the "national interest" and thus subject to significant restrictions on publication and disclosure. The bill, which was set to be debated again in early 2011, mandated prison terms of 3 to 25 years for violations. In addition, the government renewed parliamentary discussion of a proposed statutory media council that would regulate journalistic standards and responsibilities. Both the information bill and the council plan were met with vociferous opposition from the media, press freedom advocates, legal experts, and opposition parties.

Some 5.5 million South Africans, about 11 percent of the population, are infected with HIV. A 2008 Harvard University study claimed that 330,000 people had died between 2000 and 2005 as a result of the Mbeki government's skepticism about the link between HIV and AIDS. While state-funded access to antiretroviral drugs has expanded in recent years, in 2009, the AIDS Law Project reported that 40 percent of HIV-positive South Africans were not receiving treatment. In April 2010, the government launched a campaign to administer HIV tests to 15 million people over 12 months; 2.8 million had been tested by October.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: South Africa is an electoral democracy with a bicameral Parliament. Elections for the 400-seat National Assembly are determined by party-list proportional representation, and the 90 members of the National Council of Provinces are selected by the provincial legislatures. The National Assembly elects the president to serve concurrently with its five-year term.

The ANC, which has won supermajorities in every democratic election, dominates the political landscape. The DA is the leading opposition party, followed by COPE and the IFP. The electoral process is generally free and fair, although the

state-owned South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) has been accused of pro-ANC bias. Political violence, while never severe, increased in the run-up to the 2009 elections. According to the *Mail & Guardian*, there were 40 incidents of electoral violence in 2009, most "at the level of intimidation or clashes" in KwaZulu-Natal and the Eastern Cape. Five politicians were killed in election-related violence, including four in KwaZulu-Natal. In addition, party officials engaged in inflammatory rhetoric during the campaign.

Several agencies are tasked with combating corruption, but enforcement is inadequate. Public servants regularly fail to declare their business interests as required by law, and the ANC has been criticized for charging fees to business leaders for access to top government officials. Corruption is a problem among lower-level civil servants—particularly within the Departments of Home Affairs and Human Settlements—as well as high-ranking officials. In July 2010, former police commissioner Jackie Selebi was sentenced to 15 years in prison for accepting a large bribe from an organized crime boss. Between 2006 and 2009, current president Jacob Zuma was three times charged with corruption and cleared of those charges on procedural grounds. In several instances, the tender process for contracts associated with the 2010 World Cup were alleged to be corrupt and nontransparent; in a few cases, journalists and local activists reported tender-related violence. South Africa was ranked 54 out of 178 countries surveyed in Transparency International's 2010 Corruption Perceptions Index.

Freedoms of expression and the press are protected in the constitution and generally respected in practice. A number of private newspapers and magazines are sharply critical of powerful figures and institutions. Most South Africans receive the news via radio outlets, a majority of which are controlled by the SABC. The SABC also dominates the television market, but two commercial stations are expanding their reach. Internet access is unrestricted and growing rapidly, though many South Africans cannot afford the service fee.

The government is sensitive to media criticism and has increasingly encroached on the editorial independence of the SABC. Government critics have been barred or restricted from SABC airwaves, while a number of critical documentaries and special programs produced by the broadcaster have been canceled due to political considerations. In 2009, SABC internal auditors—investigating the leak of a canceled program to the *Mail & Guardian* newspaper—searched the offices of the unit that produced the program and subjected staff to lie-detector tests. In addition, the government in recent years has enacted and proposed potentially restrictive legislation. The 2009 Film and Publications Amendment Act requires any publisher not recognized by the press ombudsman—or any person who wishes to distribute, broadcast, or exhibit a film or game—to submit any potentially pornographic or violence-inciting materials to a government board for approval. The law also allows for the banning of such materials, which are broadly defined. In 2010, the government sent a widely criticized Protection of Information Bill to Parliament and continued to air the possibility of an ANC-proposed statutory media tribunal that would police journalistic standards. In December, Zuma announced a R5 million (\$677,000) defamation lawsuit against *Sunday Times* cartoonist Jonathan Shapiro over a controversial 2008 political cartoon.

Freedom of religion and academic freedom are constitutionally guaranteed and actively protected by the government.

Freedoms of association and peaceful assembly are also secured by the constitution. South Africa hosts a vibrant civil society and an embedded protest culture. Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) can register and operate freely, and lawmakers regularly accept input from NGOs on pending legislation. In 2010, the government's proposed restrictions on press freedom were met with repeated protests by journalists and press freedom advocates. A recent trend of protests over the pace and extent of public-service delivery—including housing, electricity, and water—continued during the year. The organization Municipal IQ reported that service delivery protests in 2010 outpaced those in 2009, though most protests were concentrated in the beginning of the year. In March, the NGO Abahlali baseMjondolo (AB) organized a march through Durban to protest lack of housing, drawing thousands of participants; 13 AB members were arrested during a spate of related rioting, and 8 were granted bail. In 2009, AB had accused ANC supporters of torching its headquarters as well as the home of its president, who is now in hiding.

South Africans are free to form, join, and participate in independent trade unions. The Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), which claims over two million members, is part of a tripartite governing alliance with the ANC and the South African Communist Party. Strike activity is common, and was widespread in 2010. In August, approximately 1.3 million public sector workers—including many teachers and health workers—staged a three-week strike over pay and housing allowances. The action was marred by numerous instances of violence and intimidation by strikers, including the blocking of patients from entering hospitals and the threatening of students at schools. Roads were blocked as well. In late August, the army deployed more than 1,800 medical staff to 47 hospitals, and police used rubber bullets and water hoses to disperse protesters in Soweto, Durban, and other locations. The strike ended in early September, and an agreement addressing the workers' grievances was reached in October. Autoworkers and some mine workers also mounted strikes during 2010.

Judicial independence is guaranteed by the constitution, and the courts—particularly the Constitutional Court (CC) and the Supreme Court—operate with substantial autonomy. Nevertheless, judicial and prosecutorial independence has come under pressure in recent years amid the Zuma corruption cases, prompting several instances of both judicial and political misconduct. While Zuma's five appointments to the CC in October 2009 were welcomed by opposition parties and legal organizations, his November appointment of former Justice Ministry director general Menzi Simelane to head the National Prosecuting Authority (NPA) was condemned by many opposition parties and civil society groups, who pointed to Simelane's lack of qualifications and allegedly unlawful role in the politically tainted dismissal of former NPA head Vusi Pikoli in 2008.

Staff and resource shortages undermine defendants' procedural rights, including the rights to a timely trial and state-funded legal counsel. While pretrial detainees wait an average of three months before trial, some wait up to two years. The lower courts have proven more susceptible to corruption than the higher panels, and there have been reports of violent intimidation of judges and magistrates.

In advance of the 2010 World Cup, the government set up some a number of "dedicated courts" to deal with tournament-related cases. The courts were widely lauded for their efficiency, and the justice minister announced that some elements

of the temporary system would remain intact, though details were pending at year's end. The government also hired and trained an additional 40,000 police officers, who remained on the job after the World Cup to bolster the undermanned police force.

Despite constitutional prohibitions and government countermeasures, there have been reports of police torture and excessive force during arrest, interrogation, and detention. According to Amnesty International, deaths in custody increased in 2009 and 2010; according to the Independent Complaints Directory, 294 people died in police custody between April 2009 and March 2010, 90 of which were linked to "injuries sustained in custody." The Judicial Inspectorate of Prisons investigates prisoners' assault allegations but has limited resources and capacity. Prisons often fail to meet international standards and feature overcrowding, inadequate health care, and abuse of inmates by staff or other prisoners; both HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis are problems. Recent inquiries have found that corruption, maladministration, and sexual violence are rife in the penal system.

South Africa has one of the highest violent crime rates in the world. House burglaries increased in 2010, though rates of murder, robbery, and carjacking declined. The Zuma administration has given the police more latitude to use force against criminals. Mostly due to police incapacity, vigilante activity is a problem. An August 2010 report by the Centre for Study of Violence and Reconciliation estimated that 900 people die each year in instances of vigilante justice.

The constitution prohibits discrimination based on a range of categories, including race, sexual orientation, and culture. State bodies such as the South African Human Rights Commission and the Office of the Public Prosecutor are empowered to investigate and prosecute cases of discrimination. Affirmative-action legislation has benefited previously disadvantaged groups (defined as "Africans," "Coloureds," "Asians," and as of 2008, "Chinese") in public and private employment as well as in education. Racial imbalances in the workforce persist, and a majority of the country's business assets remain white owned. The government's Black Economic Empowerment (BEE) program aims to increase the black stake in the economy, mostly by establishing race-based ownership thresholds for government tenders and licenses.

Increased illegal immigration, particularly from Zimbabwe and Mozambique, has led to a rise in xenophobic violence by police and vigilantes, including a wave of attacks in May 2008 that killed 62 suspected foreigners (21 were, in fact, South African) and temporarily displaced some 80,000 others. Sporadic attacks occurred in 2009 and in 2010 following the conclusion of the World Cup.

The number of foreign nationals in South Africa is contested, with estimates ranging from two to seven million, including between one and three million Zimbabweans. In April 2009, the government announced a moratorium on the deportation of Zimbabweans, and granted most of them 90-day visa waivers. The government also unveiled plans to create six-month "special dispensation permits" for many Zimbabweans, legalizing their presence and giving them access to workers' rights and basic health care and education. In September 2010, however, the government stated that it would resume the deportation of Zimbabweans without valid documents in January 2011, arguing that conditions in Zimbabwe had improved.

Separately, the nomadic Khoikhoi and Khomani San peoples, indigenous to South Africa, suffer from social and legal discrimination.

South Africa has one of the world's most liberal legal environments for homosexuals. The 2006 Civil Unions Act legalized same-sex marriage, and a 2002 Constitutional Court ruling held that homosexual couples should be allowed to adopt children. Nevertheless, homosexuals are subject to physical attacks.

The state generally protects citizens from arbitrary deprivation of their property. However, some 80 percent of farmland is owned by white South Africans, who make up 14 percent of the population. As a result, thousands of black and colored farmworkers suffer from insecure tenure rights; illegal squatting on white-owned farms is a serious problem, as are attacks on white owners. The government has vowed to transfer 30 percent of land to black owners by 2014; however, only about 6 percent of land had been transferred by the end of 2010, and about 90 percent of the redistributed farms had failed or were failing, according to the Ministry for Land Reform and Rural Development.

Equal rights for women are guaranteed by the constitution and promoted by the Commission on Gender Equality. While the constitution allows the option and practice of customary law, it does not allow such law to supersede women's rights as South African citizens. Nevertheless, women suffer de facto discrimination with regard to marriage (including forced marriage), divorce, inheritance, and property rights. Despite a robust legal framework, domestic violence and rape, both criminal offenses, are extremely grave problems. South Africa has one of the world's highest rates of sexual abuse. In 2009, a survey by the South African Medical Research Council found that two-fifths of male respondents admitted to being physically violent with a sexual partner, and one-quarter admitted to committing rape. A 2010 survey by the same organization found that over 37 percent of men in Gauteng admitted to rape. Zuma was put on trial for rape in 2006, and he was acquitted. Women are also subject to sexual harassment and wage discrimination in the workplace, and are not well represented in top management positions. Still, women hold 45 percent of the seats in the National Assembly and lead five of nine provincial governments; the main opposition DA party is led by Helen Zille, the premier of Western Cape Province.

South Korea

Political Rights: 1

Population: 48,900,000

Civil Liberties: 2

Capital: Seoul

Status: Free

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline For Year Under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
2:2F	2:2F	2:2F	1:2F						

Overview:

The sinking of the South Korean naval vessel *Cheonan* by a North Korean torpedo in March 2010 increased tensions on the Korean Peninsula, dominating South Korea's foreign policy priorities for the year and spilling over into the domestic agenda as well. The

June local elections brought unexpected victories for the opposition, forcing the ruling conservative Grand National Party to reevaluate its policy course. Inter-Korean relations gradually improved in the second half of the year, only to worsen sharply in November, when the North launched a brief but intense artillery attack on an island held by the South. At year's end, much of the South Korean public was calling for military retaliation.

The Republic of Korea (ROK) was established on the southern portion of the Korean Peninsula in 1948, 3 years after the Allied victory in World War II ended Japan's 35-year occupation. U.S. and Soviet forces had divided the peninsula between them, initially to accept the surrender of the Japanese army. The subsequent Korean War (1950-53) pitted the U.S.- and UN-backed ROK, or South Korea, against the Soviet- and Chinese-backed Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), or North Korea, and left some three million Koreans dead or wounded. In the decades following the 1953 armistice, South Korea's mainly military rulers crushed dissent and maintained tight control over society in response to the continuing threat from the North. During this period, South Korea implemented an export-led industrialization drive that transformed the poor, agrarian country into one of the world's leading economies.

South Korea began its democratic transition in 1987, when military strongman Chun Doo-hwan acceded to widespread protests, allowing his successor to be chosen in a direct presidential election. In the December balloting, Chun's ally and fellow general Roh Tae-woo defeated the country's two best-known dissidents, Kim Young-sam and Kim Dae-jung.

After joining the ruling party in 1990, Kim Young-sam defeated Kim Dae-jung in the 1992 presidential election, becoming South Korea's first civilian president since 1961. He sacked hard-line military officers, curbed domestic security services, and successfully prosecuted former presidents Chun and Roh for corruption and treason. However, the government's inability to mitigate a regional financial crisis led South Koreans to elect Kim Dae-jung as president in 1997, making him the first opposition candidate to win a presidential election.

Kim Dae-jung's efforts to reach out to North Korea culminated in a historic 2000 summit with North Korean leader Kim Jong-il. Roh Moo-hyun, a human rights lawyer and former cabinet minister, won the 2002 presidential election on the ruling liberal party's ticket, narrowly defeating Lee Hoi-chang of the opposition conservative Grand National Party (GNP).

Roh took office in February 2003 facing an economic slowdown, an opposition-led parliament, and North Korea's revival of its nuclear weapons program. Just one year into his term, the opposition moved to impeach Roh over a minor technical breach of election rules, and he stepped down temporarily. The Constitutional Court later overturned the impeachment vote, and Roh was reinstated.

Former Seoul mayor Lee Myung-bak of the GNP won the December 2007 presidential election with 48.7 percent of the vote, defeating Chung Dong-young of the liberal Uri Party, who took 26.1 percent. In the 2008 parliamentary elections, the GNP won 131 seats outright and 22 seats through proportional representation; the opposition Democratic Party (formerly the Uri Party) took 66 seats outright and 15 proportional seats. Four smaller parties and independents accounted for the remainder.

Lee's foreign policy was focused on strengthening relations with the United States. His decision to resume U.S. beef imports in April 2008 drew weeks of protests in the form of mass candlelight vigils. The demonstrations were driven in part by broader disappointment with the new administration's alleged "authoritarian style" of governance, business-friendly reform agenda, and other changes from the policies of the two previous presidents. Lee was ultimately forced to reshuffle his cabinet and backtrack on much of his agenda.

Government and public attention shifted to the economy in late 2008 as a global financial crisis emerged. With aggressive fiscal intervention and heavy spending, the Lee administration was able to stabilize the financial sector, save the job market from massive layoffs, and steer the economy toward recovery after an initial plummet.

Relations with North Korea grew tense in 2009. In April, Pyongyang announced its withdrawal from the multilateral Six-Party Talks on its nuclear weapons program, and tested a long-range missile. It then conducted its second nuclear weapons test in May. The UN Security Council tightened sanctions on the North in response.

Although inter-Korean relations improved toward the end of 2009, tensions flared again in March 2010, when the South Korean naval vessel *Cheonan* was sunk, killing 46 crew members. In May, an international group of experts concluded that the ship had been struck by a North Korean torpedo. The investigative team did not include members from North Korea, China, or Russia, and all three governments argued that the evidence implicating North Korea was inconclusive.

The experts' findings triggered a series of escalatory provocations between the two Koreas. South Korea vowed retaliation and countermeasures, and demanded that Pyongyang apologize and prosecute the officers responsible. Pyongyang then proclaimed that it would not engage in dialogue with the South until after Lee was out of office. A seemingly real potential for war drove South Koreans to the polls for the June 2 local elections, and voter turnout reached 54 percent, the highest in 15 years. The GNP expected a landslide victory, but the opposition Democratic Party won 7 of 16 races—2 mayoral and 5 gubernatorial seats. The GNP won 4 mayoral seats, including Seoul, but only 2 gubernatorial seats. The remaining gubernatorial races went to the Liberty Forward Party and two independent candidates. The upset was largely seen as a gauge of public sentiment toward the Lee administration's handling of the *Cheonan* incident.

In June, South Korea brought its case against North Korea to the UN Security Council, and in July, the council issued a presidential statement to condemn the attack, without explicitly naming North Korea as the attacker.

With North Korea focused on domestic issues in the third quarter of 2010, and international pressure on both Koreas to calm regional tensions, inter-Korean relations began to improve. However, in response to joint U.S.-South Korean live-fire naval exercises, North Korea launched a surprise attack on South Korea's Yeonpyeong Island on November 23. The South mounted a counterattack, with the entire exchange lasting an hour and causing a number of South Korean casualties. The year ended with tensions on the Korean Peninsula at their highest levels since the Korean War, and much of the South Korean public calling for military retaliation.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: South Korea is an electoral democracy. Elections are free and fair. The 1988 constitution vests executive power in a

directly elected president, who is limited to a single five-year term. Of the unicameral National Assembly's 299 members, 245 are elected in single-member districts, and 54 are chosen through nationwide proportional representation, all for four-year terms. Political pluralism is robust, with multiple parties competing for power. The two largest parties are the conservative GNP and the liberal Democratic Party.

Despite the overall health of the political system, bribery, influence peddling, and extortion have not been eradicated from politics, business, and everyday life. South Korea was ranked 39 out of 178 countries surveyed in Transparency International's 2010 Corruption Perceptions Index.

The news media are free and competitive. Newspapers are privately owned and report fairly aggressively on government policies and alleged official and corporate wrongdoing. The government directly censors films for sex and violence, though it has been increasingly permissive in recent years. Violent and sexually explicit websites are also censored. The National Security Law stipulates that South Koreans may not listen to North Korean radio. However, no effective measures are in place to block access to North Korean broadcasts.

In January 2010, four television producers and a writer were cleared of defamation charges for a 2008 report on U.S. beef imports that sparked weeks of protests. In April, more than 650 union members mounted a 39-day strike at MBC, South Korea's second largest television network, to protest the appointment of Kim Jae-chul as network president. The union claimed that the Foundation for Broadcast Culture, a quasi-governmental body and owner of a 70 percent stake in the station, had undue influence over the decision, which was labeled an act of political cronyism. Nevertheless, the union's call for Kim's resignation went unheeded.

The constitution provides for freedom of religion. Academic freedom is also unrestricted, with the exception of limits on statements of support for the North Korean regime or communism, in accordance with the National Security Law. This law is applied selectively and only rarely.

South Korea respects freedom of assembly, and the Law on Assembly and Demonstrations requires only that the police be informed in advance of all demonstrations. Local nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) have alleged that while protesters are convicted under this law, police have not been equally penalized for mistreating demonstrators. In July 2010, a ban on nighttime rallies expired after legislators were unable to agree on revisions ordered by the Constitutional Court in 2009. Human rights groups, social welfare organizations, and other NGOs are active and for the most part operate freely.

The country's independent labor unions advocate workers' interests, organizing high-profile strikes and demonstrations that sometimes lead to arrests. However, labor unions in general have been diminishing in strength and popularity, especially amid the economic downturn.

South Korea's judiciary is generally considered to be independent. There is no trial by jury; judges render verdicts in all cases. Police occasionally engage in verbal and physical abuse of detainees. In August 2010, Kang Hee-rak, commissioner general of the National Police Agency, resigned after five Seoul police officers were indicted for the torture of 22 people suspected of petty crimes, among other law enforcement scandals. While South Korea's prisons lack certain amenities, such as hot water in the winter, there have been few reports of beatings or intimidation by guards.

Residents who are not ethnic Koreans face extreme difficulties obtaining citizenship, which is based on parentage rather than place of birth. Lack of citizenship bars them from the civil service and limits job opportunities at some major corporations. The country's few ethnic minorities face legal and societal discrimination.

The government generally respects citizens' right to privacy. An Anti-Wiretap Law sets the conditions under which the government can monitor telephone calls, mail, and e-mail. Nevertheless, political and business elites often carry two mobile phones and change their numbers frequently to evade what they perceive as intrusive government eavesdropping. In July 2010, former senior ethics officials from the Prime Minister's Office were arrested over allegations of illegal surveillance of an opposition-aligned businessman; three were indicted in August on those and other charges. Travel both within South Korea and abroad is unrestricted. The only exception is travel to North Korea, for which government approval is required.

Although women in South Korea enjoy legal equality, they face discrimination in practice, with men enjoying more social privileges and better employment opportunities. However, a 2005 Supreme Court ruling granted married women equal rights with respect to inheritance. Previously, they were considered part of their husband's family and were not eligible to inherit their own family's property. South Korea is one of the few countries outside the Muslim world where adultery is a criminal offense.

Spain

Political Rights: 1

Population: 47,100,000

Civil Liberties: 1

Capital: Madrid

Status: Free

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline For Year Under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)



Overview: In response to declining opinion polls following the introduction of unpopular austerity measures, Prime Minister José Luís Rodríguez Zapatero in October introduced the most significant changes to his cabinet since taking power in 2004. In September, the Basque separatist group Euskadi Ta Askatasuna (ETA) called another ceasefire, though a bomb was detonated shortly thereafter in the Basque region by ETA sympathizers.

Peninsular Spain's current borders were largely established by the 16th century, and after a period of great colonial expansion and wealth, the country declined in relation to its European rivals. Most of its overseas possessions were lost in wars or revolts by the end of the 19th century. The Spanish Civil War of 1936-39 ended in victory for General Francisco Franco's right-wing Nationalists, who executed, jailed, and exiled the leftist Republicans. During Franco's long rule, many countries

cut off diplomatic ties, and his regime was ostracized by the United Nations from 1946 to 1955. The militant Basque separatist group Euskadi Ta Askatasuna (ETA), or Basque Fatherland and Freedom, was formed in 1959 with the aim of creating an independent Basque homeland, and went on to carry out a campaign of terrorist bombings and other illegal activities. After a transitional period following Franco's death in 1975, Spain emerged as a parliamentary democracy, joining the European Economic Community, the precursor to the European Union (EU), in 1986.

In the 2004 parliamentary elections, the Spanish Socialist Workers' Party (PSOE) defeated the conservative Popular Party (PP), which had been in power for 11 years. However, lacking an outright majority, the PSOE relied on regionalist parties to support its legislation. The elections came only days after multiple terrorist bombings of commuter trains in Madrid that killed almost 200 people. The PP government initially blamed ETA, sparking anger from voters, after it was discovered that the attacks had been carried out by Islamic fundamentalists in response to the government's support of the U.S.-led war in Iraq. After becoming prime minister, the PSOE's José Luís Rodríguez Zapatero pulled Spain's troops out of Iraq. In 2007, a Spanish court handed down long prison sentences to 21 of the 28 defendants charged in connection with the 2004 bombings; 7 of the accused were acquitted. In 2008, a key suspect in the bombings was sentenced to 20 years in prison.

ETA announced its first ceasefire in 2006, but peace talks with the Spanish government broke down in January 2007, after the separatist group claimed responsibility for a December 2006 bombing in a parking garage at Madrid's Barajas Airport. The Supreme Court banned hundreds of candidates with alleged links to ETA from participating in 2007 local elections in the Basque region.

Parliamentary elections in March 2008 returned the PSOE and Zapatero to power. The PSOE—which had focused on liberal reforms, such as gender equality and same-sex marriage—won 44 percent of the vote and 169 of 350 seats in the Chamber of Deputies. The PP placed second, with 40 percent and 154 seats. In the Senate, the PP captured 101 of 208 seats up for election, while the PSOE claimed 89. In March 2009, the Basque Nationalist Party lost its absolute majority in the Basque parliament elections for the first time in 30 years. The new coalition of the PSOE and the PP pledged to focus on security and the economy in the Basque region, and not press for regional autonomy.

In March 2010, ETA was accused of shooting a police officer in Paris in the group's first killing of a French officer. ETA called its fifth ceasefire in September, which was met with skepticism from the Spanish government. The separatist group had broken its previous ceasefires with bombings and other attacks. Shortly after its ceasefire declaration in September, a small bomb attributed to ETA sympathizers was detonated in an industrial area of the Basque region, though no casualties were reported.

In February 2010, the Senate approved a measure liberalizing abortion laws to allow for the termination of a pregnancy on demand during the first 14 weeks. The law went into effect in July. The effort to liberalize abortion laws had been met with criticism from the opposition conservatives and the Catholic Church.

Prime Minister Zapatero received low popularity ratings in the lead-up to his party's defeat in regional elections in Catalonia in November. The decline in support was attributed to the country's economic difficulties—including a 20 percent unemployment rate—and government efforts to push through austerity measures, such

as increasing the retirement age from 65 to 67. In response to his party's waning popularity, Zapatero in October reduced the number of cabinet posts and replaced seven cabinet ministers with people closer to his left-wing base.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Spain is an electoral democracy. The Congress of Deputies, the lower house of the bicameral Parliament, has 350 members elected in multimember constituencies, except for the North African enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla, which are each assigned one single-member constituency. The Senate has 264 members, with 208 elected directly and 56 chosen by regional legislatures. Members of both the Senate and Congress serve four-year terms. Following legislative elections, the prime minister, known as the president of the government, is selected by the monarch and is usually the leader of the majority party or coalition. The candidate must also be elected by the Parliament. The country's 50 provinces are divided into 17 autonomous regions with varying degrees of power.

People generally have the right to organize in political parties and other competitive groups of their choice. The Basque separatist Batasuna party, which had previously garnered between 5 and 10 percent of the regional vote, was permanently banned in 2003 for its alleged ties to the armed group ETA.

In September 2010, the largest corruption trial in the country's history began in the summer resort town of Marbella. The 95 defendants—including two former mayors and 15 town counselors—were accused of participating in a widespread system of graft, with local businesspeople bribing town officials for favorable decisions, primarily in city planning. Spain was ranked 30 out of 178 countries surveyed in Transparency International's 2010 Corruption Perceptions Index.

Spain has a free and lively press, with more than 100 newspapers covering a wide range of perspectives and actively investigating high-level corruption. Daily newspaper ownership, however, is concentrated within large media groups like Prisa and Zeta. Journalists who oppose the political views of ETA have in the past been targeted by the group. Newspapers objected to a proposed government regulation announced in July that would prohibit advertising prostitution in the classified section. The explicit advertisements bring in over 40 million euros (approximately \$57 million) annually for the newspaper industry, which is struggling economically. The law had not been passed by year's end.

Freedom of religion is guaranteed through constitutional and legal protections. Roman Catholicism is the dominant religion and enjoys privileges that other religions do not, such as financing through the tax system. Jews, Muslims, and Protestants have official status through bilateral agreements with the state, while other groups (including Jehovah's Witnesses and Mormons) have no such agreements. The government does not restrict academic freedom.

The constitution provides for freedom of assembly, and the government respects this right in practice. Domestic and international nongovernmental organizations operate without government restrictions. With the exception of members of the military, workers are free to strike and organize and join unions of their choice. About 15 percent of the workforce is unionized. Workers went on strike in September 2010 to protest possible austerity measures, which were eventually passed in early December, sparking a new round of protests across the country.

The constitution provides for an independent judiciary. However, there have

been recent concerns over the functioning of the judicial system, including the impact of media pressure on sensitive issues such as immigration and Basque terrorism. In May 2010, Baltasar Garzon, the most controversial judge in Spain, was suspended on the grounds that he overstepped his judicial powers with his 2008 inquiry into the atrocities committed by former Spanish dictator General Francisco Franco. Garzon had not faced trial by the end of 2010. Police abuse of prisoners, especially immigrants, has been reported. Those suspected of certain terrorism-related crimes can be held by police for up to five days with access only to a public lawyer. Prison conditions generally meet international standards.

Spain's universal jurisdiction law allows for the trial of suspects for crimes committed abroad if they are not facing prosecution in their home country. However, in June 2009, Spain's lower house voted in favor of limiting the universal jurisdiction law to cases involving either victims with Spanish citizenship or some other link to Spain, as well as cases where the alleged perpetrators are in Spain.

Women enjoy legal protections against rape, domestic abuse, and sexual harassment in the workplace. However, violence against women, particularly within the home, remains a serious problem. Women hold 36 percent of the seats in the lower house. Legislation enacted in 2005 legalized same-sex marriages and allowed gay couples to adopt children. Trafficking in men, women, and children for the purpose of sexual exploitation and forced labor remains a problem in Spain. However, according to the U.S. State Department's 2010 Trafficking in Persons Report, Spain fully complies with the minimum standards to eliminate trafficking and had introduced a number of initiatives aimed at prevention.

Sri Lanka

Political Rights: 5*

Population: 20,700,000

Civil Liberties: 4

Capital: Colombo

Status: Partly Free

Ratings Change: Sri Lanka's political rights rating declined from 4 to 5 due to the misuse of state resources before and during the 2010 presidential and parliamentary elections, the arrest and prosecution of opposition presidential candidate Sarath Fonseka, and an increasing concentration of power in the executive branch and the president's family.

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline For Year Under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
3,4PF	3,4PF	3,3PF	3,3PF	3,3PF	4,4PF	4,4PF	4,4PF	4,4PF	5,4PF

Overview: President Mahinda Rajapaksa tightened his grip on power in 2010, securing a new term in an early presidential election in January and leading his coalition to a sweeping victory in parliamentary elections in April. Both polls were characterized by the misuse of state resources to favor the ruling party, as well as a degree of violence and

intimidation aimed at the opposition, including the imprisonment of presidential challenger Sarath Fonseka. Despite the defeat of the Tamil Tiger rebel group's long-running insurgency in May 2009 and an improvement in security throughout the country, emergency laws remained in place. In addition, the situation for human rights defenders and journalists remained grim, with numerous attacks and cases of intimidation occurring amid a climate of nationalist rhetoric and impunity. The majority of the civilians displaced by the final stages of the war were able to return to their home districts in 2010, but the rehabilitation of the war-torn north and east remained slow, as the army consolidated their control over these areas and long-standing ethnic grievances remained largely unaddressed.

After Sri Lanka gained independence from Britain in 1948, political power alternated between the conservative United National Party (UNP) and the leftist Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP). While the country made impressive gains in literacy, basic health care, and other social needs, its economic development was later stunted and its social fabric tested by a long-running civil war between the government and ethnic Tamil rebels. The conflict was triggered by anti-Tamil riots in 1983 that claimed hundreds of lives, but it came in the context of broader Tamil claims of discrimination in education and employment by the Sinhalese majority. By 1986, the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE, or Tamil Tigers), which called for an independent Tamil homeland in the northeast, had eliminated most rival Tamil guerrilla groups and was in control of much of the northern Jaffna Peninsula. At the same time, the government was also fighting an insurgency in the south by the leftist People's Liberation Front (JVP). The JVP insurgency, and the brutal methods used by the army to quell it in 1989, killed an estimated 60,000 people.

In 1994, Chandrika Kumaratunga ended nearly two decades of UNP rule by leading the SLFP-dominated People's Alliance (PA) coalition to victory in parliamentary elections and then winning the presidential election. Kumaratunga won another term as president in 1999, but the UNP and its allies gained a majority in 2001 parliamentary elections. Following a 2002 ceasefire accord (CFA), the government and LTTE agreed to explore a political settlement based on a federal system. However, the peace process was weakened by the Tigers' pullout from negotiations in 2003, as well as infighting between the main political parties about how to approach the LTTE.

After parliamentary elections held in 2004, Kumaratunga's United People's Freedom Alliance (UPFA) coalition, bolstered by the support of the JVP, formed a minority government. Apart from the JVP, other extremist and ethnic-based parties also made inroads, including a new party formed by Buddhist clergy, the National Heritage Party (JHU). The addition of the JVP to the ruling coalition and the presence of pro-Sinhalese forces like the JHU in Parliament further hampered the peace process, as did the emergence in 2004 of a breakaway faction of the Tigers, the Tamil People's Liberation Tigers (TMVP). The splinter group was led by Colonel Karuna Amman (the *nom de guerre* of Vinayagamoorthi Muralitharan), an LTTE commander who alleged discrimination in the treatment of eastern Tamils by the LTTE leadership. By 2006, the Karuna faction had become loosely allied with the government. Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa of the PA narrowly won the 2005

presidential election, largely due to an LTTE boycott enforced by voter intimidation in the areas under its influence. Rajapaksa cultivated a more authoritarian style of rule, relegating Parliament to a secondary role, and appointed his brothers to lead key ministries.

In 2007, consensus-building among the southern parties stalled, government fighting with the LTTE escalated, and both sides engaged in targeted killings of key leaders. The government formally annulled the CFA in January 2008, and the army stepped up its offensive, deepening the humanitarian crisis. The military continued to make gains against the rebels in early 2009, and won a decisive final battle in May in which the Tigers' leadership was annihilated. An official end to the war was declared on May 9. At least 100,000 people had been killed in the 26-year conflict, including over 15,500 in 2009 alone, according to the South Asia Terrorism Portal.

Approximately 300,000 civilians were displaced during the final phases of the war, and many of those were interned in government-run camps, where they faced severe food shortages and outbreaks of disease. While the government promised that internally displaced persons (IDPs) would be released and resettled, it initially limited aid groups' access to the camps and did not allow inmates to leave, with the primary aim of screening all residents for any rebels hiding among them. The safe return of IDPs to their homes was also impeded by the large number of mines laid across the conflict zone by both sides. At the end of 2009, more than 100,000 IDPs remained in the camps, while thousands more had left but were unable to return to their homes due to war damage and mines. In August 2009, local elections were held in the northern cities of Jaffna and Vavuniya for the first time in more than a decade. In another sign of normalization, officials reopened the A9 Jaffna-Kandy highway, the only land route connecting the capital with the northernmost part of the country.

The SLFP strengthened its political position ahead of the 2010 parliamentary elections by winning a number of local and provincial elections throughout 2009. The victories were seen as a public endorsement of the government's military successes. The ruling party also drew senior TMVP defectors, including Karuna himself, into its ranks.

Rajapaksa called for the presidential election to be held nearly two years early, in January 2010. However, in a surprise move, General Sarath Fonseka resigned as head of the armed forces and declared his candidacy on behalf of an opposition coalition in late 2009. The poll was held on January 26, with a turnout of just under 75 percent. Rajapaksa won a convincing victory, securing nearly 58 percent of the vote, while Fonseka received around 40 percent. Voting was divided along ethnic lines, with most Sinhalese supporting the president and most Tamils and Muslims supporting Fonseka. Following the vote, Fonseka made a formal complaint, alleging irregularities and asking that the vote be annulled. On February 8, he was arrested on charges of plotting a coup. The ensuing protests by thousands of opposition supporters encountered violence from progovernment groups and the police. Fonseka's trial in a military court, on charges of engaging in politics while an active service member and of not adhering to procurement rules, commenced in March. Most analysts viewed the charges as politically motivated.

Parliamentary elections held in April were contested by a record number of almost 8,000 candidates, but as expected, the ruling UPFA won a convincing victory, securing 144 seats and over 60 percent of the popular vote. The opposition UNP

won around 30 percent of the vote and 60 seats, while the Democratic National Alliance (DNA) coalition, led by the JVP, won 7 (including a seat for Fonseka), and the Tamil National Alliance won 14. Turnout was considerably lower than in the previous election, at just over 50 percent. The UFPA increased its share of seats, though it fell just short of the two-thirds majority it was seeking. The president's brother, Chamal Rajapaksa, was elected as Speaker of Parliament. The government's position was further strengthened by the defection of several lawmakers from opposition parties in August.

Parliament passed the government-backed 18th Amendment to the constitution in September. The package of revisions formally extended political control over state institutions by abolishing the constitutional council mandated by the 17th Amendment and replacing it with a government-dominated, five-member parliamentary council tasked with selecting key members of the judiciary and nominally independent commissions. The new amendment also reduced the powers of the electoral and police commissions and removed the two-term limit on presidents. The opposition boycotted the parliamentary vote on the changes, which were criticized by a range of civil society and watchdog groups.

Also in September, a court-martial found Fonseka guilty of the charges against him, and after Rajapaksa endorsed the verdict, the former general began a 30-month prison sentence. In addition to harassment of political opponents, the government continued to crack down on dissent from other quarters, applying pressure to prominent journalists, human rights advocates, and international critics.

By the end of 2010, only about 19,000 of the interned IDPs remained in the largest camp, and while most had returned to their home districts, some could not recover their former property. Since the war's end, few efforts had been made to resolve the grievances that fueled the conflict, including calls to devolve certain powers to the provinces as envisaged in the 13th Amendment to the constitution. The army took over many aspects of civil administration in the north and east, and residents of those areas have had little input into political or economic decision making that affects their daily lives.

The issue of whether war crimes had been committed in the final phases of the war continued to be contentious during 2010. In June, the UN secretary general appointed an advisory panel on implementation of mechanisms to ensure accountability for alleged war crimes. The Sri Lankan government maintained that an international panel was unnecessary, as it had set up an internal investigative body in May, called the Lessons Learnt and Reconciliation Commission (LLRC), whose primary mandate was to assess the reasons behind the collapse of the 2002 ceasefire. The LLRC held a number of hearings to gather testimony from witnesses during the summer and fall. Following protests against the United Nations in June, as well as the European Union's withdrawal of preferential trade benefits in July, Sri Lanka's relations with the United Nations and major democracies soured further. The government increasingly turned to alternate sources of foreign investment and diplomatic support—such as China, Iran, and Russia—that did not raise questions regarding its human rights record or its conduct during the end of the war.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Sri Lanka is not an electoral democracy. The 1978 constitution vested strong executive powers in the president, who

is directly elected for a six-year term and can dissolve Parliament. The prime minister heads the leading party in Parliament but otherwise has limited powers. The 225-member unicameral legislature is elected for a six-year term through a mixed proportional-representation system.

Elections have historically been generally free and fair, though marred by some irregularities, violence, and intimidation, and the LTTE refused to allow free elections in areas under its control. However, in the 2010 presidential vote, monitoring groups alleged inappropriate use of state resources—particularly transport, infrastructure, the police services, and media—to benefit the incumbent, in violation of orders issued by election officials. More than 1,000 incidents of violence, including at least four deaths, were reported in the preelection period. In addition, in the northern and eastern provinces, inadequate provisions for transport and registration of IDPs, as well as some violence, led to a low turnout. Election officials' orders were similarly disregarded prior to the April 2010 parliamentary elections, which also featured extensive misuse of state resources. The independent Center for Monitoring Election Violence (CMEV) noted that the parliamentary elections were considerably less beleaguered by violence, with 84 major and 202 minor incidents reported. Nevertheless, irregularities led to the nullification or suspension of results in several districts.

Some observers charge that President Mahinda Rajapaksa's centralized, authoritarian style of rule has led to a lack of transparent, inclusive policy formulation. The Centre for Policy Alternatives (CPA) and others have noted the concentration of power in the hands of the Rajapaksa family. The president's brothers hold important posts—Gotabaya serves as defense secretary, Basil is a member of Parliament and now minister for economic development, Chamal is Speaker of Parliament—and a growing number of other relatives, including the president's son Namal, also serve in important political or diplomatic positions. The president and his family consequently control approximately 70 percent of the national budget. Other trusted party stalwarts serve as implemented and advisers. The passage of the 18th Amendment to the constitution in September 2010 effectively reversed efforts to depoliticize key institutions under the 17th Amendment, placing a government-dominated parliamentary council in control of appointments to independent commissions that oversee the police, the judiciary, human rights, and civil servants.

Official corruption is a continuing concern. The current legal and administrative framework is inadequate for promoting integrity and punishing corrupt behavior, and weak enforcement of existing safeguards has been a problem. For example, legislators routinely ignore wealth-declaration requirements stipulated in the 1994 Bribery Amendment Act. The Commission to Investigate Allegations of Bribery or Corruption (CIABOC) has taken up hundreds of cases, but they have yielded only five prosecutions (three acquittals and two convictions), and after the term of the commissioners expired in March 2010, replacements were not appointed, rendering the body ineffective for the remainder of the year. Corruption watchdogs have found that government interference and the Treasury's ability to withhold funding compromise the CIABOC's independence. Corruption cases can only be initiated by members of the public, who have been reluctant to do so because of a lack of whistleblower protections. Sri Lanka was ranked 91 out of 178 countries surveyed in Transparency International's 2010 Corruption Perceptions Index.

Although freedom of expression is guaranteed in the constitution, a number of

laws and regulations restrict this right, including the Official Secrets Act, emergency regulations extended continuously since 2005, the Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA), additional antiterrorism regulations issued in 2006, and laws on defamation and contempt of court. Senior journalist J. S. Tissainayagam, who was sentenced to a 20-year prison term under the PTA in 2009, received a presidential pardon in May 2010 and was able to leave the country. State-run media outlets have fallen under government influence, while official rhetoric toward critical journalists and outlets has grown more hostile, often equating any form of criticism with treason.

Some bans on reporters' physical access to the war zone and internment camps continued in 2010, and British Broadcasting Corporation journalists were denied entry to cover hearings related to the civil war in September. Journalists throughout Sri Lanka, particularly those who cover human rights or military issues, encounter considerable levels of intimidation, which has led over the past several years to increased self-censorship. A number of journalists received death threats in 2010, while others were subject to kidnapping and assaults. In the period surrounding the presidential election, the *Lanka* newspaper was shut down, several journalists were detained and questioned, state media employees were harassed, and journalist Prageeth Eknaligoda disappeared; he remained missing at year's end. Gamini Pushpakumara was dismissed from his position at the state-run television station in January, following his attempts to protest imbalanced coverage of the presidential election; after he fled into exile, his wife continued to receive threats against his life. Armed attackers in July firebombed the private Siyatha television and radio station, whose owner had supported opposition presidential candidate Sarath Fonseka, damaging broadcast equipment and injuring staff. Earlier, the same media group's newspaper had been prevented from covering events and lost its official advertising, forcing it to shut down. Past attacks on journalists have not been adequately investigated, leading to a climate of complete impunity. The government has taken steps to censor the internet, blocking access to a number of news websites. While the majority of the blocks in 2010 were temporary, coinciding with the presidential election, some sites, such as *Lanka News* and TamilNet, have been permanently banned.

Religious freedom is respected, and members of all faiths are generally allowed to worship freely. However, the constitution gives special status to Buddhism, and there is some discrimination and occasional violence against religious minorities. Tensions between the Buddhist majority and the Christian minority—particularly evangelical Christian groups, who are accused of forced conversions—sporadically flare into attacks on churches and individuals by Buddhist extremists. Following the January 2010 presidential election and the arrest of Fonseka, attempts by some Buddhist leaders to convene a sangha, an assembly of monks traditionally held to advise the king on good governance, was met with government pressure and threats, and was eventually called off. Work permits for foreign clergy, formerly valid for five years, are now being issued for only one year, with the possibility of extension. Conditions for Muslims in the north and east improved with the demise of the LTTE, but relations between Muslims and the predominantly Hindu Tamils remained somewhat tense. In recent years, the minority Ahmadiyya Muslim sect has faced increased threats and attacks from Sunni Muslims who accuse Ahmadis of being apostates.

Academic freedom is generally respected, and no official restrictions were re-

ported in 2010. However, some commentators have raised concerns regarding increasing politicization on campuses and lack of tolerance for the expression of dissenting or antigovernment views, which in turn have led to a rise in self-censorship by both professors and students.

Although the 2005 emergency regulations give the president the power to restrict rallies and gatherings, permission for demonstrations is usually granted. Police occasionally use excessive force to disperse protesters, as was the case with the February 2010 demonstrations following the arrest of Sarath Fonseka. In another sign of increasing restrictions on freedom of assembly, two members of Parliament from Fonseka's coalition were arrested during a political protest in August. The Supreme Court intervened in September to clarify existing rules on displaying political posters, after some activists were detained under the emergency regulations. The army has placed some restrictions on assembly, particularly for planned events in the north and east concerning grieving or memorializing the end of the war, according to the International Crisis Group.

Nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) face some curbs on their activities, as well as official harassment. Even following the end of the war in May 2009, many humanitarian workers' access to the conflict zone and IDP camps remained restricted. In April 2010, the president gave the Defense Ministry control over the registration of NGOs, both local and foreign. Human rights and peace-seeking NGOs, particularly those considered "unpatriotic" or unwilling to support the official line, have faced greater threats and harassment from authorities in recent years, including assaults on their gatherings, proposed parliamentary investigations into their activities, and death threats directed against prominent individuals such as Paikiasothy Saravanamuttu, head of the CPA. In March 2010, the emergence of a list of journalists and activists allegedly targeted for government surveillance raised concerns, as several had previously received threats. Prominent rights defender Pattani Razeek disappeared in February 2010 and was still missing at year's end.

Most of Sri Lanka's 1,500 trade unions are independent and legally allowed to engage in collective bargaining. Except for civil servants, most workers can hold strikes, but the 1989 Essential Services Act allows the president to declare a strike in any industry illegal. Even though more than 70 percent of the mainly Tamil workers on tea plantations are unionized, employers routinely violate their rights. The government has increased penalties for employing minors, and complaints involving child labor have risen significantly. Nevertheless, thousands of children continue to be employed as domestic servants, and many face abuse.

Successive governments have respected judicial independence, and judges can generally make decisions without overt political intimidation. However, concerns about politicization of the judiciary have grown in recent years. A 2009 International Crisis Group report on the judiciary highlighted a number of problems, including the executive's power to make high-level judicial appointments; the chief justice's control over the Judicial Service Commission, which makes lower-level appointments; and the lack of a mechanism to sanction biased or corrupt judges. In 2010, the Supreme Court made rulings favorable to the government in a number of politically charged cases, including a decision that allowed Rajapaksa's new term to begin 10 months after the presidential election. Corruption remains fairly common in the lower courts, and those willing to pay bribes have better access to the legal system.

Heightened political and military conflict during the last years of the war led to a sharp rise in human rights abuses by security forces, including arbitrary arrest, extrajudicial execution, forced disappearance, torture, custodial rape, and prolonged detention without trial, all of which predominantly affect Tamils. Torture occurred in the context of the insurgency but also takes place during routine interrogations. Such practices are facilitated by the emergency regulations, the PTA, and the 2006 antiterrorism regulations. Under the PTA, suspects can be detained for up to 18 months without trial. These laws have been used to detain a variety of perceived enemies of the government, including political opponents, critical journalists, members of civil society, and Tamil civilians suspected of supporting the LITE. Roughly 650 Tamils have been detained, some for over a decade, without being charged. Separately, of the roughly 11,000 Tiger cadres who surrendered in the war's final stages, some 8,000 remained in custody and were undergoing "rehabilitation" programs at the end of 2010. The government has estimated that after further releases, 1,000 would be left to stand trial. In September, the International Commission of Jurists criticized the indefinite detention of the former fighters without charge or access to legal counsel, as well as the government's retention of the emergency and antiterrorism regulations despite the end of the civil conflict.

Most past human rights abuses are not aggressively prosecuted, while victims and witnesses are inadequately protected, contributing to a climate of almost complete impunity. The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) is empowered to investigate abuses, but it has traditionally suffered from insufficient authority and resources. The independence of the NHRC and other commissions was weakened by the adoption of the 18th Amendment to the constitution in September 2010.

Human rights groups have claimed that insufficient registration policies in the postwar IDP camps contributed to widespread disappearances and removals without accountability, and the status of hundreds of Tamils who disappeared during the war's final phase remains unclear. Following the August 2009 release of a video that appeared to show extrajudicial killings of captured rebels by government forces, the United Nations called for a full investigation, and rights groups urged the government to lift its censorship policy on war coverage. Ongoing allegations of atrocities during the final stages of the war included extrajudicial executions, rape, the use of civilians as human shields by the Tamil Tiger rebels, and the indiscriminate aerial shelling of civilians in supposed ceasefire zones by government forces. In 2010, the government continued to reject calls by the United Nations, foreign governments, and international NGOs for an independent inquiry into abuses committed by both sides during the war. However, the LLRC—appointed by President Rajapakse in May 2010 to investigate allegations of war crimes—has no powers of enforcement or implementation of its recommendations, and its key personnel are compromised by serious conflicts of interest.

Tamils maintain that they face systematic discrimination in areas including government employment, university education, and access to justice. Legislation that replaced English with Sinhala as the official language in 1956 continues to disadvantage Tamils and other non-Sinhala speakers. Tensions between the three major ethnic groups (Sinhalese, Tamils, and Muslims) occasionally lead to violence, and the government generally does not take adequate measures to prevent or contain it. However, no major incidents were reported in 2010.

For many years, the LTTE effectively controlled 10 to 15 percent of Sri Lankan territory, operating a parallel administration that included schools, hospitals, courts, and law enforcement. It enforced its decrees through summary executions, disappearances, torture, and the forcible conscription of children. The Tigers' leadership and territorial control were essentially eliminated by the end of the war in May 2009. In 2010, the government concentrated on rehabilitating former LTTE territory through economic development programs, but Tamil hopes for greater political autonomy remained unfulfilled, and the army retained a heavy presence in the north and east, controlling most aspects of daily life.

In late 2009, bowing to international pressure, the government granted freedom of movement to the roughly 130,000 civilian IDPs who remained in internment camps under extremely poor conditions. The authorities pledged to resettle all IDPs and close the camps as soon as possible. By the end of 2010, about 19,000 IDPs remained in the Menik Farm camp, with another 1,000 detainees kept at a smaller camp in the Jaffna peninsula. While most had returned to their home districts, in some cases they were unable to occupy their former property due to land mines or destruction of their homes. Other former residents of the conflict area live as refugees in India.

Muslims forcibly ejected from the north by the LTTE in the early 1990s noted during the course of the LLRC hearings in 2010 that many were unable to return to their homes, as their land was still being occupied by Tamils. In general, there are few official attempts to help this group of returnees. In addition, observers have expressed concern that government appropriation of land in the north and east as part of economic development projects, or "high security zones," will impinge on the ability of local people to return to their property, and land will be allotted to southerners or on politically motivated grounds. The military expanded its economic activities in the north and east, running shops and growing agricultural produce for sale in the south, while local businesspeople were crowded out of the market.

Women are underrepresented in politics and the civil service. Female employees in the private sector face some sexual harassment as well as discrimination in salary and promotion opportunities. Rape and domestic violence remain serious problems, with hundreds of complaints reported annually; existing laws are weakly enforced. Violence against women, including rapes, increased, along with the general fighting in the civil conflict, and has also affected female prisoners and interned IDPs. The entrenchment of the army in the north and east increased the risks of harassment and sexual abuse for female civilians (many of whom are widows) in those areas. Although women have equal rights under civil and criminal law, matters related to the family—including marriage, divorce, child custody, and inheritance—are adjudicated under the customary law of each ethnic or religious group, and the application of these laws sometimes results in discrimination against women. There were several signs in 2010 that the government was attempting to enforce stricter moral codes regarding dress and public displays of affection. The government remains committed to ensuring that children have access to free education and health care, and it has also taken steps to prosecute those suspected of sex crimes against children.

Sudan

Political Rights: 7

Population: 43,200,000

Civil Liberties: 7

Capital: Khartoum

Status: Not Free

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline For Year Under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
7,7NF									

Overview: Sudan's first national, multiparty elections in 24 years, held in April 2010, were marred by fraud involving the main parties in the North and the South. President Omar al-Bashir won another five-year term but faced mounting pressure from the International Criminal Court, which in July issued a warrant for his arrest on charges of genocide in the Darfur region. Fighting intensified in Darfur during the year, after one of the main rebel movements pulled out of peace talks. Meanwhile, the autonomous Government of Southern Sudan prepared to hold a referendum on independence from the North in early 2011.

Sudan has been embroiled in nearly continuous civil wars since gaining independence from Britain and Egypt in 1956. Between 1956 and 1972, the Anyanya movement, representing mainly black Africans in Southern Sudan, battled Arab Muslim-dominated government forces. In 1969, General Jafar Numeiri toppled an elected government and established a dictatorship. The South gained extensive autonomy under a 1972 accord, but Numeiri reneged on the deal in 1983 and imposed Sharia (Islamic law), igniting a civil war with the main Southern rebel group, the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA). The fighting lasted until 2004, causing the deaths of an estimated two million people and the displacement of millions more. Numeiri was ousted in 1985, and a civilian government elected in 1986 was overthrown three years later by General Omar al-Bashir. Over the next decade, al-Bashir governed with the support of senior Muslim clerics, including Hassan al-Turabi, who served as leader of the ruling National Congress Party (NCP).

Al-Bashir fired al-Turabi in 1999 and oversaw deeply flawed presidential and parliamentary elections a year later, which the NCP won overwhelmingly. The government ended the civil war with the South in January 2005 by signing the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) with the SPLA and its political arm, the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM). The pact established a power-sharing government, with the NCP retaining a slight majority in the parliament. The CPA also granted autonomy to a Government of Southern Sudan (GoSS), led by the SPLM, and allowed for a referendum on Southern independence to be held after a six-year transitional period. Non-SPLM opponents of the NCP were excluded from the deal. The CPA implementation process suffered a serious setback when longtime SPLM leader John Garang died in a helicopter crash shortly after being sworn in as first vice president in 2005. His deputy, Salva Kiir, became SPLM leader and first vice president.

While the CPA was being negotiated, a separate conflict erupted in Darfur. Rebels from Muslim but non-Arab ethnic groups attacked military positions in 2003, citing discrimination by the Arab-dominated government. In 2004, government-supported Arab militias known as janjaweed began torching villages, massacring the inhabitants, slaughtering and stealing livestock, and raping women and girls. The military also bombed settlements from the air. More than two million civilians were displaced. The scale of the violence led to accusations of genocide by international human rights groups and the United States.

In 2006, the government reached a peace agreement with a faction of the Sudan Liberation Army, one of Darfur's rebel groups. All the other major groups refused to sign the pact, and fighting continued over the subsequent years despite the presence of international peacekeepers. In March 2009, the International Criminal Court (ICC) issued an arrest warrant for al-Bashir on charges of war crimes and crimes against humanity in Darfur.

The focus of the international community shifted from Darfur toward the South as the end of the CPA's interim period approached. Fraught negotiations over the terms of the Southern referendum ended with an agreement that secession would be contingent on a "yes" vote by a simple majority of the Southern electorate, with a turnout of at least 60 percent. The referendum bill also defined who would be able to vote in 2011.

With the ground rules set for the referendum, officials proceeded with delayed national elections, which took place in April 2010. While large sections of the electorate showed an eagerness to participate in the country's first multiparty balloting in 24 years, the process was undermined by intimidation and vote rigging by the NCP in the North and the SPLM in the South. It was further compromised in the North, when the SPLM decided to boycott the presidential election, citing unfair campaign conditions. Other parties, including the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) and Umma, followed suit, extending their boycott to the parliamentary and gubernatorial contests as well.

Voting took place over five days in a largely peaceful fashion. Turnout in Darfur was low due to insecurity and the reluctance of internally displaced persons (IDPs) to participate. Parliamentary elections in Southern Kordofan state were postponed until a new census could be taken.

In the presidential contest, al-Bashir capitalized on the withdrawal of his main rivals, capturing 68 percent of the 9 million votes cast. Yasir Arman of the SPLM placed second, with nearly 22 percent, despite the party's declared withdrawal from the contest. The NCP also swept the parliamentary race, winning 323 of 450 seats—or 73 percent—in the National Assembly, the lower house. That left the SPLM with 99 seats, and smaller parties with the remainder. At the state level, the NCP's dominance was even more overwhelming; it captured 91 percent of the state assembly seats in the North.

The SPLM's victory in the South was similarly crushing. Kiir was elected president of the GoSS, with 93 percent of the vote, and the SPLM won 87 percent of the state assembly seats as well as 9 out of 10 governorships. In the Southern Sudan Legislative Assembly, the SPLM won all but 4 seats; the NCP captured a single seat, the SPLM-Democratic Change won 2 seats, and the final seat went to an independent candidate.

While the United States described the elections as an important milestone, it said they fell short of international standards. The European Union observer mission criticized the dominance of the two main parties and described voter education campaigns as inadequate. African Union monitors said the elections were, "imperfect but historic."

Bolstered by his victory, al-Bashir launched a crackdown on civil liberties in the North. Al-Turabi was arrested once more in May and held for two months without charge. Civil society activists, aid workers, and journalists were harassed and obstructed. Meanwhile, international pressure on al-Bashir mounted in July, when the ICC issued a fresh warrant for his arrest, this time on charges of genocide in Darfur.

In the South, there was sporadic postelection violence, some of it orchestrated by electoral candidates who believed they had been cheated out of victory. Up to 60 people were killed, when a losing candidate in the Jonglei state governor's race mounted an armed rebellion.

After the elections, attention turned to the task of organizing the Southern referendum, scheduled for January 2011. The process, already behind schedule, was further waylaid by arguments about who should sit on the Southern Sudan referendum commission. Despite the challenges, voter registration got under way in November and proceeded smoothly, assisted by the international community. By the end of the registration period in December, 3.9 million Southerners had registered to take part. International observer groups, including the Carter Center, declared the process to have been credible.

A row about voter eligibility deadlocked negotiations on a separate referendum in the contested border enclave of Abyei. Residents there were set to decide whether to join the South or remain in the North. The SPLM accused the NCP of foot-dragging and warned that any effort to derail the referendum would amount to a declaration of war. Both sides acknowledged in December that the Abyei vote would not go ahead as planned.

The prospects of reaching a peace deal in Darfur ebbed and flowed in 2010. A reconciliation pact between Sudan and Chad remained intact, and the two governments stopped using the Darfur border region to sponsor attacks on each other. The most powerful rebel group, the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM), agreed to join long-running talks between the government and various rebel factions in Doha, Qatar, in February. However, it withdrew again in May, accusing the government of continuing to attack its forces.

The security situation on the ground in Darfur sharply deteriorated. The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs recorded more than 2,300 violent deaths during 2010. Fighting between government forces and rebel factions led to 400 deaths in May alone, making it the deadliest month since the UN Mission in Darfur took over from African Union peacekeepers at the end of 2007. The government resumed aerial bombing raids in the region, and clashes between rival factions in one of the largest IDP camps led to the deaths of at least 35 people in July, causing another 25,000 to flee. Separate fighting between Arab groups over land and migration routes caused 157 fatalities in August alone.

Sudan's economy continues to rely on petroleum exports. Oil revenue makes up 98 percent of Southern Sudan's budget and approximately 60 percent of the

North's. While most of Sudan's oil is located in the South, the export infrastructure is in the North. For this reason, the ongoing negotiations over how to divide Sudan's oil revenue after the referendum have assumed critical importance.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Sudan is not an electoral democracy. The transitional government and legislature in place until May 2010 were unelected, and the presidential and legislative elections of April 2010 failed to meet international standards, according to monitors from the United States, the European Union, and Sudan itself.

There were irregularities at every stage of the polls, beginning with the drawing of district boundaries based on census results that overstated the population in areas controlled by the ruling NCP and undercounted opposition strongholds in the South and Darfur. During the voter registration period, there were reports that some people were stopped from registering, while others registered illegally. Insufficient attempts were made to educate citizens about the complex voting procedure.

A total of 72 political parties nominated candidates for the elections, but many of them were not allowed to campaign freely. Candidates seeking to hold public events were forced to register with the authorities 72 hours in advance, and approval was often withheld. State broadcasters restricted access to opposition candidates, placing limits on what they could say. The National Elections Commission was accused by opposition parties of favoring the NCP.

The decision by much of the opposition to boycott the elections cleared the way for resounding wins for the NCP in the North and the SPLM in the South. Both parties used intimidation, and in some cases violence, to ensure victory, particularly the SPLM. Non-SPLM candidates in the South were detained and prevented from campaigning, and voters were threatened. The voting period was plagued by irregularities. Voter rolls were inaccurate or incomplete, polling stations in some constituencies failed to open, and there were reports of the NCP handing cash to voters. Domestic observers were denied access to polling stations in Khartoum and other areas in the North. Moreover, ballot boxes in some districts were mislaid or tampered with. Observers expressed concerns about the vote-counting process; the Carter Center described the procedure as, "non-transparent," and, "vulnerable to electoral manipulation."

The elections had the effect of sharpening the political polarization between North and South. The NCP dominated the new government in Khartoum. Although SPLM leader and GoSS president Salva Kiir retained his position as the country's first vice president, the SPLM's representation in the 450-seat lower house of parliament, the National Assembly, was slashed from 126 to 99, and NCP ministers took 26 of the 35 seats in the cabinet. In the GoSS, the SPLM took 30 of the 32 cabinet posts. The national parliament's 50-seat upper chamber, the Council of States, was indirectly elected by the new state legislatures in May, and comprises 32 NCP and 18 SPLM members. The winners of the presidential and parliamentary elections will all serve five-year terms.

Sudan is considered one of the world's most corrupt states. The NCP tightly controls the national economy and uses the wealth it has amassed in banking and business to buy political support. During the 2010 elections, there were widespread reports that the NCP paid rival candidates to withdraw from the polls. Two NCP

members were accused of setting up a Ponzi scheme that defrauded more than 40,000 people in North Darfur state. Victims of the scam demonstrated outside the governor's residence in Al-Fashir, but police opened fire on the crowd, killing 17 people. Corruption and nepotism are also serious problems in the GoSS, whose institutions are chronically weak. However, the government has set up an anticorruption commission that recovered approximately \$5 million in misappropriated funds in 2010.

The 2005 interim constitution recognizes freedom of the press, but the media face significant obstacles in practice. The 2009 Press and Publication Act allows a government-appointed Press Council to prevent publication or broadcast of material it deems unsuitable, temporarily shut down newspapers, and impose heavy fines on those who break the rules. In the North, the NCP government launched a crackdown on the media following the April 2010 elections. Newspaper editors were forced to submit their articles for approval by the National Intelligence and Security Services (NISS) between May and August, and six papers were forced to cancel editions after their articles were rejected. Hassan al-Turabi's newspaper, *Al-Rai al-Sha 'ab*, was closed in May, and four staff members were arrested. Three of them were ultimately convicted of "attempting to destabilize the constitutional system," receiving prison sentences of up to five years each. The daily paper *Al-Intibaha* had its license suspended from July to October, after being accused of campaigning for Southern secession. Separately in July, journalists were told to complete questionnaires demanding information about their political views and about their friends and families. In October, police raided the Khartoum offices of Radio Dabanga, a major source of news on Darfur, and arrested 13 people.

Despite the deteriorating media environment, numerous privately owned dailies and weeklies were able to provide a range of views, including those of the opposition and the GoSS. International media are generally accessible, particularly in the South. However, the government in Khartoum suspended the license of the British Broadcasting Corporation's Arabic service in August, accusing it of smuggling satellite equipment into the country. Authorities also refused to renew the license of Radio France Internationale's Arabic service.

There is generally greater press freedom in Southern Sudan than in the North. Nevertheless, journalists considered unfriendly to the SPLM face harassment and, in some cases, arrest. Two radio stations in Juba were raided in March 2010, after they broadcast an interview with an independent candidate. In October, the Southern Sudan Union of Journalists criticized restrictions placed on the reporting of political developments on the border with the North.

Religious freedom, though guaranteed by the 2005 interim constitution, is not upheld in the North. Northern states, which are predominantly Sunni Muslim, are subject to Sharia, unlike those in the South, where most people follow Christianity or traditional religions. The North-South conflict was characterized as jihad by the Khartoum government, and in some cases, non-Muslims were forced to convert to Islam. The Christian minority in the North continues to face discrimination. In June 2010, police detained eight people for two days for holding a religious ceremony at their home in the Nuba Mountains without permission. The United States in 2010 renewed its designation of Sudan as a "country of particular concern" for its violations of religious freedom. The GoSS generally respects religious freedom.

Respect for academic freedom is limited. The government administers public universities, monitors appointments, and sets the curriculum. Authorities do not directly control private universities, but self-censorship among instructors is common.

Freedom of assembly is restricted. The authorities routinely withheld permission for opposition rallies and other political meetings during the election campaign. A demonstration in June 2010 by students at Khartoum University in support of a doctors' strike was broken up by police. At least a dozen people were injured. In October, riot police clashed with a crowd of demonstrators holding a rally in favor of Southern secession.

The operating environment for nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) remained difficult in 2010, particularly in Darfur, where aid workers faced obstruction from the government and rebel groups. Two German aid workers were kidnapped in Darfur in May and held for more than a month before being released. An American employee of another NGO was held hostage for more than 100 days in Darfur before being released in August.

Trade union rights are minimal, and there are no independent unions. The Sudan Workers Trade Unions Federation has been co-opted by the government. Six doctors were arrested in June 2010 and held without charge until the end of the month for organizing a strike to protest low pay and poor working conditions.

The judiciary is not independent. Lower courts provide some due process safeguards, but the higher courts are subject to political control, and special security and military courts do not apply accepted legal standards. Sudanese criminal law is based on Sharia and allows punishments such as flogging and amputation, although such laws apply only to Northern, Muslim states.

The National Security Act, which took effect in January 2010, gives the NISS sweeping authority to seize property, conduct surveillance, search premises, and detain suspects for up to four and a half months without judicial review. The police and security forces routinely exceed these broad powers, carrying out arbitrary arrests and holding people at secret locations without access to lawyers or their relatives. Human rights groups accuse the NISS of systematically detaining and torturing opponents of the government, including Darfuri activists, journalists, and members of the student movement Girifna. Amnesty International documented at least 34 such cases in the first half of 2010.

It is widely accepted that the government has directed and assisted the systematic killing of tens or even hundreds of thousands of people in Darfur since 2003, including through its support for militia groups that have terrorized civilians. Human rights groups have documented the widespread use of rape, the organized burning of villages, and the forced displacement of entire communities. The GoSS has struggled to provide basic security in the South, leaving communities exposed to violence by rival ethnic groups or clans, and by external forces such as the Lord's Resistance Army of neighboring Uganda. The GoSS has done little to address the proliferation of small arms in the South.

Female politicians and activists play a role in public life in Sudan, and women were guaranteed a quarter of the seats in the new National Assembly. In daily life, however, women face extensive discrimination. Islamic law denies Northern women equitable rights in marriage, inheritance, and divorce. Female genital mutilation is widely practiced.

The U.S. State Department considers Sudan to be a source, transit, and destination country for persons trafficked for forced labor and sexual exploitation. The Sudanese military, Darfur rebel groups, and Southern Sudanese forces continue to use child soldiers, although the SPLA pledged to end the practice by the end of 2010.

Suriname

Political Rights: 2

Population: 520,000

Civil Liberties: 2

Capital: Paramaribo

Status: Free

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline For Year Under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
1,2F	1,2F	1,2F	1,2F	2,2F	2,2F	2,2F	2,2F	2,2F	2,2F

Overview: The May 2010 parliamentary elections were led by a coalition consisting of former dictator Desiré Bouterse's National Democratic Party and three smaller parties. Bouterse was subsequently elected president in July. The murder trial against him for the 1982 execution of 15 political opponents was suspended in October. As president, he will not be required to testify and he could engineer a pardon if convicted.

The Republic of Suriname achieved independence from the Netherlands in 1975, after more than three centuries of colonial rule. The 1980 military coup led by Desiré Bouterse established a regime that brutally suppressed civic and political opposition and initiated a decade of military intervention in politics. In 1987, Bouterse permitted elections, which were handily won by the center-right New Front for Democracy and Development (NF), a coalition of mainly East Indian, Creole, and Javanese parties. The National Democratic Party (NDP), organized by the military, won just 3 out of 51 seats in the National Assembly.

The army ousted the elected government in 1990, and Bouterse again took power in a bloodless coup. International pressure led to new elections in 1991. The NF won a majority in parliament, and the NF's candidate, Ronald Venetiaan, was selected as president. Bouterse quit the army in 1992 in order to lead the NDP. In the 2000 legislative elections, the NF again secured a strong majority of seats.

In 2001, Fred Derby—the star witness in the trial of Bouterse and others for 15 political killings committed in December 1982—suffered a fatal heart attack that initially appeared to rob the prosecution of key testimony. However, the government vowed that testimony given by Derby during a preliminary hearing would be submitted at trial.

In 2004, the NF government's fiscal austerity program helped to stabilize prices and the economy, though the policy's negative side effects led to increased voter discontent. In the May 2005 elections, the NF managed to remain the single largest political force, although its failure to win a two-thirds majority in the National Assembly prevented it from electing a president. In August, a United People's

Assembly consisting of 891 members—including national, regional, and local lawmakers—gave Venetiaan his third term as president, with 560 votes for the incumbent to 315 for the NDP's Rabindre Parmessar.

In 2007, Suriname's courts ordered officials to proceed with the long-delayed prosecution of Bouterse and nine other suspects for the 1982 "December murders." Bouterse denied involvement in the killings, although in March 2007, he accepted political responsibility while offering a public apology. The trial, which is regarded as a landmark test for Suriname's judicial system, began in November 2008, and has since dominated the political debate. In 2009, following frequent delays, the trial advanced, featuring the testimony of six bystanders who had fled the country and settled in the Netherlands after witnessing the executions.

Bouterse's Mega Combination coalition—comprising the NDP and three smaller parties—won legislative elections held in May 2010, capturing 40 percent of the vote and 23 seats in parliament. The NF placed second, with approximately 32 percent of the vote and 14 seats. In the July presidential election, Bouterse was elected with 70.6 percent of the vote, defeating NF candidate Chandrikapersad Santokhi. As president, Bouterse has the power to grant amnesty to those involved in the 1982 murders, but the charges had not been dropped by year's end. Some analysts fear that as president, Bouterse would not be required to testify or that he could use his elected position to receive a pardon. However, the trial was suspended again in October, when 19 defense witnesses failed to appear.

Foreign relations remained contentious for the remainder of 2010, with only Bharrat Jagdeo, neighboring Guyana's president, in attendance at Bouterse's inauguration. International travel was also difficult for Bouterse, with an Interpol warrant out for his arrest and a drug-trafficking conviction in the Netherlands still outstanding. However, he remained protected from arrest, because Suriname does not have an extradition treaty.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Suriname is an electoral democracy. The Organization of American States reported that the 2010 legislative and presidential elections met international standards. The 1987 constitution provides for a unicameral, 51-seat National Assembly, elected by proportional representation for five-year terms. The body elects the president to five-year terms with a two-thirds majority. If it is unable to do so, a United People's Assembly—consisting of lawmakers from the national, regional, and local levels—convenes to choose the president by a simple majority. A Council of State (Raad van State) made up of the president and representatives of major societal groupings—including labor unions, business, the military, and the legislature—has veto power over legislation deemed to violate the constitution.

Political parties largely reflect the cleavages in Suriname's ethnically diverse society, although political-racial discord is much less acute than in neighboring Guyana. Suriname's major parties include the NDP, the National Party Suriname (NPS), and the People's Alliance for Progress (VVP). The NF is a coalition of the NPS and several smaller parties.

Suriname has been plagued by corruption cases in recent years, and organized crime and drug networks continue to hamper governance. In December 2010, President Desiré Bouterse fired Martinus Sastroedjo, his minister of spatial plan-

ning, land, and forestry management, after Sastroredjo refused to resign over a controversy involving his wife and a land application.

The constitution provides for freedoms of expression and of the press, and the government generally respects these rights in practice. Some media outlets engage in occasional self-censorship due to fear of reprisal from members of the former military leadership or pressure from senior government officials and others who object to critical stories about the administration. However, the trial of Bouterse for the "December murders" has been freely covered by the local press. There are two privately owned daily newspapers, *De Ware Tijd* and *De West*. A number of small commercial radio stations compete with the government-owned radio and television broadcasting systems, resulting in a generally pluralistic range of viewpoints. Public access to government information is legally recognized, although it is very limited in practice. The government does not restrict access to the internet, and it is becoming more accessible.

The authorities generally respect freedom of religion and do not infringe on academic freedom. Freedoms of assembly and association are provided for by the constitution, and the government respects these rights in practice. Although civic institutions remain weak, human rights organizations function freely. Workers can join independent trade unions, though civil servants have no legal right to strike. Collective bargaining is legal and conducted fairly widely. The labor movement is active in politics.

The judiciary is susceptible to political influence and suffers from a significant shortage of judges and a large backlog of cases. In 2009, the Ministry of Justice and Police added six new judges in order to address the shortage. The courts and prisons are seriously overburdened by the volume of people detained for narcotics trafficking. Police abuse detainees, particularly during arrests, and prison guards mistreat inmates. Suriname is a signatory to the 2001 agreement establishing the Trinidad-based Caribbean Court of Justice (CCJ) as the final venue of appeal for member states of the Caribbean Community, but has yet to ratify the CCJ as its own final court of appeal. Suriname is a major transit point for cocaine en route to Europe, and poor law enforcement capabilities have resulted in a rising tide of drug money entering the country.

Discrimination against indigenous and tribal groups is widespread, and Surinamese law offers such groups no special protection or recognition. As a result, Amerindians, who live mostly outside urban areas, have only a marginal ability to participate in decisions affecting their lands, cultures, traditions, and natural resources. Tribal people known as Maroons are the descendants of escaped African slaves who formed autonomous communities in the interior during the 17th and 18th centuries. Their rights to lands and resources, cultural integrity, and the autonomous administration of their affairs are not recognized in Surinamese law. In September 2009, around 65 Guyanese migrants were forcefully deported from the western districts of Suriname during "Operation Koetai." The deportations, while aimed at cracking down on smuggling and other illegal border activity, fueled tensions between Guyana and Suriname. However, a November 2010 agreement to seek Chinese investment to build a bridge between the two countries indicated that the incident had not damaged relations.

Constitutional guarantees of gender equality are not adequately enforced. De-

spite their central role in agriculture and food production, 60 percent of rural women, particularly those in tribal communities, live below the poverty level. Human trafficking remains a problem, and the country lacks a comprehensive law specifically banning the practice. However, several organizations address violence against women and related issues.

↓ Swaziland

Political Rights: 7
Civil Liberties: 5
Status: Not Free

Population: 1,200,000
Capital: Mbabane

Trend Arrow: Swaziland received a downward trend arrow due to a major crackdown on oppositionist and prodemocracy groups before and during organized demonstrations in September 2010.

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline For Year Under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
6,5NF	6,5NF	7,5NF							

Overview: In September 2010, prodemocracy demonstrations in Manzini were preceded and followed by a state-sponsored crackdown on oppositionist activists, including trade unionists and members of banned political parties.

Swaziland regained its independence from Britain in 1968, and an elected Parliament was added to the traditional monarchy. In 1973, King Sobhuza II repealed the 1968 constitution, ended the multiparty system in favor of a tinkhundla (local council) system, and declared himself an absolute monarch. After Sobhuza's death in 1982, a protracted power struggle ended with the coronation of King Mswati III in 1986.

A new constitution implemented in 2006 removed the king's ability to rule by decree, but reaffirmed his absolute authority over the cabinet, Parliament, and judiciary. It also maintained the tinkhundla system—in which local chiefs control elections for 55 of the 65 seats in the House of Assembly, the lower house of Parliament—and did not overturn the ban on political parties. The charter provided for limited freedoms of speech, assembly, and association, as well as limited rights for women, but the king could suspend those rights at his discretion.

Also in 2006, 16 members of the prodemocracy People's United Democratic Movement (PUDEMO) were arrested and charged in connection to bomb attacks in 2005, but all were later freed on bail. In 2008, there were over 10 bomb attacks on government targets, and while there were no official or civilian casualties, the September blast killed one of the bombers, a member of PUDEMO. The government subsequently banned PUDEMO, along with four other groups, under the newly enacted Suppression of Terrorism Act (STA). PUDEMO leader Mario Masuku was also arrested on charges of terrorism and sedition, but was acquitted in 2009 for lack of evidence.

In September 2010, the Swaziland Federation of Trade Unions (SFTU) and the Swaziland Democracy Campaign—a coalition of prodemocracy groups—organized two days of protests in Manzini against the monarchy, calling for political, civil, and economic reforms. Security personnel forcibly dispersed the demonstrations and detained some 50 activists, though most were released shortly thereafter. According to Amnesty International, two trade union officials, a number of PUDEMO leaders, and members of the Open Society Institute for Southern Africa were among those arrested. In the months preceding the demonstrations, several activists were harassed, threatened, or detained by security forces under the STA, and were reportedly subject to torture and ill-treatment under interrogation. Activists were also reportedly under intense surveillance, had their homes and offices searched (sometimes without warrants), and were subject to searches at roadblocks.

Swaziland has the world's highest rate of HIV infection, with estimates ranging between 26 and 33 percent of the sexually active population. In 2010, about 30,000 Swazis were receiving antiretroviral drug treatment, out of an estimated 60,000 who require it. Swaziland also has the highest rate of tuberculosis infection, which aggravated by HIV/AIDS, remains the country's leading cause of death.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Swaziland is not an electoral democracy. King Mswati III is an absolute monarch with ultimate authority over the cabinet, legislature, and judiciary. Of the House of Assembly's 65 members, 55 are elected by popular vote within the tinkhundla system, in which local chiefs vet all candidates. The king appoints the other 10 members. The king also appoints 20 members of the 30-seat Senate, with the remainder selected by the House of Assembly. Parliament members, all of whom serve five-year terms, are not allowed to initiate legislation. Traditional chiefs govern designated localities and typically report directly to the king.

Political parties are illegal, but there are political associations, the two largest being the banned PUDEMO and the Ngwane National Liberatory Congress (NNLC). Prodemocracy groups and PUDEMO boycotted the 2008 House of Assembly elections.

Corruption is a major problem. The monarchy spends lavishly, despite the largely impoverished population, and members of Parliament engage in fraud and graft. According to the Coordinating Assembly for Nongovernmental Organizations, an estimated \$6 million in potential government revenue is lost each month due to corruption. A 2010 Elections and Boundaries Commission report cited the wide use of vote buying and "treating"—whereby voters were entertained in exchange for their votes—in the 2008 elections. Swaziland was ranked 91 out of 178 countries surveyed in Transparency International's 2010 Corruption Perceptions Index.

The king can suspend constitutional rights to free expression at his discretion, and these rights are severely restricted in practice, especially with respect to the discussion of political issues. Publishing criticism of the ruling family is also banned. Self-censorship is widespread, as journalists are routinely subject to threats and attacks by the authorities. In January 2010, the government banned the *Times of Swaziland* from running a column by PUDEMO leader Mario Masuku. In July, a prince closely aligned to King Mswati stated that journalists who criticize the country should "die," and palace officials accused critical journalists of being paid by foreign forces. The attorney general and other officials have also threatened journalists with

arrest under the STA. South African media are available, and both the *Swazi Observer* and the independent *Times of Swaziland* occasionally criticize the government. The country's only independent radio station broadcasts religious programming; four radio stations that had received operating licenses in 2008 had them revoked in 2009. The government does not restrict access to the internet, but few Swazis can afford access. However, authorities in December 2010 reportedly blocked access to PUDEMO's website, which had been hosting a poll on whether the country should hold multi-party elections.

Freedom of religion is not explicitly protected under the constitution, but is respected in practice. While Swazis criticize the government in private discussions, they are less free to criticize the monarchy itself, which has effectively limited academic freedom.

The government has restricted freedoms of assembly and association, and permission to hold political gatherings has often been denied. Prodemocracy protesters are routinely dispersed and arrested by police. The government has sweeping powers under the STA to declare any organization a "terrorist group," a practice that has reportedly been widely abused by authorities. Police harassment and surveillance of civil society organizations has also increased in recent years.

Swaziland has active labor unions, and the largest labor organization, the SFTU, has continued to lead demands for democratization. However, government pressure and crackdowns on strikes have greatly limited union operations. In addition, the government is the country's largest employer, and recent retrenchments in the public sector have spurred increased activism on the part of government employees. Workers in all areas of the economy, including the public sector, can join unions, and 80 percent of the private workforce is unionized.

The dual judicial system includes courts based on Roman-Dutch law and traditional courts using customary law. The judiciary is independent in most civil cases, although the king has ultimate judicial powers, and the royal family and government often refuse to respect rulings with which they disagree. However, the Swazi High Court has made a number of notable antigovernment rulings in recent years.

According to the U.S. State Department, there were numerous incidents of police torture, beatings, and suspicious deaths in custody in 2010. In May, prodemocracy activist and PUDEMO member Siphon Jele died under suspicious circumstances following his arrest by police under the STA. Security forces generally operate with impunity. During the September crackdown, police raided the rural home of PUDEMO deputy president Sikhumbuzo Phakathi ahead of his arrest. Prisons are overcrowded, and inmates are subject to torture, beatings, rape, and a lack of sanitation. The spread of HIV/AIDS also remains a major problem in Swazi prisons. While the constitution prohibits torture, the ban is not enforceable in court.

The constitution grants women equal rights and legal status as adults, but these rights remain restricted in practice. While both the legal code and customary law provide some protection against gender-based violence, it is common and often tolerated with impunity. The Central Statistics Office reported in 2008 that 60 percent of men believed it acceptable to beat their wives, while 18 percent of females between 13 and 44 years old had contemplated suicide, primarily as a result of domestic violence. A 2007 survey found that one-third of Swazi women had been subjected to sexual violence, and two-thirds had been beaten or abused.

Sweden

Political Rights: 1

Population: 9,400,000

Civil Liberties: 1

Capital: Stockholm

Status: Free

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline For Year Under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
1,1F									

Overview: Fredrik Reinfeldt's center-right governing coalition retained power in the September 2010 parliamentary elections, but failed to capture a parliamentary majority. The controversial right-wing party Swedish Democrats entered Parliament for the first time with 20 seats.

After centuries of wars and monarchical unions with its neighbors, Sweden emerged as a liberal constitutional monarchy in the 19th century. Norway ended its union with the country in 1905, leaving Sweden with its current borders. Its tradition of neutrality, beginning with World War I, was altered somewhat by its admission to the European Union (EU) in 1995 and was further eroded by a more pragmatic approach to security presented in 2002. However, Sweden has continued to avoid military alliances, including NATO.

Voters rejected adoption of the euro in a 2003 referendum, despite support from government and business leaders. The rejection was attributed to skepticism about the EU and fears regarding the possible deterioration of welfare benefits and damage to the economy. Just days before the referendum, Foreign Minister Anna Lindh was killed in a knife attack in Stockholm. Her killer, a Swedish national of Serbian descent who had no clear political agenda, was sentenced to life in prison.

In the 2006 parliamentary elections, a four-party, center-right alliance headed by Fredrik Reinfeldt of the Moderate Party defeated the Social Democratic Party (SAP), which had been in power for 12 years.

Parliament passed the Signals Intelligence Act in 2008, giving Sweden's National Defense Radio Establishment the authority to wiretap communication without a court order. Following widespread public protest, the law was changed to allow wiretapping only in cases where external military threats were suspected. While the law went into effect in January 2009, continued protest led Parliament to pass an amended version of the bill in October. Among other changes, the weakened legislation specifies that only the government and military can request surveillance and that those who have been monitored must be notified.

In the September 2010 parliamentary elections, Reinfeldt won a second term as prime minister, though his coalition failed to win an outright majority and would instead rule as a minority government. The four parties in his coalition captured a total of 173 seats: the Moderate Party won 107 seats; the Center Party, 23 seats; the Liberal Party (FP), 24 seats; and the Christian Democrats (KD), 19. The SAP

took 112 seats, while the Green Party (MP) captured 25 seats and the Left Party (VP) won 19. The controversial right-wing Swedish Democrats (SD) entered Parliament for the first time with 20 seats, though the other seven parties represented in Parliament vowed not to rely on the SD for significant votes, which left the party politically isolated. While the SD faced criticism during the elections for failing to distance itself sufficiently from the openly anti-immigration right, the party has transformed itself over the last decade from a marginal political movement to a professional party with a country-wide organizational structure.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Sweden is an electoral democracy. The unicameral Parliament, the Riksdag, has 349 members elected every four years by proportional representation. A party must receive at least 4 percent of the vote nationwide, or 12 percent in 1 of the 29 electoral districts to win representation. The prime minister is appointed by the Speaker of the Riksdag and confirmed by the body as a whole. King Carl XVI Gustaf, crowned in 1973, is the ceremonial head of state.

Eight political parties are currently represented in the Riksdag. The largest is the SAP, also known as the Workers' Party, which ruled for most of the last century with the aid of the VP and, in the later decades, the MP.

The country's principal religious, ethnic, and immigrant groups are represented in Parliament. Since 1993, the indigenous Sami community has elected its own parliament, which has significant powers over community education and culture and serves as an advisory body to the government.

Corruption rates are low in Sweden, which was ranked 4 out of 178 countries surveyed in Transparency International's 2010 Corruption Perceptions Index.

Freedom of speech is guaranteed by law, and the country has one of the most robust freedom of information statutes in the world. However, hate-speech laws prohibit threats or expressions of contempt based on race, color, national or ethnic origin, religious belief, or sexual orientation. In August 2010, the commercial television station TV4 was heavily criticized for refusing to air a campaign video for the Swedish Democrats, citing the hate-speech laws. The video featured an elderly lady with a walker being outrun by a group of burqa-clad women in a race to a pile of tax money. An amended version—in which controversial images were removed, but the soundtrack remained the same—aired later that same month.

Sweden's media are independent. Most newspapers and periodicals are privately owned, and the government subsidizes daily newspapers regardless of their political affiliation. Public broadcasters air weekly radio and television programs in several immigrant languages. The ethnic press is entitled to the same subsidies as the Swedish-language press. Under the Intellectual Property Rights Enforcement Directive law, which came into effect in April 2009, internet service providers must reveal information about users found to be engaged in illegal file sharing. However, the first case was referred to the European Court of Justice to determine whether the law is in accordance with wider European law on privacy and data protection.

Religious freedom is constitutionally guaranteed. Although the population is 87 percent Lutheran, all churches, as well as synagogues and mosques, receive some state financial support. While reported hate crimes against the Jewish community

declined by 13 percent in 2010, those targeting Muslims increased by the same percentage during the year. Academic freedom is ensured for all.

Freedoms of assembly and association are respected in law and in practice. In 2010, major peaceful protests were staged in Stockholm in September and October against the SD and racism. The rights to strike and organize in labor unions are guaranteed. Trade union federations, which represent about 80 percent of the workforce, are strong and well organized. The Swedish labor code was amended in April 2010, after the European Court of Justice ruled that employees posted to the Swedish branches of foreign companies are subject to their home country's collective agreements, and not those of Swedish unions. The new arrangement allegedly undermines the right to strike, according to Swedish unions.

The judiciary is independent. Swedish courts are allowed to try suspects for genocide committed abroad. The government maintains effective control of the police and armed forces.

In 2007, Sweden changed its immigration policy, disallowing family reunification for "quota refugees." Family members must now apply separately for visas. A new Equality Ombudsman position was created in 2008 to oversee efforts to prevent discrimination on the basis of gender, ethnicity, disability, and sexual orientation, and a permanent national hate-crime police unit was established in April 2009. Demonstrations and counterdemonstrations were sparked in November 2009, after a youth hostel in Vellinge was turned into temporary housing for children seeking asylum. In 2010, difficulties continued as the government tried to persuade municipalities to house young refugees.

Gay couples were legally allowed to adopt for the first time in 2003. The country granted lesbian couples the same rights to artificial insemination and in vitro fertilization as heterosexual couples in 2005.

Sweden is a global leader in gender equality. Approximately 45 percent of Riksdag members are women. Of the 24 government ministers, 11 are women. Although 80 percent of women work outside of the home, they still earn only 70 percent of men's wages in the public sector and 76 percent in the private sector. The country is a destination and transit point for women and children trafficked for the purpose of sexual exploitation. The 2004 Aliens Act helped to provide more assistance to trafficking victims, and a special ambassador has been appointed to aid in combating human trafficking. Under Sweden's Sex Purchase Act, the purchase of sexual services is illegal, with punishments of up to six months in prison.

Switzerland

Political Rights: 1

Population: 7,800,000

Civil Liberties: 1

Capital: Bern

Status: Free

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline For Year Under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2005	2007	2008	2009	2010
1;1F									

Overview: In the September 2010 by-elections for the Swiss Federal Council, women captured a majority of seats for the first time. Approximately 53 percent of Swiss voters approved a controversial referendum in November, mandating the automatic deportation of foreigners convicted of certain crimes.

Switzerland, which has existed as a confederation of cantons since 1291, emerged with its current borders and a tradition of neutrality at the end of the Napoleonic wars in 1815. The country's four official ethnic communities are based on language: German, French, Italian, and Romansh (the smallest community).

Switzerland remained neutral during the wars of the 20th century, and it joined the United Nations only after a referendum in 2002. Membership in international institutions has long been a controversial issue in Switzerland. The Swiss have resisted joining the European Union (EU), and even rejected membership in the European Economic Area, a free-trade area that links non-EU members with the EU. However, Switzerland has joined international financial institutions and signed a range of free-trade agreements.

Hostility to both EU membership and immigration has been a hallmark of the right-wing Swiss People's Party (SVP). During the 2003 legislative elections, the SVP made blatantly xenophobic appeals, while insisting that it was not opposed to legal immigrants. The SVP led the vote, followed closely by the center-left Social Democratic Party (SP). The center-right Christian Democratic People's Party (CVP) received barely half the number of SVP seats. Christoph Blocher, leader of the SVP, successfully called for a second SVP seat on the seven-member Federal Council, at the expense of the CVP.

A package of bilateral accords with the EU was passed in a June 2005 referendum. Switzerland agreed to join the Schengen area, a passport-free travel zone consisting of 2 other non-EU countries (Norway and Iceland) and 13 of the 25 EU member states. The accord also deepened Switzerland's cooperation with the EU on asylum policy, justice, and home affairs. A second referendum in September extended the free movement of labor to the 10 countries that had joined the EU in 2004.

The SVP opposed both referendums, and their passage led to speculation that the party had passed its political peak. However, the SVP successfully championed a 2006 referendum on tightening asylum and immigration laws. The new laws required asylum seekers to produce an identity document within 48 hours of arrival or

risk repatriation, effectively limiting immigration to those coming from EU countries; prospective immigrants from outside the EU would have to possess skills lacking in the Swiss economy.

In the October 2007 legislative elections, the SVP captured 29 percent of the vote, more than any party since 1919. The SP captured 19.5 percent, while the Free Democratic Party (FDP) took 15.6 percent, its worst-ever performance. The SVP campaign received international attention for its anti-immigrant appeals, and an SVP rally and counterdemonstration in Bern resulted in violence rarely seen in Switzerland.

In December 2007, the SVP formally placed itself in opposition to the government after the parliament refused to reappoint Blocher to the cabinet, choosing instead Eveline Widmer-Schlumpf, from the party's more moderate wing. The SVP subsequently expelled Widmer-Schlumpf, who then became part of the new moderate-right Bourgeois-Democratic Party. At the end of the year, however, the SVP returned to the cabinet.

Following successful petitioning by the SVP, a referendum calling for a ban on the future construction of minarets on mosques was held in November 2009. Despite government opposition, nearly 58 percent of the population and 22 out of 26 cantons voted in favor of the ban, effectively prohibiting the future construction of minarets at the constitutional level. However, the four mosques with existing minarets would not be affected. In November 2010, a referendum mandating the automatic deportation of foreigners convicted of certain crimes passed with 53 percent of the vote; previously, judges could determine whether to order deportation on a case-by-case basis. Both referendums met with considerable domestic and international criticism. Switzerland, a major banking center, was hit hard by the global financial crisis in 2008, leading to renewed international criticism of the country's strict bank secrecy laws. In 2009, Switzerland agreed to adopt international transparency standards established by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) by providing foreign governments with financial information in tax evasion cases and tax fraud investigations. In 2010, Switzerland reached tax agreements with Germany, the United Kingdom, and the United States, most of which involved untaxed money held in Swiss bank accounts.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Switzerland is an electoral democracy. The 1848 constitution, significantly revised in 1874 and 2000, provides for a Federal Assembly with two directly elected chambers: the Council of States (in which each canton has two members and each half-canton has one) and the 200-member National Council. All lawmakers serve four-year terms. The Federal Council (cabinet) is a seven-person executive council, with each member elected by the Federal Assembly. The presidency is largely ceremonial and rotates annually among the Federal Council's members.

The Swiss political system is characterized by decentralization and direct democracy. The cantons and half-cantons have significant control over economic and social policy, with the federal government's powers largely limited to foreign affairs and some economic matters. Referendums are common; any measure that modifies the constitution must be put to a referendum. A new or revised law must also be put to a referendum and requires 50,000 signatures in favor of doing so. Voters

may even initiate legislation themselves with 100,000 signatures. The main political parties have long been the SVP, the SP, the right-wing and free-market FDP, and the CVP. The new Bourgeois-Democratic Party constituted itself formally at the national level in 2008.

The government is free from pervasive corruption. As the world's largest off-shore financial center, the country had long been criticized for failing to comply with recommended international norms on money laundering and terrorist financing. However, Switzerland has reached bilateral deals with several countries on financial information sharing and was removed from the OECD's "grey list" of tax havens in 2009. Switzerland was ranked 8 out of 178 countries surveyed in Transparency International's 2010 Corruption Perceptions Index.

Freedom of expression is guaranteed by the constitution. Switzerland has a free media environment, although the state-owned Swiss Broadcasting Corporation dominates the broadcast market. Consolidation of newspaper ownership in large media conglomerates has forced the closure of some small and local newspapers. The penal code prohibits public incitement to racial hatred or discrimination. While criticized, the SVP was permitted to circulate both a controversial poster in 2009 in support of the minaret ban and another in 2010 depicting Italian and Romany workers as rats, eating away at Swiss cheese. Internet access is unrestricted.

Freedom of religion is guaranteed by the constitution, and most cantons support one or several churches. The country is split roughly between Roman Catholicism and Protestantism, though some 400,000 Muslims form the largest non-Christian minority, according to the 2000 census. A 2008 law requires that immigrant clerics receive integration training, including language instruction, before practicing. Most public schools provide religious education, depending on the predominant creed in each canton. Religion classes are mandatory in some schools, although waivers are regularly granted on request. The government respects academic freedom.

Freedoms of assembly and association are upheld in practice, and civil society is especially active in Switzerland. The right to collective bargaining is respected, and roughly one-third of the workforce is unionized.

The judiciary is independent, and the rule of law prevails in civil and criminal matters. Most judicial decisions are made at the cantonal level, except for the federal Supreme Court, which reviews cantonal court decisions when they pertain to federal law. Refusal to perform military service is a criminal offense for males. Prison conditions are generally acceptable, although some incidents of police discrimination and excessive use of force have been documented. An independent 12-member National Commission for the Prevention of Torture was appointed in 2009 by the Federal Council to conduct prison inspections.

The rights of cultural, religious, and linguistic minorities are legally protected, though increasing anxiety about the large foreign-born population has led to a tightening of asylum laws and societal discrimination, especially against non-European immigrants and their descendants. The mosque in Geneva was vandalized three times in the lead-up to the 2009 referendum on the construction of minarets.

Women were only granted universal suffrage at the federal level in 1971, and the half-canton of Appenzell-Innerrhoden denied women the right to vote until 1990. The constitution guarantees men and women equal pay for work of equal value, but pay differentials remain. In the September 2010 by-elections for the Federal Coun-

cil, women captured a majority of seats for first time. Additionally, 59 women sit on the 200-member National Council, surpassing the European average. Abortion in the first 12 weeks of pregnancy was decriminalized following a 2002 referendum. Switzerland was ranked 10 out of 134 countries surveyed in the World Economic Forum's 2010 Gender Gap Report, which analyzes equality in the division of resources and opportunities between men and women.

Syria

Political Rights: 7

Population: 22,500,000

Civil Liberties: 6

Capital: Damascus

Status: Not Free

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline For Year Under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
7,7NF	7,7NF	7,7NF	7,7NF	7,7NF	7,6NF	7,6NF	7,6NF	7,6NF	7,6NF

Overview: While Syria's first lady promoted the development of civil society activity in apolitical fields in 2010, the authorities continued to impose harsh restrictions on fundamental human rights. Those subjected to monitoring, intimidation, and imprisonment during the year included journalists, dissident writers, suspected Islamists, Kurdish activists, and gay men.

The modern state of Syria was established as a League of Nations mandate under French control after World War I and gained formal independence in 1946. Periods of military and elected civilian rule alternated, until the Arab Socialist Baath Party seized power in a 1963 coup, transforming Syria into a one-party state governed under emergency law. During the 1960s, power shifted from the party's civilian ideologues to army officers, most of whom belonged to Syria's Alawite minority (adherents of an Islamic sect who make up 12 percent of the population). This trend culminated in General Hafez al-Assad's rise to power in 1970.

The regime cultivated a base of support that spanned sectarian and ethnic divisions, but relied on Alawite domination of the security establishment and the suppression of dissent. In 1982, government forces stormed the northern city of Hama to crush a rebellion by the opposition Muslim Brotherhood, killing as many as 20,000 insurgents and civilians.

Bashar al-Assad took power after his father's death in 2000, pledging to liberalize Syria's politics and economy. The first six months of his presidency featured the release of political prisoners, the return of exiled dissidents, and open discussion of the country's problems. In February 2001, however, the regime began to reverse this so-called Damascus Spring. Leading reformists were arrested and sentenced to lengthy prison terms, while others faced constant surveillance and intimidation by the secret police.

Reinvigorated by the toppling of Iraq's Baathist regime in a U.S.-led invasion in

2003, Syria's secular and Islamist dissidents began cooperating and pushing for the release of political prisoners, the cancellation of the state of emergency, and the legalization of opposition parties. Syria's Kurdish minority erupted into eight days of rioting in March 2004. At least 30 people were killed, as security forces suppressed the riots and made some 2,000 arrests.

Despite hints that sweeping political reforms would be drafted at a major Baath Party conference in 2005, no substantial measures were taken. In October 2005, representatives of all three segments of the opposition—the Islamists, the Kurds, and secular liberals—signed the Damascus Declaration for Democratic National Change (DDDNC), which called for the country's leaders to step down and endorsed a broad set of liberal democratic principles.

In May 2006, exiled opposition leaders announced the creation of the National Salvation Front (NSF) to bring about regime change. Also that month, a number of Syrian political and human rights activists signed the Beirut-Damascus Declaration, which called for a change in Syrian-Lebanese relations and the recognition of Lebanese sovereignty. Many of the signatories were subsequently detained or sentenced to prison as part of a renewed crackdown on personal freedoms.

In 2007, al-Assad won another term as president, with 97.6 percent of the vote. In results that were similarly preordained by the electoral framework, the ruling Baath-dominated coalition won the majority of seats in that year's parliamentary and municipal polls. Meanwhile, supporters of the DDDNC formed governing bodies for their alliance and renewed their activities, prompting another government crackdown that extended into 2008.

The NSF fell apart in 2009, largely because the Muslim Brotherhood, in deference to the Syrian government's support for the Palestinian militant group Hamas, suspended its opposition activities in the aftermath of Israel's offensive in the Gaza Strip that January. In 2010, the state continued to use its internal security apparatus to suppress dissenting views and punish government opponents.

In 2010, the international community pursued limited engagement with Damascus. The United States lifted its travel warning to Syria for American citizens, eased visa requirements for Syrians looking to travel to the United States, allowed Boeing to sell parts to Syria's national airline to upgrade its commercial fleet, and nominated an ambassador to Damascus. European business leaders, eager to enter the rapidly expanding Syrian economy, began courting their Syrian counterparts. Syrian human rights and opposition leaders criticized the international community for ignoring internal oppression in Syria in order to pursue regional objectives. Much of the détente came to an end, however, when the United States and Israel accused Syria of shipping arms to Hezbollah in April, and President Barack Obama renewed sanctions on Syria in May.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Syria is not an electoral democracy. Under the 1973 constitution, the president is nominated by the ruling Baath Party and approved by popular referendum for seven-year terms. In practice, these referendums are orchestrated by the regime, as are elections for the 250-seat, unicameral People's Council, whose members serve four-year terms and hold little independent legislative power. Almost all power rests in the executive branch.

The only legal political parties are the Baath Party and its several small coalition partners in the ruling National Progressive Front (NPF). Independent candidates, who are heavily vetted and closely allied with the regime, are permitted to contest about a third of the People's Council seats, meaning two-thirds are reserved for the NPF.

Regime officials and their families benefit from a range of illicit economic activities. Syria is slowly opening itself economically by removing heavy tariffs and eliminating subsidies, but these limited reforms benefit a small minority at the expense of average citizens. Corruption is widespread, and bribery is often necessary to navigate the bureaucracy. Those arrested on corruption charges rarely face serious punishment. A general responsible for enforcing customs regulations was arrested in 2009 on charges of extensive graft, but he had not faced trial by the end of 2010. Syria was ranked 127 out of 178 countries surveyed in Transparency International's 2010 Corruption Perceptions Index.

Freedom of expression is heavily restricted. Vaguely worded articles of the penal code, the Emergency Law, and a 2001 Publications Law criminalize the publication of material that harms national unity, tarnishes the image of the state, or threatens the, "goals of the revolution." Many journalists, writers, and intellectuals have been arrested under these laws. Apart from a handful of radio stations with non-news formats, all broadcast media are state owned. However, satellite dishes are common, giving most Syrians access to foreign broadcasts. More than a dozen privately owned newspapers and magazines have sprouted up in recent years, and criticism of government policy is tolerated, provided it is nuanced and does not criticize the president. The 2001 press law permits the authorities to arbitrarily deny or revoke publishing licenses and compels private print outlets to submit all material to government censors. It also imposes punishment on reporters who do not reveal their sources in response to government requests. Since the Kurdish protests of 2004, the government has cracked down on journalists calling for the expansion of Kurdish or regional rights.

Two journalists from the Saudi-owned Rotana satellite television channel were arrested in early January 2010, though they were released in February, and charges were never brought against them. Former political prisoner Ragheda Sa'id Hasan was detained in February in connection with a manuscript she had written on her experience. In June, authorities arrested a blogger who wrote on a popular independent site for Syrian news and analysis. Reporters Without Borders found that at least five journalists and online dissidents remained in extended detention in Syria as of that month.

Syrians access the internet only through state-run servers, which block more than 160 sites associated with the opposition, Kurdish politics, Islamic organizations, human rights, and certain foreign news services, particularly those in Lebanon. Social-networking and video-sharing websites such as Facebook and YouTube are also blocked. E-mail correspondence is reportedly monitored by intelligence agencies, which often require internet cafe owners to monitor customers. In practice, internet users can find ways around these restrictions, and poor connections and high costs tend to hinder access more effectively than government censorship. The government has also been successful in fostering self-censorship through intimidation.

Although the constitution requires that the president be a Muslim, there is no

state religion in Syria, and freedom of worship is generally respected. However, the government tightly monitors mosques and controls the appointment of Muslim religious leaders. All nonworship meetings of religious groups require permits, and religious fundraising is closely scrutinized. The Alawite minority dominates the officer corps of the security forces. The government continued its periodic campaign against religious extremism in 2010, outlawing the niqab (facial veil) in Syrian universities and transferring more than 2,000 schoolteachers who wore the garment to administrative positions.

Academic freedom is heavily restricted. Several private universities have recently been founded, and the extent of academic freedom within them varies. University professors have been dismissed or imprisoned for expressing dissent.

Freedom of assembly is closely circumscribed. Public demonstrations are illegal without official permission, which is typically granted only to progovernment groups. The security services intensified their ban on public and private gatherings in 2006, forbidding any group of five or more people from discussing political and economic topics. This rule has been enforced through surveillance and reports by extensive informant networks. Such activity by the intelligence services has ensured that a culture of self-censorship and fear prevails, and ordinary Syrians are unwilling to discuss politics under most circumstances.

Freedom of association is severely restricted. All nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) must register with the government, which generally denies registration to reformist or human rights groups. In 2010, First Lady Asma al-Assad led a drive to increase Syrians' participation in civil society and announced that regulations on NGO registration and governance would be simplified. In practice, however, only state-friendly NGOs working on apolitical issues like rural development, social welfare, the environment, and entrepreneurship benefited from this limited opening. Leaders of unlicensed human rights groups have frequently been jailed for publicizing state abuses. Two leaders of an unlicensed Kurdish human rights organization were arrested in March.

Professional syndicates are controlled by the Baath Party, and all labor unions must belong to the General Federation of Trade Unions, a nominally independent grouping that the government uses to control union activity. Strikes in nonagricultural sectors are legal, but they rarely occur.

While the lower courts operate with some independence and generally safeguard defendants' rights, politically sensitive cases are usually tried by the Supreme State Security Court (SSSC), an exceptional tribunal established under emergency law that denies the right to appeal, limits access to legal counsel, tries many cases behind closed doors, and routinely accepts confessions obtained through torture. SSSC judges are appointed by the executive branch, and only the president and interior minister may alter verdicts. The SSSC suspended its operations in late 2008 following riots in Syria's largest prison for political detainees, but reopened its docket in 2009. In June 2010, Muhannad al-Hassani, a human rights lawyer and longtime critic of the courts, was sentenced to three years in prison for, "weakening the national sentiment."

The security agencies, which operate independently of the judiciary, routinely extract confessions by torturing suspects and detaining their family members. The state of emergency in force since 1963 gives security agencies virtually unlimited

authority to arrest suspects and hold them incommunicado for prolonged periods without charge. Many of the estimated 2,500 to 3,000 political prisoners in Syria have never been tried. The majority are believed to be Islamists; those suspected of involvement with the Muslim Brotherhood or radical Islamist groups are regularly detained by the authorities. Political activists are often monitored and harassed by security services even after release from prison.

The Kurdish minority faces severe restrictions on cultural and linguistic expression. The 2001 press law requires that owners and top editors of print publications be Arabs. Kurdish exile groups estimate that as many as 300,000 Syrian Kurds are deprived of citizenship and are unable to obtain passports, identity cards, or birth certificates, which in turn prevents them from owning land, obtaining government employment, and voting. Suspected Kurdish activists are routinely dismissed from schools and public sector jobs. In 2009, the government made it more difficult to hire noncitizens, resulting in the dismissal of many Kurds. At least one person was killed in clashes between Kurds and security forces at a March 2010 celebration of the Kurdish New Year.

Though Syria provides relatively generous educational and medical benefits to Iraqi refugees, they face obstacles to employment and owning property. The Syrian government in 2010 reported that there were 1.5 million Iraqi refugees in Syria, and called on the Iraqi government to provide more support. The Iraqi government countered that only 206,000 Iraqis remained in Syria. Many young Iraqi women have been forced into the country's sex trade.

Opposition figures, human rights activists, and relatives of exiled dissidents are often prevented from traveling abroad. The Syrian Center for Media and Freedom of Expression estimated in 2010 that more than 400 Syrians were barred from traveling because of their political activities. Many ordinary Kurds lack the requisite documents to leave the country. Other Syrians are generally allowed greater freedom of movement, residence, and employment.

Women are underrepresented in politics and government, with 12.4 percent of the seats in the legislature, though the government has appointed some women to senior positions, including one of the two vice presidential posts. The government provides women with equal access to education, but many discriminatory laws remain in force. A husband may request that the Interior Ministry block his wife from traveling abroad, and women, unlike men, are generally barred from taking their children out of the country without proof of the spouse's permission. Violence against women is common, particularly in rural areas. The government imposed two-year minimum prison sentences for killings classified as "honor crimes" in 2009; previously there had been a maximum one-year sentence. State-run media estimate that there are 40 such killings each year, whereas women's rights groups put the figure at 200. Personal status law for Muslims is governed by Sharia (Islamic law) and is discriminatory in marriage, divorce, and inheritance matters; church law governs personal status issues for Christians, in some cases barring divorce.

The authorities appeared to crack down on homosexuals in 2010. While gay activity at private parties and in certain areas was previously tolerated, the police had arrested at least 25 gay men by July, citing security concerns. Those detained were reportedly unwilling to speak out, due in part to the threat of family and societal hostility.

Taiwan

Political Rights: 1

Population: 23,200,000

Civil Liberties: 2

Capital: Taipei

Status: Free

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline For Year Under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
1,2F	2,2F	2,2F	2,1F	1,1F	2,1F	2,1F	2,1F	1,1F	1,2F

Overview: The ruling Kuomintang won three of the five mayoral posts at stake in November 2010 municipal elections, with the opposition Democratic Progressive Party securing the other two. Also in November, the Supreme Court finalized former president Chen Shui-bian's conviction on bribery charges, sentencing him to 17 and a half years in prison. Separately, the early dismissal of the leadership of the Public Television Service raised concerns about the independence of publicly funded media.

Taiwan became home to the Chinese nationalist Kuomintang (KMT) government-in-exile in 1949 and is still formally known as the Republic of China (ROC). Although the island is independent in all but name, the People's Republic of China (PRC) considers it a renegade province and has threatened to take military action if *de jure* independence is declared.

Taiwan's transition to democracy began in 1987, when the KMT ended 38 years of martial law. In 1988, Lee Teng-hui became the first Taiwanese-born president, breaking the mainland émigrés stranglehold on politics. The media were liberalized and opposition political parties legalized in 1989. Lee oversaw Taiwan's first full multiparty legislative elections in 1991-92 and won the first direct presidential election in 1996.

Chen Shui-bian's victory in the 2000 presidential race, as a candidate of the proindependence Democratic Progressive Party (DPP), ended 55 years of KMT rule. Chen narrowly won reelection in 2004, but the KMT-led opposition retained its majority in the legislature.

Thanks in part to a new seat-allocation system adopted in 2005, the KMT secured an overwhelming majority in the January 2008 legislative elections, taking 81 of 113 seats. The DPP took 27, and the remainder went to independents and smaller parties. Taipei mayor Ma Ying-jeou of the KMT won that year's presidential election, which marked the island's second peaceful, democratic transfer of power. Both elections were deemed generally free and fair.

In the first of several cases, Chen was indicted on corruption charges in December 2008, and in September 2009, he and his wife were sentenced to life in prison. An appeals court reduced the sentence to 20 years in June 2010. In November, the Supreme Court finalized two of the couple's bribery convictions, sentencing them to 17 and a half years in prison. The other charges were sent back to a lower court for a retrial. Separately, Chen was acquitted of embezzlement charges in June and bribery charges in November. Both cases were on appeal at year's end. Some observers

viewed the prison term as a positive demonstration that presidents are not above the law, but there were also concerns about possible political bias and procedural irregularities in the earlier stages of the case, such as the switching of judges during the initial trial, Chen's detention before and during trial, prosecutorial leaks to the media, and the government's attempt to impose disciplinary measures on Chen's defense counsel. These problems were largely absent during the subsequent appeals process.

On the issue of relations with China, the Ma administration proclaimed a policy of pursuing closer cross-strait ties while continuing to reject unification, independence, and the use of force. Bilateral talks led to agreements on various matters, including transportation, tourism, food safety, financial cooperation, and intellectual-property protection. An agreement on mutual judicial and law enforcement assistance began to yield results in 2010, including repatriation of criminals across the strait and cooperation in disrupting a large telephone-fraud ring. In June, both sides signed the Economic Cooperation Framework Agreement (ECFA), which was expected to bring about greater cross-strait economic integration by reducing trade barriers.

Though many Taiwanese supported improving economic ties with China, critics argued that the administration was conceding elements of Taiwan's sovereignty, moving too quickly, and acting with minimal transparency. The executive branch did not submit any of the first 12 cross-strait agreements for substantive legislative review, but the ECFA was sent to the legislature in July 2010, and the KMT ultimately secured its approval over DPP objections in August. Successive opposition attempts to initiate referendums on the ECFA were rejected in June and August by the executive branch's Referendum Review Committee. Critics questioned the committee's independence and claimed that the committee's decisions were based on political rather than legal considerations.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Taiwan is an electoral democracy. The 1946 constitution created a unique government structure comprising five distinct branches (yuan). The president, who is directly elected for up to two four-year terms, wields executive power, appoints the prime minister, and can dissolve the legislature. The Executive Yuan, or cabinet, consists of ministers appointed by the president on the recommendation of the prime minister. The prime minister is responsible to the national legislature (Legislative Yuan), which consists of 113 members serving four-year terms. The three other branches of government are the judiciary (Judicial Yuan), a watchdog body (Control Yuan), and a branch responsible for civil-service examinations (Examination Yuan).

The two main political parties, the proindependence DPP and the Chinese nationalist KMT, dominate the political landscape. Although opposition parties are generally able to function freely, the KMT currently has an overwhelming majority in the Legislative Yuan, which has exacerbated political polarization.

When the KMT pushed through the Local Government Act in January 2010, lawmakers from the two sides engaged in a physical scuffle. The law allowed dozens of elected officials whose townships were to be subsumed within four newly enlarged or upgraded cities to automatically stay on as appointed officials until 2014. The DPP argued that the mayors of the reorganized cities, to be elected in Novem-

ber, should be able to appoint officials of their choice, and that the bill would buy the KMT electoral support from the local politicians who benefited. Ultimately, the KMT won three of the five mayoral posts at stake in November, while the DPP took the remaining two. While acts of violence are not common in Taiwan's election campaigns, Sean Lien, son of former KMT party chairman Lien Chan, was shot the night before the election, casting a shadow over the municipal elections.

Though significantly less pervasive than in the past, corruption remains an ongoing problem. In addition to the prison terms for former president Chen Shui-bian and his wife, anticorruption efforts in 2010 yielded the September conviction of eight former and incumbent lawmakers across party lines. Several judges, prosecutors, and lawyers were detained on bribery charges. A former high-ranking navy officer was sentenced to 15 years in prison in August for taking kickbacks in a 1991 deal to buy French warships. The Ministry of Justice launched a comprehensive investigation regarding the November municipal elections, resulting in the indictment of over 450 people on suspicion of vote-buying or accepting bribes by year's end. While several KMT members were investigated or punished for corruption during the year, concerns about selective prosecution of DPP politicians were raised again when prosecutors cleared Wang Jin-pyng, the parliament Speaker and former KMT vice chairman, of embezzlement in May, even as similar cases involving DPP politicians were still pending in court. Taiwan was ranked 33 out of 178 countries surveyed in Transparency International's 2010 Corruption Perceptions Index.

Taiwanese media reflect a diversity of views and report aggressively on government policies and corruption allegations. The state has relatively little influence over the media. However, apparent government attempts to exert control over the Public Television Service (PTS) in 2009 continued in 2010, raising concerns about politicization. After a court granted the Government Information Office's request for an injunction that prevented the chairman of the PTS board and six other directors from exercising their duties, the remaining directors dismissed the service's president and executive vice president in September, just three months before their three-year terms expired and two months before the municipal elections. Also during the year, the National Communication Commission continued to reject applications by Hong Kong-based media firm Next Media to launch a television news channel, citing the company's use of speculative and potentially misleading computer-animated videos to supplement its news reports.

Many observers have raised concerns about self-censorship in response to the PRC's increased political and economic influence in Taiwan. The editor in chief of the *China Times*, owned by a businessman with mainland commercial interests, was replaced in January 2010 after a headline story reportedly upset Chinese officials. *Want Daily*, a member of the China Times Group, omitted mention of the June 4, 1989, Tiananmen Square massacre in its June 4, 2010, recounting of historic cross-strait events. In a separate but related phenomenon, watchdog groups have noted a sharp increase in "embedded marketing," in which PRC entities, Taiwanese government agencies, and private companies pay for promotional items that are presented as news. A senior *China Times* reporter resigned in December 2010 to protest the practice.

Taiwanese of all faiths can worship freely. Religious organizations that choose to register with the government receive tax-exempt status.

Although Taiwanese educators can generally write and lecture freely, the 2009 Act Governing the Administrative Impartiality of Public Officials bars scholars at public academic facilities from engaging in certain political activities. In 2010, there were reports of increased pressure on government critics. A researcher at the Taiwan Institute of Economic Research was reportedly transferred due to his criticism of the ECFA and ultimately resigned in June. In October, the Education Ministry urged National Taiwan University administrators to curb political discussions on a widely popular online bulletin-board system.

Freedom of assembly is generally respected, and several large-scale demonstrations took place during 2010. Although permits for outdoor meetings are generally granted, many people have faced prosecution under the Assembly and Parade Law for failing to obtain a permit or obey police orders to disperse. The acquittal of all defendants in a high-profile case dating to 2006 was upheld by an appeals court in April 2010, and a professor facing charges for organizing peaceful protests surrounding the 2008 visit of a Chinese envoy was seeking a constitutional review of the law at year's end.

All civic organizations must register with the government, though registration is freely granted. Nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) focusing on human rights, social welfare, and the environment are active and operate without harassment.

Trade unions are independent, and most workers enjoy freedom of association. However, government employees, military personnel, and defense-industry workers are barred from joining unions or bargaining collectively. Under an amendment to the Trade Union Act passed in June 2010, teachers for the first time can form and join labor unions, though they are still barred from striking, and the authorities can no longer dissolve unions for activities that "disturb public order." The legislation was expected to come into effect in 2011, along with two other revised laws meant to strengthen workers' rights on collective bargaining and dispute resolution.

Foreign workers have the right to form and join unions. More than half of Taiwan's 370,000 foreign workers are covered by the Labor Standards Law, but about 170,000 foreign household workers are not. Abuses by employers are not uncommon, and many foreign workers decline to report them for fear of deportation. In September 2010, six undocumented workers from Indonesia were killed in a construction accident, drawing attention to the estimated 30,000 migrant workers who lack legal status. The Council of Labor Affairs faced criticism in October for raising bounties for the capture of foreign workers who fled their authorized employers, and labor groups pressed the government to allow such workers to change jobs at will.

The judiciary is independent, and trials are generally fair. However, a series of judicial corruption scandals in 2010 led to the resignations of the president and vice president of the Judicial Yuan. Several senior judges were detained, and some were suspended and referred to the Control Yuan for further investigation and disciplinary action. Separately, a number of lenient sentences for child molesters prompted public demands for the removal of incompetent judges. A long-stalled judicial reform law regulating judges' selection, evaluation, and removal was sent to the legislature but had yet to be reviewed at year's end.

Police largely respect the ban on arbitrary detention, and attorneys are allowed to monitor interrogations to prevent abuse. However, a number of prominent cases, including former president Chen's first trial, exposed flaws in the protection of crim-

inal defendants' rights. Those charged with felonies have often been detained for extended periods pending trial and conviction, and the jails in which they are held are frequently criticized for overcrowding. Prosecutorial leaks to the media continued during 2010, sullyng defendants' reputations before their cases were decided in court.

Among other high-profile cases that touched on these issues, two defendants who were allegedly tortured to extract a confession for the 1987 abduction and murder of a nine-year-old boy, Lu Cheng, remained in detention in 2010 after 22 years of repeated retrials and appeals. The three defendants in the 1991 "Hsichih Trio" murder case were found not guilty again by an appeals court; for the first time in this case, the court rejected confessions found to have been extracted through torture. Separately, the Control Yuan censured law enforcement authorities in May over a 1996 case in which the defendant was executed for raping and murdering a young girl, but was later found to have confessed under torture as part of a flawed investigation. Concerns about the death penalty rose during the year after four of Taiwan's 44 death-row inmates were executed, ending a de facto moratorium of four years. The unexpected and secretive nature of the executions prompted questions about whether all procedural requirements had been met.

In response to such problems, the Council of Grand Justices declared unconstitutional a legal provision that denied acquitted defendants state compensation for wrongful detention under certain circumstances. In addition, the legislature in April passed the Criminal Speedy Trial Act to set a cap on the detention periods in felony cases, and in June, approved an amendment to the Criminal Procedural Law to guarantee arrestees' right to meet and hold one-hour confidential discussions with their lawyers.

In December 2010, the Presidential Office launched a human rights commission tasked with establishing human rights policy and drafting annual reports in accordance with 2009 legislation that incorporated key international human rights treaties into Taiwanese law.

The constitution provides for the equality of all citizens. Apart from the unresolved issue of ownership of ancestral lands, the rights of Taiwan's indigenous ethnic minorities are protected by law. Six seats in the legislature are reserved for indigenous people, giving them representation that exceeds their share of the population. Five aboriginal townships were incorporated into new municipalities in December, meaning that the aboriginal inhabitants could no longer elect township mayors; the heads of these new districts would be appointed by the municipal mayors, undermining the aboriginals' autonomy. A draft Indigenous Autonomy Law proposed by the government in September was criticized for the weak self-government entities it envisioned and its failure to address the land-rights issue.

Taiwanese law does not allow for the granting of asylum or refugee status. However, amendments to the Immigration Act in 2009 facilitated the granting of residency certificates to over 100 Tibetans and 400 descendants of Chinese nationalist soldiers left behind in Thailand and Burma in 1949.

Government development projects have triggered concerns about land rights, the environment, and the rule of law. In 2010, the government allowed the construction of a science park to continue, even after a court issued an injunction in July to suspend the project due to an incomplete environmental impact assessment. Also in

July, protests by farmers erupted, after officials destroyed farmland during a land seizure. Thousands of people rallied in November to demand that the government stop its expansion of the petrochemical industry.

Taiwanese women face private sector job discrimination and lower pay than men on average. After the 2008 elections, women held 30 percent of the legislature's seats. Rape and domestic violence remain problems, despite government programs to protect women and the work of numerous NGOs to improve women's rights. According to the U.S. State Department's Trafficking in Persons Report, Taiwan is a destination and, to a much lesser extent, a source and transit territory, for human trafficking.

Tajikistan

Political Rights: 6

Population: 7,600,000

Civil Liberties: 5

Capital: Dushanbe

Status: Not Free

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline For Year Under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
6,6NF	6,5NF								

Overview: President Emomali Rahmon oversaw the continued regimentation of matters of faith in 2010, as his government, citing the need to curb extremism, urged or compelled the return of students obtaining a religious education abroad. Security conditions deteriorated during the year, and the country suffered its first-ever suicide bombing in September. Nevertheless, the ruling party enjoyed a predictable landslide victory in February parliamentary elections that international monitors described as falling short of democratic standards.

Former Communist Party leader Rakhmon Nabiyev was elected president of Tajikistan after the country declared independence from the Soviet Union in 1991. Long-simmering, clan-based tensions, combined with various anti-Communist and Islamist movements, soon plunged the country into a five-year civil war. In September 1992, Communist hard-liners forced Nabiyev's resignation; he was replaced later that year by Emomali Rakhmonov, a leading Communist Party member.

Rakhmonov was elected president in 1994, after most opposition candidates either boycotted or were prevented from competing in the poll. Similarly, progovernment candidates won the 1995 parliamentary elections amid a boycott by the United Tajik Opposition (UTO), a coalition of secular and Islamic groups that had emerged as the main force fighting against Rakhmonov's government.

After a December 1996 ceasefire, Rakhmonov and UTO leader Said Abdullo Nuri signed a formal peace agreement in 1997, with a reintegration process to be overseen by a politically balanced National Reconciliation Commission. A September 1999 referendum that permitted the formation of religion-based political parties paved the way for the legal operation of the Islamic opposition, including

the Islamic Renaissance Party (IRP). The referendum also extended the president's term from five to seven years. In November, Rakhmonov was reelected with a reported 97 percent of the vote in a poll that was criticized by international observers for widespread irregularities.

In February 2000 parliamentary elections, Rakhmonov's People's Democratic Party (PDP) received nearly 65 percent of the vote. Although the participation of six parties provided some political pluralism, a joint monitoring mission by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the United Nations cited serious problems. After the elections, the National Reconciliation Commission was formally disbanded. However, important provisions of the 1997 peace accord remained unimplemented, with demobilization of opposition factions incomplete and the government failing to meet a 30 percent quota for UTO members in senior government posts.

A 2003 constitutional referendum cleared a path for Rakhmonov to seek two additional terms, which would allow him to remain in office until 2020. The PDP easily won 2005 parliamentary elections amid reports of large-scale irregularities. In the run-up to the polls, a number of Rakhmonov's prominent former allies were jailed, often on dubious charges.

Separately in 2005, Russian border guards, who had long patrolled the frontier with Afghanistan, completed their withdrawal. However, a Russian army division dating to the Soviet period remained in the country.

Rakhmonov won the November 2006 presidential election with more than 70 percent of the vote, although the OSCE noted lackluster campaigning and a general absence of real competition. The president broadened his influence to the cultural sphere in 2007, de-Russifying his surname to "Rahmon" in March and signing legislation in May to establish spending limits on birthday and wedding celebrations.

The country suffered extreme economic hardship in 2008 and 2009, and the security situation in 2010 experienced its worst deterioration since the 1992-97 civil war. In August, 5 prison guards were killed as 25 prisoners, some with extremist ties, escaped from a detention center in Dushanbe. In early September, a police station in Khujand was targeted in the country's first suicide bombing. Later that month, nearly 30 soldiers were killed in an ambush on a patrol in the Rasht Valley.

The ruling PDP won 55 of 63 lower-house seats in February 2010 parliamentary elections that failed to meet basic democratic standards, according to OSCE monitors.

Also during the year, Uzbekistan blocked rail shipments and issued numerous complaints over Tajikistan's plans to build new hydropower plants, which Tashkent claimed would cause economic and environmental harm to Uzbekistan. Iran, meanwhile, continued to fund the construction of the Sangtuda-2 hydropower plant.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties:

Tajikistan is not an electoral democracy. The 1994 constitution provides for a strong, directly elected president who enjoys broad authority to appoint and dismiss officials. A full-time, bicameral parliament was created in 1999, while amendments in 2003 allowed current president Emomali Rahmon to serve two additional seven-year terms beyond the 2006 election. In the Assembly of Representatives (lower chamber),

63 members are elected by popular vote to serve five-year terms. In the 33-seat National Assembly (upper chamber), 25 members are chosen by local assemblies, and 8 are appointed by the president, all for five-year terms. Elections are neither free nor fair.

Patronage networks and regional affiliations are central to political life, with officials from the president's native Kulyob region dominant in government. In 2009, Rahmon's daughter Ozoda was appointed deputy foreign minister, while his son became deputy head of the Youth Union.

Corruption is reportedly pervasive. Members of the president's family allegedly maintain extensive business interests, and major irregularities at the National Bank have been documented. In a positive sign, newly appointed prosecutor general Sherkhon Salimzoda led an anticorruption drive in 2010 that included the dismissal of 15 regional prosecutors over graft allegations in the first half of the year. Tajikistan was ranked 154 out of 178 countries surveyed in Transparency International's 2010 Corruption Perceptions Index.

Despite constitutional guarantees of freedom of speech and the press, independent journalists face harassment and intimidation, and the penal code criminalizes defamation. Crippling libel judgments are common, particularly against newspapers that are critical of the government. The government controls most printing presses, newsprint supplies, and broadcasting facilities, leaving little room for independent news and analysis. The newspapers *Farazh*, *Paikon*, and *Nigoh* experienced difficulty finding printers in 2010, allegedly due to pressure from government officials. Most television stations are state owned or only nominally independent, and the process of obtaining broadcast licenses is cumbersome. In October, Defense Minister Sherali Khairulloyev accused independent media of siding with terrorists in their coverage of an ambush that killed nearly 30 government troops. Internet penetration is low. The government blocks some critical websites, and online news outlets are subject to criminal libel laws.

The government has imposed a number of restrictions on religious freedom. Wearing of the hijab (headscarf) in schools and higher educational institutions has been banned since 2005. In 2007, the authorities shut down large numbers of unauthorized mosques and instituted more restrictive rules for licensing religious leaders, and a 2009 law banned the promotion of any religion except the traditional Hanafi form of Islam. The authorities raided unlicensed religious schools in July 2010. In August, Rahmon called for Tajiks studying at religious schools abroad to come home, warning that such instruction created, "extremists and terrorists." The families of the students reportedly faced pressure from the government, and by December Tajik officials said that nearly 1,500 had returned to Tajikistan. In October, a women's mosque affiliated with the opposition IRP was destroyed in a suspicious fire; the previous day, the government's Religious Affairs Committee had visited and told the IRP to stop using the facility for prayers.

The government at times limits freedoms of assembly and association. Local government approval is required to hold public demonstrations, and officials reportedly refuse to grant permission in virtually all cases. All nongovernmental organizations must register with the Ministry of Justice. Citizens have the legal right to form and join trade unions and to bargain collectively, but trade unions are largely subservient to the authorities and indifferent to workers' interests.

The judiciary lacks independence. Many judges are poorly trained and inexperienced, and bribery is reportedly widespread. Police often conduct arbitrary arrests and beat detainees to extract confessions. Conditions in prisons—which are overcrowded and disease-ridden—are often life threatening.

Tajikistan is a major conduit for the smuggling of narcotics from Afghanistan to Russia and Europe. A side effect has been an increase in drug addiction within Tajikistan, as well as a rise in the number of cases of HIV/AIDS.

The government continued to pressure citizens to purchase shares in the planned Roghun hydropower project in 2010, with critics describing the campaign as state-sponsored extortion.

Sexual harassment, discrimination, and violence against women, including spousal abuse, are reportedly common, but cases are rarely investigated. Reports indicate that women sometimes face societal pressure to wear headscarves, even though official policy discourages the practice. An Interior Ministry official told Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty that of 108 cases of suicide and attempted suicide by women in Khatlon province in 2010, more than half were related to domestic violence and violence against women. Despite some government efforts to address human trafficking, Tajikistan remains a source and transit country for persons trafficked for prostitution. Child labor, particularly on cotton farms, also remains a problem.

Tanzania

Political Rights: 3*

Civil Liberties: 3

Status: Partly Free

Population: 45,000,000

Capital: Dar-es-Salaam

Ratings Change: Tanzania's political rights rating improved from 4 to 3 due to the more open and competitive nature of national elections held in October 2010.

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline For Year Under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
4,4PF	4,3PF	3,3PF							

Overview: The October 2010 presidential and legislative elections were considered the most competitive and legitimate in Tanzania's history. President Jakaya Kikwete of the ruling Chama Cha Mapinduzi (CCM) party was elected to a second five-year term, and while the CCM retained a majority, the opposition secured its largest representation in parliament. The CCM also narrowly won the presidential election for the semiautonomous island region of Zanzibar and Pemba.

Three years after mainland Tanganyika gained independence from Britain in 1961, the Zanzibar archipelago—consisting of Zanzibar, Pemba, and a number of smaller islands—merged with Tanganyika to become the United Republic of Tanzania. The ruling Chama Cha Mapinduzi (CCM) party, under longtime presi-

dent Julius Nyerere, dominated the country's political life. Nyerere's collectivist economic philosophy—known in Swahili as *ujamaa*—promoted a sense of community and nationality, but also resulted in significant economic dislocation and decline. During Nyerere's tenure, Tanzania played an important role as a "frontline state" in the international response to white-controlled regimes in southern Africa. Nyerere's successor, Ali Hassan Mwinyi, was president from 1985 to 1995 and oversaw a carefully controlled political liberalization process.

A CCM landslide victory in the 1995 parliamentary elections was tainted by poor organization of the electoral process, fraud, and administrative irregularities; voting in Zanzibar was plainly fraudulent. The 2000 national elections showed modest improvements over the 1995 vote, though the opposition Civic United Front (CUF) and independent observers charged that the CCM had engaged in fraud to retain power.

Rioting in Zanzibar in 2001 resulted in the deaths of more than 40 people. The CCM and the CUF reached a reconciliation agreement designed to resolve the political crisis, but implementation of the agreement was delayed and continues to strain relations with the mainland.

The CCM captured a majority of seats in the 2005 elections, and Foreign Minister Jakaya Kikwete, a CCM stalwart, was elected president. There were incidents of violence in the run-up to the polls in Zanzibar, and the postelection atmosphere was tense, as the CUF once again accused the victorious CCM of electoral fraud. Negotiations to legitimate the 2005 elections remained deadlocked until a July 2010 referendum that led to a constitutional change creating two vice-presidential positions to be divided between the CCM and CUF.

In contrast to previous elections, the campaign period for the October 2010 national polls was characterized by a lively policy debate and active campaigning by a range of parties. Opposition candidates argued that the CCM had not fulfilled its promises to increase social services and fight corruption, while at the same time, limiting spending on government administration. Kikwete was reelected to a second five-year term as president, with approximately 61 percent of the vote, defeating five opposition candidates. While the CCM retained its majority in concurrent legislative elections, winning 186 seats, the results gave the opposition its largest representation in parliament in Tanzania's history. The CUF took 24 seats, and the Party for Democracy and Progress (CHADEMA) won 23, while the 6 remaining seats went to three smaller parties. While there were some protests alleging vote rigging and poor administration of the elections, the 2010 polls represented a considerable improvement over previous elections. In the separate Zanzibar polls, the CCM presidential candidate also won a narrow victory.

According to the World Bank, Tanzania's economy has grown between 5 and 7 percent in recent years. Nevertheless, Tanzania remains one of the poorest countries in the world, with a per capita gross domestic product of approximately \$1,400.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Tanzania is an electoral democracy. The October 2010 national elections were judged to be the most competitive and legitimate in Tanzania's history. Unlike past elections, the opposition accepted the 2010 results in Zanzibar and Pemba, due in large part to a July referendum providing for the creation of a national unity government

after the poll. Executive power rests with the president, who is elected by direct popular vote for a maximum of two five-year terms. Legislative power is held by a unicameral National Assembly, the Bunge, which currently has 357 members serving five-year terms. Of these, 239 are directly elected in single-seat constituencies; 102 are women chosen by the political parties according to their representation in the Bunge; 10 are appointed by the president; 1 is awarded to the Attorney General; and 5 are members of the Zanzibar legislature, whose 50 deputies are elected to five-year terms.

Although opposition parties were legalized in 1992, the ruling CCM continues to dominate the country's political life. The constitution prohibits political coalitions, which has impeded serious efforts by other parties to contest the CCM's dominance. Opposition politics have also tended to be highly fractious. The opposition CUF, based in Zanzibar, has sought to establish significant support on the Tanzanian mainland. To register in Tanzania, political parties must not be formed on religious, ethnic, or regional bases and cannot oppose the union of Zanzibar and the mainland. Parties with parliamentary representation receive government subsidies, but they criticize the low level of funding and the formula by which it is allocated.

Corruption remains a serious problem. A 2007 anticorruption bill gave the government greater power to target abuses in procurement and money laundering, but critics claim it is insufficient. Several high-profile scandals, including the controversial purchase of radar equipment from the United Kingdom involving alleged kickbacks to Tanzanian government officials and businessmen, were the focus of considerable press attention in 2010. Tanzania was ranked 116 out of 178 countries surveyed in Transparency International's 2010 Corruption Perceptions Index.

Although the constitution provides for freedom of speech, it does not specifically guarantee freedom of the press. Print and electronic media are active, but their reach is largely limited to major urban areas. The country has more than 50 regular newspapers, including 17 dailies. The growth of broadcast media has been hindered by a lack of capital investment, both public and private. However, a number of independent television and private FM radio stations have gone on the air in recent years. Observers noted a bias toward the ruling party in most, but not all, media during the 2010 campaign. While the number of journalists has significantly increased, they must work under very difficult conditions with little compensation. Internet access, while limited to urban areas, is growing.

Press freedom rights in Zanzibar are constrained by its semiautonomous government, which has not permitted private broadcasters or newspapers. However, many islanders receive mainland broadcasts and read the mainland press. The Zanzibari government often reacts to media criticism by accusing the press of being a "threat to national unity."

Freedom of religion is generally respected in Tanzania, and relations between the various faiths are largely peaceful. In recent years, however, religious tensions, especially between Muslims and Christians, have increased. The Zanzibari government appoints a mufti, a professional jurist who interprets Islamic law, to oversee Muslim organizations. Some Muslims have criticized this practice, arguing that it represents excessive government interference in the exercise of religion. Academic freedom is respected in the country.

The constitution guarantees freedoms of assembly and association. However, these rights are not always respected, particularly in Zanzibar, where on several occasions in 2010, authorities either banned demonstrations or arrested peaceful protestors. Organizers of political events are required to obtain permission from the police. Many nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) are active, and some have influenced the public policy process. However, the 2002 NGO Act has been criticized for increasing government control over NGOs and restricting their operation.

Less than 5 percent of the labor force is unionized, and workers' rights are limited. Essential workers are barred from striking, and other workers are restricted by complex notification and mediation requirements. Workers are reportedly dismissed for involvement in trade union activity, and strikes are often declared illegal. In 2010, private bus and postal workers engaged in short-term strikes. According to the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions, Zanzibar has outlawed strikes completely.

Tanzania's judiciary has displayed some signs of autonomy after decades of subservience to the one-party CCM regime, but it remains subject to considerable political influence. Arrest and pretrial detention rules are often ignored. Prisons suffer from harsh conditions, including overcrowding and safety and health concerns, and police abuse is common. Narcotics trafficking is a growing problem, especially given the challenge of controlling Tanzania's borders. In its 2010 report, a Tanzanian NGO, the Legal and Human Rights Centre, expressed concern over an increase in the number of extrajudicial killings; 52 were reported for the year, up from 15 in 2009.

The 2002 Prevention of Terrorism Act has been criticized by NGOs for its inconsistencies and anomalies. Acts of terrorism include attacks on a person's life, kidnapping, and serious damage to property. The law gives the police and immigration officials sweeping powers to arrest suspected illegal immigrants or anyone thought to have links with terrorists.

Tanzania has enjoyed relatively tranquil relations among its many ethnic groups. The presence of refugees from conflicts in Burundi, Rwanda, and the Democratic Republic of Congo, however, has raised tensions in the past. According to the 2009 World Refugee Survey, approximately 320,000 refugees remain in the country, though Tanzania was praised in April 2010 for granting citizenship to 162,000 Burundian refugees. Albinos are subject to violence and discrimination. The first albino murder convictions were obtained in September 2009, and the first albino was elected to parliament in 2010.

Women's rights are constitutionally guaranteed but not uniformly protected. Nevertheless, women are relatively well represented in parliament, with over 30 percent of seats. Traditional or Islamic customs that discriminate against women prevail in family law, especially in rural areas and in Zanzibar, and women enjoy fewer educational and economic opportunities than men. Domestic violence against women is reportedly common and rarely prosecuted. Human rights groups have sought laws to bar forced marriages, which are most common among Tanzania's coastal peoples.

↓ Thailand

Political Rights: 5

Population: 68,100,000

Civil Liberties: 4

Capital: Bangkok

Status: Partly Free

Trend Arrow: Thailand received a downward trend arrow due to the use of violence in putting down street protests in April and May 2010, and the coercive use of lèse-majesté laws and emergency powers to limit freedom of expression and personal autonomy.

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline For Year Under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
2,3F	2,3F	2,3F	2,3F	3,3PF	7,4NF	6,4PF	5,4PF	5,4PF	5,4PF

Overview: Thailand experienced some of the worst street violence in its history in April and May 2010, as authorities clashed with tens of thousands of antigovernment "red shirt" protesters occupying the heart of Bangkok's commercial district. Around 90 people were killed, and hundreds of others were injured. In April, the government imposed a state of emergency in Bangkok and 23 provinces, and it remained in place in the capital and some other areas until just before the end of the year. Also during 2010, the government aggressively employed lèse-majesté laws and the emergency powers to curb freedom of expression and political speech. Following the crackdown on protests in April and May, the government charged red-shirt leaders, including exiled former prime minister Thaksin Shinawatra, with terrorism, and froze the assets of suspected red-shirt financiers.

Known as Siam until 1939, Thailand was the only Southeast Asian country to avoid European colonial rule. A 1932 coup transformed the kingdom into a constitutional monarchy, but Thailand endured multiple military coups, constitutional overhauls, and popular uprisings over the next six decades. The army dominated the political scene during this period, with intermittent bouts of unstable civilian government. Under the leadership of General Prem Tinsulanonda in the 1980s, the country underwent a rapid economic expansion and a gradual transition toward democratic rule. The military seized power again in 1991, but Thailand's revered monarch, King Bhumipol Adulyadej, intervened to appoint a civilian prime minister in 1992. Fresh elections held in September of that year ushered in a 14-year period of elected civilian leadership.

Thaksin Shinawatra, a former deputy prime minister who built his fortune in telecommunications, unseated the ruling Democratic Party (DP) in the 2001 elections. He and his Thai Rak Thai (TRT, or Thais Love Thais) party mobilized voters in rural areas in part by criticizing the government for favoring urban, middle-class Thais. As prime minister, Thaksin won praise for pursuing populist economic policies designed to stimulate aggregate demand. However, critics accused him and his government of undercutting the 1997 reformist constitution, and he faced several

serious corruption charges and investigations. Human rights groups also condemned Thaksin for media suppression and a violent counternarcotics campaign that resulted in at least 2,500 killings in a three-month period in 2003.

In 2004, separatist violence surged in Thailand's four southernmost provinces, home to most of the country's four million Muslims. Thaksin mounted a hard-line response, and the government placed the provinces of Narathiwat, Yalá, and Pattani under martial law that year. The government was accused of human rights abuses in its effort to put down the insurgency, and two high-profile cases, known as the Krue Se and Tak Bai incidents, resulted in the deaths of 191 people and drew international condemnation.

The TRT swept the February 2005 parliamentary elections, making Thaksin the first prime minister to serve out a full four-year term, be elected to two consecutive terms, and lead a party to win outright without the need for a coalition partner. However, anti-Thaksin sentiment rose markedly during the year, particularly in Bangkok and the south. Facing a wave of protests led by the People's Alliance for Democracy (PAD)—a right-wing grouping of royalists, business elites, and military leaders with support in the urban middle class—the prime minister called snap elections in early April 2006. All three opposition parties boycotted the vote, and a fresh round of elections was ultimately scheduled for October.

However, a military coup in September 2006 preempted the new vote and ousted Thaksin, who was abroad at the time. The coup leaders' Council for National Security (CNS) abrogated the constitution, dissolved the parliament, and replaced the Constitutional Court with its own tribunal. In May 2007, the tribunal found the TRT guilty of paying off smaller parties in the April 2006 elections and dissolved it, specifically prohibiting Thaksin and 111 other party leaders from participating in politics for the next five years.

Referendum voters in August 2007 approved a new constitution, which contained a number of antidemocratic provisions. The poll results, with 57 percent in favor and 41 percent opposed, showed a significant protest vote in the northeast, Thaksin's regional stronghold.

Former TRT members regrouped under the banner of the People's Power Party (PPP) and won the December 2007 parliamentary elections. Throughout 2008, yellow-shirted PAD supporters led protests accusing the new government of serving as a corrupt proxy for Thaksin and demanding its dissolution. At the height of the protests in November, the PAD seized Bangkok's main airports, seriously disrupting travel and economic activity in the country and region. Meanwhile, in October, the Supreme Court sentenced Thaksin in absentia to two years in prison for abuse of office.

The PPP-led government—under intense pressure from the PAD, military commanders, and the judiciary—finally fell in December 2008, when the Constitutional Court disbanded the ruling party on the grounds that it had engaged in fraud during the December 2007 elections. DP leader Abhisit Vejjajiva, the head of the opposition, subsequently formed a new coalition and won a lower-house vote to become prime minister. Throughout 2009, Abhisit struggled to cope with opposition protests, carry out effective reconciliation, and counter corruption charges filed against his allies. The red-shirted United Front for Democracy Against Dictatorship (UDD), which had mounted large protests during the period of military rule following Thaksin's ouster, resumed its activities to oppose the PPP's dissolution and carried out

disruptive antigovernment demonstrations during the year. Abhisit imposed emergency rule in Bangkok for nearly two weeks in April, arresting red-shirt leaders and shutting down pro-UDD radio stations. Clashes between the army and protesters that month resulted in at least two deaths.

Reconciliation efforts later in 2009 made little progress, and the crisis worsened in February 2010, when the Supreme Court ordered the seizure of \$1.4 billion of Thaksin's \$2.29 billion in frozen assets, finding him guilty of concealing his assets while in office and abusing his power for personal gain. UDD protests escalated, with red shirts occupying the heart of Bangkok's commercial district on April 3. In response, the government declared a state of emergency in Bangkok and 23 other provinces on April 7, banned demonstrations, and attempted to regain control of the occupied area on April 10. A total of 21 civilians and 5 soldiers were killed, and 860 people—including 350 soldiers—were injured, but the protesters remained in place and gradually fortified their encampment with walls of tires and bamboo.

The government accused the red shirts of intending to overthrow the monarchy and established a military-dominated Centre for the Resolution of the Emergency Situation (CRES), which exercised broad detention and censorship powers under the emergency decree. Meanwhile, violent incidents inside and along the perimeter of the red-shirt encampment heightened tensions. Attempts at negotiation, based on a plan for early elections, failed due in part to internal divisions in the UDD.

Finally, in a six-day operation that began May 14, the army violently dispersed the entrenched protesters, at times using live fire. At least 54 people died, including 2 soldiers, and some 470 people were injured. In the aftermath of the crackdown, 36 buildings in Bangkok were set ablaze; governor's offices in four northeastern provinces were also torched. Between March and the end of May, a total of 92 people had been killed in the clashes, including civilians, military, and foreign journalists. The authorities arrested red-shirt leaders, and 52 faced terrorism and other charges by year's end, including Thaksin, who had supported the protest movement from abroad. The CRES used emergency powers to freeze hundreds of millions of dollars in assets belonging to those suspected of financially backing the red shirts.

Low-level unrest continued for the remainder of 2010, punctuated by periodic, small-scale bomb blasts in the capital in the summer and fall. Abhisit established two committees on national reform to advance reconciliation, and his government attempted to garner public support with populist policies, including a debt moratorium for farmers, debt-repayment assistance, and the extension of utility and transport subsidies.

Separatist violence in the south continued during 2010, and renewed attacks on teachers in the fall seriously disrupted education in the affected provinces. Peace initiatives remained at a standstill, as the government dismissed a limited unilateral suspension of hostilities offered by the insurgents.

**Political Rights
and Civil Liberties:**

Thailand is not an electoral democracy. The most recent national parliamentary elections in December 2007 proceeded without major disruptions and returned Thailand to civilian rule following the 2006 military coup, but they were not free and fair. The military retained significant influence, and martial law was in effect in 25 provinces at the time of the elections. The CNS maintained tight control over the electoral

process and deliberately maneuvered to influence the outcome against the PPP. Moreover, the PPP-led government that emerged from the voting was toppled in December 2008 in what many observers regarded as a judicial coup. Prime Minister Abhisit Vejjajiva, who took power after the PPP's ouster, had not sought a popular mandate through new national elections by the end of 2010.

The current constitution was drafted under the supervision of the military-backed government and approved in an August 2007 referendum. It included an amnesty for the 2006 coup leaders, and in a clear response to the premiership of Thaksin Shinawatra, whose government the coup overthrew, the charter limited prime ministers to two four-year terms and set a lower threshold for launching no-confidence motions. The constitution also reduced the role of elected lawmakers. Whereas the old Senate was fully elected, the Senate created by the new charter consists of 76 elected members and 74 appointed by a committee of judges and members of independent government bodies. Senators, who serve six-year terms, cannot belong to political parties. For the 480-seat lower chamber, the House of Representatives, the new constitution altered the system of proportional representation to curtail the voting power of the northern and northeastern provinces, where support for Thaksin remains strong. Members serve four-year terms, and the prime minister is elected from among them. King Bhumibol Adulyadej is the head of state, and while he has little responsibility in day-to-day politics, he has historically wielded tremendous moral and symbolic influence, particularly in times of national or constitutional calamity. The palace's relative silence during the most recent political crisis has been interpreted as a tacit endorsement of the Abhisit government's actions in suppressing the red-shirt movement.

The CNS-appointed interim legislature passed the Internal Security Act (ISA) shortly before the 2007 elections. The law created an Internal Security Operations Command (ISOC), headed by the prime minister and the army chief, which retains the authority to override civilian administration and restrict basic civil liberties to suppress disorder, even without a formal state of emergency. The government invoked the ISA in Bangkok in early March 2010, well before opposition protests became violent in early April. In addition, under Thailand's 2005 Emergency Decree, the prime minister can declare a state of emergency, which grants the government the following powers: extended detention without charge or trial, the use of unofficial detention centers, the suppression of information about detainees, and unfettered government censorship. Like the ISA, the Emergency Decree grants legal immunity to officials who violate human rights law in the course of their duties. The government announced a state of emergency in Bangkok and 23 other provinces outside the south in April 2010. Though emergency rule was gradually lifted in the north and northeastern provinces, it remained in place in Bangkok and neighboring provinces until December 22.

Corruption is widespread at all levels of Thai society. It ranked among Thais' top frustrations with the Thaksin government and was cited as part of the military's justification for the 2006 coup. Despite Abhisit's clean image, his party and coalition cohorts have faced numerous corruption charges since coming to power. The Office of the Attorney General forwarded two cases to the Constitutional Court in 2010 that could have resulted in the dissolution of the DP, the country's oldest political party. One involved the alleged misuse of electoral funds in the 2005 election, and

the other revolved around the alleged acceptance of an unlawful donation of about \$8 million from the former head of a large petrochemicals firm. The court dismissed both cases by year's end. Thailand was ranked 78 out of 178 countries surveyed in Transparency International's 2010 Corruption Perceptions Index.

The 2007 constitution restored freedom of expression guarantees that were eliminated by the 2006 coup. However, harsh defamation provisions remain in the penal code, and suits are often used to silence government critics. The 2007 Computer Crimes Act assigns significant prison terms for the publication of false information deemed to endanger the public or national security. In 2010, the long duration of the state of emergency and the creation of the CRES, along with existing legal restrictions, enabled the government to suppress criticism of the government and target opposition broadcast, print, and internet outlets. During the year, the CRES blocked more than 2,200 websites seen as pro-UDD, and another 50,000 sites were censored without any proof that they had incited or were connected to political violence.

The government and military control licensing and transmission for Thailand's six main television stations and all 525 radio frequencies. Many community radio stations operate without licenses. In the four months after the declaration of the state of emergency in 2010, more than 47 community radio stations suspected of supporting the red shirts were raided and shut down, and 49 arrest warrants issued for associated individuals. Broadcasts of pro-Thaksin radio stations and television channels were blocked, and the government required media outlets to air "obligatory" programs and news from the state-run Radio Thailand and army-licensed Channel 5 television station. Print publications are for the most part privately owned and have been subject to fewer restrictions than the broadcast media. Nevertheless, several red-shirt print publications were banned in 2010.

The past two years have featured a surge in use of the country's *lèse-majesté* laws to stifle freedom of expression. The laws prohibit defamation of the monarchy, but the authorities have increasingly used them to target activists, scholars, students, journalists, foreign authors, and politicians who are critical of the government, exacerbating self-censorship. Some of the accused face decades in prison for multiple counts, while others have fled the country. The CRES, the Defense Ministry, and the Ministry of Information and Communication Technology were the prime enforcers of *lèse-majesté* laws in 2010.

The constitution prohibits discrimination based on religious belief. There is no official state religion, but the constitution requires the monarch to be a Buddhist, and speech considered insulting to Buddhism is prohibited by law. The conflict in the south, which pits ethnic Malay Muslims against ethnic Thai Buddhists, continues to undermine citizens' ability to practice their religion. Buddhist monks report that they are unable to travel freely through southern communities to receive alms, while Muslim academics and imams face government scrutiny.

The 2007 constitution restored freedom of assembly guarantees, though the government may invoke the ISA or declare a state of emergency to curtail major demonstrations, as it did for much of 2010. In September, about 10,000 red-shirt protesters gathered peacefully in Bangkok to mark the fourth anniversary of the coup that ousted Thaksin; this was the first large demonstration since the violence that spring. Thailand has a vibrant nongovernmental organization (NGO) community, with groups representing farmers, laborers, women, students, environmentalists, and human rights

interests. However, according to the U.S. State Department's 2010 human rights report, NGOs that dealt with sensitive political issues or obstructed government-backed development projects faced harassment. Human rights groups focused on the volatile southern provinces reportedly encounter intimidation by both sides in the conflict.

Thai trade unions are independent, and more than 50 percent of state-enterprise workers belong to unions, but less than 2 percent of the total workforce is unionized. Antiunion discrimination in the private sector is common, and legal protections for union members are weak and poorly enforced. There are some restrictions on private sector strikes, and strikes by state-enterprise workers are prohibited, though such workers sometimes engage in walkouts in practice. Exploitation and trafficking of migrant workers from Burma, Cambodia, and Laos are serious and ongoing problems, as are child and sweatshop labor.

The 2007 constitution restored judicial independence and reestablished an independent Constitutional Court. A separate military court adjudicates criminal and civil cases involving members of the military, as well as cases brought under martial law. Sharia (Islamic law) courts hear certain types of cases pertaining to Muslims. The Thai courts have played a decisive role in determining the outcome of political disputes, generating complaints of judicial activism and political bias. A series of rulings in 2008 brought down the elected PPP government and cleared the way for Abhisit to take power.

Pretrial detention—often lasting up to 60 days in criminal cases—is a serious problem, and trials frequently take years to complete. Prison conditions are grim, with inmates and detainees facing shackling and abuse by police and military personnel. State officials are rarely prosecuted for such acts. A September study from the National Human Rights Commission found that torture is widely and systematically used in the deep south.

A combination of martial law, emergency rule, and the ISA remains in effect in the four southernmost provinces. Military sweeps since June 2007 have involved the indiscriminate detention of thousands of suspected insurgents and sympathizers, and there are credible reports of torture and other human rights violations, including extrajudicial killings, by security forces. To date, there have been no successful criminal prosecutions of security personnel for these transgressions. Separatist fighters and armed criminal groups regularly attack government workers, police, teachers, religious figures, and civilians. As of the end of 2010, more than 4,400 people had been killed in the conflict since 2004, and 7,200 had been injured, making the insurgency one of the world's deadliest.

Thailand's hill tribes are not fully integrated into society and face restrictions on their freedom of movement. Many reportedly lack citizenship, which renders them ineligible to vote, own land, attend state schools, or receive protection under labor laws. Thailand has not ratified UN conventions on refugees, and the authorities continue to forcibly repatriate Burmese and Laotian refugees.

While women have the same legal rights as men, they remain subject to economic discrimination in practice; underrepresented in local and national government bodies, with about 13 percent of the seats in the lower house of parliament; and vulnerable to domestic abuse, rape, and sex trafficking. Some 200,000 to 300,000 Thai women and children work as prostitutes, according to NGO estimates, and sex tourism remains a problem.

Togo

Political Rights: 5
Civil Liberties: 4
Status: Partly Free

Population: 6,800,000
Capital: Lome

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline For Year Under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
5,5PF	6,5NF	6,5NF	6,5NF	6,5NF	6,5NF	5,5PF	5,5PF	5,4PF	5,4PF

Overview: Faure Gnassingbé was reelected president of Togo in March 2010. While voting irregularities were reported, they were not serious enough to alter the outcome. The opposition bitterly contested the results and led weekly demonstrations in Lomé despite a temporary ban on post-election protests. After the Union of Forces for Change (UFC) splintered in May over the election controversy, a faction led by the party's historic leader, Gilchrist Olympio, entered into a coalition with the ruling party, giving the opposition representation in government for the first time since 1990.

Originally part of a German colony that fell under the control of France after World War I, Togo gained its independence in 1960. Gnassingbé Eyadéma, a demobilized sergeant, overthrew the civilian government in a bloodless coup in 1967. Using mock elections and a loyal military, he then presided over close to 40 years of repressive rule.

In 1991, under pressure from European governments, Eyadema agreed to set up a transitional government and prepare for free elections. However, his soldiers and secret police attacked opposition supporters, ultimately forcing thousands to flee abroad, and the transitional government was later dissolved. A series of elections were held during the 1990s, but military harassment and legal manipulation ensured that Eyadema and his Rally of the Togolese People (RPT) party remained in power. The president secured a new five-year term in 2003. Gilchrist Olympio, the most prominent opposition politician for the Union of Forces for Change (UFC), was prevented from running through a manufactured technicality.

Eyadéma died in February 2005, and the military quickly installed his son, Faure Gnassingbé, as president. While protests and opposition activity were formally banned, demonstrations remained frequent, and the police response was brutal.

Under international pressure, Gnassingbé held an April 2005 election that confirmed him as president. The Economic Community of West African States was the only international organization to endorse the poll, which featured over a million phantom voters on the electoral rolls, widespread intimidation, and a complete communications blackout on election day. Subsequent clashes between opposition supporters and security forces killed almost 500 people, injured thousands, and forced 40,000 to flee the country.

In 2006, the promise of renewed economic aid from the European Union (EU)—which had cut off support in 1993—spurred the RPT and opposition parties to schedule legislative elections. In the October 2007 polls, the RPT won 50 of the 81 Na-

tional Assembly seats, with 85 percent voter turnout. The UFC secured 27 seats, while the Action Committee for Ren wral (CAR), another opposition party, captured the remainder. Polls were deemed to have been transparent and relatively fair, though many observers noted that the lopsided electoral system enabled the RPT to win 62 percent of the seats, with just 39 percent of the vote.

By the end of 2008, the EU had restored full economic aid, and the World Bank and International Monetary Fund also resumed cooperation. Relations with international donors were bolstered in part by Gnassingb 's appointment of Gilbert Fossoun Hounbo, a former UN Development Programme official, as prime minister in September.

In preparation for the 2010 presidential elections, an agreement was reached in 2009 over the reformation of the electoral code, including the removal of residency requirements that had previously barred Olympio from running. However, tensions remained high over the government's refusal to introduce further reforms, including updating the voter list; altering the constituency structure that favored the RPT; and, most notably, allowing a second-round vote.

In February 2010, Olympio was disqualified for having missed a mandatory health inspection, leading the UFC to back Jean-Pierre Fabre as its presidential candidate. The UFC's inability to unite the other opposition candidates behind Fabre, the president's refusal to allow a second round in the election, and the RPT's dominance over the state media resulted in Gnassingb 's reelection in March with over 60 percent of the vote. While the elections were deemed largely free and fair by local and international observers, a number of irregularities were observed, including the lack of official seals on ballots, verified reports of vote-buying by the RPT, inconsistencies in early voting by the army, and partisanship within the electoral commission. However, the problems were not considered serious enough to have influenced the outcome of the vote.

Despite a temporary ban on post-election demonstrations, Fabre—who had immediately contested the results—led weekly protests in Lom , which were dispersed with tear gas and water cannons. The UFC splintered in May following disagreements over how to address the contested election results. Fabre refused to accept the results and chose to boycott parliament, while a faction led by Olympio agreed to enter into a coalition government with the RPT. UFC members were subsequently appointed to high-level cabinet and ministry positions, including the foreign and communications ministries. The RPT-UFC coalition marked the first time the opposition had been included in the government since 1990. The coalition agreed to hold the country's first local elections, carry out the first population census in a decade, and create a new electoral list. Gnassingb  again appointed Hounbo as prime minister in May.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Togo is not an electoral democracy. Despite international consensus that the 2007 legislative elections and the 2010 presidential elections were carried out in a relatively free and fair manner, the structure of the electoral system largely ensures that President Faure Gnassingb  will remain in power. The president is elected to five-year terms and appoints the prime minister. Members of the 81-seat, unicameral National Assembly are also elected to five-year terms, using a party-list system that favors the RPT.

Corruption continues to be a serious impediment to development, and the government took no significant steps to tackle the problem in 2010. Togo was ranked 134 of 178 countries surveyed in Transparency International's 2010 Corruption Perceptions Index.

Freedom of the press is guaranteed by law, though it is often disregarded in practice. Blatant impunity for past crimes against journalists and frequent defamation suits encourage self-censorship. A 2009 law gives the state broadcasting council the power to impose severe penalties—including the suspension of publications and the confiscation of press cards—if journalists are found to have made "serious errors." The government runs Togo's only daily newspaper, *Togo Press*, as well as the only national television station. In August 2010, the Gnassingbé family took a series of legal actions against private media outlets, all of which were pending at year's end. President Gnassingbé filed defamation charges against three separate papers during the year, though he withdrew the suits in October. The government did not ban media coverage during this year's presidential election, but the state media was dominated by pro-Gnassingbé coverage. Private print and broadcast outlets are limited in capacity and often heavily politicized. Access to the internet is generally unrestricted, but few people use the medium due to high costs.

Constitutionally protected religious freedom is generally respected, though tensions sometimes arise between Togo's southern Christian majority and northern Muslim minority. Islam and Christianity are recognized as official religions, but other religious groups must register as associations. Political discussion is prohibited on religious radio and television outlets. While government informers and security forces are believed to maintain a presence on university campuses and in other public places, ordinary citizens are now able to speak more openly than in previous years.

Respect for freedoms of assembly and association has improved since 2006. However, the Ministry of Security temporarily banned post-election demonstrations in 2010, and security forces used water cannons and tear gas to disperse supporters of Jean-Pierre Fabre protesting the election results.

Togo's constitution guarantees the right to form and join labor unions, and most workers have the right to strike. However, collective bargaining is limited to a single, nationwide wage agreement.

The judicial system, including the Constitutional Court, is understaffed, inadequately funded, and heavily influenced by the presidency. While the death penalty was abolished in 2008, extrajudicial killings remain a concern. Human rights groups and victims have repeatedly called for the prosecution of those responsible for the campaign of killings, abductions, and intimidation linked to the 2005 presidential election. A Truth and Reconciliation Commission launched in 2009 is tasked with investigating the abuses from the 2005 election, but it lacks the power to prosecute. While the commission can recommend prosecutions, no progress had been made by the end of 2010.

Discrimination is common among the country's 40 ethnic groups, and tensions have historically divided the country between north and south along political, ethnic, and religious lines. The army is traditionally composed of soldiers from the northern Kabiye group.

Togolese citizens are typically free to travel overseas and around the country, despite numerous roadblocks set up by vigilante groups or unemployed youths at-

tempting to extort money. Citing security concerns, the government closed all international borders prior to the 2010 presidential election, prompting a number of Togolese to flee to Ghana before the closure in fear of post-election upheaval.

Despite constitutional guarantees of equality, women's opportunities for education and employment are limited. Nonetheless, the first female presidential candidate ran for office in 2010. Customary law discriminates against women in divorce and inheritance, giving them the legal rights of minors, and a husband may legally bar his wife from working or choose to receive her earnings. Child trafficking for the purpose of slavery remains a serious problem, and prosecutions under a 2005 child-trafficking law are rare.

Tonga

Political Rights: 3*
Civil Liberties: 3
Status: Partly Free

Population: 100,000
Capital: Nuku'alofa

Ratings Change: Tonga's political rights rating improved from 5 to 3 due to free and fair parliamentary elections held in November 2010, in which for the first time a majority of seats were filled through universal suffrage and won by prodemocracy candidates.

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline For Year Under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
5,3PF	3,3PF								

Overview: Tonga adopted a new government structure in April 2010, providing for a majority of the Legislative Assembly's 26 members to be popularly elected. In free and fair elections held in November, prodemocracy candidates took 12 of the 17 popularly elected seats, though the parliament voted 14 to 12 to elect Lord Tu'ivakano over prodemocracy leader Samuela 'Akilisi Pohiva as the new prime minister. The state of emergency, in its fifth year, remained in effect throughout 2010.

Tonga consists of 169 islands that King Siaosi I united under his rule in 1845. It became a constitutional monarchy in 1875 and a British protectorate in 1900, gaining independence in 1970 as a member of the Commonwealth. King Taufa'ahau Tupou IV ruled from 1945 to 2006. His son, Crown Prince Tupouto'a, assumed the title King Siaosi Tupou V in 2006 and was officially crowned in 2008.

Politics and the economy are dominated by the monarchy, hereditary nobles, and a few prominent commoners. The economy is heavily dependent on foreign aid and remittances from Tongans living abroad.

Prodemocracy advocates won a majority of commoners' seats in the 2002 and 2005 elections. Public demand for political reform pushed the king to approve a constitutional review, though prodemocracy advocates rejected the government's

proposals as too conservative and slow, and launched street protests in 2006 that quickly escalated into violent rioting. After declaring a state of emergency, the king entered into talks with prodemocracy activists. An agreement was finally reached in December 2009, providing for the creation of a new 26-member parliament with 17 popularly elected representatives. In April 2010, the parliament adopted the new government structure.

Attorney General John Cauchi resigned in protest of the king's right to make judicial appointments in April 2010. The government countered that the king retained this authority under the current constitution. In June, the power to appoint judges was transferred from the Judicial Services Commission to the position of lord chancellor—who would also be chosen by the king—raising questions about the country's judicial independence.

In September, the government announced that elections would be held on November 25. Tongans residing abroad—who comprise nearly half of the population and whose remittances represent 70 percent of the country's national income—were effectively prohibited from participating, after the Electoral Commission said that ballots could only be cast in person in Tonga. Nevertheless, approximately 90 percent of the 42,000 registered voters cast ballots in the historic November elections. Prodemocracy candidates, under the banner of the Democratic Party of the Friendly Islands (DPFI), won 12 of the 17 commoners' seats. There were no incidences of violence, and the media had broad access to the polls. The elections were considered free and fair by international and domestic observers, though the emergency laws—now in their fifth year—remained in place. On December 20, the parliament chose Lord Tu'ivakano over the DPFI's Samuela 'Akilisi Pohiva as the new prime minister in a vote of 14 to 12.

In September 2009, a domestic interisland ferry sank and killed 74 people. In February 2010, the ferry's captain was charged with knowingly sailing an unseaworthy vessel, while the head of the government-owned enterprise that purchased the vessel was charged with perjury. In March, a special inquiry commission found that the government had systematically failed in its purchase of the ferry.

**Political Rights
and Civil Liberties:**

Tonga is an electoral democracy. The unicameral Legislative Assembly has 26 members, including 17 popularly elected representatives and 9 nobles elected by their peers; all members serve four-year terms. The king retains the power to appoint the chief justice, judges of the court of appeal, and the attorney general on the advice of the privy council. The privy council, whose members are appointed by the king, lost its power to pass legislation following changes to the government structure in 2010. Additionally, the Legislative Assembly—rather than the king—now selects the prime minister.

Prodemocracy candidates have typically aligned with the Human Rights and Democracy Movement, which is not a formal party. However, new parties formed ahead of the November 2010 elections, including DPFI, the Democratic Labor Party, the Sustainable Nation-Building Party, and the People's Democratic Party. Widespread official corruption is a major source of public discontent. The royals, nobles, and their top associates have allegedly used state assets for personal benefit, and transparency and accountability are lacking. Tonga was ranked 101

out of 178 countries surveyed in Transparency International's 2010 Corruption Perceptions Index.

Despite constitutional guarantees of freedom of the press, the government has a history of suppressing media criticism. A Department of Information oversees all media reporting. Nevertheless, letters to the editor and commentaries critical of the government appear regularly in all newspapers, including those owned by the state or in which the state owns shares. In December 2010, the government terminated the broadcasting license of the privately owned FM88.1, claiming the decision was prompted by public complaints against the station. Internet access is not restricted, and the number of users has increased despite high costs and lack of infrastructure.

Freedom of religion is generally respected, but the government requires all religious references on broadcast media to conform to mainstream Christian beliefs. Academics reportedly practice self-censorship to avoid conflicts with the government.

Criticism of the monarchy is not tolerated. In August 2010, a prodemocracy member of parliament, Samuela 'Akilisi Pohiva, was suspended for two months after he questioned the government's financing of improvements to the royal palace in such a poor economy.

Freedoms of assembly and association are upheld. While those engaging in protests and marches have faced government harassment in the past, there were no reported crackdowns on demonstrations by law enforcement officials in 2010. The 1963 Trade Union Act gives workers the right to form unions and to strike, but regulations for union formation were never promulgated.

The judiciary is generally independent, and traditional village elders frequently adjudicate local disputes. Criminal suspects may exercise the right to an attorney and a court hearing. However, a shortage of judges has created serious backlogs; only 2 of 10 magistrate seats had been filled by the end of September 2010. Nobles have increasingly faced scrutiny in society and the courts. In December 2010, two nobles, who had recently been elected to the parliament, were charged with the illegal possession of firearms and drugs. Prisons are basic, and are only lightly guarded, as violent crimes are rare. There have been no reports of prisoner abuse. Tensions between Tongans and ethnic Chinese have worsened in recent years, largely due to resentment over the perceived Chinese domination of the economy.

Women enjoy equal access to education and health care and receive fairly equal treatment in employment. Women hold several senior government jobs, including cabinet positions and the majority of commissioned officer posts in the police force. Nevertheless, no women were elected in the 2010 elections, women cannot own land, and domestic violence against women is common. In 2009, the parliament rejected ratification of the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, claiming it conflicts with Tongan culture by providing women with land ownership rights and allowing abortion and same-sex marriage.

Trinidad and Tobago

Political Rights: 2

Population: 1,300,000

Civil Liberties: 2

Capital: Port-of-Spain

Status: Free

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline For Year Under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
3,3PF	3,3PF	3,3PF	3,3PF	3,2F	2,2F	2,2F	2,2F	2,2F	2,2F

Overview.' Facing a no-confidence vote, Prime Minister Patrick Manning called an early election for May 2010. The Peoples Partnership coalition defeated the People's National Movement, which was removed from power for the first time in nearly 40 years.

Trinidad and Tobago, a member of the Commonwealth, achieved independence from Britain in 1962 and became a republic in 1976.

Patrick Manning of the People's National Movement (PNM) held the premiership from 1991 to 1995 and returned as prime minister in 2001. Disputed elections in that year resulted in an evenly divided lower house, and Manning sought to break the deadlock by calling fresh elections in October 2002. The PNM won 20 of the chamber's 36 seats, but the opposition United National Congress (UNC) also had a strong showing, reinforcing the dominance of the two parties.

Former prime minister Basdeo Panday was sentenced to two years of hard labor in April 2006 for having failed to declare London bank accounts that he held while leading the country in the late 1990s. He retained the UNC chairmanship while appealing his conviction, which was overturned in April 2007. Nevertheless, the UNC was embroiled in infighting, and several high-level defections fueled speculation that a three-party system could emerge. In September 2006, former UNC leader Winston Dookeran created a new party: Congress of the People (COP).

Manning handily won another term in office in the November 2007 elections, which were considered free and fair. A Caribbean Community observer mission reported that voting was orderly and peaceful, which represented a marked reduction in tension compared to previous elections.

In 2009, Trinidad and Tobago gained international attention by hosting the Fifth Summit of the Americas, a major meeting of the 34 elected leaders from the Western Hemisphere. While the government tried to frame the summit as a major diplomatic achievement, popular discontent with the costs of the event and the related disruptions for security purposes cut into Manning's support.

In the face of a no-confidence vote, Manning dissolved parliament in April 2010 and called elections for May. Kamla Persad-Bissessar's People's Partnership (PP) coalition—which was made up of the UNC, COP, and the Tobago Organization of the People—won 29 of 41 seats, while Manning's PNM captured only 12 seats. Persad-Bissessar's campaign was based on pledges to bring transparency and accountability to all areas of government. The PP's victory ended nearly 40 years of rule by the PNM.

Soon after becoming prime minister, Persad-Bissessar held local elections in July for the first time since 2003, after being postponed four times by the Manning government. The PP dominated in the country's 14 city, borough, and regional corporations.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Trinidad and Tobago is an electoral democracy. The 2010 legislative elections were generally considered to be free and fair by observers. Tobago is a ward of Trinidad. The president is elected to a five-year term by a majority of the combined houses of Parliament, though executive authority rests with the prime minister. Parliament consists of the 41-member House of Representatives, elected to five-year terms, and the 31-member Senate, also serving five-year terms. The president appoints 16 senators on the advice of the prime minister, 6 on the advice of the opposition, and 9 at his or her own discretion.

The parties are technically multiethnic, though the PNM is favored by Afro-Trinidadians, while the UNC is affiliated with Indo-Trinidadians. The PP coalition was multiethnic.

The country is believed to suffer from high levels of official corruption. Trinidad's Integrity Commission, established under the 2000 Integrity in Public Life Act to uphold standards of transparency and accountability, has the power to investigate the financial and ethical performance of public functionaries. Following the resignations of several commission members in 2009, after their legal eligibility to serve came under scrutiny, a new Integrity Commission was appointed in 2010. Trinidad and Tobago was ranked 73 out of 178 countries surveyed in Transparency International's 2010 Corruption Perceptions Index.

Freedom of speech is constitutionally guaranteed. Press outlets are privately owned and vigorous in their pluralistic views. There are four daily newspapers and several weeklies, as well as both private and public broadcast media outlets. Access to the internet is not restricted.

Freedom of religion is guaranteed under the constitution, and the government honors this provision in practice. Foreign missionaries are free to operate, but the government allows only 35 representatives of each denomination. Academic freedom is generally observed.

Freedoms of association and assembly are respected. Civil society is relatively robust, with a range of interest groups engaged in the political process. Labor unions are well organized, powerful, and politically active, although union membership has declined in recent years. Strikes are legal and occur frequently.

The judicial branch is independent, though subject to some political pressure and corruption. As a result of rising crime rates, the court system is severely backlogged, with thousands of criminal cases awaiting trial. The government permits human rights monitors to visit prisons, which are severely overcrowded.

The government has struggled in recent years to address the problem of violent crime. Many Trinidadians of East Indian descent, who are disproportionately the targets of abduction, blame the increase in violence and kidnapping on government corruption and police collusion. Most investigations of extrajudicial crimes go unpunished.

Drug-related corruption extends to the business community, and a significant

amount of money is believed to be laundered through front companies. The 2000 Proceeds of Crime Act imposes severe penalties for money laundering and requires that major financial transactions be strictly monitored. The government works closely with U.S. law enforcement agencies to track drug shipments in and out of the country. Corruption in the police force, which is often drug related, is endemic, and law enforcement inefficiency results in the dismissal of some criminal cases. The police have won praise, however, for establishing a branch of Crime Stoppers, an international organization that promotes community involvement in preventing and informing on crime through a telephone hotline.

Trinidad and Tobago is one of the few countries in Latin America and the Caribbean that is grappling with the problem of Islamic extremism. In 2007, a four-person terrorist plot to blow up a fuel line at John F. Kennedy International Airport in New York City involved a Trinidadian suspect, but no formal links were found to Jamaat al-Muslimeen, a small radical Muslim group that had staged a coup attempt in Port-of-Spain in 1991, causing 23 deaths.

The population is multiethnic, consisting of Afro-Trinidadians, Indo-Trinidadians, and those of mixed race. The Indo-Trinidadian community continues to edge toward numerical, and thus political, advantage. Racial disparities persist, with Indo-Trinidadians composing a disproportionate percentage of the country's upper class.

Women participate in high-level politics, holding 12 seats in the House of Representatives and 8 seats in the Senate. Salary gaps continue to favor men. Domestic violence remains a significant concern. While serious crimes such as murder and rape are reported, other instances of domestic abuse go unreported. In September 2009, the Network of NGOs of Trinidad and Tobago for the Advancement of Women complained that the government was withholding a draft version of a new gender policy, a violation of the country's Freedom of Information Act.

Tunisia

Political Rights: 7

Population: 10,500,000

Civil Liberties: 5

Capital: Tunis

Status: Not Free

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline For Year Under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
6,SNF	6,SNF	6,SNF	6,SNF	6,SNF	6,SNF	7,SNF	7,SNF	7,SNF	7,SNF

Overview:

A state-run media campaign in 2010 called for constitutional amendments that would lift the age limit on presidential candidates, allowing President Zine el-Abidine Ben Ali to run for a sixth term in 2014. Throughout the year, the authorities continued to harass, arrest, and imprison journalists and bloggers, human rights activists, and political opponents of the government, and a law passed in June imposed new criminal restrictions on opposition activity. Antigovernment demonstrations broke out

in late December, sparked by the self-immolation of a fruit vendor protesting police harassment.

Tunisia, which had been a French protectorate since 1881, gained its independence in 1956. The country was then ruled for more than 30 years by President Habib Bourguiba, a secular nationalist who favored economic and social modernization along Western lines but severely limited political liberties. Bourguiba succeeded in advancing women's rights and economic development, and his government maintained strong relations with the West and fellow Arab states.

In 1987, Prime Minister Zine el-Abidine Ben Ali ousted Bourguiba and seized the presidency in a bloodless coup. Ben Ali's rise to power had little effect on state policy. He continued to push market-based economic development and women's rights, but he also repressed political opponents. Independent journalists, secular activists, and Islamists faced imprisonment, torture, and harassment. Many Islamists, particularly supporters of the banned movement Ennahda, were jailed following sham trials in the early 1990s.

Ben Ali's hold on government institutions remained strong, and he won a fifth five-year term in the October 2009 presidential election, taking nearly 90 percent of the vote amid tight media and candidacy restrictions. In concurrent elections for the Chamber of Deputies, the lower house of the legislature, the ruling Democratic Constitutional Rally (RCD) captured 161 of 214 seats. Of the six other parties that won representation, none took more than 16 seats. The Progressive Democratic Party (PDP), one of the few critical independent parties, boycotted the 2009 elections after it was barred from campaigning.

The government's efforts to control the 2009 election process were evident in restrictions imposed on the media, retaliation against journalists and bloggers, and a concerted bid by official media to discredit critical coverage. Although the presidential campaign was the first in Tunisia in which all candidates received airtime to discuss their platforms, the authorities manipulated the scheduling and edited the speeches. The RCD monopolized prime-time advertising and campaigning, while independent journalists and commentators were arrested or assaulted, and their publications, broadcast outlets, and even blogs and websites were blocked.

The government's repressive measures continued in 2010. In June, the parliament passed a law that criminalized opposition activities deemed to be fomented by "agents of a foreign power." The measure followed meetings in May 2010 between Tunisian human rights activists and European lawmakers.

Also during 2010, a state media campaign continued to advocate constitutional amendments that would allow Ben Ali to run for a sixth term in 2014, but the changes had not been passed by year's end. Existing constitutional rules require presidential candidates to be younger than 75, and Ben Ali turned 74 in September 2010. At the conclusion of a sixth term, he would be 83; Ben Ali had ousted Bourguiba, then 84, on the grounds that he was too old and infirm to rule effectively. Meanwhile, Ben Ali's choice of successor remained unclear. Reputed candidates included his son-in-law, Mohamed Sakher el-Materi, and the secretary general of the RCD, Mohamed Ghariani.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Tunisia is not an electoral democracy. President Zine el-Abidine Ben Ali has exercised authoritarian rule since seiz-

ing power in a coup in 1987. Beginning in 1989, he won five consecutive five-year terms in tightly controlled elections, either running unopposed or easily defeating token challengers. A 2002 referendum removed the constitution's three-term limit for the presidency and raised the maximum age for presidential candidates from 70 to 75. A package of amendments in 2008 lowered the voting age from 20 to 18 and effectively barred presidential candidates other than the elected leaders of political parties who had served at least two years, or those who obtained nominations from, at least 30 lawmakers or local councilors.

The president appoints the cabinet, the prime minister, regional governors, and the head of the official election-monitoring organization. Members of the 214-seat Chamber of Deputies are directly elected to serve five-year terms. A 2002 constitutional amendment created an upper house, the Chamber of Counselors. Of its 126 members, 85 are indirectly elected by local officials, and 41 are appointed by the president, all for six-year terms. A cabinet reshuffle took place in January 2010, but Mohamed Ghannouchi, a technocratic economist, remained in place as the long-standing prime minister.

Opposition parties that are genuinely independent of state influence are weak and have almost no role in the formation of public policy. The state strictly monitors and severely curbs their activities. In July 2010, for example, the authorities continued their 13-year campaign of repression against the party newspaper of the PDP, *Al-Mawkef*, by invalidating the lease for its Tunis office.

Ben Ali and his close relatives and associates used their positions to create private monopolies in several sectors of the economy. Tunisia was ranked 59 out of 178 countries surveyed in Transparency International's 2010 Corruption Perceptions Index.

Tunisia has one of the worst media environments in the world. Despite constitutional guarantees and a press law that promise freedom of expression, the government uses an array of legal, penal, and economic measures to silence dissenting voices. Libel and defamation are criminal offenses, and journalists also risk punishment under laws against disturbing public order. Only a handful of private television and radio stations have received licenses, including one owned by the president's son-in-law that was launched in 2009. Government-approved media regularly featured praise of Ben Ali and his associates in 2010, and criticism of the president was not tolerated.

Tunisian journalists are detained, physically assaulted, fired from their jobs, prevented from leaving the country, and subjected to seemingly arbitrary police surveillance. More than 100 Tunisian journalists live in exile, according to Canadian Journalists for Free Expression. The authorities monitor foreign media, denying accreditation to critical journalists, and foreign publications or reporters can be seized or expelled if they offend the government. Ahead of the 2009 elections, the Qatar-based satellite television station Al-Jazeera was the target of a smear campaign, and its Tunisia-based correspondent was denied accreditation. In July 2010, television journalist Fahem Boukadous began serving a four-year prison term for threatening public order through his coverage of labor protests in 2008. He appealed the sentence to the Supreme Court, and expressed concern that his acute respiratory ailment would worsen in prison. Boukadous remained behind bars at year's end.

Stations that operate without approval via satellite or internet broadcasts face severe repression. For example, in January 2009, the authorities shut down the inde-

pendent radio station Kalima soon after it began broadcasting via satellite, arresting or detaining several of its employees and confiscating materials from its offices. The next month, three journalists for the London-based satellite television station Al-Hiwar al-Tounissi were arrested and charged with working for an "illegal station," according to the Observatory for Freedom of Press, Publishing, and Creation.

The government bans access to an array of internet sites dealing with topics like democracy and human rights, and opposition media websites are often defaced. Social-networking and video-sharing sites like Facebook and YouTube are intermittently blocked. Online journalists and bloggers are routinely monitored, harassed, and arrested. The Committee to Protect Journalists has ranked Tunisia among the 10 worst places to be a blogger. In October 2010, the Arabic Network for Human Rights Information (ANHRI) criticized the blocking of the website of the Tunisian Observatory for Union Rights and Freedoms shortly after it was launched.

Tunisia's state religion is Islam, but the small population of Jews and Christians are generally free to practice their faiths. The government closely monitors mosques for extremist activity. They receive state funding and may remain open only during prayer time; imams are appointed and paid by the state. "Sectarian" dress like the hijab (headscarf) is prohibited, and both men and women with conservative religious appearances face police harassment.

Authorities limit academic freedom. While academics may discuss sensitive topics with relative openness in private settings, the government does not allow such discussion in public forums.

Freedoms of association and assembly are guaranteed in the constitution and in several international treaties to which Tunisia is a party, but the government restricts these rights in practice. In late December 2010, antigovernment demonstrations erupted in the underdeveloped towns of the interior, after fruit vendor Mohamed Bouazizi burned himself to death to protest police harassment. The suicide became a symbol for wider political despair and economic dislocation. The unrest quickly spread to larger coastal cities, and while the police attempted to crack down, the military had generally declined to intervene by year's end.

Nongovernmental organizations are legally prohibited from pursuing political objectives and activities, and independent human rights groups are routinely denied registration, forcing them to operate precariously as illegal bodies. Public-funding requirements and foreign-funding reporting rules make it extremely difficult for registered associations to maintain independence from the government and benefit from foreign sponsorship. Rights activists are regularly harassed, slandered, and abused.

Government-sanctioned trade unions, including the only labor federation, the General Union of Tunisian Workers, support government policies. Authorities limit independent labor activity, especially when it resembles or threatens to become organized political opposition. Progovernment forces orchestrated a virtual coup within the year-old National Syndicate of Tunisian Journalists in mid-2009, taking over key leadership positions and endorsing Ben Ali's candidacy in the presidential election.

The judicial system in Tunisia is carefully managed by the executive branch, which controls the appointment and assignment of judges. Beginning in 2005, the executive bureau of the Association of Tunisian Judges faced a campaign of harassment and dismissals, resulting in a changed membership that is allegedly more co-

operative with the regime. A wide-ranging coalition of human rights organizations issued a statement in November 2010 to condemn the assault on judicial autonomy.

Courts do not ensure due process in politically motivated cases and regularly subject the defendants to harsh sentences, including terms of "administrative control," or internal exile, after release from prison. Trials of suspected Islamists, human rights activists, and journalists are typically condemned as grossly unfair and politically biased by domestic and international observers. Detention facilities in general are plagued by overcrowding and lack of medical care, and credible local and international sources report that detainees are often tortured in prison and in police custody.

Tunisia has long been praised for relatively progressive social policies, especially in the areas of family law and women's rights. The country ratified the Optional Protocol to the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in late 2008, and women in Tunisia enjoy more social freedoms and legal rights than in most other countries in the region. The personal status code grants women equal rights in divorce, and children born to Tunisian mothers and foreign fathers are automatically granted citizenship. The country legalized medical abortion in 1973.

Turkey

Political Rights: 3

Population: 73,600,000

Civil Liberties: 3

Capital: Ankara

Status: Partly Free

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline For Year Under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

2001	2001	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
4,5PF	3,4PF	3,4PF	3,3PF						

Overview: In September 2010, Turkish referendum voters approved constitutional changes that included a restructuring of the civilian judiciary and limitations on the jurisdiction of military courts. The package also allowed for the prosecution of the leaders of the 1980 military coup.

Turkey emerged as a republic following the breakup of the Ottoman Empire at the end of World War I. Its founder and the author of its guiding principles was Mustafa Kemal, dubbed Atatürk (Father of the Turks), who declared that Turkey would be a secular state. He sought to modernize the country through measures such as the pursuit of Western learning, the use of the Roman alphabet instead of Arabic script for writing Turkish, and the abolition of the Muslim caliphate.

Following Atatürk's death in 1938, Turkey remained neutral for most of World War II, joining the Allies only in February 1945. In 1952, the republic joined NATO to secure protection from the Soviet Union. However, Turkey's domestic politics remained unstable, and the military—which saw itself as a bulwark against both

Islamism and Kurdish separatism—forced out civilian governments on four occasions between 1960 and 1997. In the most recent of the incidents, the military forced the resignation of a government led by the Islamist party Welfare, which had won parliamentary elections in 1995.

The governments that followed failed to stabilize the economy, leading to growing discontent among voters. As a result, the Justice and Development (AK) Party won a sweeping majority in the 2002 elections. The previously unknown party had roots in Welfare, but it sought to distance itself from Islamism. Abdullah Gül initially served as prime minister, because AK's leader, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, had been banned from politics due to a conviction for crimes against secularism after he read a poem that seemed to incite religious intolerance. Once in power, the AK majority changed the constitution, allowing Erdogan to replace Gül in 2003.

Erdogan oversaw a series of reforms linked to Turkey's bid to join the European Union (EU). Accession talks officially began in 2005, but difficulties soon arose. Cyprus, an EU member since 2004, objected to Turkey's support for the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, which is not recognized internationally. EU public opinion and some EU leaders expressed opposition to Turkish membership for a variety of other reasons. This caused the reform process to stall, and Turkish popular support for membership declined, even as Turkish nationalist sentiment increased. Ahmet Necdet Sezer's nonrenewable term as president ended in May 2007. He had been considered a check on the AK-dominated parliament, and the prime minister's nomination of a new president was closely watched. Despite objections from the military and the secularist Republican People's Party (CHP), Erdogan chose Gül. In a posting on its website, the military tacitly threatened to intervene if Gül's nomination were approved, and secularists mounted huge street demonstrations to protest the Islamist threat they perceived in his candidacy. An opposition boycott of the April presidential vote in the parliament prevented a quorum, leading the traditionally secularist Constitutional Court to annul the poll. With his nominee thwarted, Erdogan called early parliamentary elections for July.

AK won a clear victory in the elections, increasing its share of the vote to nearly 50 percent. However, because more parties passed the 10 percent threshold for entering the legislature than in 2002, AK's share of seats decreased slightly to 340. The CHP together with its junior partner, the Democratic Left Party, won 112 seats. The Nationalist Movement Party (MHP) entered the assembly for the first time, with 70 seats. A group of 20 candidates from the pro-Kurdish Democratic Society Party (DTP) also gained seats for the first time by running as independents, since they did not have the national support required to enter as a party. Other independents won the remaining 8 seats. The MHP decided not to boycott the subsequent presidential vote, and Gül was elected president in August.

In an October 2007 referendum, voters approved constitutional amendments that, among other changes, reduced the presidential term to five years with a possibility for reelection, provided for future presidents to be elected by popular vote, and cut the parliamentary term to four years.

In 2008, long-standing tensions between the AK government and entrenched, secularist officials erupted into an ongoing investigation focused on an alleged secretive ultranationalist group called Ergenekon. A total of 194 people were charged in three indictments in 2008 and 2009, including military officers, academics,

journalists, and union leaders. A trial against 86 people began in October 2008, and a second trial against 56 people began in July 2009. Ergenekon was blamed for the 2006 bombing of a secularist newspaper and a court shooting that killed a judge the same year; its alleged goal was to raise the specter of Islamist violence so as to provoke a political intervention by the military. The trials continued in 2010, with only three suspects released and many more arrested, including 21 generals in February. Moreover, the chief prosecutor investigating the Ergenekon case was himself arrested in February 2010 for allegedly helping to establish the clandestine group; he was released in June, but his trial was still pending at year's end. Critics continued to accuse the government of using the far-reaching case to suppress its political opponents. In December, the trial began for approximately 200 active and retired military officers accused of plotting to overthrow the AK government in 2003.

Meanwhile, in September 2010, the government called a referendum on a new package of constitutional amendments. The controversial measures included an increase in the memberships of the Constitutional Court and the Supreme Board of Judges and Prosecutors, allowing for more AK appointments; both bodies had clashed with the AK government in the past. Voters accepted the amendments by an unexpectedly wide margin, 58 percent to 42 percent. The DTP's successor party boycotted the vote.

The AK government in 2009 made positive overtures to the separatist Kurdish Workers' Party (PKK), raising hopes of a permanent ceasefire in the group's decades-long guerrilla war against government forces in the southeast. An earlier halt in fighting had lasted from 1999 to 2004. However, the DTP's disbandment in late 2009 for alleged PKK ties, and the prosecution of accused PKK collaborators in 2010, soured the state's relations with the Kurdish minority.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties:

Turkey is an electoral democracy. The 1982 constitution provides for a 550-seat unicameral parliament, the Grand National Assembly. Reforms approved in a 2007 referendum reduced members' terms from five to four years. The changes also envision direct presidential elections for a once-renewable, five-year term, replacing the existing system of presidential election by the parliament for a single seven-year term. The president appoints the prime minister from among the members of parliament. The prime minister is head of government, while the president has powers including a legislative veto and the authority to appoint judges and prosecutors. The July 2007 elections were widely judged to have been free and fair, with reports of more open debate on traditionally sensitive issues.

A party must win at least 10 percent of the nationwide vote to secure representation in the parliament. The opposition landscape changed in 2007, with the entrance of the MHP and representatives of the DTP into the legislature. By contrast, only the two largest parties—the ruling AK and the opposition CHP—won seats in the 2002 elections.

Political parties have been shut down for having a program that is not in agreement with the constitution, a condition that could be interpreted broadly. In December 2009, the Constitutional Court shuttered the DTP and banned many of its members from politics, forcing the removal of two members of parliament from

office. Major protests that followed the ruling were often violent and even deadly. The party's remaining lawmakers regrouped under the new Peace and Democracy Party (BDP).

Reforms have increased civilian oversight of the military, but restrictions persist in areas such as civilian supervision of defense expenditures. The military continues to intrude on issues beyond its purview, commenting on key domestic and foreign policy matters. A 2009 law restricting the use of military courts brought Turkey closer to EU norms, and the 2010 constitutional amendments limited the jurisdiction of military courts to military personnel. The amendments also removed an article that had prevented the prosecution of the leaders of the 1980 military coup.

Turkey struggles with corruption in government and in daily life. The AK government has adopted some anticorruption measures, but reports by international organizations continue to raise concerns, and allegations have been lodged against both AK and CHP politicians. Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan has been accused of involvement in a scandal over the misuse of funds at a charity called Lighthouse. Following a related trial in Germany, an investigation began in Ankara that was ongoing as of the end of 2010. Government transparency has improved under a 2004 law on access to information. Turkey was ranked 56 out of 178 countries surveyed in Transparency International's 2010 Corruption Perceptions Index.

The right to free expression is guaranteed in the constitution, but legal impediments to press freedom remain. A 2006 antiterrorism law reintroduced jail sentences for journalists, and Article 301 of the penal code allows journalists and others to be imprisoned for discussing subjects such as the division of Cyprus and the 1915 mass killings of Armenians by Turks, which many consider to have been genocide. Defendants have been charged under the same article for crimes such as insulting the armed services and denigrating "the Turkish nation"; very few have been convicted, but the trials are time-consuming and expensive. In 2008, a court overturned a government ban on reporting about Ergenekon, but one journalist was facing 12 separate cases and 97 years of imprisonment at the end of 2010 over a series of Ergenekon-related articles he wrote that February. Journalists have been among those implicated in the Ergenekon case. In June 2010, as a result of an article on PKK activity in Iraq, a journalist with a Kurdish biweekly was sentenced to 15 months—and his publication was fined—for making propaganda for a terrorist organization. In August, the European Court of Human Rights ruled that Turkey was guilty of violating the right to life, freedom of expression, and effective remedy for its handling of the case of prominent ethnic Armenian journalist Hrant Dink, who was murdered in 2007 after facing repeated accusations under Article 301 and reporting death threats to the police.

Nearly all media organizations are owned by giant holding companies with interests in other sectors, contributing to self-censorship. In 2009, the Dogan holding company, which owns many media outlets, was ordered to pay crippling fines for tax evasion in what was widely described as a politicized case stemming from Dogan's criticism of AK and its members. The internet is subject to the same censorship policies that apply to other media, and a 2007 law allows the state to block access to websites deemed to insult Atatürk or whose content includes criminal activities. This law has been used to block access to the video-sharing website

YouTube—from 2008 through October 2010—as well as several other websites. Kurdish-language publications and television broadcasts are now permitted. However, Kurdish newspapers in particular often face closure or website blocking.

The constitution protects freedom of religion, but the state's official secularism has led to considerable restrictions on the Muslim majority and others. Observant men are dismissed from the military, and women are barred from wearing headscarves in public universities and government offices. However, in practice, universities and sometimes individual professors make their own decisions as to whether students can wear headscarves.

Three non-Muslim groups—Jews, Orthodox Christians, and Armenian Christians—are officially recognized, and attitudes toward them are generally tolerant, although they are not integrated into the Turkish establishment. Other groups, including non-Sunni Muslims like the Alevis, lack legal status, and Christian minorities have sometimes faced hostility.

The government does not regularly restrict academic freedom, but self-censorship on sensitive topics is common.

Freedoms of association and assembly are protected in the constitution. Prior restrictions on public demonstrations have been relaxed, but violent clashes with police still occur. While a 2004 law on associations has improved the freedom of civil society groups, legislation passed in 2005 allows the state to restrict groups that might oppose its interests. Members of local human rights groups have received death threats and sometimes face prosecution. Nevertheless, civil society is active on the Turkish political scene.

Laws to protect labor unions are in place, but union activity remains limited in practice. Under the 2010 constitutional amendments, workers are entitled to enroll in more than one trade union in a single sector, and state employees for the first time are granted the right to collective bargaining. The quality of enforcement of these measures remains to be seen.

The constitution envisions an independent judiciary. The government in practice can influence judges through appointments, promotions, and financing, though much of the court system is still controlled by strict secularists who oppose the current government. In October 2010, seven members of the Supreme Board of Judges and Prosecutors resigned, claiming that the Ministry of Justice had not allowed them to work since August; the ministry said it was preparing a new structure in line with the constitutional amendments. A 2009 scandal revealed official wiretapping of judges, leading to accusations of political interference. In September 2010, a former police chief was arrested for ties to an outlawed group called the Revolutionary Headquarters, for whom he allegedly conducted wiretaps; as a result of the investigation, it was revealed that more than 70,000 telephones were currently being wiretapped by court order. The court system in general is undermined by procedural delays, with some trials lasting so long as to become a financial burden for the defense.

The current government has enacted laws and introduced training to prevent torture, including a policy involving surprise inspections of police stations announced in 2008. However, Amnesty International has accused the Heavy Penal Courts of accepting evidence extracted under torture. In the first half of 2010, the Turkish Human Rights Presidency, which is part of the prime minister's office, received 3,461 complaints, mostly related to health and patient rights, the right

to fair trial, and torture. Prison conditions can be harsh, with overcrowding and practices such as extended isolation in some facilities.

In 2009, serious peace negotiations began with the PKK, and the government announced a major initiative to improve democracy and minority rights. After protests erupted over the banning of the DTP in December of that year, the initiative was shelved. Two bombings in Istanbul in 2010 were attributed to the PKK, and bombings by various other radical groups are not infrequent. The PKK declared a ceasefire ahead of the September 2010 referendum, and extended it through year's end.

The state claims that all Turkish citizens are treated equally, but because recognized minorities are limited to the three defined by religion, other minorities and Kurds in particular have faced restrictions on language, culture, and freedom of expression. The situation has improved with EU-related reforms. In October 2010, the Diyarbakir city council voted to restore Kurdish names to villages in the region. However, some municipal officials in the southeast have faced criminal proceedings for communicating in Kurdish. Alleged collaboration with the PKK is still used as an excuse to arrest Kurds who challenge the government. Also in October 2010, 151 suspects, including 12 mayors from the BDP, were put on trial for alleged ties to a group called the Kurdistan Communities Union (KCK), an urban extension of the PKK. The court rejected a request by the defendants for permission to present their defense in Kurdish; while the law grants the right to such a defense, the judge argued that the defendants were sufficiently fluent in Turkish.

Gay and transgender people in Turkey face widespread discrimination and, in some cases, violence. Istanbul's largest gay and transgender organization, Lambda, won an appeal against its closure in 2009, but a prominent transgender human rights activist was stabbed to death soon thereafter. In May 2010, five transgender rights activists were stopped in their car and then beaten by police; they were charged with resisting the police, but the charges were later dropped for lack of evidence. Advocates for the disabled have criticized lack of implementation of a law designed to reduce discrimination. Amnesty International in 2009 criticized Turkey's asylum policy, which does not recognize non-Europeans as refugees.

Property rights are generally respected in Turkey, with the exception of the southeast, where tens of thousands of Kurds as well as thousands of Assyrians were driven from their homes during the 1990s. Increasing numbers have returned under a 2004 program, and some families have received financial compensation, but progress has been slow. Local paramilitary "village guards" have been criticized for obstructing the return of displaced families through intimidation and violence.

The amended constitution grants women full equality before the law, but the World Economic Forum ranked Turkey 126 out of 134 countries surveyed in its 2010 Global Gender Gap Index. Women hold just 50 seats in the 550-seat parliament, though that is nearly double the figure before the 2007 elections. Domestic abuse is reportedly common, and so-called honor crimes continue to occur. Suicide among women has been linked to familial pressure, as stricter laws have made honor killings less permissible; penal code revisions in 2004 included increased penalties for crimes against women and the elimination of sentence reductions in cases of honor killing and rape. In 2009, the government introduced a policy whereby police officers responding to calls for help regarding domestic abuse would be held legally responsible should any subsequent abuse occur.

Turkmenistan

Political Rights: 7

Population: 5,200,000

Civil Liberties: 7

Capital: Ashgabat

Status: Not Free

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline For Year Under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
7,7NF									

Overview: Turkmenistan held local elections in 2010, but as with all previous polls, the process and results were orchestrated by the authorities. The ruling Democratic Party remained the only registered political party, and the chairman of the Central Election Commission called for President Gurbanguly Berdymukhammedov to keep his post for life. Also during the year, the government continued to cultivate foreign markets and export routes for its abundant natural gas reserves.

Turkmenistan gained formal independence from the Soviet Union in 1991. Saparmurat Niyazov, the former head of the Turkmenistan Communist Party, had been the sole candidate in elections to the newly created post of president in October 1990. He won reelection in 1992, with a reported 99.5 percent of the vote. A 1994 referendum extended his term until 2002. In the December 1994 elections to the Mejlis (National Assembly), only Niyazov's Democratic Party of Turkmenistan (DPT), the former Communist Party, was permitted to field candidates.

In the 1999 Mejlis elections, every candidate was selected by the government, and virtually all were members of the DPT. The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), citing numerous procedural inadequacies, refused to send even a limited assessment mission. The Mejlis unanimously voted in late December to make Niyazov president for life.

In 2002, Niyazov survived an alleged assassination attempt in Ashgabat. The incident sparked a crackdown on the opposition and perceived critics of the regime, drawing condemnation from foreign governments and international organizations. Mejlis elections in 2004 followed the established pattern of executive control.

Niyazov's rule was marked by frequent government reshuffles, the gutting of formal institutions, the muzzling of media, and an elaborate personality cult. The *Ruhnama*, a rambling collection of quasi-historical and philosophical writings attributed to Niyazov, became the core of educational curriculums. The limited available information about the true state of affairs in Turkmenistan pointed to crises in health care, education, and agriculture.

Niyazov's death in December 2006 from an apparent heart attack was followed by the rapid and seemingly well-orchestrated ascent of Deputy Prime Minister Gurbanguly Berdymukhammedov to the position of acting president. The succession appeared to circumvent constitutional norms, as criminal charges were brought against Mejlis speaker Ovezgeldy Atayev, who would have become acting president according to the constitution. Berdymukhammedov subsequently cemented

his formal status, easily besting five obscure ruling-party candidates in a February 2007 presidential election that was not monitored by any international observers.

Berdymukhammedov gradually removed high-ranking Niyazov loyalists and took steps to phase out Niyazov's cult of personality. In August 2008, the Halk Maslahaty (People's Council), the country's supreme representative body, voted without public debate to approve a new constitution, effectively dissolving itself and dispersing its powers to the Mejlis and the president. Elections for an expanded Mejlis were held in December 2008, but as with previous votes, all of the nearly 300 candidates were preapproved by the presidential administration.

Under Berdymukhammedov, Turkmenistan's foreign policy became less isolationist, though it remained focused on natural gas exports. China became Turkmenistan's leading export market, following the completion of a pipeline that is slated to reach full capacity by 2012. Russia faded as a business partner after an April 2009 pipeline explosion that Turkmenistan blamed on Moscow. In January 2010, Iranian president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad visited Turkmenistan, which had recently opened a second gas pipeline to his country. Berdymukhammedov made a rare foreign visit to France in February, though it produced no significant agreements.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties:

Turkmenistan is not an electoral democracy. The late president Saparmurat Niyazov wielded near-absolute power until his death. None of the country's elections—including the February 2007 vote that gave Niyazov's successor, Gurbanguly Berdymukhammedov, a five-year term in office—have been free or fair.

Under a new constitution approved in 2008, the Mejlis (National Assembly) became the sole legislative body and expanded from 50 to 125 seats, with members serving five-year terms. The new charter also gave citizens the right to form political parties, though only one party, the ruling DPT, is officially registered. Berdymukhammedov made several references to the possibility of forming new political parties in 2010, but no actual changes took place. Local elections held in July 2009 and December 2010 mimicked the country's previous stage-managed polls amid reports of low voter turnout.

In November 2010, the chairman of the Central Election Commission called for Berdymukhammedov to keep his post for life, raising the possibility of a return to a Niyazov-style lifetime presidency.

Corruption is widespread, with public officials often forced to bribe their way into their positions. Allocation of state profits from gas exports remains opaque. Turkmenistan was ranked 172 out of 178 countries surveyed in Transparency International's 2010 Corruption Perceptions Index. The government's lack of transparency affects a variety of public services, including medical care. An April 2010 report by Doctors Without Borders alleged that Turkmen authorities are concealing, "a dangerous public health situation, in which government officials actively deny the prevalence of infectious disease, medical data is systemically manipulated, and international standards and protocols are rarely applied in practice."

Freedom of the press is severely restricted by the government, which controls all broadcast and print media. Berdymukhammedov announced plans in July 2010 to create privately owned newspapers, but no action followed. Internet access has expanded somewhat since Niyazov's death, although the sole service provider,

run by the government, reportedly blocks undesirable websites. The authorities remained hostile to foreign news services, particularly Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL), during 2010. RFE/RL correspondents Osman Hallyev and Dovletmurat Yazguliev were threatened in January, and RFE/RL journalist Allamourad Rakhimov, a Turkmenistan native based in Prague, was refused entry to the country at Ashgabat's airport despite having a valid visa. Unanswered questions still surround the 2006 death in custody of RFE/RL correspondent Ogulsapar Muradova.

The government restricts freedom of religion, and independent groups face persecution. Practicing an unregistered religion remains illegal, with violators subject to fines. Islamic cleric Shiri Geldimuradov reportedly died in prison under unclear circumstances following his April 2010 arrest.

The government places significant restrictions on academic freedom, and the *Ruhnama* is still used in the school system, although its prominence appears to be declining gradually.

The constitution guarantees freedoms of peaceful assembly and association, but these rights are severely restricted in practice. Sporadic protests, usually focused on social issues, have taken place. While not technically illegal, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) are tightly controlled, and Turkmenistan has no civil society sector to speak of.

The government-controlled Colleagues Union is the only central trade union permitted. There are no legal guarantees protecting workers' rights to form unions and strike, though the constitution does not specifically prohibit such activities. Strikes in Turkmenistan are extremely rare.

The judicial system is subservient to the president, who appoints and removes judges without legislative review. The authorities frequently deny rights of due process, including public trials and access to defense attorneys. In May 2010, the parliament approved a new criminal code that reduced the maximum prison sentence from 25 to 15 years.

Prisons suffer from overcrowding and inadequate nutrition and medical care, and international organizations are not permitted to visit. The government has released some two dozen political prisoners since Niyazov's death, but without a coordinated review. Nothing is known about the condition of jailed former foreign ministers Boris Shikhmuradov and Batyr Berdyev. Rights activists Annakurban Amanklychev and Sapardurdy Khajiev, convicted on dubious espionage charges in 2006, remained behind bars in 2010. The UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention stated in 2010 that their continued detention violated international law. Turkmen territory is used to smuggle drugs from neighboring Afghanistan.

Employment and educational opportunities for ethnic minorities are limited by the government's promotion of Turkmen national identity, though some of the more onerous restrictions on the educational and cultural institutions of ethnic minorities have been eased since Niyazov's death.

Freedom of movement is restricted, with a reported blacklist preventing some individuals from leaving the country. In 2010, some students who had been prevented from studying abroad in 2009 were allowed to return to educational institutions in Bulgaria and Kyrgyzstan.

A Soviet-style command economy and widespread corruption diminish equality of opportunity, though some changes are taking place. The new constitution

establishes the right to private property, but the deeply flawed judiciary provides little protection to businesses and individuals. In December 2010, Turkmen authorities suspended the license of Russian-owned mobile-telephone operator MTS-Turkmenistan, leaving many customers without service.

Traditional social and religious norms, inadequate education, and poor economic conditions limit professional opportunities for women, and anecdotal reports suggest that domestic violence is common.

Tuvalu

Political Rights: 1

Population: 10,000

Civil Liberties: 1

Capital: Funafuti

Status: Free

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline For Year Under Review(Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
1,1F									

Overview: National elections held in September 2010 were considered free and fair, with no reported incidents of violence or fraud. Apisai Ielemia retained his parliamentary seat, but was replaced as prime minister by Maatia Toafa. In December, Toafa lost a confidence vote, and Willy Telavi was elected as Tuvalu's new prime minister.

The Gilbert and Ellice Islands, situated in the central South Pacific Ocean, became a British protectorate in 1892 and a British colony in 1916. Polynesian Ellice Islanders voted to separate themselves from the Micronesian Gilbertese in 1974. In 1978, the Ellice Islands became independent under the name of Tuvalu, while the Gilbert Islands become part of Kiribati.

Tuvalu saw several changes of government between 2001 and 2006, due to intense personal and political rivalries and frequent no-confidence votes. The government of Prime Minister Apisai Ielemia, elected in 2006, was relatively stable. In the September 2010 elections, 26 candidates—all independents—competed for 15 seats in Parliament. Ielemia won a second four-year parliamentary term, but was replaced as prime minister by Maatia Toafa, who had lost to Ielemia in the 2006 elections. Toafa, the leader of the opposition, won by a narrow margin—8 votes to 7—over Kausea Natano. The elections were considered free and fair, with no reported incidents of fraud or violence.

In December, Toafa was ousted in a no-confidence vote, after Home Affairs Minister Willy Telavi declared that he would no longer support the prime minister. In the subsequent leadership vote, Telavi defeated Enele Sopoaga, 8 votes to 7, to claim the premiership.

Global climate change and rising sea levels pose significant challenges for Tuvalu and other low-lying island states. Tuvalu's highest point is just five meters above sea level. Other immediate concerns for Tuvalu are high unemployment, en-

vironmental pollution, a shortage of fresh water, increasing dependence on food imports, and health problems, such as malnutrition.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Tuvalu is an electoral democracy. Britain's Queen Elizabeth II is the head of state, and is represented by a governor general, who must be a citizen of Tuvalu. The prime minister, chosen by Parliament, leads the government. The unicameral, 15-member Parliament is elected to four-year terms. A six-person council administers each of the country's nine atolls. Council members are chosen by universal suffrage for four-year terms.

There are no formal political parties, although there are no laws against their formation. Political allegiances revolve around geography, tribal loyalties, and personalities, with elected representatives frequently changing sides and building new alliances.

Tuvalu is one of the few places in the Pacific Islands where corruption is not a serious problem, though international donors have called for improvements in governance.

The constitution provides for freedoms of speech and the press, and the government generally respects these rights in practice. The semi-public Tuvalu Media Corporation (TMC) operates the country's sole radio and television stations, as well as the biweekly newspaper, *Tuvalu Echoes*, and the government newsletter, *Sikuelo o Tuvalu*. Human rights groups have criticized the TMC for its limited coverage of politics and human rights issues, but there have been no allegations of censorship or imbalances in reporting. Many residents use satellite dishes to access foreign programming. Internet use is largely limited to the capital because of cost and connectivity challenges, but authorities do not restrict access.

Freedom of religion is upheld. In this overwhelmingly Christian country, religion is a major part of life, and Sunday service is typically considered the most important weekly event. Academic freedom is generally respected.

The constitution provides for the freedoms of association and assembly, and the government upholds these rights in practice. Public demonstrations are permitted, and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) provide a variety of health, education, and other services for women, youth, and the general population. A 2007 law allowing the incorporation of NGOs strengthened legal protection for civil society groups. Workers have the right to strike, organize unions, and choose their own representatives for collective bargaining. Public sector employees, numbering fewer than 1,000, are members of professional associations that do not have union status. With two-thirds of the population engaged in subsistence farming and fishing, Tuvalu has only one registered trade union—the Tuvalu Overseas Seamen's Union—with about 600 members who work on foreign merchant vessels. Remittances from these and other Tuvaluans working overseas are a major source of income for the country.

The judiciary is independent and provides fair trials. Tuvalu has a two-tier judicial system. The higher courts include the Privy Council in London, the Court of Appeal, and the High Court. The lower courts consist of senior and resident magistrates, the island courts, and the land courts. The chief justice, who is also the chief justice of Tonga, visits Tuvalu twice a year to preside over the High Court. A civilian-controlled constabulary force maintains internal order. Prisons are basic with no reports of abuse.

About 10 percent of Tuvalu's annual budget is derived from the Tuvalu Trust Fund, a well-run overseas investment fund set up by Britain, Australia, and South Korea in 1987 to provide development assistance.

Traditional customs and social norms condone discrimination against women and limit their role in society. Women enjoy equal access to education, but they remain underrepresented in positions of leadership in business and government. There are currently no women in Parliament. There have been few reports of violence against women. Rape is illegal, but spousal rape is not included in the definition. In August 2010, the police initiated an awareness campaign to encourage more women to report domestic violence. No law specifically addresses sexual harassment.

Uganda

Political Rights: 5

Population: 33,800,000

Civil Liberties: 4

Capital: Kampala

Status: Partly Free

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline For Year Under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
6.5PF	6.4PF	5.4PF							

Overview: In July 2010, the Shabaab, a Somali Islamist militia group, bombed two venues in Kampala, killing at least 76 people. Primary elections held by the ruling National Resistance Movement in August were marred by fraud and violence, raising concerns over potential problems in the national elections scheduled for February 2011. While the charge of criminal sedition was ruled unconstitutional by the Constitutional Court in August, the media environment remained restricted, with a draft law under consideration at year's end that would grant the government extensive control over media licensing.

Following independence from Britain in 1962, Uganda experienced considerable political instability. President Milton Obote, an increasingly authoritarian leader, was overthrown by Major General Idi Amin in 1971. Amin's brutality made world headlines, as hundreds of thousands of people were killed. His 1978 invasion of Tanzania led to his ouster by Tanzanian forces and Ugandan exiles. After Obote returned to power in 1980 through fraudulent elections, opponents, primarily from southern Ugandan ethnic groups, were savagely repressed.

Obote was overthrown again in a 1985 military coup, and in 1986, the rebel National Resistance Army, led by Yoweri Museveni, took power. Museveni introduced a "no party" system, under which only one supposedly nonpartisan political organization—the National Resistance Movement (NRM)—was allowed to operate unfettered. This system lasted for two decades.

Museveni and the NRM won presidential and legislative elections in 2001. While a ban on most formal party activities restricted the opposition, observers

generally deemed the voting transparent and held that Museveni would have won in an open contest. The opposition boycotted the parliamentary elections, and the NRM's comfortable legislative majority was buttressed by dozens of special interest representatives.

In 2005, voters approved constitutional amendments that lifted the ban on political parties and repealed the prohibition on sitting presidents running for a third term, allowing Museveni to seek reelection in 2006.

A leading Museveni opponent, Kizza Besigye of the Forum for Democratic Change (FDC), returned from exile to contest the 2006 presidential election. However, he was arrested on charges including treason and rape, and was defeated at the polls by Museveni, who took 59 percent of the vote. The NRM won a large majority in concurrent parliamentary elections. In October 2010, the Constitutional Court cleared Besigye of pending treason, terrorism, murder, and illegal use of firearms charges.

In September 2009, growing tensions between the government and the Buganda region concerning land reform legislation erupted into violence, after police stopped Ronald Muwenda Mutebi II, monarch of the Baganda ethnic group, from attending a rally. At least 40 people were killed in rioting in Kampala, and hundreds were arrested. Tensions were reignited in March 2010, when a suspicious fire destroyed much of the Kasubi Tombs, the burial grounds of the Baganda monarchs. Security forces fired into the crowds that had gathered around the tombs following the fire, killing three and injuring five others. A government commission began investigating the incident in December 2010.

On July 11, 2010, the Shabaab, a Somali Islamist militia group, bombed two venues where crowds had gathered to watch the final 2010 World Cup match, killing some 76 people and injuring 70 others. The Shabaab opposes Uganda's contribution of peacekeeping troops to the African Union Mission in Somalia. In July, Kenyan authorities arrested six men in connection with the bombings and transferred them to Uganda, though no arrest warrants or extradition orders had been issued. In September 2010, Kenyan activist Al-Amin Kimathi of the Muslim Human Rights Forum—which had publically criticized the failure of the governments of Uganda and Kenya to respect extradition procedures—was arrested after arriving in Kampala to provide legal aid to the Kenyan terrorism suspects. After being held in incommunicado detention for six days, Kimathi was charged with terrorism, murder, and attempted murder in connection with the July attacks. His hearing—along with the 16 others facing terrorist charges in connection with the Kampala bombings—was pending at year's end.

In August 2010, Museveni was nominated as the NRM candidate for the February 2011 presidential elections. The NRM primaries were marred by fraud and violence, raising concerns about the security outlook for the national elections next year.

Despite a joint military operation conducted in 2008-2009 by Uganda, Sudan, and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), and the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA)—a cult-like rebel group led by Joséph Kony—continued to attack civilians in 2010 in the DRC, South Sudan, and the Central African Republic. While originally based in northern Uganda, the LRA has not been active within the country in the past six years, though it continues to hold children who were forcibly abducted from the country.

Uganda is home to more than 500,000 people infected with HIV, with an estimated prevalence rate of 6.4 percent among adults ages 15 to 49. In May 2010, parliament tabled the HIV and AIDS Prevention and Control Bill, which would require disclosure of HIV status and criminalize the willful transmission of HIV, among other provisions. Ugandan and international civil society activists charged that the bill would impede effective responses to the HIV/AIDS epidemic and violate human rights.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Uganda is not an electoral democracy. The single-chamber National Assembly and the powerful president, who faces no term limits, are elected for five-year terms. Of the current legislature's 332 members, 215 are directly elected, and 104 are indirectly elected from special interest groups, including women, the military, youth, the disabled, and trade unions. Thirteen ex-officio seats are held by cabinet ministers, who are not elected members and do not have voting rights.

The National Assembly has asserted some independence, censuring high-level executive officials and exercising oversight to influence a number of government actions and policies. However, significant concerns remain over the ability of opposition parties to compete with the ruling NRM. The opposition is hindered by restrictive party registration requirements, voter and candidate eligibility rules, the use of government resources to support NRM candidates, a lack of access to media coverage, and paramilitary groups—such as the Kiboko Squad and the Black Mambas—that intimidate voters and government opponents. Army representatives in the National Assembly have openly campaigned for President Yoweri Museveni. Despite questions over the independence of the electoral commission, Museveni renewed the panel and reappointed its incumbent chairman in August 2009.

Although Uganda has certain measures in place to combat corruption, including the 2009 Anti-Corruption Bill and the Anti-Corruption Court, the resources to enforce them are generally lacking. In 2010, donors—including the European Union, the United Kingdom, and the World Bank—announced a 10 percent cut in budget support for the next fiscal year, citing concerns over the country's failure to address high-level corruption. Uganda was ranked 127 out of 178 countries surveyed in Transparency International's 2010 Corruption Perceptions Index.

The constitution provides for freedom of speech. Independent print outlets, including more than two dozen daily and weekly newspapers, are often critical of the government, and several private radio and television stations report on local politics. However, according to the Uganda Journalists Union, members of the ruling party own approximately 60 percent of the nation's radio stations, none of which are expected to provide equal coverage to opposition members in the run-up to the February 2011 national elections. The government has grown increasingly intolerant of press freedom, as demonstrated by a complete ban on live political debate and the closure of four radio stations following the September 2009 riots in Kampala. A 2010 Human Rights Watch report criticized the tactics used by the government to silence critics, including physical violence, threats, harassment, bureaucratic interference, and criminal charges. Journalists are increasingly practicing self-censorship, particularly those broadcasting in local languages outside the capital. The 2010 Press and Journalist Amendment Bill proposes mandatory registration

and licensing of newspapers by the government-controlled Media Council, which would have the authority to deny and revoke licenses based on vague considerations such as the newspaper's "values." Under the proposed legislation, media organizations would have to reapply for a license each year, a requirement that would encourage self-censorship. However, criminal sedition—a charge previously used to prosecute journalists critical of the NRM—was ruled unconstitutional by the Constitutional Court in August 2010. The authorities do not restrict internet usage, although access is limited to major urban centers.

There is no state religion, and freedom of worship is constitutionally protected and respected in practice. Various Christian sects and the country's Muslim minority practice their creeds freely. Academic freedom is also generally respected.

The freedoms of association and assembly are officially recognized. However, the 2010 Public Order Management Bill would require that groups of three or more people receive prior police approval before gathering to discuss any government actions, failures, or policies. The proposed law would also give police wide powers to regulate the conduct of public meetings. Members of the opposition were reportedly beaten and arrested during demonstrations against the composition of the electoral commission in January and June. Nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) are willing to address politically sensitive issues. However, their existence and activities are vulnerable to legal restrictions, including the manipulation of registration requirements. The 2006 NGO Registration Amendment Act requires NGOs and religious organizations to reregister with the Internal Affairs Ministry each year, though enforcement has been suspended pending a review of the law, and no action was taken by the end of 2010.

Workers' rights to organize, bargain collectively, and strikes are recognized by law, except by those providing essential government services, but legal protections often go unenforced. Many private firms refuse to recognize unions, and strikers are sometimes arrested.

The executive does not guarantee the independence of the judiciary. Prolonged pretrial detention, inadequate resources, and poor judicial administration impede the fair exercise of justice. The country has also faced criticism over the military's repeated interference with court processes. Rape, vigilante justice, and torture and abuse of suspects and detainees by security forces remain problems. The prison system is reportedly operating at three times its intended capacity, with pretrial detainees constituting more than half of the prison population.

The number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) has decreased in recent years due to reduced tensions in the northern part of the country and a government policy to phase out IDP camps. In July 2010, the Ugandan government—in cooperation with the Rwandan government—forcibly repatriated more than 1,700 Rwandan asylum seekers from the Nakivale and Kyaka II refugee settlements in southwestern Uganda. At least two people were killed after jumping off trucks in an attempt to escape the forced removal.

Although the constitution enshrines the principle of gender equality, discrimination against women remains pronounced, particularly in rural areas. Uganda has legislated quotas for women in all elected bodies. Women hold nearly 30 percent of the National Assembly seats, and one-third of local council seats are reserved for women. The law gives women the right to inherit land, but customary practices often

trump legal provisions in practice. Rape remains a serious problem, and although there were arrests, prosecutions, and convictions during the year, most cases were not investigated. Despite a 2009 law criminalizing domestic violence, incidents often go unreported and are rarely investigated. Cultural practices such as female genital mutilation persist. Women and girls with disabilities are extremely vulnerable to stigma, exclusion, and gender-based violence, particularly in the north. Sexual abuse of minors appears to be increasing, and according to the International Labour Organization, more than 2.7 million children are employed as workers. While the overall enforcement of anti-trafficking laws is improving, Uganda continues to be a source and destination country for men, women, and children trafficked for the purposes of forced labor and prostitution. The government remains hostile towards the rights of homosexuals.

Ukraine

Political Rights: 3

Population: 45,900,000

Civil Liberties: 3*

Capital: Kyiv

Status: Partly Free

Status Change: Ukraine's civil liberties rating declined from 2 to 3 and its status from Free to Partly Free due to deteriorating media freedom, secret service pressure on universities to keep students from participating in protests, government hostility toward opposition gatherings and foreign nongovernmental organizations, and an increase in presidential influence over the judiciary.

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline For Year Under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
4.0PF	4.0PF	4.0PF	4.0PF	3.2F	3.2F	3.2F	3.2F	3.2F	3.0PF

Overview: After winning the generally free and fair presidential runoff election in February 2010, Viktor Yanukovich and his Party of the Regions quickly redefined the rules of the Ukrainian political system. They rewrote the law on forming a governing coalition, postponed local elections from May to October, and stacked local electoral commissions with party loyalists. Yanukovich also benefited from a Constitutional Court decision that annulled the 2004 amendments to the constitution, shifting power back from the prime minister and parliament to the presidency. Also during the year, the security services exerted increased pressure on academic freedom, journalists complained of greater censorship, the administration began selective prosecutions against its political opponents, and corruption remained a major concern.

In December 1991, Ukraine's voters approved independence from the Soviet Union in a referendum and elected Leonid Kravchuk as president. Leonid Kuchma defeated Kravchuk in the 1994 presidential poll, and won reelection in 1999 amid

media manipulation, intimidation, and the abuse of state resources. Kuchma faced growing criticism for high-level corruption and the erosion of political rights and civil liberties, and evidence implicating him in the 2000 murder of independent journalist Heorhiy Gongadze fueled mass demonstrations and calls for the president's ouster. The democratic opposition made important gains in the 2002 parliamentary elections, but propresidential factions retained a majority.

In the significantly tainted first round of the October 2004 presidential election, reformist former prime minister Viktor Yushchenko led a field of 24 candidates, followed by Prime Minister Viktor Yanukovich, a representative of the eastern, Russian-speaking Donbas region, who enjoyed backing from Russian president Vladimir Putin. In the November runoff, the official results showed Yanukovich to be the winner by less than three percentage points, but voting irregularities in Yanukovich's home region led the domestic opposition and international monitors to declare his apparent victory "not legitimate."

In what became known as the Orange Revolution because of Yushchenko's ubiquitous campaign color, millions of people massed peacefully in Kyiv and other cities to protest fraud in the second-round vote. The Supreme Court on December 4 struck down the results and ordered a rerun on December 26. In the middle of the crisis, the parliament ratified constitutional reforms that shifted crucial powers from the president to the parliament, effective January 1, 2006. Although technically adopted in an unconstitutional manner, the compromise changes effectively lowered the stakes of the upcoming rerun, making it more palatable to Yushchenko's opponents. However, they also created an unclear division of power, which later led to constant conflict between the president and prime minister.

The repeat of the second round was held in a new political and social atmosphere. The growing independence of the media, the parliament, the judiciary, and local governments allowed for a fair and properly monitored ballot. As a result, Yushchenko won easily, and his chief ally, former deputy prime minister Yulia Tymoshenko, became prime minister. However, their alliance quickly broke down, leading to stalemate.

The March 2006 parliamentary elections prolonged a political stalemate in which neither the feuding Orange factions led by Tymoshenko and Yushchenko nor Yanukovich's Party of the Regions could form a majority. In July, Socialist Party leader Oleksandr Moroz abandoned the Orange alliance to join the Party of the Regions and the Communist Party in a coalition that made him Speaker of parliament and Yanukovich prime minister.

After a period of considerable infighting, Yushchenko dissolved the parliament in April 2007 and was ultimately able to schedule new legislative elections in September. Tymoshenko returned to the premiership in December, thanks to a restoration of the Orange alliance. Nevertheless, the power struggle between Yushchenko and Tymoshenko continued unabated in 2008 and 2009.

In the 2010 presidential election, which met most international standards, Yanukovich defeated Tymoshenko in the second round of voting in February, 49 percent to 46 percent. He quickly reversed many of the changes adopted in the wake of the Orange Revolution. After allying himself with parliament Speaker Volodymyr Lytvyn, who gave him enough votes to replace Tymoshenko as prime minister, Yanukovich installed Mykola Azarov in the post in March. To build the necessary

majority, the parliament abruptly changed the law on parliamentary procedure to allow individual deputies to defect from their factions and join the governing coalition. Although the Constitutional Court had rejected such a procedure two years earlier, it approved the change on April 8. Also in April, Yanukovich signed a deal that extended Russia's lease on its Crimean naval base for 25 years; even though the constitution does not permit the basing of foreign troops on Ukrainian soil.

In July, Yanukovich tried to amend the law on referendums so that he could ask voters to overturn the 2004 constitutional amendments, but he lacked the votes in the parliament. However, after replacing a number of critical Constitutional Court justices in September, he secured an October ruling that annulled the 2004 compromise, restoring the 1996 constitution and returning considerable power to the presidency.

Separately, in another move that went beyond constitutional provisions, the parliament postponed local elections set for May. It then hastily adopted a new electoral law in July that favored Yanukovich's party by prohibiting multiparty electoral blocs—such as the Tymoshenko Bloc and Yushchenko's Our Ukraine—People's Self-Defense—and allowing the ruling parties to dominate the electoral commissions. The European Union criticized Ukraine before the elections over numerous credible reports that the secret services were cracking down on independent media and the opposition, particularly Tymoshenko's Fatherland Party. Ultimately, the October voting was less democratic than the presidential poll, according to the Opora watchdog group, which cited an atmosphere of mistrust and numerous technical violations. The state used its resources to remove candidates from the ballot and to block observers from doing their jobs. There were vote falsifications in the Kharkiv and Odessa mayoral elections, where the number of votes recorded exceeded the number of ballots distributed, and Tymoshenko candidates were barred from the Lviv and Kyiv polls.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Ukraine is an electoral democracy at the national level, with the opposition winning in the four most recent presidential and parliamentary elections. However, the October 31, 2010, local elections showed serious flaws under newly elected president Viktor Yanukovich's leadership.

Citizens elect delegates to the Verkhovna Rada (Supreme Council), the 450-seat unicameral parliament, for four-year terms. The 2004 constitutional amendments, which were annulled in 2010, had extended this term to five years. Under an electoral law first used in the 2006 elections, all seats are chosen on the basis of party-list proportional representation. Parties must garner at least 3 percent of the vote to win representation. The president is elected to a maximum of two five-year terms. With the return to the 1996 constitution, the president now dominates the political system. He issues decrees; exercises power over the courts, the military, and law enforcement agencies; appoints the prime minister with the Rada's approval and removes the prime minister at will; appoints and fires all other ministers without the Rada's approval; and appoints regional governors without consulting the prime minister. The Rada can dismiss the entire cabinet, but not individual ministers. Political parties are typically little more than vehicles for their leaders and financial backers, and they generally lack coherent ideologies or policy platforms.

Corruption remains one of the country's most serious problems. Business magnates are presumed to benefit financially from their close association with top politicians, while the party-list electoral system reinforces legislators' loyalty to party bosses and leaves them less accountable to voters. In 2010, Yanukovich appointed individuals affiliated with the notoriously corrupt RosUkrEnergo gas-trading company to serve as presidential chief of staff, minister of energy, and head of the Security Service of Ukraine (SBU). The new SBU chief, leading private media owner Valeriy Khoroshkovsky, was also appointed to the Supreme Council of Justice, which oversees the judiciary. Yanukovich himself has become de facto owner of a huge estate outside of Kyiv, raising suspicions of illicit wealth. In May, the government commissioned the U.S. law firm Trout Kacheris to investigate corruption under the previous government. The report charged that former prime minister Yulia Tymoshenko's government misused more than \$400 million between 2008 and 2010. The new authorities opened a criminal case against Tymoshenko in mid-December and ordered her to remain in Kyiv. They also arrested a number of Tymoshenko's cabinet officials—including former economy minister Bohdan Danylyshyn, former interior minister Yuriy Lutsenko, and former environment minister Georgy Filipchuk—in what appeared to be a politically motivated effort to discredit the opposition.

The constitution guarantees freedoms of speech and expression, and libel is not a criminal offense. After the 2004 Orange Revolution, the government abstained from direct political interference in the media, which consequently grew more pluralistic, offering a broad range of opinions to the public. Business magnates with varying political interests own and influence many outlets, while local governments often control the local media. Conditions worsened after Yanukovich's election. The media watchdog Telekritika reported that television coverage of the opposition was decreasing, and in May journalists from Channel 1+1 released an open letter complaining of censorship. Personnel changes in early 2010 left the opposition with no representatives on the National Council for Television and Radio Broadcasting. In June, a court stripped the independent stations Channel 5 and TVi of broadcast frequencies they had won in January; the stations competed with Khoroshkovsky's Inter media group, and he was accused of engineering the ruling. Journalists who investigate wrongdoing at the local level face physical intimidation, and local police and prosecutors do not energetically pursue such cases. Vasyl Klymentyev, a journalist who investigated local corruption in Kharkiv, disappeared in August and is presumed dead. Internet access is not restricted and is generally affordable; lack of foreign language skills is the main barrier.

The constitution and the 1991 Law on Freedom of Conscience and Religion define religious rights in Ukraine, and these are generally well respected. However, among other problems, Yanukovich publicly associates himself with one of the country's competing branches of the Orthodox Church, and there have been some signs of anti-Semitism in political campaigns in recent years.

Academic freedom has come under pressure since Yanukovich took power. During 2010, Yanukovich's education minister began a process aimed at bringing Ukrainian textbooks into line with those of Russia. In March, the head of the Institute of National Memory—which investigates politically contentious episodes in Ukrainian history—was replaced with a Yanukovich supporter. The SBU in May

put pressure on the rector of the Ukrainian Catholic University in Lviv to keep students from protesting Yanukovich's policies alongside opposition parties. In September, the SBU interrogated historian Ruslan Zabilii for 14 hours and confiscated his computer. The authorities claimed that Zabilii, who researches Nazi and Soviet atrocities and the Ukrainian independence movement, planned to transfer state secrets to a third party and classified the case as top secret, which limits his rights as a defendant. Bribery surrounding university entrance exams and grades remains a problem.

The constitution guarantees the right to peaceful assembly but requires organizers to give the authorities advance notice of any demonstrations. Yanukovich's government has made it more difficult to assemble. When 30,000 businesspeople turned out in November and early December to protest tax code amendments, police accused some of them of destroying city property after forcibly closing their tent camp on December 3. Ukraine has one of the most vibrant civil societies in the region. However, the SBU has begun to pressure foreign-funded nongovernmental organizations (NGOs). In June 2010, Nico Lange, head of the Ukraine office of the Konrad Adenauer Foundation, was detained for 10 hours at the Kyiv airport after publishing a critical report. The SBU in September searched the offices of organizations funded by U.S.-based philanthropist George Soros. In October, the police searched the home of human rights blogger Dmytro Groysman. Trade unions function, but strikes and worker protests are infrequent. Factory owners are still able to pressure their workers to vote according to the owners' preferences.

The judiciary is subject to intense political pressure. Under the previous administration, the judiciary was an important arbiter in the political battles between the president and prime minister, and all political factions attempted to manipulate courts, judges, and legal procedures. The Constitutional Court had largely remained silent in the face of politicians' attempts to grab power. Under Yanukovich, however, the Constitutional Court has sided with the president, allowing him to form a parliamentary majority and overturn the 2004 constitutional amendments. Three Constitutional Court judges who were critical of Yanukovich resigned in September, clearing the way for more supportive replacements ahead of the October ruling on the 2004 amendments. Also during the year, the parliament adopted a new law giving the Supreme Council of Justice the right to appoint and dismiss judges from their positions, in violation of the constitution.

Torture by police and poor conditions in overcrowded prisons have been persistent problems. A 2008 reform measure aimed to bring Ukraine's criminal justice system up to international standards, with a focus on improving pretrial detention procedures and strengthening victims' rights. However, the May 2010 death of Ihor Indyl at a Kyiv police station, following what his parents said was a beating, raised questions about police behavior. An investigation proved inconclusive, but two officials were charged with abuse of power and negligence.

While the country's Romany population suffers from discrimination, the government has actively interceded to protect the rights of most ethnic and religious minorities, including the Crimean Tatar community. Tatars continue to suffer discrimination at the hands of local authorities and communities in Crimea in terms of land ownership, access to employment, and educational opportunities. Members of the gay and lesbian community also report discrimination.

Gender discrimination is prohibited under the constitution, but women's rights have not been a priority for government officials. Despite Tymoshenko's prominent role, women still do not have the same opportunities as men. Human rights groups have complained that employers openly discriminate on the basis of gender, physical appearance, and age. The trafficking of women abroad for the purpose of prostitution remains a major problem.

United Arab Emirates

Political Rights: 6
Civil Liberties: 5
Status: Not Free

Population: 5,400,000
Capital: Abu Dhabi

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline For Year Under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
6,5NF	6,5NF	6,6NF	6,6NF	6,6NF	6,5NF	6,5NF	6,5NF	6,5NF	6,5NF

Overview: In January 2010, a United Arab Emirates (UAE) court acquitted Sheikh Issa bin Zayed al-Nahyan of torturing an Afghan merchant in 2008. That same month, a British woman who had complained to Emirati police that she had been raped was instead charged with having illegal sex with her fiancé. The government in February began blocking access to the popular website UAE Hwar, an online platform for political and social discussion. In October, the government abandoned a controversial plan to limit messaging and e-mail services for owners of BlackBerry smartphones.

Attacks on shipping off the coast of what is now the United Arab Emirates (UAE) led the British to mount military expeditions against the local tribal rulers in the early 19th century. A series of treaties followed, including a long-term maritime truce in 1853 and an 1892 pact giving Britain control over foreign policy. The seven sheikhdoms of the area subsequently became known as the Trucial States. In 1971, Britain announced that it was ending its treaty relationships in the region, and six of the seven Trucial States formed the UAE federation. Ras al-Khaimah, the seventh state, joined in 1972. The provisional constitution left significant power in the hands of each emirate.

In the wake of the 2001 terrorist attacks on the United States, the government cut ties with Afghanistan's ruling Taliban regime and introduced reforms in its financial services and banking sectors to block the financing of terrorism. A 2004 law subsequently established stricter punishments for crimes involving terrorism.

In January 2006, Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid al-Maktoum succeeded his brother as ruler of the emirate of Dubai and prime minister of the UAE. His ascension did not result in any substantive changes in the UAE's political balance, with the ruling families maintaining a firm grip on power.

The first-ever elections for half of the 40-seat, largely advisory Federal National Council were held in December 2006. However, participation was limited to a small

electoral college appointed by the emirates' seven rulers. The UAE government appointed the remaining 20 members in February 2007.

In May 2009, UAE police detained Sheikh Issa bin Zayed al-Nahyan, brother of the current UAE president, after he was caught on videotape torturing an Afghan merchant in 2008. In January 2010, all charges against al-Nahyan were dropped, after a court ruled that he had been drugged and, therefore, had committed the crime unknowingly. The court awarded the Afghan victim approximately \$2,700 in compensation.

In contrast to many of its neighbors, the UAE has achieved some success in diversifying its economy to reduce dependency on the petroleum sector. The country has built a leading free-trade zone in Dubai and a major manufacturing center in Shaijah, and it has invested resources to expand its tourism industry.

Political Rights

and Civil Liberties:

The UAE is not an electoral democracy. All decisions about political leadership rest with the dynastic rulers of the seven emirates, who form the Federal Supreme Council, the highest executive and legislative body in the country. The seven leaders select a president and vice president, and the president appoints a prime minister and cabinet. The UAE has a 40-member Federal National Council (FNC), half of which was elected for the first time in 2006 by a 6,689-member electoral college chosen by the seven rulers. The other half of the council is directly appointed by the government for two-year terms. The council serves only as an advisory body, reviewing proposed laws and questioning federal government ministers. The government failed to hold FNC elections scheduled for 2010.

There are no political parties in the country. Instead, the allocation of positions in the government is largely determined by tribal loyalties and economic power. The emirate of Abu Dhabi, the major oil producer in the UAE, has controlled the federation's presidency since its inception. Citizens have limited opportunities to express their interests through traditional consultative sessions.

The UAE is considered one of the least corrupt countries in the Middle East. It was ranked 28 out of 178 countries surveyed in Transparency International's 2010 Corruption Perceptions Index.

Although the UAE's constitution provides for some freedom of expression, the government has historically restricted this right in practice. The 1980 Printing and Publishing Law applies to all media and prohibits, "defamatory material and negative material about presidents, friendly countries, [and] religious issues, and [prohibits] pornography." Consequently, journalists commonly practice self-censorship, and the leading media outlets frequently publish government statements without criticism or comment. However, Dubai has a "Media Free Zone," where print and broadcast media is produced for audiences outside of the UAE with relatively few restrictions. The government continued to consider a restrictive press law in 2010. While the proposed law would remove prison sentences for press offenses, journalists would instead receive fines of up to \$136,000 for articles deemed harmful to UAE's economy and up to \$1.35 million for those considered "insulting" to the ruling family or government. The draft law would also force journalists to reveal their sources. Government officials continue to ban a variety of publications and internet websites. In February 2010, authorities began blocking access to the popular

website UAE Hewan—an online platform for political and social discussions—for undisclosed reasons; it remained blocked through year's end.

The constitution provides for freedom of religion. Islam is the official religion, and the majority of citizens are Sunni Muslims. Nevertheless, the minority Shiite Muslim sect and non-Muslims are free to worship without interference. The government controls content in nearly all Sunni mosques. Academic freedom is limited, with the Ministry of Education censoring textbooks and curriculums in both public and private schools.

The government places restrictions on freedoms of assembly and association. Small political discussions in private homes are generally tolerated. However, there are limits on citizens' ability to organize broader gatherings, and public meetings require government permits. All nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) must register with the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs. Registered NGOs reportedly receive subsidies from the government. In July 2010, authorities arrested a small group of citizens for using their BlackBerry smartphones to plan a protest against rising gasoline prices. The government subsequently announced plans to limit BlackBerry services in the country, but abandoned the proposed restrictions in October under pressure from the U.S. government.

The UAE's mostly foreign workers do not have the right to organize, bargain collectively, or strike. Although labor strikes are rare, workers periodically protest against unpaid wages and poor working and living conditions, but the government reportedly uses military force to crack down on such demonstrations. Amidst the global recession, a growing number of expatriate workers were dismissed from their jobs and sent home.

The judiciary is not independent, with court rulings subject to review by the political leadership. The legal system is divided into Sharia (Islamic law) courts, which handle family and criminal matters, and secular courts, which cover civil law. Although the constitution bans torture, members of the royal family and the country's police have allegedly used torture against political rivals and business associates. Sharia courts sometimes impose flogging sentences for drug use, prostitution, and adultery. Violence among the nonindigenous community has led to arbitrary arrests and detention, and prisons in the larger emirates are overcrowded. While the federal Interior Ministry oversees police forces in the country, each emirate's force enjoys a great deal of autonomy.

Discrimination against noncitizens and foreign workers occurs in many aspects of life. Fewer than 20 percent of the country's residents are UAE citizens. There are also more than 100,000 stateless residents, known as *bidoon*, who are unable to secure regular employment and face systemic discrimination. While the Interior Ministry has established registration centers for the *bidoon* to apply for citizenship, the government retains the final authority to approve or reject requests for citizenship, and selection criteria remain unclear.

The constitution does not specifically mention gender equality, and women's social, economic, and legal rights are not always protected. Muslim women are forbidden to marry non-Muslims and are eligible for only one half of their brother's inheritance. In January 2010, a British woman was arrested for having "illegal" sex with her fiancé and for drinking alcohol while visiting the UAE. Prior to her arrest, she had complained to authorities that she had been raped in a hotel bathroom

in Dubai. The case was eventually dismissed, after she and her fiance produced documentation of their intent to marry. In June, an 18-year-old Emirati woman was sentenced to one year in prison after accusing six men of gang-raping her.

Women are underrepresented in government, though they have received appointments at various levels in recent years. The prime minister, Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid al-Maktoum, added two new women to the cabinet in 2008, and Sheikh Sultan al-Qasimi, ruler of the emirate of Shajjah, has appointed five women to his consultative council. Abu Dhabi swore in the country's first woman judge in October 2008, after the judicial law was amended to allow women to serve as prosecutors and judges.

Foreigners lured into the country by employment opportunities are often subjected to harsh working conditions, physical abuse, and the withholding of passports. Despite government efforts to combat human trafficking—including a 2006 antitrafficking law and the opening of two shelters for women victims—the government has failed to address the problem adequately. In March 2010, the organization Anti-Slavery International posted images that allegedly presented evidence of the continued use of children as jockeys in the popular sport of camel racing, a practice that was officially banned in 2005.

United Kingdom

Political Rights: 1

Population: 62,200,000

Civil Liberties: 1

Capital: London

Status: Free

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline For Year Under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
1;2F	1;1F								

Overview*. In the May 2010 parliamentary elections, the Conservative Party captured the most seats, but failed to secure an absolute majority, and subsequently formed a coalition government with the Liberal Democrats. The Labour Party—placing second in the elections—was forced into opposition after 13 years in power. In October, the coalition government—under the leadership of David Cameron—shifted its attention to the nation's slow economic recovery, announcing large-scale public spending and defense cuts.

The English state emerged before the turn of the first millennium and was conquered by Norman French invaders in 1066. Wales, Scotland, and lastly Ireland were subdued or incorporated into the kingdom over the course of centuries, culminating in the creation of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland in 1801. The Glorious Revolution of 1688-89 began a gradual—but eventually total—assertion of the powers of Parliament, as Britain became one of the modern world's first democracies. A significant extension of voting rights was passed in 1832, and subsequent reforms led to universal adult suffrage.

Most of Ireland won independence after World War I, with Protestant-majority counties in the north remaining a restive part of what became, as of 1927, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. Significant powers were devolved to a Scottish Parliament, and fewer to a Welsh Assembly, in 1997. Peace negotiations tentatively restored home rule to Northern Ireland in 1998.

The Labour Party won the 1997 general elections after adopting more centrist positions, ending nearly two decades of Conservative Party rule. Prime Minister Tony Blair led Labour to another major victory in 2001, though he faced opposition within the party for his support of the U.S.-led war in Iraq beginning in 2003.

A combination of slow progress in improving public services and the continuation of the Iraq war led to a far less decisive Labour victory in May 2005 elections. While Blair remained prime minister, he was considerably weakened by speculation over when he would hand the premiership to Gordon Brown, the chancellor of the exchequer.

On July 7, 2005, three suicide bombings in London's Underground railway system and one on a London bus killed more than 50 people and wounded hundreds more. The culprits were British Muslims—three of Pakistani descent and one a convert to Islam. The attacks set off a public debate about the integration of immigrants and racial and religious minorities into British society. They also led to wide-ranging government proposals to tighten antiterrorism laws, which, in turn, sparked concerns about civil liberties.

In previous decades, Britain's main source of internal violence had been the struggle between unionists and Irish nationalists in Northern Ireland. This largely ended with the 1998 Good Friday peace agreement. However, the locally elected Northern Ireland Assembly, as called for in the agreement, was suspended in 2002 after Sinn Féin—the political party linked to the Irish Republican Army (IRA), an outlawed Irish nationalist paramilitary group—was caught spying on rival politicians and security officials. Further peace talks and the formal disarmament of the IRA paved the way for fresh elections to the assembly in March 2007 and the formation of a power-sharing local government between Sinn Féin and the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP). The DUP's longtime leader, Ian Paisley, became first minister.

In June 2007, Blair resigned, and Brown took office as prime minister. Although Brown won some praise for his response to failed terrorist attacks earlier that month, he subsequently suffered from waning public support and a Labour Party fund-raising scandal later in the year. Brown acted decisively to counter the international financial crisis in late 2008 and early 2009 by shoring up ailing banks with public money, and his approach was, for a time, hailed abroad as a model response. Nevertheless, Labour was outperformed by the Conservatives in the June 2009 European Parliament elections, which also handed the nationalist—and many say racist—British National Party its first two seats.

In April 2010, Gordon Brown announced that parliamentary elections would be held in May; constituency boundaries were redrawn, increasing the number of seats in the House of Commons by 2 for a total of 650. David Cameron's centre-right Conservative Party returned to power after 13 years of rule by the centre-left Labour Party. The Conservatives captured 306 seats, Labour secured 258 seats, the Liberal Democrats took 57, and the remaining seats went to smaller parties.

Without an absolute majority, Prime Minister Cameron formed a coalition government with the Liberal Democrats, the first formal coalition government to rule the United Kingdom in 70 years.

After coming to power, Cameron's coalition faced a daunting economic situation. With a ballooning budget deficit, the United Kingdom was only slowly emerging from a deep recession caused by the 2008 global financial collapse. In October 2010, Cameron announced the nation's most severe austerity program in generations, including deep cuts in government spending and defense funding. Public anger over the cuts was substantial and prompted the largest protests seen in London since the 2003 Iraq War. Meanwhile, the armed forces of the United Kingdom and France began closely cooperating and cost-sharing. The cost of Britain's nuclear deterrent came under particular scrutiny, though there was no plan to eliminate it. The new government also promised to review the Labour governments' tightening of security at the perceived expense of civil liberties.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: The United Kingdom is an electoral democracy. Each of the members of the House of Commons, the dominant lower chamber of the bicameral Parliament, is elected in a single-member district. This procedure multiplies the power of the two largest parties—the Labour Party and the Conservative Party—at the expense of smaller parties. The Liberal Democrats, the third-largest party, are the most disadvantaged; although they won 23 percent of the vote in the 2010 elections, they received only 8.8 percent of the seats in the House of Commons. In exchange for their participation in the coalition government, the Liberal Democrats demanded, among other requests, a referendum on a new electoral system that would give parties a number of seats more in line with their share of the vote. The referendum did not take place by year's end. The parliamentary opposition holds ministers accountable in debates that are widely covered in the press. Parliamentary elections must be held at least every five years.

The House of Lords, Parliament's upper chamber, can delay legislation initiated in the Commons. If it defeats a measure passed by the Commons, the Commons must reconsider, but it can ultimately overrule the Lords. The Lords membership, currently more than 700, was reformed under former prime minister Tony Blair, and all but 92 hereditary peers (nobles) were removed. The rest are "life peers," chosen by governments to serve for life; Law Lords, who until 2009 served as the country's highest court; and a small number of bishops and archbishops of the Church of England. The monarch, currently Queen Elizabeth II, plays a largely ceremonial role as head of state.

In addition to the Labour and Conservative parties and the left-leaning Liberal Democrats, other parties include the Welsh nationalist Plaid Cymru and the Scottish National Party. In Northern Ireland, the main Catholic and republican parties are Sinn Féin and the Social Democratic and Labour Party, while the leading Protestant and unionist parties are the Ulster Unionist Party and the DUP.

After a period of centralization under Conservative governments from 1979 to 1997, the Labour Party delivered a far-reaching devolution of power to Northern Ireland, Scotland, and Wales. The first elections to the Scottish Parliament and the Welsh Assembly were held in 1999. The Scottish body has more power, includ-

ing some tax-raising authority, than its Welsh counterpart. Welsh nationalism is primarily cultural. The Northern Ireland Assembly was restored in 2007.

Corruption is not pervasive in Britain, but high-level scandals have damaged the reputation of the political class under both Labour and Conservative governments. Instances of political donations made in exchange for "honors" (peerages and titles) were reported under the Labour government. In May 2009, the media revealed that many members of Parliament—from both major parties—had routinely used public funds for luxury items, home renovations, and other dubious purposes. Sir Thomas Legg, chair of the House of Commons's independent audit commission investigating the scandal, issued a report in February 2010, demanding that nearly 400 members of Parliament reimburse the government for \$2.1 million in illegitimate expenditures. However, the report was criticized by some as being overzealous, and Sir Paul Kennedy overturned or reduced the payments owed by many of those who appealed. Britain was ranked 20 out of 178 countries surveyed in Transparency International's 2010 Corruption Perceptions Index.

The law provides for press freedom, and the British media are lively and competitive. Daily newspapers span the political spectrum, though the combined effects of the economic crisis and rising internet use have driven some smaller papers out of business. The state-owned British Broadcasting Corporation is editorially independent and faces significant private competition. England's libel laws are among the most claimant-friendly in the world, leading wealthy foreign litigants—known as libel tourists—to use Britain's libel laws to silence their critics. Anyone can try to sue for libel in a British court, as long as the material was accessed in Britain, and the burden of proof falls on the defendant. In some cases, this practice has led to self-censorship. The government is also increasingly using so-called super-injunctions to forbid the media from reporting certain information and even from reporting on the injunction. The government has faced criticism for rampant delays in fulfilling freedom of information requests. Internet access has not been restricted by the government. However, the government in 2009 increased the amount of information that internet firms must store on user activities, including visits to foreign websites.

Although the Church of England and the Church of Scotland have official status, the government both prescribes freedom of religion in law and protects it in practice. Nevertheless, Muslims especially report discrimination, harassment, and occasional assaults. A 2006 law banned incitement to religious hatred, with a maximum penalty of seven years in prison. Academic freedom is respected by British authorities.

Freedoms of assembly and association are respected. Civic and nongovernmental organizations are allowed to operate freely. Workers have the right to organize trade unions, which have traditionally played a leading role in the Labour Party, though this connection weakened as the party moved toward the center beginning in the 1990s.

A new Supreme Court began functioning in October 2009, improving the separation of powers by moving the highest court out of the House of Lords. An earlier round of reform in 2005 had removed the judicial and legislative functions of the Lord Chancellor, who remains a senior figure in the cabinet. The police maintain high professional standards, and prisons generally adhere to international guidelines.

Britain's antiterrorism laws are some of the strongest in the democratic world, and are frequently criticized by rights groups. Terrorism suspects can be detained without charge for 28 days, and in 2009, the European Court of Human Rights awarded compensation to 11 people who had been detained without trial after the 2001 terrorist attacks in the United States. A report issued by the government in 2009 found that many people arrested under the antiterrorism laws had been subsequently charged with different crimes, indicating that the laws may have been misused.

The government has occasionally been accused of "outsourcing" torture by extraditing terrorism suspects to their home countries, where they could be abused in custody. According to a 2009 UN report, at least 15 people claimed to have been tortured in other countries with the knowledge of British authorities. In October 2010, the head of the Secret Intelligence Service (MI6), Sir John Sawers, publically denounced torture as abhorrent and illegal, but stressed that in an era of public disclosures and transparency, secrecy was necessary to ensure the safety and security of the United Kingdom. Sawers is the first chief of MI6 to make a public speech in its 101-year history.

Violence in Northern Ireland has been rare in recent years. However, the murders of two soldiers and a policeman in March 2009 were claimed by IRA splinter groups that oppose the peace agreement. Parliament passed a law in 2009 delegating responsibility for policing and criminal justice to the Northern Ireland government, the last provisions of which came into effect on April 12, 2010.

Britain has large numbers of immigrants and locally born descendants of immigrants, who receive equal treatment under the law. In practice, their living standards are lower than the national average, and they complain of having come under increased suspicion amid the terrorist attacks and plots of recent years. Racist incidents are more common in Northern Ireland than in other parts of the country.

Women receive equal treatment under the law but are underrepresented in politics and the top levels of business. Women currently hold 143 seats in the House of Commons. Abortion is legal in Great Britain but heavily restricted in Northern Ireland, where it is allowed only to protect the life or the long-term health of the mother. Northern Irish women seeking abortion typically travel to Great Britain.

United States of America

Political Rights: 1

Population: 309,600,000

Civil Liberties: 1

Capital: Washington, D C.

Status: Free

Note: The numerical ratings and status listed above do not reflect conditions in Puerto Rico, which is examined in a separate report.

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline For Year Under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
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Overview: The Republican Party made major advances in midterm congressional elections in 2010, gaining majority control of the House of Representatives and narrowing the Democratic Party's hold in the Senate. The elections followed the passage of legislation to overhaul the country's health-care system, a measure that had been a high priority for President Barack Obama but drew stiff opposition from Republicans. Separately, a major controversy emerged over the release of hundreds of thousands of classified government documents by the antisecrecy group WikiLeaks.

The United States declared independence in 1776, during a rebellion against British colonial rule. The current system of government began functioning in 1789, following ratification of the country's constitution. Because the founders of the United States distrusted concentrated government authority, they set up a system in which the federal government has three coequal branches—executive, legislative, and judicial—and left many powers with state governments and the citizenry.

For most of the country's history, power has alternated between the Democratic Party and the Republican Party. President George W. Bush of the Republicans was reelected for a second four-year term in 2004, but he subsequently suffered from major policy setbacks and declining public-approval ratings. In the 2006 midterm elections, the Democrats won control of both houses of Congress for the first time since 1994, and in 2008, Democratic senator Barack Obama won the presidency, taking 53 percent of the popular vote. Senator John McCain, the Republican nominee, took 46 percent. In concurrent 2008 legislative elections, the Democrats increased their majorities in both the House of Representatives and the Senate.

Obama, the first black candidate to become president, entered the White House with an ambitious domestic agenda dictated in part by fears of economic collapse in the wake of a financial crisis in late 2008. During his first 18 months in office, he pushed through measures to stimulate the economy, revive the automobile industry, and, after a lengthy and bitter struggle, overhaul the nation's health-care system. In response, the Republicans accused the president of improperly expanding the involvement of the federal government in economic affairs, and of implementing policies that irresponsibly increased an already large budget deficit.

In the November 2010 congressional elections, Republicans recaptured control

of the House of Representatives, taking 242 seats, and narrowed the Democratic majority in the Senate, securing a new total of 47 seats. This left the Democrats with 193 House seats and 51 seats in the Senate. There were also two independent senators who voted with the Democratic caucus. Many of the successful Republican candidates aligned themselves with the Tea Party movement, a loose grouping of citizen and lobbying organizations that demanded reductions in the federal budget, a much smaller role for government in domestic affairs, and tax cuts. Republicans, many with Tea Party endorsements, won a majority of the state governorships that were contested in 2010 and made substantial gains in state legislatures.

Also during 2010, a major controversy surrounded the release of thousands of classified military and diplomatic documents by the antisecrecy group WikiLeaks. The leaked documents were initially published by several prominent newspapers, including the *New York Times*. There were calls by leading political figures to consider prosecuting the *Times* and Julian Assange, the Australian founder of WikiLeaks, though in similar situations in the past, American courts had generally upheld the right of the press to publish leaked government information. A U.S. soldier, Bradley Manning, was arrested on charges of having handed the classified documents over to WikiLeaks. At year's end, he was facing a military trial and a possibly lengthy term of imprisonment.

In a major gain for homosexual rights in December 2010, Congress passed and the president signed a bill that repealed the ban on gay men and women serving openly in the military. The measure, once fully implemented, would end a "don't ask, don't tell" policy, under which gays were permitted to serve if they did not disclose their sexual orientation.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: The United States is an electoral democracy with a bicameral federal legislature. The upper chamber, the Senate, consists of 100 members—two from each of the 50 states—serving six-year terms, with one-third coming up for election every two years. The lower chamber, the House of Representatives, consists of 435 members serving two-year terms. All national legislators are elected directly by voters in the districts or states they represent. The president and vice president are elected to four-year terms. Under a 1951 constitutional amendment, the president is limited to two terms in office.

Presidential elections are decided by an Electoral College, meaning it is possible for a candidate to win the presidency while losing the national popular vote. Electoral College votes are apportioned to each state based on the size of its congressional representation. In most cases, all of the electors in a particular state cast their ballots for the candidate who won the statewide popular vote, regardless of the margin. Two states, Maine and Nebraska, have chosen to divide their electoral votes between the candidates based on their popular-vote performance in each congressional district, and other states are now considering similar systems.

A great deal of government responsibility rests with the 50 states. Most law enforcement matters are dealt with at the state level, as are education, family matters, and many land-use decisions. States also have the power to raise revenues through various forms of taxation. In some states, citizens have a wide-ranging ability to influence legislation through institutions of direct democracy, such as referendums,

which have been conducted on issues including tax rates, affirmative action, and immigrant rights. In 2010, for example, voters in California rejected a proposal to legalize the possession and sale of marijuana. Direct-democracy mechanisms have been hailed by some as a reflection of the openness of the U.S. system. However, critics have argued that they lead to incoherent governance, undermine the institutions of representative democracy, and weaken the party system.

The intensely competitive U.S. political environment is dominated by the two major parties, the right-leaning Republicans and the left-leaning Democrats. The country's "first past the post" or majoritarian electoral system discourages the emergence of additional parties, as do a number of specific legal and other hurdles. However, independent or third-party candidates have at times significantly influenced politics at the presidential and state levels, and a number of newer parties, such as the Green Party, have modestly affected politics in certain municipalities in recent years. While the majoritarian system has discouraged the establishment of parties based on race, ethnicity, or religion, religious groups and minorities have been able to gain political influence through participation in the two established parties. Conservative Christian groups, for example, play a substantial role in Republican Party affairs, while black, Hispanic, and homosexual rights advocates play important roles in the Democratic Party. A number of laws have been enacted to ensure the political rights of minorities. In 2009, the Supreme Court upheld a provision of the 1965 Voting Rights Act that allows the federal government to vet changes to election laws in certain states and municipalities with histories of discriminatory balloting rules.

Election campaigns in the United States are long and expensive. Serious candidates frequently find themselves in a "permanent campaign," with a never-ending process of fund-raising. The two parties and the constituency and interest groups that support them have used various methods to circumvent legal restrictions on campaign spending, and the Supreme Court on several occasions has struck down such restrictions, finding that they violated free speech rights. Election spending for the 2008 contests easily surpassed that of previous year's, reaching over \$5 billion; the presidential race alone cost \$2.4 billion.

American society has a tradition of intolerance toward corrupt acts by government officials, corporate executives, or labor leaders. In 2010, charges of corruption were brought against government officials in a number of states and municipalities. The U.S. media are aggressive in reporting on corruption, and newspapers often publish investigative articles that delve into questions of private or public malfeasance. However, there are concerns that financial difficulties in the newspaper industry have reduced the press's willingness to devote resources to investigative journalism. At the same time, the expanding influence of interest groups and lobbyists on the legislative and policymaking processes, combined with their crucial role in campaign fund-raising, has given rise to public perceptions of enhanced corruption in Washington.

The federal government has a high degree of transparency. A substantial number of auditing and investigative agencies function independently of political influence. Such bodies are often spurred to action by the investigative work of journalists. Federal agencies regularly place information relevant to their mandates on websites to broaden public access. In an action widely praised by scholars and civil libertarians,

President Barack Obama in 2009 ordered that millions of government documents from the Cold War era be declassified and made available to the public. Nevertheless, the Obama administration has been more aggressive than its predecessors in prosecuting leaks of classified information.

The United States has a free, diverse, and constitutionally protected press. A long-standing debate over the impact of ownership consolidation—either by sprawling media companies with outlets in many states and formats, or by corporate conglomerates with little or no previous interest in journalism—has evolved into doubts about the financial viability of newspapers. While there were signs of increased stability among traditional media in 2010, the circulation of daily newspapers continued to decline. Internet journalists and bloggers play an important and growing role in the coverage of political news, and internet access is widespread in the country. Meanwhile, the traditional news divisions of major broadcast television networks have given way to 24-hour cable news stations and their internet sites. News coverage has also grown more polarized, with particular outlets and their star commentators providing a consistently right- or left-leaning perspective on the news.

Controversy has emerged in recent years over attempts to compel journalists to divulge the names of confidential sources or turn over notes and background material in the course of legal cases. A bill that would provide journalists with limited protection from such demands in federal cases has stalled in Congress in the wake of the WikiLeaks document releases. Similar laws already exist in 37 states. The United States has been a staunch opponent of the phenomenon known as "libel tourism," whereby plaintiffs, often with substantial financial resources, shop for a friendly foreign venue in which to initiate libel cases. In August 2010, Congress passed a law that protects American journalists, publishers, and authors from defamation decisions reached in countries with low thresholds for libel suits.

The United States has a long tradition of religious freedom. Adherents of practically every major religious denomination, as well as many smaller groupings, can be found throughout the country, and rates of both religious belief and religious service attendance are high. The constitution protects religious freedom while barring any official endorsement of a religious faith, and there are no direct government subsidies to houses of worship. The debate over the role of religion in public life is ongoing, however, and religious groups often mobilize to influence political discussions on the diverse issues in which they take an interest, including gay marriage, abortion, civil rights, and immigration. There is also an ongoing debate over proposals to allow public money to be used to enable students from low-income families to attend private schools with religious affiliations.

While the United States has avoided the hard-edged debate over Muslim immigrants that has afflicted a number of European societies, a series of controversies over the assimilation of Muslims have arisen in recent years. During 2010, a plan to establish a Muslim community center near the site of the 2001 terrorist attack in New York City triggered a protracted and at times angry argument, with local and national political figures taking a range of positions on the issue. However, most agreed that the center's organizers had the legal right to proceed with their project, even if some found it unseemly.

The academic sphere enjoys a healthy level of intellectual freedom. There are regular discussions on university campuses over such issues as the global economy,

Israel and the Palestinians, and the alleged politicization of curriculums on Middle Eastern affairs.

In general, officials respect the right to public assembly. Protest demonstrations directed at government policies are frequently held in Washington, New York, and other major cities. The United States gives wide freedom to trade associations, non-governmental organizations, and issue-oriented pressure groups to organize and argue their cases through the political process. In recent years, local authorities have sometimes employed strict crowd-control tactics during the presidential nomination conventions of the two major parties, large antiwar demonstrations, and protests at gatherings of the World Bank or other transnational institutions.

Federal law guarantees trade unions the right to organize workers and engage in collective bargaining with employers. The right to strike is also guaranteed. Over the years, however, the strength of organized labor has declined, so that less than 8 percent of the private sector workforce is currently represented by unions. The country's labor code and decisions by the National Labor Relations Board during Republican presidencies have been regarded as impediments to organizing efforts. Union organizing is also hampered by strong resistance from private employers. Despite its institutional decline, organized labor continues to play a vigorous role in electoral politics.

Judicial independence is respected. Although the courts have occasionally been accused of intervening in areas that are best left to the political branches, most observers regard the judiciary as a linchpin of the American democratic system. In recent years, much attention has been paid to the ideological composition of the nine-member Supreme Court, which has issued a number of significant decisions by a one-vote margin and is currently seen as having a conservative majority.

While the United States has a strong rule-of-law tradition, the criminal justice system's treatment of minority groups has long been a concern. A disproportionately large percentage of defendants in criminal cases involving murder, rape, assault, and robbery are black or Hispanic. Minority groups also account for an outsized share of the prison population.

Indeed, civil liberties organizations and other groups have advanced a broad critique of the criminal justice system, arguing that there are too many Americans in prison, that prison sentences are often excessive, and that too many people are prosecuted for minor drug offenses. Over two million Americans are behind bars in federal and state prisons and local jails at any given time, producing the highest national incarceration rate in the world. The number of incarcerated Americans has continued to increase even as the national rate of violent crime has declined. There is also a disturbing number of juveniles serving lengthy prison terms in adult penitentiaries. Concerns have been raised about prison conditions, especially the unsettling incidence of violence and rape.

The United States has the highest rate of legal executions in the democratic world. Reflecting growing doubts about the death penalty, several states have announced a moratorium on capital punishment pending studies on the practice's fairness, and the number of executions has declined steadily in recent years. Of particular importance in the campaign against the death penalty has been the exoneration of some death-row inmates based on new DNA testing. The Supreme Court has struck down the death penalty in cases where the perpetrator is a juvenile or mentally handicapped, and for crimes other than murder.

Obama entered office with pledges to reverse many of outgoing president George W. Bush's counterterrorism policies, which had drawn major criticism by civil liberties groups in the United States and governments abroad. Obama quickly issued a policy document that forbade the use of torture by U.S. personnel, and announced plans to quickly shut down the military detention facility at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. But he expressed little interest in investigating the actions of former Bush officials, and declined to roll back other Bush-era practices, such as the collection of Americans' voice and internet communications by the National Security Agency. The administration also invoked the doctrine of state secrets to block information requests in several court cases; made no effort to amend the USA PATRIOT Act, aspects of which have been criticized by civil libertarians; and continued to rely on the use of indefinite detention of terrorism suspects.

By the end of 2010, the plan to shut down the Guantanamo detention facility had effectively been abandoned due to public and congressional opposition to the relocation of the detainees to prison facilities in the United States and their possible trial in civilian courts. In November 2010, Ahmed Ghailani, the first Guantanamo detainee to be tried in a civilian court, was convicted of conspiring to destroy government property for his role in the 1998 bombing of two U.S. embassies in Africa, but the jury acquitted him of over 280 other charges. The Justice Department indicated that high-profile terrorism suspects may be tried by military tribunals in the future. In another decision that disturbed some civil libertarians, the Justice Department abandoned an investigation into the 2005 destruction of videotapes showing the interrogation of terrorism suspects by the Central Intelligence Agency. The tapes were believed to show interrogators using harsh techniques that might have placed them in legal jeopardy.

The United States is one of the world's most racially and ethnically diverse societies. In recent years, residents and citizens of Latin American ancestry have replaced black Americans as the largest minority group, and the majority held by the non-Hispanic white population has declined somewhat. An array of policies and programs are designed to protect the rights of minorities, including laws to prevent workplace discrimination, quotas to guarantee representation in the internal affairs of some political parties, and policies to ensure that minorities are not treated unfairly in the distribution of government assistance. The black population, however, continues to lag in overall economic standing, educational attainment, and other social indicators. Affirmative action in employment and university admissions remains a contentious issue. The Supreme Court has given approval to the use of race or ethnicity as a factor in university admissions under certain, narrow conditions. However, affirmative action has been banned, in whole or in part, through referendums in five states.

The United States has generally maintained liberal immigration policies in recent decades. Most observers believe that the country has struck a balance that both encourages assimilation and permits new legal immigrants to maintain their religious and cultural customs. Americans remain troubled by the large number of illegal immigrants in the country, and the federal government has responded by strengthening security at the border with Mexico. In a departure from previous policy, the Obama administration announced in 2009 that it would focus its domestic enforcement efforts on employers rather than raiding job sites in search of undocumented workers who were subject to deportation.

Citizens of the United States enjoy a high level of personal autonomy. The right to own property is protected by law and is jealously guarded as part of the American way of life. Business entrepreneurship is encouraged as a matter of government policy.

The United States prides itself as a society that offers wide access to economic and social advancement. Recently, however, studies have shown a rising inequality in wealth and narrowing opportunities for upward mobility. Among the world's prosperous, stable democracies, the United States is unique in having a large underclass of poor people who have at best a marginal role in economic life.

Women have made important strides toward equality over the past several decades. They now constitute a majority of the American workforce and are well represented in the legal profession, medicine, and journalism. Although the average compensation for female workers is roughly 80 percent of that for male workers, women with recent university degrees have effectively attained parity with men. Nonetheless, many female-headed families continue to live in conditions of chronic poverty.

Federal antidiscrimination legislation does not include homosexuals as a protected class, though many states have enacted such protections. Since Massachusetts's highest court ruled in 2003 that the state constitution gave homosexual couples the same right to marry as heterosexual couples, many states have passed laws or constitutional amendments explicitly banning same-sex marriage. At the same time, an increasing number of states have granted gay couples varying degrees of family rights, and a handful have endorsed full marriage rights.

Uruguay

Political Rights: 1

Population: 3,400,000

Civil Liberties: 1

Capital: Montevideo

Status: Free

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline For Year Under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
1,1F									

Overview: President José Mujica of the center-left Broad Front coalition developed a conciliatory tone toward the opposition during his first year in office, fostering support among the main opposition parties. However, leftist elements from within his coalition complicated the reform agenda. Separately, former president Juan María Bordaberry received a 30-year prison sentence in February for the 1976 kidnapping and murder of two parliamentary leaders during Uruguay's dirty war.

After gaining independence from Spain, the Republic of Uruguay was established in 1830. The ensuing decades brought a series of revolts, civil conflicts, and incursions by neighboring states, followed by a period of relative stability in the first half of the 20th century. The rival Colorado and Blanco parties vied for politi-

cal power in the 1950s and 1960s, but economic troubles and an insurgency by the leftist Tupamaros National Liberation Front led to a military takeover in 1973. For the next 22 years, the country remained under the control of a military regime, whose reputation for incarcerating the largest proportion of political prisoners per capita in the world earned Uruguay the nickname "the torture chamber of Latin America."

The military era came to an end after the 1984 elections, in which Julio Maria Sanguinetti of the Colorado Party won the presidency. Sanguinetti, the military's favored candidate, promoted a 1986 amnesty law that granted members of the armed forces immunity for human rights violations committed during the years of dictatorship. The military extracted the concession as its price for allowing the democratic transition the year before.

In the 1989 general election, Luis Lacalle of the Blanco Party was elected president. The 1990s were marked by relative economic stability and prosperity. Dr. Jorge Batlle of the Colorado party was elected president in 1999. He immediately sought an honest accounting of the human rights situation under the former military regime, while showing equally firm determination to reduce spending and privatize state monopolies. In 2001, crises in the rural economy and an increase in violent crime, as well as growing labor unrest, set off alarms in what was still one of Latin America's safest countries.

A currency devaluation and default in Argentina at the end of 2001 caused a dramatic drop in foreign exchange reserves and unprecedented economic insecurity. By mid-2002, the government was forced to impose a weeklong bank holiday, Uruguay's first in 70 years, to stanch a run on the country's banks.

In October 2004, Tabare Vazquez of the Broad Front (FA) coalition was elected president in the first round of voting, dealing a crushing blow to the Colorado Party. Vazquez's coalition also captured a majority of seats in both houses of parliament, marking the first time in nearly 40 years that the president's party enjoyed a parliamentary majority. Faced with the challenge of creating a stable macroeconomic framework and attracting foreign capital, Vazquez began his term by implementing a floating exchange rate, fiscal discipline, and an inflation-targeted monetary policy in a growing economy.

Uruguay fully repaid its International Monetary Fund (IMF) obligations in November 2006. Nevertheless, the Vazquez administration continued its commitment to economic orthodoxy, including the introduction of a personal income tax and a simplified the tax system in 2007. Aided by increased commodity prices, President Vazquez tripled foreign investment, maintained steady inflation, reduced poverty from 37 to 26 percent of the population, and cut unemployment in half.

Vázquez was willing to reopen the issue of the disappearance of some 200 Uruguayans during the military's political dominance in the 1970s, known as Uruguay's dirty war. Under its reinterpretation of the 1986 amnesty law, which allowed for higher-level officers to be tried, the administration arrested several police chiefs and army leaders in 2006 and 2007 for human rights violations committed during the dirty war. Former military dictator Gregorio Alvarez was convicted in October 2009 of abducting political opponents during the period of military rule and was sentenced to 25 years in prison. Also in October, the Supreme Court declared unconstitutional the amnesty law as it applied to the case of a young activist who was tortured and killed in the 1970s; just days later, a public referendum on

overturning the amnesty law failed. In February 2010, former president Juan María Bordaberry received a 30-year prison sentence for the 1976 kidnapping and murder of two parliamentary leaders.

In October 2009 parliamentary elections, the FA coalition won slim majorities in both houses, securing 16 of 30 seats in the Senate and 50 of 99 seats in the Chamber of Representatives. Aided by the ongoing popularity of President Vázquez, José Mujica of the FA coalition was elected president in November 2009, capturing 53 percent in a runoff vote. Mujica, a socialist senator who spent 14 years in prison for waging a guerilla movement against the military regime, focused his first year on national reconciliation and maintaining moderate policies. The left wing of Mujica's diverse FA coalition stepped up criticism of his agenda after the election, specifically public sector reform and elements of the five-year budget law. In contrast to his predecessor, Mujica supports the amnesty law. In October 2010, the Chamber of Representatives adopted a bill that would nullify the amnesty law by establishing a constitutional right to investigate crimes against humanity, though the Senate did not pass the bill by year's end.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Uruguay is an electoral democracy. The 2009 elections were free and fair. The 1967 constitution established a bicameral General Assembly consisting of the 99-member Chamber of Representatives and the 30-member Senate, with all members serving five-year terms. The president is directly elected for a single five-year term.

The major political parties and groupings are the Colorado Party, the Independent Party, the Blanco Party, and the ruling FA coalition. The latter includes the Movement of Popular Participation (MPP), the New Space Party, the Socialist Party, and the Uruguayan Assembly, among other factions.

The Transparency Law criminalizes a broad range of potential abuses of power by officeholders, including the laundering of funds related to public corruption cases. Uruguay was ranked 24 out of 178 countries surveyed in Transparency International's 2010 Corruption Perceptions Index, making it one of the least corrupt countries in Latin America.

Constitutional guarantees regarding free expression are respected, and violations of press freedom are rare. The press is privately owned, and broadcasting includes both commercial and public outlets. Numerous daily newspapers publish, many of which are associated with political parties; there are also a number of weeklies. A June 2009 bill eliminated criminal penalties for the defamation of public officials. The government does not place restrictions on internet usage.

Freedom of religion is a cherished political tenet of democratic Uruguay and is broadly respected. The government does not restrict academic freedom.

Rights to freedom of assembly and association are provided for by law, and the government generally observes these in practice. Civic organizations have proliferated since the return of civilian rule. Numerous women's rights groups focus on problems such as violence against women and societal discrimination. Workers exercise their right to join unions, bargain collectively, and hold strikes. Unions are well organized and politically powerful. The national umbrella trade union, the PIT-CNT, held a nation wide general strike in October 2010, demanding wage increases and protesting against proposed reforms

to the bloated and inefficient public administration. The guiding principles for these reforms had been announced in August and included ending the immobility of public servants, reforming the civil service, and establishing a new pay system. The decision to hold the first general strike under José Mujica's government was divisive within the union movement and reflected an increase in opposition from the radical left within the president's alliance.

Uruguay's judiciary is relatively independent, but the court system remains severely backlogged. Pretrial detainees often spend more time in jail than they would if convicted of the offense in question and sentenced to the maximum prison term. Overcrowded prisons, poor conditions, and violence among inmates remained problems in 2010. In July, 12 inmates died in a prison fire in southeastern Uruguay. Medical care for prisoners is substandard, and many rely on visitors for food.

The small black minority, comprising an estimated 4 percent of the population, continues to face economic difficulties. Official estimates state that 50 percent of Afro-Uruguayans are poor and suffer from discrimination.

Women enjoy equal rights under the law but face traditional discriminatory attitudes and practices, including salaries averaging approximately two-thirds those of men. Violence against women remained a problem in 2010. Women hold only 14 percent of parliamentary seats, below the Latin American average of 23 percent. However, under a 2009 quota law, women must comprise one-third of a party's political candidate list beginning in 2014. Congress approved gay civil unions in 2007, making Uruguay the first South American country to approve these rights nationwide.

Uzbekistan

Political Rights: 7

Population: 28,100,000

Civil Liberties: 7

Capital: Tashkent

Status: Not Free

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline For Year Under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
7,6NF	7,6NF	7,6NF	7,6NF	7,7NF	7,7NF	7,7NF	7,7NF	7,7NF	7,7NF

Overview: Uzbekistan's government continued to suppress all political opposition and restrict independent business activity in 2010, and the few remaining civic activists and critical journalists in the country faced prosecution, fines, and lengthy prison terms. Nevertheless, the regime maintained relatively good relations with the United States and Europe, as it provided logistical support for NATO operations in Afghanistan.

Uzbekistan gained independence from the Soviet Union through a December 1991 referendum. In a parallel vote, Islam Karimov, the former Communist Party leader and chairman of the People's Democratic Party (PDP), the successor to the

Communist Party, was elected president amid fraud claims by rival candidate Mohammed Solih of the Erk (Freedom) Party. Solih fled the country two years later, and his party was forced underground. Only progovernment parties were allowed to compete in elections to the first post-Soviet legislature in December 1994 and January 1995. A February 1995 referendum extended Karimov's first five-year term until 2000, allegedly with 99 percent voter support.

All of the five parties that competed in the December 1999 parliamentary elections, which were strongly criticized by international monitors, supported the president. In the January 2000 presidential poll, Karimov defeated his only opponent, allegedly winning 92 percent of the vote. The government refused to allow the participation of genuine opposition parties. A 2002 referendum extended presidential terms from five to seven years.

A series of suicide bomb attacks and related violent clashes in late March and early April 2004 killed some 50 people. Police appeared to be the main targets. The authorities blamed radical international Islamist groups—particularly the Al Qaeda-linked Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) and the banned Hizb ut-Tahrir (Party of Liberation). Suicide bombers killed several people outside the U.S. and Israeli embassies in July 2004, amid conflicting claims of responsibility. In December, elections for the lower house of a new bicameral parliament were held, with only the five legal, pro-presidential parties allowed to participate.

In May 2005, a popular uprising in the Ferghana Valley city of Andijon triggered a violent government crackdown. The incident began on May 10 and 11, when family members and supporters of 23 local businessmen charged with involvement in a banned Islamic group staged a peaceful demonstration in anticipation of the trial verdict. The situation turned violent on the night of May 12, when armed men stormed a prison, freed the 23 businessmen and other inmates, and captured the local government administration building. Thousands of local residents subsequently gathered in the city center, where people began to speak out on political and economic issues, often making antigovernment statements.

Security forces responded by opening fire on the crowd, which included many women and children. Although the authorities maintained that the protesters were the first to open fire, eyewitnesses reported that the security forces began shooting indiscriminately. Official figures put the death toll at 187, but unofficial sources estimated the dead at nearly 800, most of them unarmed civilians. The government accused Islamic extremists of orchestrating the demonstrations, though most of the participants appeared to have been motivated by economic and social grievances, and many of those present had come to witness the events rather than join protests.

Karimov repeatedly rejected calls from the European Union (EU), the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), and the United States for an independent international inquiry into the violence. In July 2005, Uzbekistan gave the United States six months to leave its military base at Karshi-Khanabad, which it had been allowed to use to support operations in Afghanistan since late 2001. Russia and China endorsed the official Uzbek account of the violence.

The Uzbek authorities pursued a wide-ranging crackdown after the Andijon incident, targeting nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) with foreign funding, potential political opposition figures, human rights defenders, and even former officials.

Karimov's seven-year term ended in January 2007, and the constitution barred

him from running for reelection. Nevertheless, he won a new term in December 2007 with an official 88 percent of the vote. Parliamentary elections in December 2009 offered voters no meaningful choice, though the four legal political parties, all of which supported the government, indulged in mild criticism of one another.

In June 2010, Uzbekistan briefly took in over 100,000 ethnic Uzbek refugees fleeing ethnic violence in neighboring Kyrgyzstan, and housed them in well-organized camps. However, Uzbek authorities quickly returned the refugees to Kyrgyzstan amid some reports of coercion.

Uzbekistan has largely repaired relations with the EU and United States in recent years, in part by agreeing to the overland transportation of nonmilitary supplies to support NATO operations in Afghanistan.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Uzbekistan is not an electoral democracy. President Islam Karimov uses the dominant executive branch to suppress all political opposition, and his December 2007 reelection appeared to flout constitutional rules on term limits. A dubious referendum in 2002 replaced the country's single-chamber legislature with a bicameral parliament consisting of a 120-seat lower house (with members elected by popular vote for five-year terms) and a 100-member upper house, or Senate (with 84 members elected by regional councils and 16 appointed by the president).

Only four political parties, all progovernment, are currently registered, and no genuine opposition parties function legally. A 2007 law intended to expand the role of registered parties had no real effect on the moribund political arena. Unregistered opposition groups like Birlik and Erk function primarily in exile. In December 2010, police detained and questioned 15 people who met to try to establish a new political party.

Corruption is pervasive. Uzbekistan was ranked 172 out of 178 countries surveyed in Transparency International's 2010 Corruption Perceptions Index.

Despite constitutional guarantees, freedoms of speech and the press are severely restricted. The state controls major media outlets and related facilities. Although official censorship was abolished in 2002, it has continued through semiofficial mechanisms that strongly encourage self-censorship. U.S.-funded Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty was forced out of Uzbekistan in December 2005. State-controlled television has aired "documentaries" that smear perceived opponents of the government, including a program in 2007 on journalist Alisher Saipov, who was subsequently murdered in Kyrgyzstan. Sports journalist and religious commentator Khairullo Hamidov received a six-year prison sentence in May 2010, and Voice of America correspondent Abdumalik Boboev was fined \$10,000 in October—both on dubious grounds. Separately, photographer Umida Ahmedova was convicted in February of "insulting the Uzbek people" through her photographs of daily life, though she was immediately amnestied after her conviction. The OpenNet Initiative has found that the government systematically blocks websites with content that is critical of the regime.

The government permits the existence of mainstream religions, including approved Muslim, Jewish, and Christian denominations, but treats unregistered religious activities as a criminal offense. The state exercises strict control over Islamic worship, including the content of sermons. Suspected members of banned Muslim

organizations and their relatives have been subjected to arrest, interrogation, and torture.

The government reportedly limits academic freedom. Bribes are commonly required to gain entrance to exclusive universities and obtain good grades. Open and free private discussion is limited by the mahalla committees, traditional neighborhood organizations that the government has turned into an official system for public surveillance and control.

Despite constitutional provisions for freedom of assembly, the authorities severely restrict this right in practice, breaking up virtually all unsanctioned gatherings and detaining participants.

Freedom of association is tightly constrained, and unregistered NGOs face extreme difficulties and harassment. After the 2005 unrest in Andijon, the government shut down virtually all foreign-funded organizations in Uzbekistan. A local advocate in 2008 described membership in the government-controlled association for NGOs as "voluntary but compulsory." Anti-AIDS activist Maksim Popov was sentenced to a seven-year prison term in January 2010 for distributing informational materials that were deemed incompatible with local traditions. In September, activist Surat Ikromov, who leads one of the country's last surviving human rights organizations, was fined \$62 in a slander case that appeared to be designed to intimidate him.

The Council of the Federation of Trade Unions is dependent on the state, and no genuinely independent union structures exist. Organized strikes are extremely rare.

The judiciary is subservient to the president, who appoints all judges and can remove them at any time. The creation in 2008 of a Lawyers' Chamber, with compulsory membership, increased state control over the legal profession. Law enforcement authorities routinely justify the arrest of suspected Islamic extremists or political opponents by planting contraband or filing dubious charges of financial wrongdoing. In May 2010, the president signed amendments to the penal code that allow for a one-third reduction in prison time for inmates who repent.

Prisons suffer from severe overcrowding and shortages of food and medicine. As with detained suspects, prison inmates—particularly those sentenced for their religious beliefs—are often subjected to abuse or torture. In January 2010, prosecutors opened a case on the alleged 2009 gang rape of three sisters while they were in custody, but the resulting criminal charges against 12 policemen were dropped in April. Inmates at Jaslyk Prison held a hunger strike in October and November to protest poor treatment.

Although racial and ethnic discrimination is prohibited by law, the belief that senior positions in government and business are reserved for ethnic Uzbeks is widespread. Moreover, the government appears to be systematically closing schools for the Tajik-speaking minority.

Permission is required to move to a new city, and bribes are commonly paid to obtain the necessary registration documents. Restrictions on foreign travel include the use of exit visas, which are often issued selectively. In March 2010, the Health Ministry imposed restrictions on health workers traveling abroad to conferences. Despite such controls, millions of Uzbeks, primarily men of working age, seek employment abroad, particularly in Russia and Kazakhstan.

Widespread corruption and the government's tight control over the economy limit equality of opportunity. The country's agricultural sector has undergone few

reforms since the Soviet period. A series of regulations and decrees have placed numerous restrictions on market traders. Small businesses are freer to develop than large enterprises, which are often enmeshed in high-level corruption schemes. An "anti-oligarch" campaign in 2010 featured the arrests of a number of high-profile businessmen, and some reportedly fled the country, but official media were silent on the issue and details were scarce.

Women's educational and professional prospects are limited by cultural and religious norms and by ongoing economic difficulties. Victims of domestic violence are discouraged from pressing charges against perpetrators, who rarely face prosecution. The trafficking of women abroad for prostitution remains a serious problem. The parliament passed legislation in November 2009 that imposed tougher penalties for child labor, but the practice reportedly remained widespread during subsequent cotton harvests.

Vanuatu

Political Rights: 2

Population: 250,000

Civil Liberties: 2

Capital: Port Vila

Status: Free

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline For Year Under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)



Overview: In April 2010, New Zealand judge Nevin Dawson, who had led an investigation into the 2009 death of a detainee in police custody, fled Vanuatu after reportedly receiving death threats from the paramilitary Vanuatu Mobile Force. While Dawson later returned, the government remained silent about the report's findings and recommendations through year's end. Prime Minister Edward Natapei failed a vote of confidence in December and was replaced by Sato Kilman.

Vanuatu was governed as an Anglo-French "condominium" from 1906 until independence in 1980. The Anglo-French legacy continues to split society along linguistic lines in all spheres of life, including politics, religion, and economics. Widespread corruption and persistent political fragmentation have caused governments to collapse or become dysfunctional. No-confidence votes have forced several changes of government in recent years, and parliamentary coalitions are frequently formed and dissolved.

In the 2008 parliamentary elections, the Vanua'aku Party (VP) won 11 seats, the National United Party (NUP) took 8, while the Union of Moderate Parties (UMP) and the Vanuatu Republican Party (VRP) each captured 7. Parliament chose Edward Natapei of the VP as prime minister.

While some progress has been made in creating jobs and increasing per capita income, the unemployment rate remains high. Economic reform and advancing the

rule of law have been difficult, as politics continue to be dominated by ethnic, tribal, personal rivalries. Moreover, progress has been slowed by a lack of transparency and accountability. A proposal put forth by legislators in November 2010—which would sharply increase their monthly allowances and discretionary funds—was criticized as excessive given that the minimum wage remained unchanged.

Allegations of police abuse and intimidation continued in 2010, and the government's response remained weak. In March, Nevin Dawson—a New Zealander on a two-year appointment as a Vanuatu Supreme Court justice—released the findings of his investigation into the 2009 death of a detainee in police custody. Dawson found that the detainee had suffered 9 broken bones and 23 other injuries during an "interrogation" by officers of the 300-member paramilitary Vanuatu Mobile Force (VMF). The report noted that other detainees captured by VMF around this time were also deliberately beaten and maimed by the VMF. Additionally, the investigation uncovered the use of intimidation by VMF officers, who displayed firearms during courtroom hearings. Following the release of his report, Dawson was forced to leave the country in early April, after reportedly receiving death threats from senior VMF officers. He returned to his post later that month, though the government remained silent about the report's findings and recommendations through year's end.

Natapei was ousted in December after losing a vote of confidence, and Deputy Prime Minister Sato Kilman was chosen by Parliament as his successor. A total of \$91,000 was allegedly paid to cabinet ministers and appointees who were laid off following the change of government.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Vanuatu is an electoral democracy. The constitution provides for parliamentary elections every four years. The prime minister, who appoints his own cabinet, is chosen by the 52-seat unicameral Parliament from among its members. Members of Parliament and the heads of the six provincial governments form an electoral college to select the largely ceremonial president for a five-year term. The National Council of Chiefs works in parallel with the Parliament, exercising authority mainly over language and cultural matters. The 2008 elections were deemed largely credible by international observers, despite reports of bribery and fraud.

Many political parties are active, but individual rivalries are intense, and politicians frequently switch affiliations. Politics is also driven by linguistic and tribal identity. The leading parties are the VP, NUP, and the francophone UMP.

Corruption is a serious problem. National leaders have been forced from office in recent years amid corruption scandals. In June, Parliament decided to use \$30 million from the national retirement fund to save Air Vanuatu, sparking serious public criticism. In October 2010, the government decided to stop issuing visas from its embassy in China following allegations that the visas were being sold for up to \$5,000 each. Vanuatu was ranked 73 out of 178 countries surveyed in Transparency International's 2010 Corruption Perceptions Index.

The government generally respects freedoms of speech and the press, although elected officials have been accused of threatening journalists for critical reporting. The state-owned Television Blong Vanuatu broadcasts in English and French. The state-owned *Vanuatu Weekly* and several privately owned daily and weekly papers

supply international, national, and local news. In December 2010, journalists were reportedly prohibited from attending the session of Parliament during which Edward Natapei was ousted in a vote of no confidence, drawing criticism from the media industry. The government's monopoly of telecommunications services ended in 2008. As of August 2010, approximately 80 percent of residents reportedly had access to mobile telephones. The number of internet users is also growing, but access is limited by cost and lack of infrastructure.

The government generally respects freedom of religion in this predominantly Christian country. Members of the clergy have held senior government positions, including the posts of president and prime minister. There were no reports of restrictions on academic freedom in 2010.

The law provides for freedoms of association and assembly, and the government typically upholds these rights. Public demonstrations are permitted by law and generally allowed in practice. A peaceful public rally held in March 2010 in the capital by supporters of a free West Papua (a province of Indonesia) took place without incident. Civil society groups are active on a variety of issues. Five independent trade unions are organized under the umbrella Vanuatu Council of Trade Unions. Workers can bargain collectively and strike.

The judiciary is largely independent, but it is weak and inefficient. Lack of resources hinders the hiring and retention of qualified judges and prosecutors. Long pretrial detentions are common, and prisons fail to meet minimum international standards. Tribal chiefs often adjudicate local disputes, but their punishments are sometimes deemed excessive. Harsh treatment of prisoners and police brutality allegedly provoke frequent prison riots and breakouts.

In an effort to curb the inflow of Chinese unskilled laborers—which has increasingly become a source of tension—the government said in December that it would not renew the work permits of Chinese workers already in Vanuatu.

Only 2 women sit in the 52-member Parliament, and discrimination against women is widespread. No law prohibits spousal rape, domestic abuse, or sexual harassment, which women's groups claim are common and increasing. Most cases go unreported due to victims' fear of reprisal or family pressure, and the police and courts rarely intervene or impose strong penalties. Women's rights advocates strongly criticized the court's decision in December 2010 to give only a suspended three-year sentence to a man who admitted to raping a 10-year-old girl.

Venezuela

Political Rights: 5

Population: 28,800,000

Civil Liberties: 5 *

Capital: Caracas

Status: Partly Free

Ratings Change: Venezuela's civil liberties rating declined from 4 to 5 due to a raft of legislation that granted President Hugo Chávez Frias wide-ranging decree powers, tightened restrictions on civil society and the media, and attempted to vitiate opposition gains in September 2010 parliamentary elections.

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline For Year Under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
3,5PF	3,4PF	3,4PF	3,4PF	4,4PF	4,4PF	4,4PF	4,4PF	5,4PF	5,5PF

Overview: Opposition candidates won a majority of the votes in parliamentary elections held in September 2010, but electoral rules that favor the ruling party allowed the government to retain its legislative majority. Prior to the end of the 2006-10 parliamentary term, legislators passed 13 new laws on topics including civil society, the media, and subnational government structures. President Hugo Chávez Frias was also granted wide-ranging decree powers for 18 months.

The Republic of Venezuela was founded in 1830, nine years after independence from Spain. Long periods of instability and military dictatorship ended with the establishment of civilian rule in 1958 and the approval of a constitution in 1961. Until 1993, the center-left Democratic Action (AD) party and the Social Christian Party (COPEI) dominated politics under an arrangement known as the Punto Fijo pact. President Carlos Andrés Pérez (1989-93) of the AD, already weakened by the violent political fallout from his free-market reforms, was nearly overthrown by Lieutenant Colonel Hugo Chávez Frias and other nationalist military officers in two 1992 coup attempts, in which dozens of people were killed. Pérez was subsequently impeached as a result of corruption and his inability to stem the social consequences of economic decline, which had coincided with lower oil prices beginning in the 1980s. Rafael Caldera, a former president (1969-74) and founder of COPEI, was elected president in late 1993 as head of the 16-party Convergence coalition, which included both left- and right-wing groups.

Chdvez won the 1998 presidential contest on a populist, anticorruption platform, and in 1999, voters approved a new constitution that strengthened the presidency and introduced a unicameral National Assembly. Although Chávez retained his post in elections held under the new charter in 2000, opposition parties won most governorships, about half of the mayoralties, and a significant share of the National Assembly seats.

In April 2002, following the deaths of 19 people in a massive antigovernment protest, dissident military officers attempted to oust Chdvez, the vice president, and the National Assembly with backing from some of the country's leading busi-

ness groups. However, the coup was resisted by loyalist troops and protesters, and Chávez moved swiftly to regain control of the military, replacing dozens of senior officers.

The country was wracked by continued protests, and in December 2002, opposition leaders called a general strike that lasted 62 days but ultimately weakened their political position as well as the economy. While fending off his opponents with legal maneuvers and intimidation tactics, Chávez launched bold social-service initiatives, including urban health and literacy projects, many of which were staffed by thousands of experts from Cuba. He also continued to focus on increasing his influence over the judiciary, the media, and other institutions of civil society.

Chávez survived a 2004 presidential recall referendum triggered by an opposition signature campaign, taking 58 percent of the vote amid high turnout.

National Assembly elections in 2005 were boycotted by the opposition, which accused the National Electoral Council (CNE) of allowing violations of ballot secrecy. A mere 25 percent of eligible voters turned out, and all 167 deputies in the resulting National Assembly were government supporters, though a small number defected to the opposition in subsequent years.

In the 2006 presidential election, Chávez defeated Zulia state governor Manuel Rosales of the opposition A New Time party, 61 percent to 38 percent. The incumbent exploited state resources during the campaign and drew on enduring support among poorer Venezuelans, who had benefited from his social programs.

Soon after the vote, Chávez pressed forward with his program of institutional changes. Nearly all progovernment parties merged into the Unified Socialist Party of Venezuela (PSUV), and the socialist "Bolivarian revolution" deepened economically with a series of nationalizations of private assets. At the end of January 2007, the National Assembly voted to allow the president to issue decrees on a broad array of topics for 18 months.

Referendum voters in December 2007 narrowly defeated a package of constitutional amendments, among them the removal of presidential term limits. The vote reflected robust opposition participation, public disappointment with rising inflation and crime rates, and a degree of disaffection among current and former

Chávez supporters. However, a set of 26 new laws decreed by Chávez in July 2008 appeared designed to institute measures that were rejected in the referendum, including presidential authority to name new regional officials and the reorganization of the military hierarchy.

State and local elections in November 2008 were preceded by the disqualification of over 300 candidates, including some opposition leaders, by the nominally independent but government-friendly comptroller. PSUV and other Chávez-aligned candidates enjoyed massive resource advantages and state publicity, while opposition candidates focused on perceived failures in public services and benefited from coverage in the opposition press. In balloting that was deemed fair by the Organization of American States (OAS), the opposition captured the mayoralty of greater Caracas as well as Venezuela's second-largest city and 5 of 22 states, including the three richest and most populous. Meanwhile, government candidates won 17 states and some 80 percent of the mayoralties.

Following the elections, Chávez moved forward with plans for a new referendum on abolishing term limits. The government's efforts included mobilization of

state resources and pressure on public employees, as well as arguments that only a continuation of the Bolivarian revolution would assure social services and political power for poorer Venezuelans. The February 2009 poll was characterized by observers as generally free, and Chávez prevailed with over 54 percent of the vote.

In March and April 2009, the legislature passed laws allowing the national government to strip states of key governing functions and cut budget allocations; in practice, opposition-governed states and particularly the Caracas mayor's office were most affected. In August, the National Assembly passed a new electoral law that was generally perceived to favor government candidates.

Battles between the government and the media continued. In July, the National Telecommunications Commission (CONATEL) stripped 32 radio stations of their licenses for what it described as procedural and administrative problems. The primary opposition-aligned television broadcaster, Globovisión, faced a number of investigations in 2009, and in 2010, the government charged its president, Guillermo Zuloaga, with several violations, prompting him to seek exile in the United States. In December, the government took a minority ownership position in the company, following the takeover of a bank that held a 20 percent share. Also in 2010, the surviving cable version of another opposition-oriented television station, RCTV, was shut down for various alleged violations, including the refusal to broadcast official speeches. RCTV's terrestrial broadcast frequency and equipment had been seized in 2007, based on what Chávez claimed were the station's ongoing efforts to destabilize the government.

Elections to the National Assembly in September dominated the political agenda in 2010. The PSUV benefitted from significant exposure on state-run media and pressure on public employees and neighborhood groups to vote for government-backed candidates. According to the opposition and civic groups, the 2009 electoral law also allowed the Chavista-dominated CNE to gerrymander districts in favor of the PSUV. Nonetheless, the opposition, grouped as the Unity Roundtable (MUD), was able to agree on common candidates and themes. In the end, the MUD took more than 47 percent of the vote, the PSUV captured 48 percent, and the independent but opposition-leaning Fatherland for All (PPT) party obtained over 3 percent. Due to the revised electoral rules, however, PSUV candidates secured 98 of the 165 seats, MUD candidates took 65, and the PPT won the remaining 2. Final results showed that while opposition candidates benefitted from the electoral changes in some states, PSUV candidates won approximately 10 more seats than they would have under previous rules.

Following the loss of the PSUV supermajority in the National Assembly, Chávez urged lame-duck lawmakers to enact a raft of new legislation before leaving office. Over 20 laws were passed or modified in December, including highly controversial regulations related to the internet, funding for civil society groups, education, procedural issues within the National Assembly, territorial reorganization, and the distribution of resources to subnational governments and community groups. In addition, the legislature voted to grant Chávez wide-ranging decree powers for 18 months.

Venezuelan relations with neighboring Colombia recovered in 2010, following a period in 2009 in which tensions briefly sparked fears of military conflict. Interpersonal friction between Chávez and Colombian president Álvaro Uribe was

an important factor behind the rift, and the inauguration of Uribe's successor, Juan Manuel Santos, in August 2010 led to a rapid détente. Relations with the United States were stable but tense, and the United States remained without an ambassador in Caracas, after Venezuela refused to accept the appointment of Larry Palmer. Over the past several years, Chávez has increased friction with the United States and its allies by creating ostensible leftist alternatives to U.S.-backed regional trade pacts, garnering regional support with generous oil subsidies, seeking weapons purchases and other cooperation from Iran and Russia, and either explicitly or tacitly supporting favored electoral candidates in neighboring countries.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Venezuela is not an electoral democracy. While the act of voting is relatively free and the count is fair, the political playing field favors government-backed candidates, and the separation of powers is nearly nonexistent.

The opposition boycotted the 2005 National Assembly elections due to concerns that ballot secrecy would be compromised. After the failed 2004 presidential recall referendum, tens of thousands of people who had signed petitions in favor of the effort found that they could not get government jobs or contracts, or qualify for public assistance programs; they had apparently been placed on an alleged blacklist of President Hugo Chávez Frías's political opponents. The opposition decided to contest actively the 2006 presidential and 2010 National Assembly elections, and the voting was generally considered free and fair, but the CNE was ineffectual at limiting use of state resources by Chávez and the PSUV. They enjoyed a massive advantage in television exposure, and the promotion of social and infrastructure projects often blurred the line between their official roles and their electoral campaigns. Public employees were also subjected to heavy pressure to support the government. Public resources were similarly exploited ahead of the referendum balloting in both 2007 and 2009, and while the polls were conducted largely without incident, full and final results, which could have allayed any lingering suspicions, were not released.

The unicameral, 165-seat National Assembly is popularly elected for five-year terms. Chávez's control of the 2006-10 assembly allowed him to further curb the independence of institutions including the judiciary, the intelligence services, and the Citizen Power branch of government, which was created by the 1999 constitution to fight corruption and protect citizens' rights. The December 2010 grant of decree powers to Chávez was the third time he received such authority. The president serves six-year terms, but due to the results of the 2009 referendum, he and other elected officials are no longer subject to term limits.

The merger of government-aligned parties into the PSUV is largely complete, though several groups retain nominal independence. While the opposition considered the 2008 state and local elections a comeback, its victories were blunted by new laws allowing the national government to strip important functions from subnational administrations. In 2009, opposition parties established the MUD, which selected unity candidates—partially via primaries—for the 2010 elections and maintained cohesion during the campaign. Soon after the elections, the PPT, which won two seats, initiated talks with the MUD.

The government plays a major role in the economy and has done little to remove

vague or excessive regulatory restrictions that increase opportunities for corruption. As many as 12 development funds, some very large, are controlled by the executive branch without independent oversight. The government's sporadic anticorruption efforts focus on its political opponents; former defense minister and Chávez critic

Raúl Isaias Baduel was convicted in April 2010 and sentenced to eight years in prison. Another major corruption scandal during the year focused on the food-distribution arm of the national oil company, after thousands of tons of food were discovered rotting in various ports. Significant proportions of the food division's purchases were apparently never even shipped. Transparency International ranked Venezuela 164 out of 178 countries surveyed in its 2010 Corruption Perceptions Index.

Although the constitution provides for freedom of the press, the media climate is permeated by intimidation, sometimes including physical attacks, and strong antimedia rhetoric by the government is common. The 2004 Law on Social Responsibility of Radio and Television gives the government the authority to control radio and television content. Opposition-oriented outlets make up a large portion of the print media, but their share of the broadcast media has declined in recent years. Coverage of election campaigns by state media has been overwhelmingly biased in favor of the government; private outlets have also exhibited bias, though to a somewhat lesser degree. In August 2010, the publication of photographs showing corpses piled in a morgue led to a court ruling barring the media from disseminating violent images for a month. The ruling came in the middle of the campaign for parliamentary elections, in which crime was a major issue. The government does not restrict internet access, but a law passed during the December 2010 lame-duck session of the National Assembly extended the 2004 broadcasting law's restrictions to the internet. Another law passed during the session tightened licensing restrictions for broadcast media.

Constitutional guarantees of religious freedom are generally respected, though government tensions with the Roman Catholic Church remain high. Government relations with the small Jewish community have also been strained, but a round of dialogue was undertaken in 2010. Academic freedom has come under mounting pressure in recent years, with the formulation of a new curriculum that emphasizes socialist concepts. A new Organic Education Law enacted in 2009 was praised for provisions that explicitly detailed the state's obligations, but criticized over ambiguities that could lead to restrictions on private education and increased control by the government and communal councils. In universities, elections for student associations and administration positions have become more politicized, and rival groups of students have clashed repeatedly over both academic and political matters.

Freedom of peaceful assembly is guaranteed in the constitution, but the right to protest has become a sensitive topic in recent years. The rise of the student movement in 2007 caused a spike in confrontations with the government, but in 2010, it was workers, particularly employees of state-owned enterprises, who demonstrated most frequently, followed by citizens protesting poor public-services delivery and high crime rates. The state's harsh rhetorical and legal response has fallen most heavily on the labor sector. According to the rights group Provea, however, the number of protests repressed by police declined in 2010. An easing of the economic recession during the year led to a small drop in street protests after a significant

increase in 2009, though rights groups decried the August death of hunger striker Franklin Brito and the continued criminalization of protest.

In 2000, the Supreme Tribunal of Justice ruled that nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) with non-Venezuelan leaders or foreign government funding are not part of "civil society." As a result, they may not represent citizens in court or bring their own legal actions. The government has also made an effort to undermine the legitimacy of human rights and other civil society organizations by questioning their ties to international groups. The rights group Cofavic denounced 77 attacks on civil society members between 2007 and 2010. In December 2010, the lame-duck parliament passed the Law on Political Sovereignty and National Self-Determination, which threatens sanctions against any "political organization" that receives foreign funding or hosts foreign visitors who criticize the government.

Workers are legally entitled to form unions, bargain collectively, and strike, with some restrictions on public sector workers' ability to strike. Control of unions has increasingly shifted from traditional opposition-allied labor leaders to new workers' organizations. Antigovernment groups allege that Chávez intends to create government-controlled unions, while the president's supporters maintain that the old labor regime was effectively controlled by the AD, COPEI, and employers. The growing competition has contributed to a substantial increase in labor violence as well as confusion during industry-wide collective bargaining. Labor strife has also risen due to the addition of thousands of employees of nationalized companies to the state payroll and the government's failure to implement new collective-bargaining agreements in a context of reduced state resources. The government encourages the formation of workers' militias and socialist patrols to deepen the "revolution" within industrial enterprises.

Politicization of the judicial branch has increased under Chávez, and high courts generally do not rule against the government. Conviction rates remain low, the public-defender system is underfunded, and nearly half of all judges lack tenure. The National Assembly has the authority to remove and appoint judges to the Supreme Tribunal of Justice, which controls the rest of the judiciary. In December 2010, the outgoing legislature appointed nine new Supreme Court judges, who are generally viewed as friendly to the government. Judge Maria Lourdes Afiuni remained in detention throughout 2010, having been arrested on corruption charges in December 2009, just hours after ordering the release of a prominent banker who had been held without conviction for more than the maximum of two years.

At approximately 48 homicides per 100,000 inhabitants, Venezuela's murder rate is now one of the world's highest. The police and military have been prone to corruption, widespread arbitrary detention and torture of suspects, and extrajudicial killings. In 2009, the justice minister admitted that police were involved in up to 20 percent of crimes. Although hundreds of officers are investigated each year, few are convicted, partially due to a shortage of prosecutors. A plan to modify and purge the police was completed in early 2008, and pilot operations involving a new force trained in human rights began in 2010. Although the prison budget has moderately increased and pretrial detention has been limited to two years, prison conditions in Venezuela remain among the worst in the Americas. The NGO Venezuelan Prison Observatory reported 476 violent deaths within prison walls in 2010, a 30 percent increase from the 2009 toll.

The increasingly politicized military has stepped up its participation in social development and the delivery of public services. While a faction of the military is perceived as wary of the Bolivarian project, Chávez's institutional control is solid. One top general, Henry Rangel Silva, remarked in November 2010 that the military was "married" to the Bolivarian revolution, and he was subsequently promoted. Foreign officials assert that the military has adopted a permissive attitude toward drug trafficking and Colombian rebel activity inside Venezuela. In recent years, the division of responsibility between the military and civilian militias has become less clear, and informal progovernment groups have been responsible for attacks on press outlets and, occasionally, individual journalists and opposition supporters.

Property rights are affected by the government's penchant for nationalization, and the pace of nationalization accelerated in 2010, with over 200 businesses as well as farms and buildings expropriated by the government. The August nationalization of the dominant supplier of agricultural inputs, Agroislena, gave the government a powerful new position in food production.

The formal rights of indigenous people have improved under Chávez, though such rights are seldom enforced by local political authorities. The constitution reserves three seats in the National Assembly for indigenous people and provides for, "the protection of indigenous communities and their progressive incorporation into the life of the nation." Indigenous communities trying to defend their land rights are subject to abuses, particularly along the Colombian border.

Women enjoy progressive rights enshrined in the 1999 constitution, as well as benefits offered under a major 2007 law. Rights groups reported some improvements in implementation in 2010. Meanwhile, domestic violence and rape remain common and are rarely punished in practice. The problem of trafficking in women remains inadequately addressed by the authorities. Women are poorly represented in government, with just 17 percent of the seats in the National Assembly.

Vietnam

Political Rights: 7

Population: 88,900,000

Civil Liberties: 5

Capital: Hanoi

Status: Not Free

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline For Year Under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
7,6NF	7,6NF	7,6NF	7,6NF	7,5NF	7,5NF	7,5NF	7,5NF	7,5NF	7,5NF

Overview:

The government in 2010 continued a serious crackdown on dissent that carried over from previous years, but showed much more hostility toward criticism on the internet. Despite concerns about its human rights record, Vietnam dramatically upgraded its relationship with the United States during the year, launching joint naval exercises amid an ongoing maritime territorial dispute with China.

Vietnam won full independence from France in 1954, but it was divided into a Western-backed state in the south and a Communist-ruled state in the north. Open warfare between the two sides erupted in the mid-1960s. A 1973 peace treaty officially ended the war, but fighting did not cease until 1975, when the north completed its conquest of the south. Vietnam was formally united in 1976.

War and poor economic policies mired Vietnam in deep poverty, but economic reforms that began in 1986 drastically transformed the country over the next two decades. Tourism became a major source of revenue, as did the export of foodstuffs and manufactured products. However, the ruling Communist Party of Vietnam (CPV) rejected any parallel political reforms that would threaten the one-party system. Criticism of the government continued to be harshly suppressed, and official corruption remained widespread. To protect the regime's legitimacy, the government began to call openly for an end to corruption, and acknowledged that some reforms were needed. The leadership also focused on closing the widening income gap between rural and urban populations.

At the 10th party congress in April 2006, Nong Due Manh was reelected as CPV general secretary, and the delegates approved a proposal to allow CPV members to engage in business, partly to attract young entrepreneurs into the party. Nguyen Minh Triet was elected state president by the National Assembly in June, and Nguyen Tan Dung was chosen as prime minister. National Assembly elections were held in May 2007; only 50 of the 500 deputies chosen did not belong to the CPV, and all were preapproved by the party.

Vietnam secured entry into the World Trade Organization in 2007, and the government subsequently embarked on a serious and extended crackdown on peaceful dissent, displaying a sharply reduced tolerance for open criticism and prodemocracy activism. Dozens of dissidents were arrested, and many were sentenced to lengthy prison terms. This process continued unabated in 2010. Among other cases during the year, the authorities arrested at least seven independent bloggers, sentenced three prodemocracy activists to long terms in jail for allegedly "attempting to overthrow the government," and sentenced two other prominent dissidents to jail for disseminating antigovernment propaganda. Also during the year, the government expanded its attempts to censor and block critical media content, particularly on the internet. Many observers attributed the latest wave of repression to preparations for the CPV's 11th party congress, scheduled to take place in January 2011.

Despite concerns about Vietnam's human rights record, the United States dramatically deepened its relationship with the country in 2010, responding in part to growing regional tensions over China's territorial claims in the South China Sea. In addition to holding joint naval exercises and launching other bilateral programs, the United States negotiated a controversial agreement on nuclear energy that would allow it to provide Vietnam with nuclear fuel and technology without the normal nonproliferation constraints.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Vietnam is not an electoral democracy. The CPV, the sole legal political party, controls politics and the government, and its Central Committee is the top decision-making body. The National Assembly, whose 500 members are elected to five-year terms, generally follows CPV dictates. The Vietnam Fatherland Front, an arm of the CPV, vets all

candidates. The president, elected by the National Assembly for a five-year term, appoints the prime minister, who is confirmed by the legislature.

Corruption and abuse of office are serious problems. Although senior CPV and government officials have acknowledged growing public discontent, they have mainly responded with a few high-profile prosecutions of corrupt officials and private individuals rather than comprehensive reforms. Major government decisions are made with little transparency, and revelations of contracts with Chinese state-owned companies have generated considerable controversy. In 2009 and 2010, 98-year-old Vo Nguyen Giap, the famed commander of Vietnamese forces during the wars of independence and unification, led public criticism of a government deal to allow a Chinese company to open a huge bauxite-mining operation in the Central Highlands, which opponents said would displace indigenous residents, cause environmental damage, and threaten national security.

The government tightly controls the media, silencing critics through the courts and other means of harassment. A 1999 law requires journalists to pay damages to groups or individuals found to have been harmed by press articles, even if the reports are accurate. A 2006 decree imposes fines on journalists for denying revolutionary achievements, spreading "harmful" information, or exhibiting "reactionary ideology." Foreign media representatives in theory cannot travel outside Hanoi without government approval, though they often do in practice. The CPV or state entities control all broadcast media. Although satellite television is officially restricted to senior officials, international hotels, and foreign businesses, many homes and businesses have satellite dishes. All print media outlets are owned by or are under the effective control of the CPV, government organs, or the army.

The government restricts internet use through legal and technical means, and this effort was stepped up significantly in 2010. A 2003 law bans the receipt and distribution of antigovernment e-mail messages, websites considered "reactionary" are blocked, and owners of domestic websites must submit their content for official approval. Internet cafes must register the personal information of and record the sites visited by users. Internet-service providers face fines and closure for violating censorship rules. The government detained numerous bloggers and online writers throughout 2010, and cyberattacks disabled websites and blogs that were critical of the authorities or provided independent information about sensitive topics, including Roman Catholicism and human rights.

Religious freedom remains restricted. All religious groups and most individual clergy members must join a party-controlled supervisory body and obtain permission for most activities. The Roman Catholic Church can now select its own bishops and priests, but they must be approved by the government. Many restrictions on charitable activities have been lifted, and clergy enjoy greater freedom to travel domestically and internationally. However, several religious leaders and adherents remain in prison. In January 2010, Vietnamese Catholic groups reported that priests and believers in the area of Dong Chiem had been attacked on their way to pray; similar sporadic attacks were reported throughout the year.

Academic freedom is limited. University professors must refrain from criticizing government policies and adhere to party views when teaching or writing on political topics. Although citizens enjoy more freedom in private discussions than in the past, the authorities continue to suppress open criticism of the state.

Freedoms of association and assembly are restricted. Organizations must apply for official permission to obtain legal status and are closely regulated and monitored by the government. A small but active community of nongovernmental groups promotes environmental conservation, women's development, and public health. Human rights organizations and other private groups with rights-oriented agendas are banned.

The Vietnam General Conference of Labor (VGCL), closely tied to the CPV, is the only legal labor federation. All trade unions are required to join the VGCL. In recent years, the government has permitted hundreds of independent "labor associations" to represent workers at individual firms and in some service industries. Farmer and worker protests against local government abuses, including land confiscations and unfair or harsh working conditions, have become more common. The central leadership uses such demonstrations to pressure local governments and businesses to comply with tax laws, environmental regulations, and wage agreements. Enforcement of labor laws covering child labor, workplace safety, and other issues remains poor. Critics also allege that the government has intentionally kept minimum wages low to attract foreign investment, although wages have been rising as companies migrate to Vietnam due to labor unrest in China. In June 2010, farmers and other Vietnamese protested power cuts and blackouts, and sporadic labor protests were reported throughout the year.

Vietnam's judiciary is subservient to the CPV, which controls courts at all levels. Defendants have a constitutional right to counsel, but lawyers are scarce, and many are reluctant to take on human rights and other sensitive cases for fear of harassment and retribution—including arrest—by the state. Defense attorneys cannot call or question witnesses and are rarely permitted to request leniency for their clients. Police can hold individuals in administrative detention for up to two years on suspicion of threatening national security. The police are known to abuse suspects and prisoners, and prison conditions are poor. Many political prisoners remain behind bars, and political detainees are often held incommunicado. Human rights groups have expressed concern that the bloggers and other online activists arrested in 2010 have been beaten and tortured.

Ethnic and religious minorities face discrimination in mainstream society, and some local officials restrict their access to schooling and jobs. Minorities generally have little input on development projects that affect their livelihoods and communities.

Land disputes have become more frequent, as the government seizes property to lease to domestic and foreign investors. Affected residents and farmers rarely find the courts helpful, and their street protests have resulted in harassment and arrests by the state.

Although economic opportunities have grown for women, they continue to face discrimination in wages and promotion. Many women are victims of domestic violence, and thousands of women each year are trafficked internally and externally and forced into prostitution. A number of cases of international adoption fraud have been exposed in recent years.

Yemen

Political Rights: 6
Civil Liberties: 5
Status: Not Free

Population: 23,600,000
Capital: Sanaa

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline For Year Under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
6,6NF	6,6NF	5,5PF	5,5PF	5,5PF	5,5PF	5,5PF	5,5PF	6,5NF	6,5NF

Overview: In February 2010, the government announced a cease-fire in its ongoing conflict with Houthi rebels in the northern province of Saada, but violence flared between the rebels and progovernment tribes in July. Meanwhile, southern secessionists intensified their calls for independence during the year, and clashes between southern activists and the security forces accelerated, leading to more than a dozen deaths. The authorities used the tensions in the south as an excuse to crack down on the media, raiding the offices and arresting the editor of a banned southern newspaper in January. Militants associated with the terrorist network Al-Qaeda carried out multiple attacks in 2010, and Yemeni and American forces responded with military strikes, including a September assault on the town of Hawta, which resulted in the displacement of thousands of people.

For centuries after the advent of Islam, a series of dynastic imams controlled most of northern Yemen and parts of the south. The Ottoman Empire ruled many of the cities from the 16th to the early 20th century, and the British controlled the southern portion of the country, including the port of Aden, beginning in the 19th century.

After the reigning imam was ousted in a 1960s civil war and the British left the south in 1967, Yemen remained divided into two countries: the Yemen Arab Republic (North Yemen) and the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen (South Yemen). The two states ultimately unified in 1990, and northern forces put down a southern attempt to secede in 1994. In the face of widespread poverty and illiteracy, tribal influences that limited the central government's authority in certain parts of the country, a heavily armed citizenry, and the threat of Islamist terrorism, Yemen took limited steps to improve the status of political rights and civil liberties in the years after unification.

In 2006, Yemen held its second presidential election since unification. President Ali Abdullah Saleh was reelected with 77 percent of the vote, and the ruling General People's Congress (GPC) party won by a similar margin in concurrent provincial and local council elections. The 2006 presidential race was the first in which a serious opposition candidate challenged the incumbent. Saleh's main opponent, Faisal Ben Shamlan, was supported by a coalition of Islamist and other opposition parties and received 22 percent of the vote.

In May 2008, Yemen held its first-ever elections for 20 provincial governorships, which had previously been appointed. Opposition groups refused to participate,

claiming electoral manipulation by the government. Progovernment candidates were elected in 17 of the 20 provinces that participated, and independents won in the remaining three. One province did not hold elections due to protests by unemployed Yemenis.

Tensions between the government and the opposition escalated in late 2008, and the opposition Joint Meeting Parties—a coalition that included the Yemeni Socialist Party and Islah, an Islamist party—threatened to boycott parliamentary elections scheduled for April 2009. The two sides agreed in February 2009 to postpone the vote by two years pending electoral reforms.

In February 2010, the government signed a ceasefire with rebels from Yemen's large community of Zaidi Shiite Muslims in the northern province of Saada, ending five months of fighting. The rebels, followers of the family of slain Zaidi cleric Hussein Badreddin al-Houthi, had been fighting with the government intermittently since 2004, resulting in thousands of deaths and tens of thousands of people displaced. The latest ceasefire was already under pressure by July, when clashes between Houthi rebels and progovernment tribes killed over 30 people. The Houthis reached a separate ceasefire with Saudi Arabia in January, having fought with Saudi forces along the border in late 2009.

Also in 2010, the Yemeni affiliate of the international terrorist network Al-Qaeda intensified its campaign of attacks. In April, the militants attempted to attack a convoy carrying the British ambassador, and in July, Yemeni authorities reported that Al-Qaeda had attacked police in the southern city of Zinjibar. In September, security forces laid siege to the town of Hawta in southern Yemen, where militants were believed to be hiding. The assault included the use of artillery, tanks, and attack helicopters, and as many as 12,000 residents fled as a result of the fighting.

**Political Rights
and Civil Liberties:**

Yemen is not an electoral democracy. The political system is dominated by the ruling GPC party, and there are few limits on the authority of the executive branch. President Ali Abdullah Saleh has been serving continuously since 1978, when he became president of North Yemen through a military coup.

The president is elected for seven-year terms, and appoints the 111 members of the largely advisory upper house of parliament, the Majlis al-Shura (Consultative Council). The 301 members of the lower house, the House of Representatives, are elected to serve six-year terms. Provincial councils and governors are also elected. There is limited competition between the GPC, which took 238 lower-house seats in the last parliamentary elections in 2003, and the two main opposition parties—the Islamist party Islah (46 seats) and the Yemeni Socialist Party (8 seats). There is also a handful of smaller factions and independent lawmakers. In February 2009, the GPC and the opposition agreed to postpone parliamentary elections, which had been scheduled for April, by two years; the opposition, demanding electoral reforms, had threatened to boycott the vote. In 2010, Saleh and the opposition signed a memorandum calling for a national dialogue. The president also called for parliamentary elections to be held in April 2011. Past elections have been marred by the abuse of state resources, voter registration irregularities, and other flaws.

Corruption is an endemic problem. Despite some recent efforts by the government to fight graft, Yemen lacks most legal safeguards against conflicts of interest.

Auditing and investigative bodies are not sufficiently independent of the executive authorities.

The state maintains a monopoly over the media that reach the most people—television and radio. Article 103 of the Press and Publications Law bans direct personal criticism of the head of state and publication of material that "might spread a spirit of dissent and division among the people" or that "leads to the spread of ideas contrary to the principles of the Yemeni Revolution, [is] prejudicial to national unity or [distorts] the image of the Yemeni, Arab, or Islamic heritage." In November 2010, the cabinet approved additions to the media law, including provisions that would eliminate imprisonment as a punishment for libel, allow the establishment of media outlets without a license, and legalize and grant funding to the journalists' union; the amendments had not been adopted by parliament at year's end. Access to the internet is not widespread, and the authorities block websites they deem offensive.

In May 2009, the government officially suspended or effectively halted the publication of *Al-Ayyam*, the country's most popular daily, and seven other periodicals for their reporting on the southern opposition movement. In January 2010, authorities stormed the offices of *Al-Ayyam* and arrested its editor, Hisham Bashraheel. Police attacked the newspaper's offices again in April, and at least two people were killed in the incident. Yemeni authorities released Bashraheel in March, partly due to his poor health. Officials also blocked a number of websites and arrested at least one website owner and blogger during the year. After being detained in September 2009 for publishing an article that was critical of the government's and Saudi Arabia's attacks on Houthi rebels in the north, opposition journalist Muhammad al-Maqalih was charged in February 2010 with conspiring with the rebels. Judicial proceedings began against al-Maqalih in April. In May, Yemeni authorities suspended the cases against him but did not formally drop the charges.

The constitution states that Islam is the official religion and declares Sharia (Islamic law) to be the source of all legislation. Yemen has few non-Muslim minorities, and their rights are generally respected in practice. The government has imposed some restrictions on religious activity in the context of the rebellion in the northern province of Saada. Mosques' hours of operation have been limited in the area, and imams suspected of extremism have been removed. Strong politicization of campus life, including tensions between supporters of the ruling GPC and the opposition Islah party, infringes on academic freedom.

Yemenis enjoy some freedom of assembly, with periodic restrictions and sometimes deadly interventions by the government. Over the past three years, southern Yemenis have mounted growing protests to challenge the GPC's alleged corruption and abuse of power, the marginalization of southerners in the political system, and the government's inability to address pressing social and economic concerns. The protest movement has increasingly called for secession by the south. The authorities have responded with mass arrests of organizers and attempts to break up demonstrations by force. Clashes between southern activists and security forces led to the deaths of at least 14 people in the city of Dalea in February and March 2010. In May, separatists attempted to assassinate Yemen's deputy prime minister for internal affairs in the province of Shabwa.

Yemenis have the right to form associations under Article 58 of the constitution, and several thousand nongovernmental organizations operate in the country. The

law acknowledges workers' right to form and join trade unions, but some critics claim that the government and ruling party elements have stepped up efforts to control the affairs of these organizations. Virtually all unions belong to a single labor federation, and the government is empowered to veto collective-bargaining agreements.

The judiciary is nominally independent, but in practice, it is susceptible to interference from the executive branch. Authorities have a poor record on enforcing judicial rulings, particularly those issued against prominent tribal or political leaders. Lacking an effective court system, citizens often resort to tribal forms of justice or direct appeals to executive authorities.

Arbitrary detention occurs, partly because law enforcement officers lack proper training and senior government officials lack the political will to eliminate the problem. Security forces affiliated with the Political Security Office (PSO) and the Ministry of the Interior torture and abuse detainees, and PSO prisons are not closely monitored.

Yemen is relatively homogeneous ethnically and racially. The Akhdam, a small minority group, live in poverty and face social discrimination.

Thousands of refugees seeking relief from war and poverty in the Horn of Africa are smuggled annually into Yemen, where they are routinely subjected to theft, abuse, and even murder.

Women continue to face pervasive discrimination in several aspects of life. A woman must obtain permission from her husband or father to receive a passport and travel abroad. Unlike men, women do not have the right to confer citizenship on a foreign-born spouse, and they can transfer Yemeni citizenship to their children only in special circumstances. Yemen's penal code allows lenient sentences for those convicted of "honor crimes"—assaults or killings of women by family members for alleged immoral behavior. In April 2008, the parliament voted down legislation that would have banned female genital mutilation. Women are vastly underrepresented in elected office; there is just one woman in the lower house of parliament. School enrollment and educational attainment rates for girls fall far behind those for boys.

↓ Zambia

Political Rights: 3
Civil Liberties: 4
Status: Partly Free

Population: 13,300,000
Capital: Lusaka

Trend Arrow: Zambia received a downward trend arrow due to political violence against the opposition and civil society groups, as well as the judiciary's failure to demonstrate substantial independence in key decisions throughout the year.

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline For Year Under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
5,4PF	4,4PF	4,4PF	4,4PF	4,4PF	3,4PF	3,4PF	3,3PF	3,4PF	3,4PF

Overview: Anticorruption efforts faced setbacks in 2010, as the government continued to protect former president Frederick Chiluba from legal action related to corruption charges. Several judicial decisions during the year, especially those concerning Chiluba, raised concerns that the executive branch was exercising undue influence over the judiciary. Meanwhile, a climate of violence increasingly pervaded political life, as opposition members and civil society activists were harassed by police and attacked by individuals associated with Zambia's ruling party.

Zambia gained independence from Britain in 1964. President Kenneth Kaunda and his United National Independence Party subsequently ruled Zambia as a de facto—and, from 1973, a de jure—one-party state. In the face of domestic and international pressure, Kaunda agreed to a new constitution and multiparty democracy in 1991. In free elections that October, former labor leader Frederick Chiluba and his Movement for Multiparty Democracy (MMD) captured both the presidency and the National Assembly by wide margins. However, in the 1996 elections, the MMD-led government manipulated candidacy laws, voter registration, and media coverage in favor of the incumbents. Most opposition parties boycotted the polls, and the MMD renewed its parliamentary dominance.

Dissent within the MMD, as well as protests by opposition parties and civil society, forced Chiluba to abandon an effort to change the constitution and seek a third term in 2001. Instead, the MMD nominated Levy Mwanawasa, who went on to win the 2001 elections. The MMD also captured a plurality of elected parliament seats. Domestic and international election monitors cited vote rigging and other serious irregularities. In the September 2006 presidential poll, Mwanawasa won a second term, with 43 percent of the vote. In concurrent legislative elections, the MMD won 72 seats in the 150-seat parliament, the Patriotic Front (PF) took 44, and the United Democratic Alliance captured 27. The remaining seats were split between smaller parties and independents. The polls were deemed the freest and fairest in 15 years.

Mwanawasa suffered a stroke in July 2008 and died in August. Presidential by-elections followed in October, pitting Vice President Rupiah Banda against

the PF's Michael Sata and Hakainde Hichilema of the United Party for National Development (UPND). Banda was elected president, with 40 percent of the vote, against Sata's 38 percent, and Hichilema's 20 percent. Sata claimed that the elections were fraudulent and filed a legal challenge calling for a recount, but his request was rejected by the Supreme Court in March 2009.

During Banda's time in office, the overall political situation in the country has been characterized by contentious politics, increasing infringements on civil liberties, and neglected anticorruption efforts. Banda has been in conflict with members of his party who have sought to challenge both his leadership and presumed candidacy for polls scheduled for 2011. A National Constitutional Conference—inaugurated in 2008, but boycotted by elements of civil society and the opposition—completed a draft constitution that was distributed to the public for commentary in July 2010. While the draft was praised for expanding protections for economic, social, and cultural rights, it was criticized for failing to curtail sufficiently the powers of the executive and for expanding the size of parliament. Meanwhile, government and ruling party actors took aggressive and violent actions against the political opposition and elements of civil society considered hostile to the president.

Although economic growth slowed due to the global economic recession in 2008, increases in the global price of copper in 2009 have allowed for a resumption of growth; gross domestic product (GDP) increased by 7.1 percent in 2010. Zambia has received considerable debt relief from international donors since 2005, including over \$250 million from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in 2009. The country has also obtained substantial investment in recent years from China. Although Zambia continued to receive considerable financial support in 2010, relations soured over the deteriorating political climate and setbacks in the fight against corruption.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Zambia is an electoral democracy. While local and international observers declared the 2008 presidential elections to be free and fair, opposition parties and civil society groups raised concerns about fraud, including the printing of additional ballot papers and the incumbent's use of state resources for campaigning. The president and the unicameral National Assembly are elected to serve concurrent five-year terms. The National Assembly includes 150 elected members, as well as 8 members appointed by the president. Although the recent by-elections were marred by violence and intimidation, the opposition has been able to prevail in a number of contests.

Opposition parties are able to operate but often face intimidation and violence. PF leader Michael Sata has been arrested and charged with various offenses, including sedition, since 2001. In March 2009, the PF joined forces with the UPND to challenge the MMD in the 2011 elections, and the leaders of both parties have faced subsequent threats of violence and sexual assault by ruling party cadres. In 2010, members of the opposition were harassed and detained by the police, while others were violently attacked by individuals associated with the MMD.

The country has registered some successes in prosecuting corruption cases over the last few years, though concerns over the government's commitment to anticorruption efforts became more acute in 2010. In May, the national secretary of the ruling party was convicted of corruption and received a five-year prison sentence. However, the government appeared willing to protect other political figures and

weaken the legal regime against corruption. President Rupiah Banda launched an official anticorruption policy in July 2009, but has abetted the political rehabilitation of former president Frederick Chiluba. A corruption trial in a Zambian high court in August 2009 found the former president not guilty of embezzlement charges. When the head of a special task force on corruption attempted to appeal the ruling, he was dismissed from his position. In 2007, a judge in Britain, where some of Chiluba's alleged corrupt activities had occurred, ordered Chiluba to pay millions of dollars to compensate for money he was accused of stealing. In August 2010, a Zambian high court ruled that Zambian laws did not allow the enforcement of overseas rulings, and the Zambian government refused to appeal the ruling, a move criticized by civil society groups and international donors.

In July 2010, the government sponsored legislation to remove an "abuse of office" clause from the Anti-Corruption Act, sparking criticism from the local chapter of Transparency International (TI); the legislation was passed in October 2010. International donors maintain that instances of poor accountability have increased in programs they sponsor, and a report released by the auditor general in 2010 pointed to financial mismanagement and irregularities in government-controlled companies. Following the lead of the Swedish and Dutch governments, the Global Fund in June 2010 suspended funding to the health sector over corruption concerns. Zambia was ranked 101 out of 178 countries surveyed in TI's 2010 Corruption Perceptions Index.

Freedom of speech is constitutionally guaranteed, but the government often restricts this right in practice. The government controls two widely circulated newspapers, and owing to prepublication review, journalists commonly practice self-censorship. The state-owned, progovernment Zambia National Broadcasting Corporation (ZNBC) dominates the broadcast media, although several independent stations have the capacity to reach large portions of the population. The government has the authority to appoint the management boards of ZNBC and the Independent Broadcasting Authority, which regulates the industry and grants licenses to prospective broadcasters. The government has also continued to delay the passage of a freedom of information bill.

While the independent media play a significant role in Zambia, reporting conditions remained poor in 2010. Journalists faced aggression from law enforcement officials, threats of violence from ruling party members, and persistent warnings from government authorities that they might enact legislation to regulate the media. Criminal libel and defamation suits have been brought against journalists by MMD leaders in response to stories on corruption. In June 2010, the editor of the largest independent daily newspaper, the *Post*, was convicted of contempt of court and sentenced to four months in prison for allowing the publication of an article in 2009 that discussed a court case involving another journalist accused of distributing obscene materials.

Constitutionally protected religious freedom is respected in practice. However, the Catholic clergy, occasional critics of the government, became the target of threats by ruling party activists in 2010. One priest known for political activism was arrested and detained for a brief period in March on charges of conduct likely to breach the peace. The government does not restrict academic freedom.

Under the Public Order Act, police must receive a week's notice before all demonstrations. While the law does not require permits, the police have frequently

broken up "illegal" protests because the organizers lacked permits. Police broke up a rally by a civic movement for political change in April 2010, and a meeting of a regional independence movement was disrupted by authorities in October. Although nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) have operated freely in the past, legislation passed in 2009 places new constraints on their activities, such as requiring registration and re-registration every five years. The law also established a board to provide guidelines and regulate NGO activity in the country.

Zambia's trade unions are among Africa's strongest, and union rights are constitutionally guaranteed. The Zambia Congress of Trade Unions operates democratically without state interference. About two-thirds of the country's 300,000 formal-sector employees are union members. While collective-bargaining rights are protected by statute, labor laws also require labor organizations to have at least 100 members to be registered, a potentially burdensome rule. While unions remain engaged in public affairs, they have become weaker both financially and organizationally in recent years.

Judicial independence is guaranteed by law. However, several decisions in 2009 and 2010, especially those concerning former president Chiluba, tainted the public image of the judiciary and raised concerns that the executive branch was exercising undue influence over the institution. Legislation passed in 2009 allowed the executive to increase the number of judges serving on the High and Supreme Courts. However, the courts continue to lack qualified personnel, in part because of poor working conditions, which contributes to significant trial delays. Pretrial detainees are sometimes held for years under harsh conditions, and many of the accused lack access to legal aid owing to limited resources. In rural areas, customary courts of variable quality and consistency—whose decisions often conflict with the constitution and national law—decide many civil matters.

Allegations of police corruption, brutality, and even torture are widespread, and security forces have generally operated with impunity. In 2010, Human Rights Watch, the Prisons Care and Counseling Association, and the AIDS and Rights Alliance for Southern Africa conducted an investigation into prison conditions in Zambia, interviewing hundreds of inmates and visiting six prisons. The three NGOs released a report in May that decried forced labor, prisoner abuse at the hands of prison authorities, and deplorable health conditions.

Property rights are generally respected. However, ruling party members allegedly used violence and intimidation in April 2010 to acquire land designated for displaced individuals.

Societal discrimination remains a serious obstacle to women's rights. Domestic violence and rape are major problems, and traditional norms inhibit many women from reporting assaults. Women are denied full economic participation and usually require male consent to obtain credit. Discrimination against women is especially prevalent in customary courts, where they are considered subordinate with respect to property, inheritance, and marriage. In 2005, an amended penal code banned the traditional practice of "sexual cleansing," in which a widow is obliged to have sex with relatives of her deceased husband. In an alleged effort to intimidate members of civil society, Vice President George Kunda stated in 2009 that the government could prosecute the known homosexuals in the country, using 2005 legislation against homosexuality.

Zimbabwe

Political Rights: 6
Civil Liberties: 6
Status: Not Free

Population: 12,600,000
Capital: Harare

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline For Year Under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
6,6NF	6,6NF	6,6NF	7,6NF	7,6NF	7,6NF	7,6NF	7,6NF	7,6NF	6,6NF

Overview: Zimbabwe began a process of public consultation on the drafting of a new constitution in 2010, but significant political violence by government supporters marred the outreach effort. Also during the year, an international body tasked with preventing the use of diamonds to fund armed conflicts eased a 2009 suspension of Zimbabwe's diamond exports, despite ongoing abuse, corruption, and military control at the country's mines. While media regulators granted licenses to a number of new outlets in 2010, state dominance of the broadcast sector and a highly restrictive legal framework remained problems.

In 1965, a white-minority regime in what was then colonial Southern Rhodesia unilaterally declared independence from Britain. A guerrilla war led by black nationalist groups, as well as sanctions and diplomatic pressure from Britain and the United States, contributed to the end of white-minority rule in 1979 and the recognition of an independent Zimbabwe in 1980. Robert Mugabe and the Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF), first brought to power in relatively democratic elections, have since ruled the country.

Zimbabwe was relatively stable in its first years of independence, but from 1983 to 1987, the Shona-dominated government violently suppressed opposition among the Ndebele ethnic minority, and between 10,000 and 20,000 civilians were killed by government forces. Widespread political unrest in the 1990s, spurred by increasing authoritarianism and economic decline, led to the creation in 1999 of the opposition Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), an alliance of trade unions and other civil society groups. However, President Mugabe and ZANU-PF claimed victory over the MDC in parliamentary elections in 2002 and 2005, as well as in a 2002 presidential poll. All three elections were seriously marred by political violence aimed at MDC supporters, fraudulent electoral processes, and the abuse of state resources, including state-run media. Security forces crushed mass protests and strikes called by MDC leader Morgan Tsvangirai in 2003.

The 2005 parliamentary elections left the ruling party with a two-thirds majority and the ability to amend the constitution. It subsequently enacted amendments that nationalized all land, brought all schools under state control, and reintroduced an upper legislative house, the Senate. The MDC split over whether to participate in November 2005 elections for the chamber, allowing ZANU-PF to win an overwhelming majority amid voter turnout of less than 20 percent.

Also in 2005, the government implemented a slum-clearance effort known as

Operation Murambatsvina, which means "drive out the trash" in the Shona language. It resulted in the destruction of thousands of informal businesses and dwellings as well as thousands of arrests. According to the United Nations, approximately 700,000 people were made homeless, and another 2.4 million were directly or indirectly affected. Initially moved into transit camps near cities, many displaced residents were forced to return to the rural areas designated on their national identity cards. Analysts maintain that the operation, billed as part of a law-and-order campaign, actually targeted urban areas that were considered MDC strongholds and sources of antigovernment agitation.

Violence before the March 2008 elections, though serious, was less severe than expected. In the parliamentary poll, the Tsvangirai-led MDC won 99 seats in the lower house, followed by ZANU-PF with 97 seats, and a breakaway faction of the MDC, led by Arthur Mutambara, with 10. The results denied ZANU-PF a legislative majority for the first time in the country's 28-year history. In the Senate, ZANU-PF took half of the 60 elected seats, but it also controlled the chamber's 33 unelected seats. The MDC and its splinter faction won 24 and 6 Senate seats, respectively.

When the Zimbabwe Election Commission (ZEC) finally released the presidential results in May, it found that Tsvangirai had outpolled Mugabe, 47.9 percent to 43.2 percent, requiring a runoff between the two. The MDC accused the ZEC of fraud and claimed that Tsvangirai had won the election outright, with over 50.3 percent of the vote. As evidence, the party cited an extensive parallel vote count conducted by a network of civic groups, which reported tallies from polling stations across the country well before the ZEC.

Following the election, ZANU-PF militias and state security forces began a brutal campaign of violence aimed at punishing and intimidating MDC members and their suspected supporters. The effort expanded in May and June to target civil society groups, church-affiliated organizations, human rights lawyers, trade unionists, and journalists. Tsvangirai ultimately withdrew from the June 27 runoff and took refuge in the Dutch embassy, allowing the unopposed Mugabe to win 85 percent of the vote amid low turnout and many spoiled ballots.

Political violence continued after the election. According to international and domestic human rights organizations, some 200 MDC activists and supporters were killed over the course of 2008, about 5,000 were tortured by security forces or militias, and more than 10,000 required medical treatment for injuries.

In September 2008, ZANU-PF and the MDC reached a power-sharing agreement brokered by the Southern African Development Community (SADC)—known as the Global Political Agreement, or GPA—that allowed Mugabe to remain president, created the post of prime minister for Tsvangirai, and distributed ministries to ZANU-PF (14, including defense, state security, and justice), Tsvangirai's MDC faction (13, including finance, health, and constitutional and parliamentary affairs), and Mutambara's faction (3). The fate of the Home Affairs Ministry, which controls the police, was left to subsequent negotiations, and the issue—along with the abduction and detention of at least 20 MDC activists and officials by state security forces—nearly derailed the agreement on a number of occasions. A constitutional amendment creating the post of prime minister was enacted in February 2009, and the new government was sworn in that month. The cabinet included two home affairs ministers, one from ZANU-PF and one from the MDC.

In practice, Mugabe remained in control of the powerful executive branch, and over the course of 2009 and 2010, he unilaterally appointed the central bank governor, the attorney general, the police commissioner, five judges, and six ambassadors. Mugabe refused to swear in some MDC ministers and all of its provincial governors, appointing ZANU-PF loyalists instead. In response, Tsvangirai repeatedly disowned Mugabe's appointments, threatened to dissolve the government, and appealed to the international community for assistance. In February 2010, Tsvangirai and the MDC suggested the possibility of new elections if its political deadlock with ZANU-PF continued. Mugabe stated in October that the government should expire in February 2011, the deadline set by the GPA for the adoption of a new constitution. In November 2010, Tsvangirai initiated legal action against Mugabe over his unilateral appointment of provincial governors, though the dispute appeared to be resolved following mediation by South African president Jacob Zuma.

An attempt to begin national consultations on the drafting of the new charter in 2009 had been forcibly dispersed by police after ZANU-PF militants disrupted the conference and a series of fights broke out among ZANU-PF and MDC delegates. In February 2010, the government launched a new Constitutional Outreach Program to elicit public feedback, and consultations began in June. According to the civic group Veritas, about 70 outreach teams were dispatched across the country; by year's end, some 4,000 meetings had been held, attended by over 700,00 people. However, high levels of political violence—overwhelmingly perpetrated by ZANU-PF supporters—marred the meetings. In September, the Zimbabwe Peace Project cited over 1,000 incidents of intimidation, abductions, arrests, and destruction of private property stemming from the consultations. Also that month, Human Rights Watch reported a series of attacks on allegedly pro-MDC villages and civil society monitors by ZANU-PF militants. The MDC claimed that 50 of its members had been arrested, while others had been abducted and assaulted; one MDC member was killed in September. The outreach effort was suspended in October due to violence and lack of funds.

Economic growth continued in 2010, after the government formally abandoned the Zimbabwean dollar—whose inflation rate had reached an astounding 13 billion percent in 2008—in favor of the South African and U.S. currencies in early 2009. The country also received an influx of international aid 2009 and 2010, though U.S. and European sanctions aimed at ZANU-PF-linked entities remained in place.

In July 2010, the Kimberly Process (KP), an international mechanism designed to prevent the use of diamonds to fund armed conflicts, partially lifted a suspension of Zimbabwean diamond exports. The ban had been imposed in November 2009, following reports of severe human rights abuses against both miners and locals near the Marange diamond fields, which were allegedly controlled by the military. Revenues from diamond sales were reportedly going directly to ZANU-PF coffers. The decision to ease the suspension came after the release of Farai Maguwu, a researcher and activist, who had uncovered many of the abuses and was arrested in June for allegedly giving false information to KP investigators. In November, Human Rights Watch reported that while violence in the diamond fields had decreased, the army and police continued to exert control and commit abuses in Marange.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Zimbabwe is not an electoral democracy. President Robert Mugabe and the ZANU-PF party have dominated the political landscape since independence in 1980, overseeing 18 amendments to the constitution that have expanded presidential power and decreased executive accountability. Presidential and legislative elections in March 2008 were marred by a wide-ranging campaign of violence and intimidation, flawed voter registration and balloting, biased media coverage, and the use of state resources—including food aid—to bribe and threaten voters. The period leading up to the presidential runoff in June 2008 featured accelerated violence against the opposition, prompting a UN Security Council resolution declaring the impossibility of a fair poll. Mugabe ultimately ran unopposed, and the vote was declared illegitimate by observers from the African Union and the SADC. Although the September 2008 GPA called for a new, independent election commission, the body had not been formally constituted by the end of 2010.

Since the restoration of the Senate in 2005, Zimbabwe has had a bicameral legislature. A 2007 constitutional amendment removed appointed seats from the House of Assembly, increased the number of seats of both chambers (to 210 in the House of Assembly and 93 in the Senate), and redrew constituency boundaries. In the Senate, 33 seats are still held by traditional chiefs, presidential appointees, and other unelected officials. All elected officials serve five-year terms. A 2009 constitutional amendment stemming from the GPA created the post of prime minister (and two deputy prime ministers) while retaining the presidency, leaving the country with a split executive branch.

State-sponsored political violence is a serious and chronic problem. MDC-affiliated politicians, activists, and supporters continued to suffer from harassment, assault, and arbitrary detention by security forces and militias in 2010. A February report by Amnesty International alleged that torture and politically motivated prosecutions persisted, as did the intimidation of rural Zimbabweans perceived as supporting the MDC. In 2009, a group of 18 prominent human rights and political activists who had recently been released from jail were indicted on terrorism charges, and an MDC cabinet minister reported that party officials were receiving death threats on a near-daily basis. In October of that year, an audit revealed that over 10,000 ZANU-PF youth militia members were on the payroll of the Youth Development Ministry. According to the independent shortwave radio station SW Radio Africa, the whereabouts of seven MDC activists abducted in 2008 remained unknown at the end of 2010.

Corruption is rampant throughout the country, including at the highest levels of government. The collapse in public-service delivery and the politicization of food and agricultural aid has made the problem ubiquitous at the local level. A 2009 independent audit of the Agriculture Ministry showed that the illegal reselling of agricultural inputs was widespread, as was corruption in the state-run Grain Marketing Board. Also in 2009, Finance Minister Tendai Biti of the MDC revealed that almost no revenue from the country's diamond sales had gone into state coffers. Anticorruption prosecutions are almost exclusively motivated by political vendettas. An anticorruption commission envisioned in the GPA has yet to be formed. Zimbabwe was ranked 134 out of 178 countries surveyed in Transparency International's 2010 Corruption Perceptions Index.

Freedom of the press is restricted. The country's draconian legal framework

includes the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act (AIPPA), the Official Secrets Act, the Public Order and Security Act (POSA), and the Criminal Law (Codification and Reform) Act. In general, these laws restrict who may work as a journalist, require journalists to register with the state, severely limit what they may publish, and mandate harsh penalties—including long prison sentences—for violators. As mandated by the GPA, in 2010, the newly formed and quasi-independent Zimbabwe Media Commission (ZMC) replaced the state-controlled Media and Information Commission (MIC). However, former MIC head Tafataona Mahoso was appointed chief executive of the new body. In May, the ZMC granted four print licenses, including one to the long-shuttered *Daily News*—the country's most widely read independent daily until it was closed for violating AIPPA in 2003—and another to the independent daily, *NewsDay*. Four other outlets were granted licenses in July, including two news agencies, Cable News Agency and the Africa Open Media Initiative. While these licenses were positive developments, journalists and press freedom advocates cautioned that their effects would be limited by AIPPA, as well as the small size of the country's print media readership.

The government continues to dominate the broadcast sector via the state-controlled Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation (ZBC) and the NewZiana news agency. The Broadcasting Authority of Zimbabwe approved no new licenses for broadcast stations in 2010. Access to international news via satellite television is prohibitively expensive for most Zimbabweans. In 2009, the government lifted a ban on international news organizations such as the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) and the U.S.-based Cable News Network (CNN); at the same time, the MIC significantly raised the accreditation fees for foreign journalists, local journalists working for foreign media outlets, and foreign media outlets themselves. Government jamming of domestic and foreign-based shortwave radio decreased in 2010, but was still a problem. The 2007 Interception of Communications Act empowers the state to monitor telephonic and electronic communication.

Journalists are routinely subjected to verbal intimidation, physical attacks, arrest and detention, and financial pressure by the police and ZANU-PF supporters. According to Human Rights Watch, at least 15 journalists were harassed, arbitrarily arrested, or assaulted by security forces in the first four months of 2010, and the trend continued during the rest of year. Numerous journalists covering constitutional outreach meetings were harassed or assaulted. In addition, some journalists, including Stanley Kwenda of the *Zimbabwean*, were forced to flee temporarily the country following threats of arrest, violence, or death by security forces.

Restrictions on freedom of expression have extended to the art world. In March 2010, artist Owen Maseko was detained for two days for "incitement" after opening a Bulawayo exhibit about the Matabeleland massacres of the 1980s. Days earlier, authorities had shuttered photography exhibits in Masvingo, Gweru, and Chinhoyi that documented ZANU-PF human rights abuses surrounding the 2008 elections. While freedom of religion has generally been respected in Zimbabwe, church attendance has become increasingly politicized, with church groups such as the Solidarity Peace Trust and the Zimbabwe Christian Alliance at the forefront of opposition to the Mugabe government. Other groups, such as the Zimbabwe Council of Churches, are widely perceived as pro-Mugabe. However, there were fewer instances of state interference in religious affairs in 2010 compared with previous years.

Academic freedom is limited. All schools are under state control, and education aid has often been based on parents' political loyalties. Security forces and ZANU-PF thugs harass dissident university students, who have been arrested or expelled for protesting against government policy. Teachers, especially in rural areas, are often targets of political violence. In 2008, thousands of teachers—many of whom served as polling officials—were beaten by ZANU-PF militias, and many rural schools were closed. According to the Progressive Teachers' Union of Zimbabwe, 7 teachers were killed, 60 were tortured, about 600 were hospitalized, and over 230 teachers' houses were burned down. In 2009, Amnesty International reported that teachers continued to be attacked and threatened by ZANU-PF supporters.

The small nongovernmental sector is active, but nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) have faced increasing legal restrictions and extralegal harassment. The 2004 Non-Governmental Organizations Act increased scrutiny of human rights groups and explicitly prohibited them from receiving foreign funds. Among other instances of harassment in 2010, Okay Machisa, director of the Zimbabwe Human Rights Organization (ZimRights), was arrested in March and forced to leave the country temporarily, while ZimRights Masvingo chairman Joel Hita was detained overnight in April. In September, six American medical aid workers treating AIDS orphans were arrested for practicing and dispensing medicine without a license; they were subsequently deported.

The 2002 POSA requires police permission for public meetings and demonstrations. Such meetings are often broken up, and participants are subject to arbitrary arrest as well as attacks by ZANU-PF militias. The POSA also allows police to impose arbitrary curfews and forbids criticism of the president. In April and September 2010, the Women of Zimbabwe Arise (WOZA) group organized large protests over the breakdown in public-service delivery, resulting in scores of arrests.

The Labor Relations Act allows the government to veto collective-bargaining agreements that it deems harmful to the economy. Strikes are allowed except in "essential" industries. Because the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU) has led resistance to Mugabe's rule, it has become a particular target for repression. Gertrude Hambira, secretary general of the General Agriculture and Plantation Workers' Union (GAPWUZ), continued to face harassment by the authorities in 2010. In February, police raided GAPWUZ's Harare office, sending Hambira into hiding. Earlier that month, police had interrogated her following a union report on the abuse of farm workers.

Pressure from the executive branch has substantially eroded judicial independence, though the situation has improved somewhat since the GPA. The accused are often denied access to counsel and a fair, timely trial, and the government has repeatedly refused to enforce court orders. It has also replaced senior judges or pressured them to resign by stating that it could not guarantee their security; judges have been subject to extensive physical harassment. Vacancies for scores of magistrate posts have caused a backlog of tens of thousands of cases.

Security forces abuse citizens with impunity, often ignoring basic rights regarding detention, searches, and seizures. The government has taken no clear action to halt the rising incidence of torture and mistreatment of suspects in custody. ZANU-PF militias operate as *de facto* enforcers of government policy and have

committed assault, torture, rape, extralegal evictions, and extralegal executions without fear of punishment. Security forces have taken on major roles in crop collection, food distribution, and enforcement of monetary policy, and both the police and the military remain heavily politicized toward ZANU-PF, despite the GPA.

Scores of MDC officials and activists have been abducted, charged with treason, and detained without due process, particularly in 2008 but also in 2009 and 2010. In a closely watched and heavily politicized case, white MDC lawmaker Roy Bennett was acquitted of treason by the Harare High Court in May 2010, but the state appealed the decision, and Mugabe continued to stonewall Bennett's long-pending appointment to the cabinet.

Pretrial detention is a major problem, with some inmates held for over 10 years without trial. Prison conditions are harsh and life-threatening. Severe overcrowding and a major shortage of funds have contributed to a rise in HIV and tuberculosis infections among inmates and the deterioration of already poor sanitation facilities. The Zimbabwe Association for Crime Prevention and Rehabilitation reported in 2009 that Zimbabwe's prisons hold more than double their intended capacity of 17,000 inmates. Deaths in prisons are often caused by disease or beatings by guards, and many prisoners rely on food provided by family members.

People living in the two Matabeleland provinces continue to suffer political and economic discrimination, and security forces often target these areas as MDC strongholds. Restrictive citizenship laws discriminate against Zimbabweans born in neighboring African countries.

The state has extensive control over travel and residence. The government has seized the passports of its domestic opponents, and foreign critics are routinely expelled or denied entry. High passport fees inhibit legal travel. At the same time, badly underfunded immigration and border authorities lack the capacity to effectively enforce travel restrictions.

Property rights are not respected. Operation Murambatsvina in 2005 entailed the eviction of hundreds of thousands of city dwellers and the destruction of thousands of residential and commercial structures, many of which had been approved by the government. Despite the advent of a government resettlement program (Operation Garikai), by 2010, the majority of victims still lacked adequate housing and had no means of redressing the destruction of their property. Most victims have moved into existing, overcrowded, urban housing stock or remained in rural areas.

The 2007 Indigenization Law, which stipulates that 51 percent of shares in all companies operating in Zimbabwe must be owned by black Zimbabweans, came into effect in March 2010, though it was not being enforced by year's end, and Prime Minister Morgan Tsvangirai declared the law "null and void." Nevertheless, in December, Mugabe threatened to nationalize the local assets of U.S. and British companies unless sanctions against him and other ZANU-PF leaders were lifted. In January 2010, the Harare High Court blocked a 2007 SADC court ruling that found land seizures affecting a group of 70 white farmers to have been discriminatory and in violation of SADC rules. Fewer than 400 white-owned farms remain out of the 4,500 that existed when land invasions started in 2000, and any avenues of legal recourse for expropriated farmers have been closed. In February, a spate of attacks on white farmers accompanied the inauguration of a land audit by the MDC-controlled Finance Ministry.

Women enjoy extensive legal protections, but societal discrimination and domestic violence persist. Women serve as ministers in national and local governments and hold 32 and 24 seats in the House of Assembly and Senate, respectively. The World Health Organization has reported that Zimbabwean women's "healthy life expectancy" of 34 years is the world's shortest. Sexual abuse is widespread, including the use of rape as a political weapon. A Prevention of Domestic Violence Bill has lingered in Parliament for 10 years without passage. Female members of the opposition often face particular brutality at the hands of security forces. The prevalence of customary laws in rural areas undermines women's civil rights and access to education.

Homosexuality is illegal. In May 2010, police raided the offices of Gays and Lesbians of Zimbabwe, a gay rights NGO, and arrested two employees on charges of insulting Mugabe and possessing pornography. The two were allegedly assaulted in custody before being released.

Abkhazia

Political Rights: 5

Population: 216,000

Civil Liberties: 5

Status: Partly Free

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline For Year Under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
6,5NF	6,5NF	6,5NF	6,5NF	5,5PF	5,5PF	5,5PF	5,5PF	5,5PF	5,5PF

Overview: Russia continued to tighten its grip on Abkhazia in 2010, and the Abkhaz government faced growing domestic political pressure as a result. In February, Abkhaz president Sergei Bagapsh signed an agreement allowing Moscow to build additional military bases in the territory. The opposition and independent media repeatedly accused the government of ceding too much control to Moscow.

Annexed by Russia in 1864, Abkhazia became an autonomous republic within Soviet Georgia in 1930. After the 1991 collapse of the Soviet Union, Abkhazia declared its independence from Georgia in 1992, leading to a year-long war that left thousands dead and displaced more than 200,000 residents, mainly ethnic Georgians. Abkhaz forces won de facto independence for the republic in September 1993, and an internationally brokered ceasefire was signed in Moscow in May 1994.

Incumbent Abkhaz president Vladislav Ardzinba ran unopposed for reelection in 1999, and a reported 98 percent of voters supported independence in a concurrent referendum. Deputies loyal to Ardzinba won all 35 seats in the 2002 parliamentary elections after the opposition withdrew to protest bias by the election commission and state-backed media.

Under pressure from a powerful opposition movement, Prime Minister Gennady Gagulia resigned in April 2003 and was succeeded by Defense Minister Raúl Khadjimba, though Ardzinba refused to step down as president.

An opposition candidate, former prime minister Sergei Bagapsh, defeated Khadjimba in the December 2004 presidential election, but he was pressured into a January 2005 rerun with Khadjimba—who was backed by Ardzinba and Moscow—as his vice presidential running mate. The new ticket won the rerun with 91 percent of the vote.

In July 2006, Georgian troops occupied the strategic Kodori Gorge, the only portion of Abkhazia under Georgian control, after a Kodori-based Georgian paramilitary group refused orders from Tbilisi to disarm its fighters. The pro-Tbilisi government-in-exile for Abkhazia, composed of ethnic Georgians, was transferred to the gorge later that year.

Candidates from more than a dozen parties competed in the March 2007 Abkhaz parliamentary elections. Members of the three pro-Bagapsh parties captured more than 20 seats, and a number of opposition candidates were also elected, despite claims that Bagapsh interfered with the electoral process.

In April 2008, Moscow increased its deployment of peacekeepers in Abkhazia to more than 2,500, drawing sharp international criticism. After several years of rising

tension, war broke out in August between Georgian forces on one side and Russian, South Ossetian, and Abkhaz forces on the other. Although the brief conflict centered on South Ossetia, another Russian-backed Georgian territory that had won de facto independence in the early 1990s, Abkhaz troops succeeded in capturing the Kodori Gorge and additional territory on the Georgian-Abkhaz border.

In late August, following a French-brokered ceasefire, Russia formally recognized both Abkhazia and South Ossetia as independent states, though nearly all of the international community continued to view the two territories as de jure parts of Georgia.

A Russian-Abkhaz agreement signed in September 2009 authorized Moscow to build and upgrade military bases and reinforce the Abkhaz-Georgian border. Abkhazia later announced that it would transfer control of its airport and possibly its railway to Russia, and the government licensed Russia's state-owned oil company Rosneft to explore for oil in the territory.

Bagapsh won reelection in December 2009, capturing more than 59 percent of the vote in the first round amid 73 percent turnout. Khadjimba placed a distant second, with just 15 percent. Though all five candidates reportedly endorsed Russia's preeminent role in the territory, Abkhaz opposition journalists and politicians, led by Khadjimba, accused the government of ceding undue control to Moscow.

In February 2010, Bagapsh signed a second agreement with Russia, allowing it to build a naval base in the northern coastal town of Ochamchire, an air base in Gudauta, and a base for ground forces in the Kodori Gorge. Russia already had an estimated 4,000 to 5,000 troops in the territory, and air-defense missiles were deployed later in 2010. The opposition and independent media criticized these concessions to Moscow, but Bagapsh argued that Russian support was a political and economic necessity.

Vice President Aleksandr Ankvab, who had served as prime minister during Bagapsh's first term, survived an assassination attempt in September, when an unidentified attacker fired a grenade launcher at his home. Observers speculated on a range of possible political or criminal motives.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Residents of Abkhazia can elect government officials, but the more than 200,000 Georgians who fled the region during the war in the early 1990s cannot vote in the elections held by the separatist government. Most of the ethnic Georgians who remain in Abkhazia are also unable to vote in local polls, as they lack Abkhaz passports. None of the elections have been recognized internationally.

The 1999 constitution established a presidential system, stating that only ethnic Abkhaz can be elected to the post. The president and vice president are elected for five-year terms. The parliament, or People's Assembly, consists of 35 members elected for five-year terms from single-seat constituencies.

Corruption in Abkhazia is believed to be extensive, and government officials are not required to provide declarations of income.

Broadcast media are largely controlled by the government, which operates the Abkhaz State Television and Radio Company (AGTRK). In July 2010, opposition journalists and politicians proposed a package of reforms that would turn AGTRK into an independent, public-service broadcaster, though it remained state run at year's end. All the major Russian television stations also broadcast into the territory. Private broadcasters received increased government scrutiny ahead of the 2009 election, and

one television station was denied a license. Nevertheless, Abaza-TV, a private station based in Sukhumi, supported the opposition during the election. In May 2010, the opposition complained of inadequate access to broadcast media.

The print media are considered more influential, consisting of several weekly newspapers. The government publication Respublika Abkhazii competes with two main independent papers, *Chegemskaya Pravda* and *Novaya Gazeta*, which also supported the opposition in 2009. In August 2010, *Novaya Gazeta* published two articles that criticized Bagapsh's concessions to Russia and demanded that Georgian officials from the 1992 war be extradited from Moscow to stand trial as war criminals. President Sergei Bagapsh responded publicly and at length to all such criticism during the year.

Internet access has increased since Russia's 2008 recognition of the territory's independence, though some legal restrictions apply to both traditional and online media. In September 2009, a journalist received a suspended three-year prison sentence for allegedly libeling the president in an online article that was reprinted in Abkhazia's newspapers.

Religious freedom in Abkhazia is affected by the political situation. The Abkhaz Orthodox Church declared its separation from the Georgian Orthodox Church in 2009, and a number of Georgian Orthodox clerics have been expelled for alleged spying or refusal to recognize separatist authorities. Though a 1995 decree bans Jehovah's Witnesses, they continue to practice openly in Abkhazia, as do other denominations. Abkhazia's Muslims, who make up about 30 percent of the population, are allowed to practice freely. A Sukhumi imam escaped a failed assassination attempt in July 2010, and another Muslim cleric was shot dead a week later, but police were unable to determine the motive or perpetrator in either case.

The Abkhaz constitution offers some protection to ethnic minorities seeking education in their native languages. Armenian-language schools generally operate without government interference, but Gali residents report a deficit of Georgian-language textbooks and instruction. Some of Gali's ethnic Georgian students regularly travel to Georgian-controlled territory to attend classes. Ethnic Georgian residents who hold Georgian passports are restricted from studying at Sukhumi State University.

Freedom of assembly is somewhat limited, but the opposition and civil society groups mounted several protests in 2009 and 2010 to challenge the government's increasing dependence on Russia as well as a proposal to offer citizenship to some ethnic Georgian returnees. Although most nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) rely on funding from outside the territory, the NGO sector exerts a significant degree of influence on government policies. However, Abkhaz NGOs are not permitted to monitor elections.

Abkhazia's judicial code is based on Russia's, and the criminal justice system suffers from chronic problems, including limited defendant access to qualified legal counsel, violations of due process, and lengthy pretrial detentions. Local NGOs have petitioned for significant judicial reform.

The human rights situation for the ethnic Georgian population in Gali has worsened since the 2008 war. Residents have reported increased pressure from the Abkhaz authorities, and they continue to suffer from widespread poverty. A July 2009 amendment to a law on citizenship that would have made many of Gali's approximately 45,000 ethnic Georgians eligible for Abkhaz passports—entitling them to vote, own property, run a business, and obtain Russian citizenship and pensions—if they gave

up their Georgian passports was scrapped in August following protests by the opposition, which claimed the move would undermine Abkhaz security. The current legal status of ethnic Georgian residents remains unclear.

Travel and choice of residence are limited by the ongoing separatist dispute. Most ethnic Georgians who fled Abkhazia during the early 1990s live in Tbilisi and western Georgia, and Abkhaz authorities have resisted proposals to allow their return. Russian border guards, who control the de facto border, hamper freedom of movement for Gali Georgians, many of whom rely on unofficial cross-border trade and receive pensions from Tbilisi, though Gali residents have reported greater mobility inside Abkhazia. Ethnic Russians have reported that their homes have been confiscated under obscure nationalization laws.

Since the war, ethnic Abkhaz have had greater difficulty receiving visas to travel abroad, including to the United States and European Union countries. About 90 percent of Abkhazia's residents hold Russian passports, which they claim is necessary since Abkhaz travel documents are not internationally recognized.

Equality of opportunity and normal business activities are limited by corruption, criminal organizations, and economic reliance on Russia, which pays for half the state budget and accounts for 99 percent of foreign investment.

A strong NGO sector has contributed to women's involvement in business and civil society. However, women remain underrepresented in government positions, holding just four of the 35 seats in Abkhazia's parliament. After years of campaigning by Abkhazian women's groups, a law on gender equality was passed in 2008, yet it has shown little impact on political life.

Gaza Strip

Political Rights: 6

Population: 1,600,000

Civil Liberties: 6

Status: Not Free

Note: Whereas previous editions of *Freedom in the World* featured one report for Israeli-occupied portions of the West Bank and Gaza Strip and another for Palestinian-administered portions, the present edition divides the territories based on geography, with one report for the West Bank and another for the Gaza Strip. As in previous years, Israel is examined in a separate report.

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline For Year Under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)



Overview: Sporadic fighting between Israeli forces and Gazan militants continued during 2010, but Israel eased its blockade somewhat after a May incident in which several activists attempting to reach the territory by sea were killed by Israeli forces. Also in 2010, Hamas officials pursued their crackdown on independent journalism, perceived public

immorality, and suspected Israeli spies. No new election dates were set despite the recent expiration of the terms of the Palestinian Authority's executive and legislative bodies.

The Gaza Strip was demarcated as part of a 1949 armistice agreement between Israel and Egypt following the 1948 Arab-Israeli war. Populated mostly by Palestinian Arab refugees of that war, the territory was occupied by Egypt until 1967. Israel conquered Gaza, along with the West Bank and other territories, in the 1967 Six-Day War, and ruled it thereafter through a military administration.

In 1968, Israel began establishing Jewish settlements in Gaza, a process regarded as illegal by most of the international community. Israel maintained that the settlements were legal, since under international law, Gaza was a disputed territory. In what became known as the first intifada (uprising), in 1987, Palestinians living in the West Bank and Gaza staged massive demonstrations, acts of civil disobedience, and attacks against Israeli settlers and Israel Defense Forces (IDF) troops in the territories, as well as attacks within Israel proper. Israel and Yasser Arafat's Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) reached an agreement in 1993 that provided for a PLO renunciation of terrorism and recognition of Israel, Israeli troop withdrawals, and phased Palestinian autonomy in Gaza and the West Bank. In 1994, the newly formed Palestinian Authority (PA) took control of most of the Gaza Strip; the PA also came to control about 40 percent of the West Bank.

As negotiations on a final settlement and the creation of a Palestinian state headed toward collapse, a second intifada began in September 2000, and the Israeli government responded by staging deadly raids into PA territory.

After Arafat died in November 2004, the PA in January 2005 held its second-ever presidential election, which had been repeatedly postponed; the first voting for president and the Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC) had taken place in 1996. Mahmoud Abbas of Arafat's Fatah faction won the 2005 contest, with 62 percent of the vote. In subsequent municipal voting in Gaza, the Islamist group Hamas won 77 out of 118 seats in 10 districts, to Fatah's 26 seats. Each group accused the other of fraud, and there was some election-related violence.

In February 2005, Abbas and Israeli prime minister Ariel Sharon agreed on a formal truce that lasted through June 2006. In August 2005, Israel unilaterally "disengaged" from Gaza, withdrawing all settlers and military personnel. However, it retained control of the territory's airspace, its coastline, and most of its land border, including the passage of goods and people.

Hamas won the January 2006 elections for the PLC, securing 74 of 132 seats, while Fatah took just 45; Hamas was particularly dominant in Gazan districts. Subsequently, Fatah and Hamas formed a unity government headed by Prime Minister Ismail Haniya of Hamas. Israel, the United States, and the European Union (EU) refused to recognize the new government, citing Hamas's involvement in terrorism and its refusal to recognize Israel or past Israel-PA agreements. The United States and the EU, then the largest donors to the PA, cut off assistance to the government.

In June 2006, in response to the killing of eight Palestinian civilians by an artillery shell, Hamas declared an end to the 2005 truce and accelerated the firing of Qas-sam rockets at Israel from Gaza. The source of the artillery fire remained in dispute. Hamas and other militant groups subsequently carried out a raid near Gaza, killing

two IDF soldiers and capturing a third, Corporal Gilad Shalit. Israel responded by invading Gaza, where the IDF destroyed Qassam launchers and ammunition sites but failed to locate Shalit. The fighting killed dozens of civilians.

Armed clashes between Hamas and Fatah supporters in Gaza escalated in 2007, and in June, Hamas militants successfully took over Fatah-controlled institutions in the territory. Some 600 Palestinians were killed in the fighting, and thousands of Gazans fled—along with most Fatah militants—to the West Bank. Abbas accused Hamas of staging a coup in Gaza, dismissed the Hamas-led government, and appointed an emergency cabinet led by former finance minister Salam Fayad. This resulted in a bifurcated PA, with Hamas governing Gaza and Abbas and Fayad governing the roughly 40 percent of the West Bank not directly administered by Israel. Hamas security forces and militants subsequently pursued a major crackdown on Fatah in Gaza, closing down Fatah-affiliated civic organizations and media outlets, and allegedly torturing detainees.

Meanwhile, Israel declared the Gaza Strip a "hostile entity" in response to ongoing rocket attacks, and imposed an economic blockade on the territory, granting passage only to food and certain other humanitarian supplies. However, arms and goods were regularly smuggled through a developing tunnel network between Egypt and Gaza. The blockade was eased after Hamas and Israel declared a six-month truce in June 2008.

War erupted between Hamas and Israeli forces in December 2008, after the truce expired and Hamas ramped up its rocket bombardment of Israeli towns near the Gaza border. The IDF launched near-daily air strikes and an almost three-week ground invasion of the Gaza Strip. Israel declared a unilateral ceasefire in late January 2009, and Hamas soon did the same. During the conflict, Israeli forces damaged or destroyed large portions of Gaza's military, government, and civilian infrastructure. According to the United Nations, some 50,000 homes, 800 industrial properties, 200 schools, and 39 mosques or churches were damaged or destroyed. For its part, Hamas launched over 700 rockets and mortars into Israeli civilian areas, often from civilian areas in Gaza. Tens of thousands of Gazans were left homeless by the fighting, and shortages of water, food, and medicine were acute. While the Palestinian Centre for Human Rights reported that 1,434 Palestinians were killed, including 960 noncombatants, the IDF reported that 1,166 Palestinians were killed, including 295 to 460 noncombatants. Thirteen Israelis were killed, including three noncombatants.

In September 2009, a UN-commissioned investigation into the war led by South African jurist Richard Goldstone accused both Israel and Hamas of war crimes, charges that were echoed by an array of international human rights organizations. Israel subsequently announced investigations into 150 allegations from the report: 36 were transferred to criminal investigations, 48 were closed, and the rest were pending at the end of 2010. In February 2010, two IDF officers were reprimanded for an artillery attack on a UN compound in Gaza that included white phosphorus munitions, and Israel agreed to pay the United Nations \$10 million in compensation. In October, an IDF military court found two soldiers guilty of using a young boy as a human shield to check for booby traps in Tel al-Hawa; they were sentenced to two years probation. The UN Human Rights Council and nongovernmental human rights organizations accused Israel of investigating only a portion of the allegations, with

a focus on low-ranking officers; Hamas was criticized for failing to launch a serious investigation at all.

Israel tightened its blockade of Gaza during the war, allowing only humanitarian goods into the territory. Following the ceasefire, the restrictions were eased somewhat to allow the transfer of other authorized goods, as well as international aid workers and individuals with specified medical and humanitarian needs. Gaza's Rafah border crossing with Egypt opened on an ad hoc basis.

In 2010, a series of private ships carrying food and other goods attempted to break Israel's coastal blockade of Gaza. In May, Israeli soldiers intercepted a six-ship flotilla from Turkey and killed nine activists on one of the ships—the *Mavi Marmara*—in an ensuing confrontation; a total of 632 activists were arrested and detained in Israel. The Israeli government was widely condemned internationally for the incident, but claimed its soldiers were acting in self-defense. Israel later eased the blockade substantially, allowing in virtually all consumer goods while continuing to ban weapons, fertilizer, gas tanks, drilling equipment, and water disinfectant, as well as all exports and almost all travel; prohibitions on construction materials were also slightly loosened. Nevertheless, in November, a report published by twenty-one aid groups—including Oxfam, Amnesty International, and Save the Children—stated that there had been "little improvement" in economic conditions in Gaza since the easing of the blockade, citing in particular continued restrictions on exports and construction materials.

Sporadic fighting continued between Israel and Gazan militants in 2010. Incidents of rocket and mortar fire into Israel from Gaza prompted a series of Israeli air strikes and artillery bombardments, killing both combatants and civilians. Most severely, in April, Israel staged over a dozen air strikes and a brief ground incursion into Gaza after some 20 rockets and mortar shells were fired from the territory in March, while December saw an increase in cross-border skirmishes, Palestinian rocket fire, and Israel airstrikes. According to the United Nations, 55 Palestinians were killed by the IDF in Gaza in 2010, including 22 civilians.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Residents of Gaza were never granted citizenship by either Egypt or Israel, and are mostly citizens of the Palestinian Authority (PA). The current Hamas-controlled government in the territory claims to be the legitimate leadership of the PA. However, the authority—a quasi-sovereign entity created by the 1993 Oslo Accords—is effectively fractured, and the Hamas government implements PA law selectively.

The PA president is elected to four-year terms, and international observers judged the 2005 presidential election to be generally free and fair. However, PA president Mahmoud Abbas lost control over Gaza after the 2007 Fatah-Hamas schism, and Prime Minister Ismail Haniya continues to lead the Hamas government, despite being formally dismissed by Abbas. Other Hamas ministers similarly remained in their posts in Gaza after almost all Fatah-affiliated ministers, government officials, and bureaucrats were expelled or fled to the West Bank. When Abbas's elected term expired in 2009, Hamas rejected the West Bank PA's legal justifications for his continued rule, arguing instead that the PA Basic Law empowered the head of the Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC)—Aziz Dweik of Hamas, who was released from an Israeli prison that year—to serve as acting president.

The unicameral, 132-seat PLC serves four-year terms. Voting in Gaza during the 2006 PLC elections was deemed largely fair by international observers, despite allegations that Hamas candidates campaigned in mosques in violation of electoral rules. However, the Hamas-Fatah rift, combined with Israel's detention of many (especially Hamas-affiliated) lawmakers, has prevented the PLC from meeting since 2007, and its term expired in 2010.

National unity negotiations between Hamas and Fatah were renewed under Syrian auspices in October 2010, but broke down a month later. No date for new presidential or legislative elections had been scheduled by year's end.

The Hamas-led government that took control following the 2006 PLC elections campaigned on an anticorruption platform. However, humanitarian organizations and donor countries allege that Hamas authorities in Gaza exert almost total control over the distribution of funds and goods, and allocate resources according to political criteria with little or no transparency.

The media are not free in Gaza. In 2008, Hamas replaced the PA Ministry of Information with a government Media Office and banned all journalists not accredited by it; authorities also closed down all media outlets that were not affiliated with Hamas. During the conflict between Hamas and Israeli forces that ended in January 2009, Israel banned foreign journalists from traveling to Gaza through Israeli checkpoints. It also bombed Hamas-affiliated media stations and destroyed satellite equipment on the roof of a building that housed the local offices of Iran's English- and Arabic-language television networks. Journalists were harassed, detained, and summoned for questioning by security forces throughout the 2010. In February, Hamas security forces arrested British journalist Paul Martin on suspicion of spying and detained him for 25 days. In October, Hamas closed down the office of the Palestinian Journalists' Syndicate.

Freedom of religion is restricted in Gaza. The PA Basic Law declares Islam to be the official religion of Palestine and also states that "respect and sanctity of all other heavenly religions (Judaism and Christianity) shall be maintained." Personal status law, which governs matters including marriage and divorce, is based on Sharia (Islamic law). Under Hamas, the authorities—including quasi-official "morality police" and Hamas-affiliated volunteer *dawa* groups—increasingly enforce orthodox Sunni Islamic practices and conservative dress. In addition, security forces and militants routinely harass worshippers at non-Hamas-affiliated mosques. Christians suffered harassment and a series of attacks in 2008 and 2009, though these were less of a problem in 2010.

In September 2009, the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs reported that at least 280 of Gaza's 641 schools were damaged, and 18 were destroyed during the Gaza war, and that many schools lacked essential materials in the aftermath. During the war, Hamas routinely used areas near schools to stage attacks; in addition, Israel accused Hamas of storing weapons in schools. The Israeli blockade has restricted access to school supplies. While university students are ostensibly allowed to leave Gaza, they must be escorted by foreign diplomats or contactors. Hamas has taken over the formal education system, aside from schools run by the UN Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA). A teachers' strike in 2009 led to the replacement of many strikers with new, Hamas-allied teachers. In August 2009, the Education Ministry began requiring female students to wear hijab (headscarves) at school. In 2010,

Islamist militants burned down UNRWA summer camps, accusing the organizers of teaching young girls "dancing and immorality."

The PA requires permits for rallies and demonstrations and prohibits violence and racist sloganeering. Nevertheless, large rallies, often marked by violent rhetoric, are regular occurrences in Gaza. Since 2008, Hamas has significantly restricted freedoms of assembly and association, with security forces dispersing public gatherings of Fatah and other groups and killing a number of people. In October 2010, tens of thousands of Gazans rallied in support of Islamic Jihad—an Islamist militant group occasionally at odds with Hamas—and called for the destruction of Israel. In December, another large rally of tens of thousands of Gazans was held in Gaza City to mark the twenty-third anniversary of Hamas. There is a broad range of Palestinian NGOs and civic groups, and Hamas itself operates a large network that provides social services to certain Palestinians. However, following the 2009 conflict between Hamas and Israel, Hamas restricted the activities of aid organizations that would not submit to its regulations or coordinate with its relief efforts. Many civic associations have been shut down for political reasons since the 2007 split in the PA.

Independent labor unions in Gaza continue to function, and PA workers have staged strikes against Hamas-led management. However, the Fatah-aligned Palestinian General Federation of Trade Unions (PGFTU), the largest union body in the territories, has seen its operations greatly curtailed. Its main Gaza offices were taken over by Hamas militants in 2007, and the building was severely damaged in a December 2008 Israeli air raid.

Laws governing Palestinians in the Gaza Strip derive from Ottoman, British Mandate, Jordanian, Egyptian, PA, and Islamic law, as well as Israeli military orders. The judicial system is not independent, and Palestinian judges lack proper training and experience. In 2007, Abbas ordered judges to boycott judicial bodies in Gaza, and Hamas began appointing new prosecutors and judges in 2008. Security forces and militants continued to carry out arbitrary arrests and detentions throughout 2010. Hamas-run military courts sentenced 16 people to death in 2009 and 2010, eight of them for treason. In April 2010, two men were publically executed by firing squad for spying for Israel. In July, Fatah officials claimed that Hamas security forces had detained over 100 Fatah activists and former PA security commanders in Gaza, and that some were tortured.

The Israeli and Egyptian blockade on Gaza severely restricts freedom of movement. Nearly all Gazans are effectively banned from leaving the territory, with exceptions for medical cases, students, and aid workers. Those who do leave typically use periodic openings of the Egyptian border, whether officially mandated or forced by nonstate actors. Within Gaza, unexploded ordnance is a serious hazard and was responsible for at least 17 deaths and 15 injuries in 2009, many of them suffered by minors.

Freedom of residence has been restricted by the violent conflicts in and around Gaza. Following the 2007 schism in the PA, thousands of Fatah-affiliated residents fled to the West Bank. Moreover, the conflict that ended in January 2009 was fought to a large extent in civilian neighborhoods, leading to the damage or destruction of some 50,000 homes. Hamas launched and stored rockets in densely populated areas, and Israel attacked these areas with airstrikes and raids. In 2010, Human Rights Watch accused Israel of destroying hundreds of civilian buildings in Gaza with "no military significance." Israel denied the charges.

The blockade has greatly reduced economic freedom and choice in the territory. Much economic activity is conducted through a dense network of tunnels beneath Gaza's border with Egypt. These tunnels are also used to transport weapons and are routinely bombed by Israel.

Under Hamas, personal status law is derived almost entirely from Sharia, which puts women at a stark disadvantage in matters of marriage, divorce, inheritance, and domestic abuse. Rape, domestic abuse, and "honor killings," in which relatives murder women for perceived sexual or moral transgressions, are common, and these crimes often go unpunished. A December 2009 study by the Palestinian Woman's Information and Media Center found that 77 percent of women in Gaza had experienced violence of various sorts, 53 percent had experienced physical violence, and 15 percent had suffered sexual abuse. Under Hamas, women's dress and movements in public have been increasingly restricted by the so-called morality police, who are tasked with enforcing orthodox Islamic customs. The government has barred women from wearing trousers in public and declared that all women must wear hijab in public buildings, though these policies are enforced sporadically. In 2010, the government banned women from smoking water pipes and men from cutting women's hair.

Hong Kong

Political Rights: 5

Population: 7,100,000

Civil Liberties: 2

Status: Partly Free

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline For Year Under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
5,3PF	5,3PF	5,3PF	5,2PF						

Overview: In June 2010, after months of consultation and closed-door negotiations, the Hong Kong legislature approved electoral reforms that would enable a slim majority of lawmakers to be elected by popular vote for the first time, though the existing semidemocratic system would largely be preserved. Separately, Beijing's growing influence over Hong Kong's politics, media landscape, and immigration policies was evident during the year, and Hong Kong police appeared less tolerant of public protests.

Hong Kong Island was ceded in perpetuity to Britain in 1842; adjacent territories were subsequently added, and the last section was leased to Britain in 1898 for a period of 99 years. In the 1984 Sino-British Joint Declaration, London agreed to restore the entire colony to China in 1997. In return, Beijing—under its "one country, two systems" formula—pledged to maintain the enclave's legal, political, and economic autonomy for 50 years.

Under the 1984 agreement, a constitution for the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, known as the Basic Law, took effect in 1997. The Basic Law stated that universal suffrage was the "ultimate aim" for Hong Kong, but it allowed direct

elections for only 18 seats in the 60-member Legislative Council (Legco), and provided for the gradual expansion of elected seats to 30 by 2003. After China took control, it temporarily suspended the Legco and installed a provisional legislature that repealed or tightened several civil liberties laws during its 10-month tenure.

Tung Chee-hwa was chosen as Hong Kong's chief executive by a Beijing-organized election committee in 1997, and his popularity waned as Beijing became increasingly involved in Hong Kong's affairs, raising fears that civic freedoms would be compromised. Officials were forced to withdraw a restrictive antisubversion bill after it sparked mass protests in July 2003.

Pro-Beijing parties retained control of the Legco in 2004 elections, which were marred by intimidation that was thought to have been organized by Beijing. In 2005, with two years left to serve, the deeply unpopular Tung resigned. He was replaced by career civil servant Donald Tsang, and China's National People's Congress (NPC) decided that Tsang would serve out the remainder of Tung's term before facing election. In 2007, Hong Kong held competitive elections for chief executive, after democracy supporters on the 800-member election committee nominated a second candidate, Alan Leong. However, Tsang won a new term by a wide margin, garnering 82 percent of the votes in the mostly pro-Beijing election committee.

Pro-Beijing parties again won Legco elections in September 2008, taking 30 seats, though few of those members were elected by popular vote. The prodemocracy camp won 23 seats, including 19 by popular vote, enabling them to retain a veto over proposed constitutional reforms.

In November 2009, the government published a consultation document on proposed electoral reforms for the 2012 polls that would ostensibly serve as a transitional arrangement until the adoption of universal suffrage. Following months of public consultations and closed-door negotiations, a compromise was reached between the Hong Kong government, Beijing, and the Democratic Party (DP) in the Legco, which approved the reforms in June 2010. The new system would enable a narrow majority of Legco members to be elected by popular vote for the first time, but many in the prodemocracy camp criticized the plan, which largely preserved the semidemocratic status quo and provided no guarantees of future universal suffrage.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Hong Kong's Basic Law calls for the election of a chief executive and a unicameral Legislative Council (Legco).

The chief executive is elected by an 800-member committee: some 200,000 "functional constituency" voters—representatives of various elite business and social sectors, many with close ties to Beijing—elect 600 of the committee's members, and the remaining 200 consist of Legco members, Hong Kong delegates to the NPC, religious representatives, and 41 members of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC), a mainland advisory body. The chief executive serves a five-year term.

The Legco consists of 30 directly elected members and 30 members chosen by the functional constituency voters. Legco members serve four-year terms. The Basic Law restricts the Legco's lawmaking powers, prohibiting legislators from introducing bills that would affect Hong Kong's public spending, governmental operations, or political structure. In the territory's multiparty system, the five main parties are the prodemocracy DP, Civic Party, and League of Social Democrats; the pro-Beijing

Democratic Alliance for the Betterment and Progress of Hong Kong; and the business-oriented Liberal Party.

The 2008 Legco elections were procedurally free and fair, but the semidemocratic structure of the legislature meant that the prodemocracy camp remained a minority despite winning nearly 60 percent of the popular vote. Unlike in 2004, the elections were not accompanied by overt intimidation or threats, though indirect pressure and influence from Beijing was nonetheless evident.

Under the electoral reforms passed in June 2010, the election committee for the chief executive will expand from 800 to 1,200 members in 2012, but will otherwise retain its existing composition. More significantly, the Legco will expand from 60 to 70 seats. Five of the new members will be chosen through direct elections based on geographical constituencies. Members of Hong Kong's 18 district councils will nominate the other five candidates from among themselves, and nominees will then face a full popular vote. Despite this modest step toward democracy, the reforms did not include specific plans for the adoption of universal suffrage. The NPC had ruled in 2007 that universal suffrage might be adopted in 2017 for chief executive and 2020 for the Legco. The issue's omission from the 2010 reforms heightened fears that the transition would be pushed further into the future. The debate prompted a split in the prodemocracy camp, as DP leaders favored the reforms, while the Civic Party, the League of Social Democrats, and some DP members opposed them as inadequate.

Beijing's influence over Hong Kong's politics, media landscape, and immigration policies remained evident during 2010. Five Legco members from the Civic Party and the League of Social Democrats resigned in January 2010 to protest the draft electoral reforms initially proposed by the government, setting the stage for by-elections that would test public support for universal suffrage. However, shortly after the mainland liaison office publicly condemned the move as a "blatant challenge" to China's authority, pro-Beijing parties in the Legco announced a boycott of the by-elections. As a result, all five lawmakers easily won their seats back.

Hong Kong is generally regarded as having low rates of corruption, though business interests have considerable influence on the Legco. The right to access government information is guaranteed by the Code on Access to Information and generally respected in practice. However, in January 2010, the territory's ombudsman found the civil service's compliance with the code to be deficient in some respects, noting a growing number of complaints in recent years that reasonable requests for information had been rejected. Hong Kong was ranked 13 out of 178 polities surveyed in Transparency International's 2010 Corruption Perceptions Index.

Under Article 27 of the Basic Law, Hong Kong residents enjoy freedoms of speech, press, and publication. These rights are generally respected in practice, and political debate is vigorous. There are dozens of daily newspapers, and residents have access to international radio broadcasts and satellite television. International media organizations operate without interference. Nonetheless, Beijing's growing influence over the news media, book publishing, and arts industries has led to self-censorship. This influence stems in part from the close relationship between Hong Kong media owners and the central authorities; at least 10 such owners sit on the CP-PCC. In some cases, pressure from Beijing has been more direct. In June 2010, a Hong Kong publisher was forced to stop printing a memoir by former Chinese premier Li

Peng, known as a driving force behind the 1989 Tiananmen Square crackdown, after Chinese officials warned that the publication would violate copyright laws. Nevertheless, a copy of the manuscript was circulated online in both China and Hong Kong.

Hong Kong journalists face a number of restrictions when covering events on the mainland. In April 2010, Shanghai authorities denied accreditation to reporters from *Apple Daily*, who were seeking to cover the World Expo. While violence against journalists is rare in Hong Kong, reporters from the territory have repeatedly faced surveillance, intimidation, beatings, and occasional imprisonment when reporting on the mainland. Several incidents of intimidation and attacks occurred in 2010. In December, a crowd that included members of the local residential committee attacked several Hong Kong journalists outside the Beijing home of jailed activist Zhao Lianhai; police reportedly declined to intervene or assist the victims.

The Hong Kong government, rather than an independent regulator, controls media licensing in the territory, though a law passed in January 2010 imposed fixed criteria for licensing decisions. Authorities continued to obstruct broadcasts by the prodemocracy station Citizens' Radio, whose license application was rejected in 2006. The station was raided in March, May, and December, and its equipment was confiscated. In April, authorities warned candidates in Legco by-elections that it was a criminal offense to participate in the station's "illegal broadcasts." A new government-appointed advisory board for the state-owned Radio Television Hong Kong was unveiled in August 2010; by year's end, the board had taken no steps to curb the broadcaster's editorial independence, as some had feared.

The Basic Law provides for freedom of religion, which is generally respected in practice. Religious groups are excluded from the Societies Ordinance, which requires nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) to register with the government. Adherents of the Falun Gong spiritual movement, which is persecuted on the mainland, remain free to practice in the territory and hold occasional demonstrations. In September 2010, authorities rejected an application by Hong Kong Catholics to show solidarity with persecuted mainland Christians by holding a prayer meeting in a public park. The government claimed the available space was too small, but one of the organizers reported being told that the gathering was too politically sensitive.

University professors can write and lecture freely, and political debate on campuses is lively. In June 2010, however, Chinese University officials rejected students' applications to display permanently a Goddess of Democracy statue on campus, claiming it violated principles of "political neutrality." After a public outcry, the statue was allowed on campus for the anniversary of the 1989 Tiananmen Square crackdown and was still up at year's end, though its long-term status remained unclear.

The Basic Law guarantees freedoms of assembly and association. Police permits for demonstrations are required but rarely denied, and protests on politically sensitive issues are held regularly. Nevertheless, police were more confrontational with protesters in 2010 than in the past, and over 50 demonstrators were arrested during the year, according to local civic groups. Some faced questionable charges of assaulting police, and while there were several high-profile acquittals in court, many cases were still pending at year's end.

Hong Kong hosts a vibrant and largely unfettered NGO sector, and trade unions are independent. However, there is limited legal protection for basic labor rights. Collective-bargaining rights are not recognized, protections against antiunion dis-

crimination are weak, and there are few regulations on working hours. In July 2010, the Legco passed the territory's first minimum-wage law, set to take effect in 2011.

The judiciary is independent, and the trial process is fair. The NPC reserves the right to make final interpretations of the Basic Law, effectively limiting the power of Hong Kong's Court of Final Appeals. While the NPC has not directly intervened in court cases for a number of years, there have been signs of growing influence from Beijing over law enforcement matters. In January 2010, U.S.-based Tiananmen Square activist Zhou Yongjun was sentenced on the mainland to nine years in prison for bank fraud, having been detained in Hong Kong in 2008 and, in an unusual move, handed over to mainland authorities. However, in a positive development, respected jurist Geoffrey Ma Tao-li was appointed as the new chief justice of the Hong Kong judiciary in September 2010, and most observers expected him to uphold the same standards of independence as outgoing chief justice Andrew Li Kwok-nang, who had served since the end of colonial rule.

Police are forbidden by law to employ torture and other forms of abuse. They generally respect this ban in practice, and complaints of abuse are investigated. Arbitrary arrest and detention are illegal; suspects must be charged within 48 hours of their arrest. Prison conditions generally meet international standards.

Citizens are treated equally under the law, though Hong Kong's population of 200,000 foreign domestic workers remains vulnerable to abuse, and South Asians routinely complain of discrimination in employment. Since foreign workers face deportation if dismissed, many are reluctant to bring complaints against employers. A Race Discrimination Ordinance that took effect in July 2009 created an independent Equal Opportunities Commission to enforce its protections, but it has been criticized for excluding discrimination through government actions and against immigrants.

The government does not control travel, choice of residence, or employment within Hong Kong, but documents are required to travel to the mainland, and employers must apply to bring in workers from China; direct applications from workers are not accepted. Hong Kong maintains its own immigration system, but periodic denials of entry to democracy activists, Falun Gong practitioners, and others have raised suspicions that the government is enforcing a Beijing-imposed political blacklist, particularly at sensitive times. In January 2010, the authorities denied visas to six members of the production team of Shen Yun Performing Arts, a traditional Chinese dance company based in New York, whose performances include some numbers artistically portraying the persecution against Falun Gong in China. The company was also forced to cancel a series of sold-out shows. In June, officials denied entry to Chen Weiming, the sculptor of a replica of the Goddess of Democracy statue that stood among the Tiananmen Square protesters in 1989, and sent him back to the United States. In recent years, several Legco members and human rights activists from Hong Kong have been barred entry to the mainland, as well as to Macau, since that territory passed new national security legislation in 2009.

Women are protected by law from discrimination and abuse, and they are entitled to equal access to schooling and to property in divorce settlements. However, women continue to face discrimination in employment opportunities, salary, inheritance, and welfare. Despite robust efforts by the government, Hong Kong remains a point of transit and destination for persons trafficked for sexual exploitation or forced labor.

Indian Kashmir

Political Rights: 4

Population: 12,200,000

Civil Liberties: 5*

Status: Partly Free

Ratings Change: Indian Kashmir's civil liberties rating declined from 4 to 5 due to a surge in state violence against protesters opposed to Indian rule, including the enforcement of onerous curfews and use of live ammunition that caused over 100 civilian deaths in a three-month period.

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline For Year Under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
6.00P	5.50P	4.50P							

Overview: After a relative lull in violence in 2009, security forces in Indian-controlled Kashmir clashed repeatedly in 2010 with protesters opposed to increased militarization in the region. Separatist opposition parties began the Quit Kashmir protest movement in June, after a 17-year-old boy was killed by police, leading to onerous curfews and regular confrontations between armed security personnel and stone-throwing youths. More than 100 civilians had been killed before the violence began to ebb in late September. Although the central government took some conciliatory steps, unrest continued intermittently through year's end.

When British India was partitioned into India and Pakistan in 1947, the Hindu maharajah of Jammu and Kashmir tried to maintain his principality's independence, but he eventually ceded it to India in return for autonomy and future self-determination. Within months, India and Pakistan went to war over the territory. As part of a UN-brokered ceasefire in 1949 that established the present boundaries, Pakistan gained control of roughly one-third of Jammu and Kashmir, leaving India with the remainder. The territory received substantial autonomy under Article 370 of India's constitution and a 1952 accord, but India annulled such guarantees in 1957 and formally annexed the portion of Jammu and Kashmir under its control. Since then, it has largely been governed like other Indian states, with an elected legislature and chief minister. Under the 1972 Simla accord, New Delhi and Islamabad agreed to respect the Line of Control (LOC) dividing the region and to resolve Kashmir's status through negotiation.

The pro-India National Conference (NC) party won state elections in 1987 that were marred by fraud, violence, and arrests of members of a new, Muslim-based opposition coalition, leading to widespread unrest. An armed insurgency against Indian rule gathered momentum after 1989, waged by the Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF) and other proindependence groups that consisted largely of Kashmiris, as well as Pakistani-backed Islamist groups seeking to bring Kashmir under Islamabad's control.

New Delhi placed Jammu and Kashmir under federal rule in 1990 and attempted to quell the uprising by force. The JKLF abandoned its armed struggle in 1994, and

the insurgency was thereafter dominated by Pakistani-backed extremist groups, which included fighters from elsewhere in the Muslim world.

Although opposition parties joined together to form the All Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC) in 1993, they boycotted the 1996 state elections, and the NC was able to form a government. The APHC also declined to participate in the 2002 elections, but the NC nevertheless lost more than half of its assembly seats, allowing the Congress Party and the People's Democratic Party (PDP) to form a coalition government.

Despite several setbacks, relations between the Indian government and moderate Kashmiri separatist groups generally improved after the 2002 elections. In 2004, talks were held for the first time between Kashmiri separatists and the highest levels of the Indian government. Moderate APHC leaders reiterated their renunciation of violence in 2005 and called for Kashmiris to become more deeply involved in the negotiating process. However, the talks were hampered by an emerging split within the APHC between those who favored a continuation of the insurgency and those who favored a political solution.

The coalition government collapsed in June 2008, when the PDP withdrew its support amid a high-profile dispute over land set aside for a Hindu pilgrimage site. State elections were held in November and December. Turnout was higher than expected, exceeding 60 percent on most polling dates, as voters largely ignored calls for a boycott from separatist groups. While early voting dates were generally peaceful, some violence marred later polling—particularly in early December—when antielection protesters clashed with security forces. The elections were considered mostly free and fair, however, with significantly reduced levels of voter intimidation, harassment, and violence compared with previous elections. The NC won a plurality of 28 seats, followed by the PDP with 21 seats and Congress with 17. The NC allied itself with Congress to form a governing coalition.

The security situation improved during 2009, with the number of militancy-related fatalities decreasing for the seventh consecutive year. In October, New Delhi announced plans to withdraw 15,000 troops from the Jammu region, granting local police more responsibility over the area. Nevertheless, there were several incidents of violence, including bombings in public places and other attacks directed at security forces, politicians, and minority groups.

In June 2010, after a 17-year-old boy was killed by police, opposition groups organized a separatist protest movement called Quit Kashmir that focused on growing discontent over state violence and the militarization of Indian security forces in the region. APHC chairman Syed Ali Shah Geelani said protests would continue until the Indian government recognized Kashmir as an international conflict, demilitarized the region, released all political prisoners, and revoked the Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA), which allowed security forces to shoot and kill civilians with relative impunity. For about three months, police and soldiers engaged in regular clashes with youthful, stone-throwing protesters, leaving more than 100 civilians dead. Tensions began to ease in September, when the central government announced plans to reduce the security presence in the territory, release jailed protesters, compensate the families of slain civilians, and reopen schools and universities. However, police arrested protest organizer Masrat Alam in October, and curfews and unrest continued sporadically for the rest of the year.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Jammu and Kashmir, like India's other states, is governed by an elected bicameral legislature and a chief minister entrusted with executive power. An appointed governor serves as titular head of state. Members of the 87-seat lower house, or state assembly, are directly elected, while the 46-seat upper house has a combination of members elected by the state assembly and nominated by the governor.

India has never held a referendum allowing Kashmiri self-determination, as called for in a 1948 UN resolution. The state's residents can change the local administration through elections, which are supposed to be held at least once every five years. The polls are monitored by the Election Commission of India, but historically, they have been marred by violence, coercion by security forces, and balloting irregularities. Militants have enforced boycotts called for by separatist political parties, threatened election officials and candidates, and killed political activists and civilians during balloting. More than 800 people were killed during the 2002 campaign period, including over 75 political activists and candidates. However, the 2008 legislative elections were considered generally free and fair, and were largely peaceful, despite some cases of violence.

Corruption remains widespread, despite apparent government efforts to combat it. The Jammu and Kashmir State Vigilance Commission Bill, introduced in 2010 to establish an anticorruption commission under the state's 2006 Prevention of Corruption Act, was still under consideration at year's end. Higher officials are seldom prosecuted for graft, and convictions are rare. Education Minister Peerzada Mohammad Sayeed resigned in 2008, after being charged with receiving a bribe, but he rejoined the cabinet the following year. Several whistle-blowers have reported harassment after filing complaints.

India's 1971 Newspapers (Incitement to Offences) Act, which is in effect only in Jammu and Kashmir, gives district magistrates the authority to censor publications in certain circumstances, though it is rarely invoked. In response to the separatist protests that began in June 2010, owners of newspapers in Srinigar suspended circulation. Separately, the Congress Party was accused of forcing the shutdown of an Urdu-language newspaper that allegedly insulted the party's national leader, Sonia Gandhi. Curfews imposed during the protests prevented journalists from covering important stories, and the authorities revoked reporters' curfew passes. Nevertheless, newspapers did address controversial issues, such as alleged human rights abuses by security forces. Foreign journalists are generally able to travel freely, meet with separatist leaders, and file reports on a range of issues, including government abuses. As in the rest of India, print media are thriving in Kashmir, with 145 dailies available across the state.

Journalists remain subject to pressure from militants, and many practice some degree of self-censorship for this reason. Militant groups threaten and sometimes kidnap, torture, or kill journalists. Reporters are also occasionally harassed or detained by the authorities. Incidents of violence against the press declined in 2009, but a number of attacks were reported in 2010 against journalists trying to cover the separatist protests and related events.

Freedom of worship and academic freedom are generally respected by the authorities. Since 2003, the state government has permitted separatist groups to organize a procession marking the prophet Muhammad's birthday. However, Islamist militants at times attack Hindu and Sikh temples or villages.

Freedoms of assembly and association are often restricted. Although local and national civil rights groups are permitted to operate, they sometimes encounter harassment by security forces. The separatist APHC is allowed to function, but its leaders are frequently subjected to short-term preventive detention, and its requests for permits for public gatherings are often denied. Security forces broke up multiple anti-India protest marches and demonstrations during 2010, and the enforcement of curfews led to increased violence between police and protesters. The death toll of more than 100 civilians was far higher than during previous years' protests. Protesters also marched in response to news that a Christian pastor in the United States was planning to burn copies of the Koran. Protection of labor union rights in Kashmir is generally poor and has resulted in prolonged strikes by both public and informal sector workers. According to the Jammu and Kashmir Trade Union Centre, half a million people in Jammu and Kashmir organized state-level strikes between 1990 and 2006—the most of any region in the world during that period.

The courts in Kashmir, already backlogged by thousands of pending cases, were further hampered by a prolonged lawyers' strike that began in the summer of 2010 and continued through year's end. The boycott was called after police arrested the president of the Kashmir High Court Bar Association, Mian Qayoom, under the Public Safety Act for proclaiming that he did not believe in the Indian constitution, because the country had eroded its meaning and principles through its treatment of Kashmir. Qayoom was also accused of instigating the lawyers' protests. The government and security forces frequently disregard court orders, including those quashing detentions. Two broadly written laws—the AFSPA and the Disturbed Areas Act—allow Indian forces to search homes and arrest suspects without a warrant, shoot suspects on sight, and destroy buildings believed to house militants or arms.

In a continuing cycle of violence, hundreds of militants, security personnel, and civilians are killed each year. According to the South Asia Terrorism Portal (SATP), a total of 55 civilians, 78 security personnel, and 242 militants were killed in militancy-related incidents during 2009, marking a significant decrease from the 2008 death toll of 541. The overall figure remained essentially flat in 2010, though the SATP's tallies excluded protest-related deaths.

Indian security personnel based in Kashmir, numbering about 500,000, carry out arbitrary arrests and detentions, torture, forced disappearances, and custodial killings of suspected militants and their alleged civilian sympathizers. Official figures released in August 2009 estimated that 3,429 people had disappeared between 1990 and July 2009. Human rights groups have suggested a number closer to 8,000. As part of the counterinsurgency effort, the government has organized former militants into progovernment militias. Members of these groups act with impunity and have reportedly carried out a range of human rights abuses against pro-Pakistani militants and civilians. Fake "encounter" killings, in which security forces execute unarmed suspects but claim to have killed them in battle, have been common. In July 2010, the bodies of three missing civilians were found at the LOC, and it was later discovered that an Indian army major had ordered their abduction and murder. The government has faced growing pressure to repeal the AFSPA, under which the central government must approve any prosecutions of security personnel. Such prosecutions have been rare in practice.

Militant groups based in Pakistan continue to kill pro-India politicians, public

employees, suspected informers, members of rival factions, soldiers, and civilians. The militants also engage in kidnapping, rape, extortion, and other forms of intimidation. In September 2010, the proindependence JKLF criticized Pakistani militant groups for "hijacking" their nationalist cause.

Violence targeting Pandits, or Kashmiri Hindus, is part of a pattern dating to 1990 that has forced several hundred thousand Hindus to flee the region; many continue to reside in refugee camps near Jammu. Other religious and ethnic minorities such as Sikhs and Gujjars have also been targeted.

As in other parts of India, women face some societal discrimination as well as domestic violence and other forms of abuse. Female civilians continue to be subjected to harassment, intimidation, and violent attacks, including rape and murder, at the hands of both the security forces and militant groups.

Nagorno-Karabakh

Political Rights: 6*

Population: 145,000

Civil Liberties: 5

Status: Not Free

Status Change: Nagorno-Karabakh's political rights rating declined from 5 to 6 and its status from Partly Free to Not Free due to the complete absence of opposition candidates in the May 2010 parliamentary elections.

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline For Year Under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
5,6NF	5,5PF	6,5NF							

Overview: In April 2010, Armenia suspended the ratification of a historic agreement signed with Turkey in October 2009 that would have established diplomatic relations between the two countries and reopened their mutual border. Armenia cited Turkey's decision to link the agreement to a resolution of Nagorno-Karabakh's status, which Yerevan claimed was not part of the initial deal. In May, the territory held parliamentary elections, in which there were no opposition candidates. By October, negotiations between Yerevan and Baku over a resolution to the Karabakh dispute were effectively deadlocked.

Nagorno-Karabakh, populated largely by ethnic Armenians, was established as an autonomous region inside Soviet Azerbaijan in 1923. In February 1988, the regional legislature adopted a resolution calling for union with Armenia. The announcement led to warfare over the next several years between Armenian, Azerbaijani, and local Nagorno-Karabakh forces.

In 1992, Nagorno-Karabakh's new legislature adopted a declaration of independence, which was not recognized by the international community. By the time a Russian-brokered ceasefire was signed in May 1994, Karabakh Armenians, assisted by

Armenia, had captured essentially the entire territory and seven adjacent Azerbaijani districts. Virtually all ethnic Azeris had fled or been forced out of the region. The fighting resulted in thousands of deaths and created an estimated one million refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs).

In December 1994, the head of Nagorno-Karabakh's state defense committee, Robert Kocharian, was selected as president by the territory's National Assembly. Parliamentary elections were held in 1995, and Kocharian won a popular vote for president in 1996. In September 1997, Foreign Minister Arkady Ghukassian was elected to replace Kocharian, who had become Armenia's prime minister that March. Kocharian was elected as Armenia's president in 1998.

In a 2000 parliamentary vote, Ghukassian's ruling Democratic Artsakh Union (ZhAM) won a slim victory, taking 13 seats. Ghukassian won a second term as president in 2002, with 89 percent of the vote. His renamed Democratic Party of Artsakh (AZhK) led the 2005 parliamentary elections, while the opposition, which accused the authorities of misusing state resources to influence the outcome, captured only three seats.

In 2006, a reported 98 percent of voters supported a referendum calling for Nagorno-Karabakh's independence. The referendum was not recognized by the international community.

Nagorno-Karabakh security chief Bako Saakian reportedly took more than 85 percent of the vote in the 2007 presidential election. His main opponent, Deputy Foreign Minister Masis Mailian, received 12 percent. The government subsequently absorbed or co-opted most of the political opposition.

Hope for progress on a peace agreement was shaken in 2008 by a series of external political developments. On March 14, 2008, the UN General Assembly passed a resolution identifying Nagorno-Karabakh as part of Azerbaijan and calling on Armenia to withdraw its troops. The measure was supported by 39 member states and rejected by 7, including Russia, France, and the United States, the three co-chairs of the Minsk Group, a body established by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) in the 1990s to facilitate negotiations on Nagorno-Karabakh's status. Also during the year, Kosovo declared independence from Serbia, and Russia recognized the independence of the breakaway Georgian regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, raising awkward questions about Nagorno-Karabakh's status. In addition, postelection violence in Armenia was followed by skirmishes along the ceasefire line that killed 16 soldiers on both sides, marking one of the worst violations of the ceasefire in years.

Following a year of negotiations, the governments of Turkey and Armenia in October 2009 signed a historic agreement to establish diplomatic relations and reopen their shared border, which Turkey had sealed in 1993 to show solidarity with Azerbaijan over Nagorno-Karabakh. However, the agreement had all but collapsed by April 2010, when Armenian president Serzh Sarkisian suspended its parliamentary ratification. He cited Turkey's decision to link the agreement to a resolution of Nagorno-Karabakh's status, which Yerevan claimed was not part of the initial deal.

Nagorno-Karabakh held parliamentary elections in May 2010. In contrast to the more competitive elections of previous years, no genuine opposition candidates participated, and the balloting was swept by the three parties of the ruling coalition. Azat Hayrenik (Free Fatherland), the party of Prime Minister Ara Harutiunian, won

14 of the 33 seats, followed by AZhK with 10 and the Armenian Revolutionary Federation-Dashnaktsutiun party with 6. The remaining seats were captured by Hayrenik loyalists with no formal party affiliation. Parliament Speaker Ashot Ghulian was reelected to his post.

Negotiations between Yerevan and Baku over a Karabakh peace settlement stalled after a June 2010 skirmish along the ceasefire line that killed six soldiers on both sides. The breakdown represented a setback to tentative progress achieved during 2009, when the presidents of Armenia and Azerbaijan had met eight times to discuss the dispute. Both the Karabakh peace process and Armenia's rapprochement with Turkey remained deadlocked at year's end.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Nagorno-Karabakh has enjoyed de facto independence from Azerbaijan since 1994 and retains close political, economic, and military ties with Armenia. Though earlier elections were regarded as relatively free and fair, parliamentary and presidential votes held in 2005 and 2007 were criticized by the opposition for alleged fraud and other irregularities. In the 2010 parliamentary elections, there were no opposition candidates, administrative resources were used to support progovernment candidates, and the election commission was entirely composed of progovernment officials. All Karabakh elections are considered invalid by the international community, which does not recognize the territory's independence.

The president, who is directly elected for up to two five-year terms, appoints the prime minister. Of the unicameral National Assembly's 33 members, 17 are elected by party list and 16 from single-mandate districts, all for five-year terms. The main political parties in Nagorno-Karabakh are Free Fatherland, the AZhK, and the Armenian Revolutionary Federation-Dashnaktsutiun, all of which currently support the government. Given the territory's uncertain status, dissent, including political opposition, is generally regarded as a sign of disloyalty and a security risk. As a consequence, opposition groups have either disappeared or been brought into the government.

Nagorno-Karabakh continues to suffer from significant corruption, particularly in the construction industry, as well as favoritism in filling civil service positions.

The territory officially remains under martial law, which imposes restrictions on civil liberties, including media censorship and the banning of public demonstrations. However, the authorities maintain that these provisions have not been enforced since 1995, a year after the ceasefire was signed.

The government controls many of Nagorno-Karabakh's media outlets, and most journalists practice self-censorship, particularly on subjects related to the peace process. The territory's public television station, which has no local competition, broadcasts only three hours a day. Internet access is limited. The popular independent newspaper *Demo* and *Karabakh-Open.com*, the territory's only independent news website, were both closed by their publishers in 2008.

Most Karabakh residents belong to the Armenian Apostolic Church, and the religious freedom of other groups is limited. A 2009 law banned religious activity by unregistered groups and proselytism by minority faiths, and made it more difficult for minority religious groups to register. Although at least three minority groups were subsequently registered, a Protestant group and the Jehovah's Witnesses were reportedly denied registration. Unregistered groups have been fined for their religious

activities, and Baptists and Jehovah's Witnesses have been jailed for refusing to serve in the Karabakh army.

Freedoms of assembly and association are limited, but trade unions are allowed to organize. The handful of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) that are active in the territory are virtually all progovernment, but they suffer from lack of funding and competition from government-organized groups.

The judiciary is not independent in practice. The courts are influenced by the executive branch as well as powerful political, economic, and criminal groups.

The majority of Azeris who fled the territory during the separatist conflict continue to live in poor conditions in IDP camps in Azerbaijan. Land-mine explosions cause deaths and injuries each year. According to the International Committee of the Red Cross, at least 50,000 antipersonnel mines were laid during the war. In many cases, records of minefield locations were lost or never created.

The continued control of major economic activity by powerful elites limits opportunities for most residents, though the government has instituted a number of economic rehabilitation projects in recent years.

Northern Cyprus

Political Rights: 2

Population: 295,000

Civil Liberties: 2

Status: Free

Note: See also the country report for Cyprus.

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline For Year Under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
2,2F									

Overview: Dervis Eroglu, leader of the National Unity Party, won the April 2010 presidential election, replacing Mehmet Ali Talat of the Republican Turkish Party. Eroglu, who was known to support a two-state solution to the island's de facto division, met with Greek Cypriot president Demetris Christofias for a new round of negotiations in September.

Cyprus gained independence from Britain in 1960, after a five-year guerrilla campaign by partisans demanding union with Greece. In July 1974, Greek Cypriot National Guard members, backed by the military junta that ruled Greece, staged an unsuccessful coup aimed at accomplishing the union. Five days later, Turkey invaded from the north, seized control of 37 percent of the island, and expelled 200,000 Greek Cypriots from the portion it occupied. Today, the Greek and Turkish communities are almost completely separated in the south and north, respectively.

A buffer zone, called the Green Line, has divided Cyprus, including the capital city of Nicosia, since 1974. UN resolutions stipulate that Cyprus is a single country of which the northern third is illegally occupied. In 1983, Turkish-controlled Cyprus

declared its independence as the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC), an entity recognized only by Turkey.

Reunification talks accelerated after a more receptive Turkish government was elected in 2002, and under added pressure for an agreement from the European Union (EU), the United States, and the United Nations. A pro-unification TRNC government led by Prime Minister Mehmet Ali Talat was elected in late 2003.

In April 2004, a reunification plan proposed by then UN secretary general Kofi Annan was put to a vote in simultaneous, separate referendums on both sides of the island. Amid accusations that the proposal favored the Turkish side, 76 percent of Greek Cypriots voted against the plan, while 65 percent of Turkish Cypriote voted in favor. With the island still divided, only Greek Cyprus joined the EU, as planned in May 2004. The EU had used the prospect of membership as a bargaining tool to push for reunification, and after EU membership was granted, a new plan became more difficult to achieve.

Talat's Republican Turkish Party (CTP) retained power at the head of a coalition government after winning February 2005 legislative elections, with the antiunification National Unity Party (UBP) placing second. Rauf Denktas, who had held the presidency since the TRNC declared independence, did not seek a new term in the April 2005 presidential election. Instead, Talat emerged as the victor in a field of seven candidates, defeating UBP leader Dervis Eroglu, 56 percent to 23 percent.

The UBP won legislative elections in April 2009, capturing 26 of 50 seats. Polls indicated that voters turned against the CTP, which secured just 15 seats, due to its failure to achieve reunification and because of an economic downturn that began in 2008. The Democratic Party, headed by Serdar Denktas, son of the former president, won five seats, while the Free Party and the Communal Democracy Party each captured two. Eroglu became prime minister, having previously held the post from 1985 to 1994 and 1996 to 2004.

In April 2010, Eroglu defeated Talat in a presidential election, capturing more than 50 percent of the vote and bringing his antiunification views to negotiations with the Greek Cypriot government. Eroglu and Greek Cypriot president Demetris Christofias held a new round of intensive talks in September. Practical progress was made in October, when the two sides opened a seventh border crossing near the northwestern town of Limnitis.

Economic opportunities in the north are more limited than in the south. The economy depends heavily on the government of Turkey, and the public sector provides most jobs. State salaries have been frozen in the past due to budgetary austerity measures imposed by Turkey, while the cost of living has increased. Unemployment stands at about 13 percent. In 2009, the Greek Cypriot government approved a 259 million euro (\$345 million) EU aid package for the Turkish Cypriot community after years of delay. However, direct trade between the North and the EU, which had been promised after the 2004 referendum, was once again rejected by the European Parliament in October 2010.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Elections in the TRNC are generally free and fair. The president and the 50-seat Assembly are elected to five-year terms. The prime minister is head of government. The main parties are the ruling UBP, which has opposed unification, and the opposition CTP, which has supported it.

The TRNC's roughly 1,000 Greek and Maronite Christian residents are disenfranchised, but many vote in elections in the southern Republic of Cyprus. Minorities are not represented, and women are underrepresented, in the TRNC Assembly.

The government has made efforts to combat corruption in recent years, but graft and lack of transparency remain problems. After the 2009 elections, Democratic Party leader Serdar Denktas asserted that all TRNC political parties had bought votes, and admitted to distributing 10,000 euros (\$13,300) himself. The TRNC is not listed separately on Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index.

Freedom of the press is generally respected, though some problems persist. The criminal code allows authorities to jail journalists for what they write, and the government has been hostile to the independent press. The government does not restrict access to the internet.

A 1975 agreement with Greek Cypriot authorities provides for freedom of worship, which is generally respected. The government does not restrict academic freedom. In 2004, Turkish Cypriot schools began teaching a less partisan account of Cypriot history, in accordance with Council of Europe recommendations.

The rights of freedom of assembly and association are typically upheld. Civic groups and nongovernmental organizations generally operate without restrictions. Workers may form independent unions, bargain collectively, and strike, though union members have been subject to harassment. The International Trade Union Confederation and the European Trade Union Confederation condemned the August 2010 arrest of 24 trade unionists while they were demonstrating against austerity and privatization measures.

The judiciary is independent, and trials generally meet international standards of fairness. Turkish Cypriot police, under the control of the Turkish military, sometimes fail to respect due process rights, and there have been allegations of abuse of detainees. Census results released in 2007 showed that about half of the TRNC's population consisted of indigenous Turkish Cypriots. The rest included people of mainland Turkish origin and many foreign workers, as well as Greek Cypriots and Maronites. The latter three groups face discrimination, difficulties at Green Line checkpoints, and alleged surveillance by the Turkish Cypriot authorities. Male homosexuality is punishable with jail time, and while this is rarely enforced, homosexuals do face discrimination.

There are no direct flights between the TRNC and the rest of the world due to Greek Cypriot resistance and international regulations that restrict the operation of the north's ports and airports. However, trade between the two sides of the island has continued to increase since restrictions were loosened in 2004. In addition, all EU citizens, including Greek Cypriots, can now travel to the north by presenting identity cards and no longer require passports or visas. Most governments do not recognize TRNC travel documents, so thousands of Turkish Cypriots have obtained Republic of Cyprus passports since the option became available in 2004. However, in 2008, Turkey began forbidding Turkish Cypriots from leaving the country through Turkey without TRNC passports.

In 2005, the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) ruled that the TRNC must take more effective steps to address the restitution of Greek Cypriots who had owned property in the north before the island's division. In 2006, the Turkish Cypriot authorities formed a property commission to adjudicate complaints. The commission, which the Greek Cypriot government does not recognize, had resolved 202 cases out

of 840 applications by December 2010, although critics claimed that the compensation amounts were far below the value of the property. The standing of the property commission was firmly established in March 2010, when the ECHR recognized it as an adequate authority for the resolution of property disputes between the TRNC and displaced Greek Cypriots. New compensation claims must now be adjudicated by the commission and a local appeals process before they can be appealed to the ECHR. Since the ECHR decision, applications have increased from around 10 per month to up to 36 per month.

Legal provisions for equal pay for women are not always enforced, especially in blue-collar jobs. A 2007 survey found that three-quarters of women were victims of violence at least once in their lives, with most attacks occurring at home. Police have proven unwilling to intervene, and many women choose not to report the crimes. The TRNC is a destination for trafficking in women, and little effort has been made to address this problem.

Pakistani Kashmir

Political Rights: 6

Population: 5,100,000

Civil Liberties: 5

Status: Not Free

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline For Year Under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

2001	2001	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
7,5NF	6,5NF	6,5NF	6,5NF						

Overview: Conditions in Pakistani-administered Kashmir were stable in 2010, although political infighting in Azad Kashmir led to the resignation of the prime minister in July. Nationalist groups' demands for greater autonomy remained unfulfilled, and ongoing talks between India and Pakistan yielded little substantive progress on the Kashmir dispute. The territory continued to suffer from sectarian strife and limits on freedoms of expression and association, among other human rights abuses.

When British India was partitioned into India and Pakistan in 1947, the Hindu maharajah of Jammu and Kashmir tried to maintain his principality's independence, but he eventually ceded it to India in return for autonomy and future self-determination. Within months, India and Pakistan went to war over the territory. Following a UN-brokered ceasefire in 1949, Pakistan refused to withdraw troops from the roughly one-third of Jammu and Kashmir that it had occupied, but unlike India, it never formally annexed its portion. The Karachi Agreement of April 1949 divided Pakistani-administered Kashmir into two distinct entities—Azad (Free) Kashmir and the Northern Areas. Pakistan retained direct administrative control over the Northern Areas, while Azad Kashmir was given a nominal degree of self-government.

A legislative assembly for Azad Kashmir was set up in 1970, and the 1974 interim constitution established a parliamentary system headed by a president and

a prime minister. However, the political process was disrupted for long periods by military rule in Pakistan as a whole. Even when elections were held, Islamabad's influence over the voting and governance in general remained strong, and few observers considered the region's elections to be free or fair. In the 1996 polls, the Azad Kashmir People's Party (AKPP) won a majority in the legislative assembly, after the rival Muslim Conference (MC) party mounted a boycott due to fraud allegations. The MC won the 2001 elections, but within weeks, Pakistani leader General Pervez Musharraf installed his own choice of president. In 2006, the MC again won a majority of the 41 directly elected seats, and MC candidate Raja Zulfikar Khan emerged as president. MC leader Sardar Attique Ahmed Khan became prime minister after receiving Musharraf's nomination, though he was eventually deposed in a 2009 no-confidence vote. The next two prime ministers resigned to avoid no-confidence motions in December 2009 and July 2010, as factional struggles within the ruling MC continued. Raja Farooq Haider, who stepped down as premier in July, alleged that the federal authorities had a hand in destabilizing the Azad Kashmir government. After his resignation, Sardar Ateeq was unanimously elected as the new prime minister.

Meanwhile, in the Northern Areas, the lack of political representation fueled demands for both formal inclusion within Pakistan and self-determination. In 1999, the Pakistani Supreme Court directed the administration to act within six months to give the Northern Areas an elected government with an independent judiciary, and to extend fundamental rights to the region's residents. The Pakistani government then announced a package that provided for an appellate court as well as an expanded and renamed Northern Areas Legislative Council (NALC). Elections to the NALC were held in 2004, but the body had few real fiscal or legislative powers. The court of appeals was established in 2005.

Nationalist and proindependence groups in the Northern Areas continued to agitate for increased political rights, and in 2008, Islamabad began implementing structural reforms that yielded modest improvements while leaving most authority in federal hands. The August 2009 Gilgit-Baltistan Empowerment and Self-Governance Order (GBESGO), which renamed the region and replaced the Northern Areas Legal Framework Order (LFO) of 1994, provided for a somewhat more powerful legislative body, the Gilgit-Baltistan Legislative Assembly (GBLA), with the authority to choose a chief minister and introduce legislation on 61 subjects. While the government argued that the GBESGO established full internal autonomy, nationalist groups noted that a governor appointed by the Pakistani president would still be the ultimate authority and could not be overruled by the new assembly. Moreover, many subjects were excluded from the assembly's purview.

In November 2009 elections for the GBLA, the Pakistan People's Party (PPP), which was the ruling party at the federal level, won 12 of 24 directly elected seats; 10 of the remainder were divided among four other parties and four independents, and voting for 2 seats was postponed. Syed Mehdi Shah, head of the PPP's Gilgit-Baltistan chapter, became the region's chief minister. Doctor and social worker Shama Khalid was appointed as governor in March 2010, but her tenure was cut short in September, when she died of cancer; Wazir Baig, Speaker of the GBLA, served as an acting replacement through year's end.

Despite periodic talks and high-level meetings between India and Pakistan, little

progress has been made toward a comprehensive resolution of the Kashmir dispute. Negotiations resumed in mid-2009, after a breakdown stemming from a November 2008 terrorist attack on the Indian city of Mumbai, and continued during 2010. In July 2010, the Azad Kashmir leadership objected to the exclusion of Kashmiris from the bilateral talks.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: The political rights of the residents of Pakistani-administered Kashmir remain severely limited, despite a number of improvements tied to the end of military rule and the election of a civilian government at the federal level in 2008, and elections for the new GBLA in November 2009. Neither Gilgit-Baltistan nor Azad Kashmir has representation in Pakistan's Parliament.

Gilgit-Baltistan, previously known as the Northern Areas, is still directly administered by the Pakistani government, meaning its status falls short of compliance with a 1999 Supreme Court ruling on the issue. Because the region is not included in the Pakistani constitution and has no constitution of its own, its people have no fundamental guarantee of civil rights, democratic representation, or separation of powers.

Under the August 2009 GBESGO, Gilgit-Baltistan's political structure now includes the 33-member GBLA and a chief minister, as well as a 15-member Gilgit-Baltistan Council (GBC) headed by the Pakistani prime minister and vice-chaired by the federally appointed governor. The GBC consists of six members of the GBLA and nine Pakistani Parliament members appointed by the governor. The GBLA, in turn, is composed of 24 directly elected members, 6 seats reserved for women, and 3 seats reserved for technocrats; the reserved seats are filled through a vote by the elected members. Ultimate authority rests in the hands of the governor, who has significant powers over judicial appointments and whose decisions cannot be overruled by the GBLA. In addition, many financial powers remain with the GBC rather than the elected assembly. A majority of high-level positions in the local administration are reserved under the GBESGO for Pakistani bureaucrats, limiting local involvement in decision making.

No proindependence candidates won seats in the 2009 GBLA elections. Local nationalist leaders accused federal authorities of preventing their parties from holding public gatherings, and of favoring Pakistani parties with funding and other forms of support. The leadership of the Gilgit-Baltistan Democratic Alliance, a nationalist coalition, and three of its candidates were arrested prior to a rally shortly before the elections, and several proindependence leaders boycotted the vote. Although 2 people were killed and some 40 injured in violence between supporters of rival candidates, the elections themselves were largely peaceful, and female voters were able to participate in most areas. Observer missions from the independent Human Rights Commission of Pakistan and the Free and Fair Election Network characterized the elections as competitive, despite procedural flaws including an inaccurate voter list, allegations of rigging and interference, and misuse of state resources to benefit the ruling PPP.

Azad Kashmir has an interim constitution, an elected unicameral assembly, a prime minister, and a president who is elected by the assembly. Both the president and the legislature serve five-year terms. Of the 49 assembly seats, 41 are filled

through direct elections and 8 are reserved seats (5 for women and 1 each for representatives of overseas Kashmiris, technocrats, and religious leaders). However, Pakistan exercises considerable control over the structures of government and electoral politics. Islamabad's approval is required to pass legislation, and the federal minister for Kashmir affairs handles daily administration and controls the budget. The Kashmir Council—composed of federal officials and Kashmiri assembly members (including the Azad Kashmir president and prime minister), and chaired by the president of Pakistan—also holds a number of key executive, legislative, and judicial powers, such as the power to appoint superior judges and the chief election commissioner. The Pakistani military retains a guiding role on issues of politics and governance.

Those who do not support Azad Kashmir's accession to Pakistan are barred from the political process, government employment, and educational institutions. They are also subject to surveillance, harassment, and sometimes imprisonment by Pakistani security services. The 2006 legislative elections in Azad Kashmir were marred by rigging allegations, but unlike the 2001 voting, they featured few instances of physical violence and harassment, possibly because of the greater international presence in the wake of a devastating 2005 earthquake in the region.

Azad Kashmir receives a large amount of financial aid from the Pakistani government, but successive administrations have been tainted by corruption and incompetence. Aid agencies have also been accused of misusing funds. A lack of official accountability has been identified as a key factor in the poor socioeconomic condition of both Azad Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan. However, the region has benefited from improvements in accountability at the federal level and the transfer of some budgetary powers to the GBLA in 2009.

The Pakistani government uses the constitution and other laws to curb freedom of speech on a variety of subjects, including the status of Kashmir and sectarian violence. Media owners cannot publish in Azad Kashmir without permission from the Kashmir Council and the Ministry of Kashmir Affairs, and publications with a proindependence slant are unlikely to receive such permission, according to the U.S. State Department. Several dailies and weeklies operate in Gilgit-Baltistan, mostly under the auspices of the K-2 publishing house, and provide some scrutiny of official affairs. In recent years, authorities have banned a number of local newspapers and detained or otherwise harassed Kashmiri journalists. In addition to official pressure, local journalists have sometimes faced harassment and attacks from nonstate actors. The presence of foreign media and aid organizations has helped to partially open the tightly controlled information environment. In the aftermath of the earthquake, local press freedom organizations set up private radio stations that focus on news and humanitarian information, contributing to greater media diversity. Internet access is not usually restricted but remains confined to urban centers. Telephone and mobile-phone access was long deliberately limited, but has improved since the 2005 earthquake. However, both phone and internet services in Gilgit-Baltistan are under the control of the Pakistani military, which has unfettered powers of surveillance.

Pakistan is an Islamic republic, and there are numerous official restrictions on religious freedom. Religious minorities also face unofficial economic and societal discrimination, and are occasionally subject to violent attack. Sectarian violence has continued between Shiite Muslims, who form a majority in Gilgit-Baltistan,

and the increasing number of Sunni Muslims, who have migrated to the region with the tacit support of federal authorities. An upsurge in attacks in 2009 included the April assassination of a Shiite leader in Gilgit-Baltistan, a September bomb blast in Gilgit that triggered sectarian clashes, and a December suicide bombing at a Shiite religious procession in Azad Kashmir. Another bout of sectarian violence occurred in August 2010 in Gilgit. Many such incidents have allegedly been instigated or encouraged by Pakistani security services.

Academic freedom and opportunities are limited. Local groups continue to call for the right to learn Shiite and Sufi teachings in government-run schools, as well as the right to learn local languages and scripts, both of which are discouraged by the Pakistani authorities. Many areas do not have schools for girls, and in September 2010, the only university in Gilgit-Baltistan was closed due to lack of funds.

Freedoms of association and assembly are restricted. The constitution of Azad Kashmir forbids individuals and political parties from taking part in activities that are prejudicial to the region's accession to Pakistan. Police in recent years have regularly suppressed antigovernment demonstrations, sometimes violently, but there were no reports of deaths or lengthy detentions in 2010. Small protests continue to take place on occasion; workers demonstrated against Chinese construction companies in Skardo in September.

Nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) are generally able to operate freely. Programs run by the Aga Khan Foundation, an international development organization that focuses on members of the Ismaili sect of Shia Islam, have faced harassment and violence by Sunni extremist groups in the past, though no such attacks have been reported in recent years. The situation for labor rights in Pakistani-controlled Kashmir is similar to that in Pakistan, but with even fewer protections for workers. Unions and professional associations have routinely been banned by the authorities.

Under the GBESGO, the chairman of the new GBC appoints Gilgit-Baltistan's chief judge and other judges "on the advice of the governor." All judicial appointments in Gilgit-Baltistan are based on three-year contracts subject to discretionary renewal by the bureaucracy, leaving the judiciary largely subservient to the executive. In addition, the judiciary is not empowered to hear cases concerning fundamental rights or cases against the executive. Meanwhile, as the 1999 Supreme Court ruling has not yet been fully implemented, cases concerning Gilgit-Baltistan are considered outside the jurisdiction of the Supreme Court of Pakistan. In 2009, local judges went on a hunger strike to protest the lack of an independent judiciary in the territory.

Azad Kashmir has its own system of local magistrates and high courts, whose heads are appointed by the president of Azad Kashmir in consultation with the Kashmir Council and prime minister of Pakistan. Appeals are adjudicated by the Supreme Court of Pakistan. There are also Islamic judges who handle criminal cases concerning Islamic law. Disputes over the politicization of judicial appointments remain a concern, according to a detailed 2010 report by the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan. A long-standing dispute over the 2006 appointment of Mohammad Reaz Akhtar Chaudhry as chief justice of the Azad Kashmir Supreme Court culminated in a confrontation between the prime minister and the president in April 2010, when the former attempted to sack Chaudhry for misconduct and appoint his rival, Syed Manzoor Hussain Gillani, to the post. Both men ultimately resigned in May, and senior judge Khwaja Shahad Ahmed was subsequently appointed as acting chief justice.

Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence Directorate reportedly engages in extensive surveillance—particularly of proindependence groups and the press—as well as arbitrary arrests and detentions. In some instances, those detained by the security forces are tortured, and several cases of death in custody have been reported. Impunity for such abuses remains the norm. Under the colonial-era Frontier Crimes Regulations, residents are required to report to local police stations once a month. A large number of Pakistani military personnel are stationed in Gilgit-Baltistan, particularly at times of potential unrest, such as the 2009 elections.

Islamist militant groups, including those backed by the Pakistani military, operate from bases in Pakistani-administered Kashmir. Groups that once focused on attacks in Indian-administered Kashmir are reportedly expanding their influence and activities in Pakistani Kashmir, including the establishment of new religious schools. They have also increased cooperation with militants based in Pakistan's tribal areas, such as the Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP). In Pakistani Kashmir's first suicide attack, a bomber from the tribal areas targeted army barracks in June 2009, killing two soldiers and injuring three; the TTP claimed responsibility. Although the government claimed to have raided and sealed off the Muzaffarabad headquarters of Lashkar-e-Taiba, also known as the Jamaat-ud-Dawa, other reports indicated that the militant group continued to operate training camps in the region. Tension between pro-Pakistan Islamist groups and proindependence Kashmiri groups—as well as some local residents—has reportedly increased in recent years and has led to a rise in attacks against local Shiites.

Several hundred families displaced by shelling between Indian and Pakistani forces prior to a 2003 ceasefire remain unable to return to their homes and have largely been excluded from earthquake-related assistance schemes. An estimated 90 percent of the housing destroyed by the 2005 quake, which killed at least 88,000 people and left several million homeless, had been rebuilt by mid-2009, but reconstruction of education and health facilities has lagged, according to local authorities. The Azad Kashmir government manages camps for refugees from Indian-administered Kashmir, the bulk of whom arrived after the situation on the Indian side worsened in 1989. Many more of the refugees (roughly 1.5 million) live elsewhere in Azad Kashmir and Pakistan.

A bus service linking the capitals of Indian and Pakistani Kashmir was launched in 2005, allowing some civilians to reunite with family members. Since the 1970s, the Pakistani government has encouraged the settlement of Pakistanis in Gilgit-Baltistan in an effort to shift the demographic and ethnic balance in the region. Under the GBESGO, many of these settlers were given formal citizenship rights in Gilgit-Baltistan.

The status of women in Pakistani-administered Kashmir is similar to that of women in Pakistan. While honor killings and rape reportedly occur less frequently than in Pakistan, domestic violence, forced marriage, and other forms of abuse are issues of concern. Women are also at risk of molestation and attack by Pakistani troops, and such attacks often go unpunished. Women are not granted equal rights under the law, and their educational opportunities and choice of marriage partners remain circumscribed. As in some parts of Pakistan, suspected Islamists occasionally mount attacks against NGOs that employ women and on their female employees.

Puerto Rico

Political Rights: 1

Population: 4,000,000

Civil Liberties: 1

Status: Free

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline For Year Under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
1,2F	1,2F	1,2F	1,2F	1,1F	1,1F	1,1F	1,1F	1,1F	1,1F

Overview: In one of the biggest police scandals in Puerto Rico's history, the Federal Bureau of Investigation arrested dozens of police officers for alleged involvement in drug trafficking in October 2010. Also during the year, students and public employees mounted regular protests in response to fiscal austerity measures, and a decision to increase the size of the Supreme Court raised concerns about judicial independence.

Having been captured by U.S. forces during the Spanish-American War in 1898, Puerto Rico acquired the status of a commonwealth of the United States following approval by plebiscite in 1952. As a commonwealth, Puerto Rico exercises approximately the same control over its internal affairs as do the 50 states. Although they are U.S. citizens, residents of Puerto Rico cannot vote in presidential elections and are represented in the U.S. Congress by a delegate to the House of Representatives with limited voting rights.

Power has alternated between the pro-commonwealth Popular Democratic Party (PPD) and the pro-statehood New Progressive Party (PNP) for several decades. Anibal Acevedo-Vila of the PPD won the 2004 gubernatorial election, defeating his PNP opponent by a razor-thin margin. Acevedo-Vila was indicted on corruption charges by a U.S. grand jury in March 2008, but he refused to withdraw his candidacy ahead of the November 2008 elections. The result was a major shift in Puerto Rican politics. PNP gubernatorial candidate Luís Fortuno, who had served as the island's representative in the U.S. Congress, firmly defeated the incumbent, while the PNP secured overwhelming majorities in both chambers of the legislature. Acevedo-Vila was acquitted in March 2009 of violating the island's campaign finance laws, though nine of his associates reached plea agreements with the government, and several testified against the former governor.

Once in office, Fortuno was forced to contend with a fiscal crisis that was exacerbated by the global economic turndown. His moves to raise taxes and cut 30,000 workers from the public payroll triggered a series of trade union protests in 2009. Layoffs continued in 2010, with an additional 17,000 public jobs cut, leading to further protests. From April to June, students mounted a strike at the University of Puerto Rico, closing down 10 of the system's 11 campuses to protest tuition increases and cuts in public spending for higher education. Some violence broke out at the largest campus after police intervened in an effort to halt the protests.

In October, the Federal Bureau of Investigation arrested 133 people, including 89 police officers, for alleged involvement in drug trafficking. Puerto Rico has become

a major transit point for illegal narcotics moving from South America to the eastern United States.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: The commonwealth constitution, modeled after that of the United States, provides for a governor elected for four-year terms and a bicameral legislature, currently consisting of a 27-member Senate and a 51-member House of Representatives, elected for four-year terms. As U.S. citizens, Puerto Ricans are guaranteed all civil liberties granted in the United States.

The commonwealth is represented in the U.S. Congress by a single delegate. In 2007, the U.S. House of Representatives restored limited voting rights to the delegates from Puerto Rico, the District of Columbia, and several other U.S. territories. The change allows Puerto Rico's delegate to vote on floor amendments to legislation, but not on final passage of bills.

The major political parties are the pro-commonwealth PPD, the pro-statehood PNP, and the Puerto Rican Independence Party (PIP). For years, Puerto Ricans have been nearly equally divided between those who support the continuation of commonwealth status and those who favor full U.S. statehood. Commonwealth supporters argue that the special status allows the island to maintain its separate culture and an exemption from federal income taxes, while advocates of statehood seek presidential voting rights and full representation in Congress. A third option, independence, has little popular support; the PIP candidate for governor received just 2 percent of the popular vote in 2008.

Corruption is an endemic problem in Puerto Rican politics. A number of leading political figures have been indicted in recent years on various corruption charges. Puerto Rico was ranked 33 out of 178 polities surveyed in Transparency International's 2010 Corruption Perceptions Index.

Puerto Rico's tradition of varied and vigorous news media has been under strain due to a decline in newspapers stemming from the economic crisis and other factors. Freedom of religion is guaranteed in this predominantly Roman Catholic territory. A substantial number of Evangelical churches have been established on the island in recent years. Academic freedom is guaranteed.

Freedom of assembly is protected by law, and Puerto Ricans frequently mount protests against local or federal government policies. There is a robust civil society, with numerous nongovernmental organizations representing the interests of different constituencies. The government respects trade union rights, and unions are generally free to organize and strike.

The legal system is based on U.S. law, and the island's Supreme Court heads an independent judiciary. However, concerns about politicization at the Supreme Court emerged in November 2010, when the four justices appointed by current governor

Luís Fortuño approved a resolution asking the legislature to expand the court from seven to nine members, ostensibly to deal with a heavy caseload. The three-justice minority dissented, arguing that the expansion was unnecessary and approved without sufficient debate. The legislature quickly passed the measure, and Fortuño was expected to appoint the two new justices in 2011, giving his picks an overwhelming majority on the court, potentially for many years to come.

Crime is a serious problem. The murder rate is three times that of the United

States, with a large proportion of drug-related homicides. The center of the narcotics trade has shifted from San Juan to smaller communities, leaving housing projects in some towns under virtual siege by drug gangs.

In recent years, there has been an upsurge in attempts by illegal migrants from various Caribbean countries to reach Puerto Rico, often in flimsy boats. Many are brought to the island by smugglers. Identity theft and immigration fraud are endemic in Puerto Rico. In March 2009, an identity theft ring stole the personal data of over 7,000 Puerto Rican schoolchildren and sold them to illegal immigrants in the United States. Following this incident, the Puerto Rican government, with the help of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, issued new birth certificates and identification cards with enhanced security features.

Women enjoy equal rights under the law in education, at the workplace, and in other aspects of society. However, women's rights organizations maintain that women are still subject to widespread discrimination in practice.

Somaliland

Political Rights: 4*

Population: 3,500,000

Civil Liberties: 5

Status: Partly Free

Ratings Change: Somaliland's political rights rating improved from 5 to 4 due to the successful conduct of a long-delayed presidential election and the peaceful transfer of power from the incumbent to his leading rival.

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline For Year Under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)



Overview: In a long-delayed presidential election in June 2010, incumbent Dahir Riyale Kahin lost to his leading challenger, Ahmed Mohamed Mahamoud "Silanyo," and power was transferred peacefully to the new president. International observers declared the balloting a success, but overdue legislative elections were postponed once more.

The modern state of Somalia was formed in 1960, when the newly independent protectorates of British Somaliland and Italian Somaliland agreed to unite. In 1969, General Siad Barre took power, ushering in a violent era of clan rivalries and political repression. Barre was deposed in early 1991, triggering a fight for control between armed militias divided along clan lines. The current Somaliland, largely conforming to the borders of the former British Somaliland in the northwestern corner of the country, took advantage of Somalia's political chaos and declared independence later that year.

In a series of clan conferences, Somaliland's leaders formed a government system combining democratic elements, including a parliament, with traditional political

structures, such as an upper house consisting of clan elders. The first two presidents were appointed by clan elders. In 2003, Dahir Riyale Kahin became Somaliland's first elected president; although he won by less than 100 votes, the runner-up accepted the outcome. Direct elections for members of the lower house of parliament were held for the first time in 2005. The president's United People's Democratic Party (UDUB) won the most seats, with the Peace, Unity, and Development Party (Kulmiye) and the Justice and Development Party (UCID) following close behind. While the 2003 and 2005 elections did not meet international standards, there were no reports of widespread intimidation or fraud.

In 2006, Riyale violated the constitution by postponing elections for the upper house and extending its term by four years. His decision set a precedent for other constitutional breaches. Local and presidential elections were repeatedly delayed, provoking a political crisis that lasted until 2010.

At the heart of the dispute was a failure to compile an electoral roll that was acceptable to all sides. The process was mishandled by the National Electoral Commission (NEC) and plagued by fraud. Registration was almost derailed by coordinated suicide bombings in Somaliland's capital, Hargeisa, in 2008, which killed at least 23 people. Somaliland officials blamed the Shabaab (Arabic for "the youth"), the Islamist militant group that controlled much of central and southern Somalia.

The presidential election was postponed twice more in 2009. An opposition motion to impeach the president led to brawls in the parliament as well as street protests. The police responded to the protests with live ammunition, killing four people.

A transitional agreement was eventually reached between the parties, clearing the way for the presidential election to take place. After several more delays, the poll was finally held in June 2010. Kulmiye leader Ahmed Mohamed Mahmoud "Silanyo" won just under 50 percent of the vote, easily defeating Riyale, who took 33 percent. Turnout among the roughly one million eligible voters was about 50 percent, having been affected by the nonparticipation of some residents living in Sool and Sanaag, a disputed area on the border with Somalia's semiautonomous region of Puntland. Monitors from Europe and the United States identified some irregularities but declared the vote to have been free and fair. Silanyo was sworn into office in July. While the presidential election was a success, the long-overdue legislative elections were postponed again in September.

Poverty is rife in Somaliland, and the government struggles to provide basic goods and services to the population. Conditions are exacerbated by the limited access to foreign assistance and international loans that stems from the territory's lack of diplomatic recognition as an independent state, though the successful presidential election was expected to strengthen Somaliland's campaign for recognition.

Political Rights

and Civil Liberties:

According to Somaliland's constitution, the president is directly elected for a maximum of two five-year terms and appoints the cabinet. The presidential election of June 2010, originally scheduled for 2008, resulted in the smooth transfer of power from the UDUB party to the main opposition group, Kulmiye. While the outcome was peaceful, the campaign was conducted amid considerable political tension. The opposition accused incumbent Dahir Riyale Kahin of using public money to fund his campaign. There were also some outbreaks of violence. The Shabaab threatened to stop the vote, and

in June, Somaliland's police claimed to have disrupted a terrorist plot in the city of Burco. In addition, militia groups supporting Puntland's claims to Sool and Sanaag attacked polling stations, killing four people. Fake voting cards were found to be in circulation on election day, and there were some reports of underage voting and ballot box stuffing. The NEC made credible efforts to address most complaints. Domestic and foreign election monitors found that the vote generally met international standards and that its outcome reflected the will of the people.

Members of Somaliland's 82-seat lower house of parliament are directly elected for five-year terms, while members of the 82-seat upper house (Guurti) are indirectly elected by local communities for six-year terms. Both houses extended their terms in September 2010, arguing that Somaliland could not organize another election so soon after the presidential poll. The Guurti voted to increase its term by another three years, having originally been due for elections in 2006. The House of Representatives, whose elected term was to expire in December 2010, gave itself an extension of two years and eight months. Both decisions were made with the apparent blessing of the new president, Ahmed Mohamed Mahmoud "Silanyo."

Somaliland's constitution allows for a maximum of three political parties, and parties defined by region or clan are technically prohibited. Nevertheless, party and clan affiliations tend to coincide.

Corruption in Somaliland is a serious problem. There were persistent accusations that Riyale's government improperly diverted millions of dollars in public funds. Upon taking office, Silanyo set up a good governance and anticorruption commission with a mandate to tackle the corruption problem.

While freedoms of expression and the press are guaranteed by Somaliland's constitution, journalists face interference and harassment. Three reporters were arrested in June 2010 for taking photographs of a house displaying the Kulmiye party flag; they were released without charge later that month. Riyale's government displayed little tolerance of independent media and banned private broadcasters from operating inside Somaliland. The new administration followed suit. In October, the satellite broadcaster Universal TV, which operates from Britain, had its license suspended. It had been accused of favoring the interests of Puntland. The main radio station is the government-run Radio Hargeisa. There are seven private daily newspapers in Somaliland in addition to the state-owned *Mandeeq*, though they have limited circulations. While Somaliland has a small number of online news sites, they have limited reach within the territory because of low internet penetration.

Nearly all Somaliland residents are Sunni Muslims, and Islam is the state religion. Proselytizing by members of other faiths is prohibited. Academic freedom in Somaliland is greater than in neighboring Somalia. The territory has at least 10 universities and colleges of higher learning, although none are adequately resourced.

Freedom of association is constitutionally guaranteed, and both international and local nongovernmental organizations operate without serious interference. However, the country's political crisis and precarious security situation was used as a justification to ban public demonstrations in 2009. While restrictions were eased in 2010, police used heavy-handed tactics against protesters in Hargeisa and Borama shortly after the new government took office in July. The UDUB opposition accused police of firing live ammunition into a crowd of demonstrators, though there were no reports of injuries.

According to the constitution, the judiciary is independent, and the laws cannot violate the principles of Sharia (Islamic law). In practice, the Riyale government bypassed the courts and used secret security committees to try many defendants without due process. A report compiled for the House of Representatives in March 2010 revealed that of the 765 inmates at Somaliland's main prison, 300 had not been charged with any offense but were being detained on the orders of the authorities. Upon taking office, Silanyo pledged to uphold the rule of law and implemented reforms at the Ministry of Justice to reduce executive interference in the judiciary. A pledge to release all prisoners who had not been charged with a crime, apart from those suspected of terrorism or theft, had not been fulfilled by year's end.

The judiciary is underfunded, and the Supreme Court is ineffective. Somaliland has approximately 100 judges, most of whom do not have formal legal training. Somaliland's police and security forces, while more professional than those in Somalia, have at times used excessive force.

Societal fault lines are largely based on clan. Larger, wealthier clans have more political clout than the less prominent groups, and clan elders often intervene to settle conflicts.

While society in Somaliland is patriarchal, women have made modest advances in public life. Silanyo appointed 2 women to his 20-member cabinet in July 2010. As in the rest of Somalia, female genital mutilation is practiced on the vast majority of women.

South Ossetia

Political Rights: 7

Population: 70,000

Civil Liberties: 6

Status: Not Free

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline For Year Under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
							7,6NF	7,6NF	7,6NF

Overview: South Ossetian president Eduard Kokoity faced criticism in 2010 from both Moscow and residents of Tskhinvali, the territory's capital, due to the slow pace of reconstruction and accusations of corruption since the 2008 war between Georgia and Russia. In April, Kokoity loyalists charged Moscow-backed South Ossetian prime minister Vadim Brovtsev with embezzlement, leading Russian prime minister Vladimir Putin to intervene and defend Brovtsev in late May. Meanwhile, Russia continued to strengthen its grip on the territory throughout the year.

South Ossetia first declared its independence from Georgia in 1920, igniting a war that left thousands dead. Both Georgia and South Ossetia were incorporated into the Soviet Union in 1922, with South Ossetia designated an autonomous oblast (region) within Georgia.

As Georgian nationalism grew toward the end of the Soviet era, a South Ossetian independence movement demanded in 1989 that the oblast be upgraded to a republic, a move that was rejected by the Georgian government. South Ossetia declared full independence from Georgia in 1990, prompting Tbilisi to abolish its autonomous status. Fierce fighting broke out in January 1991, resulting in a thousand deaths and civilian displacement on both sides; some 40,000 to 100,000 Ossetians fled to North Ossetia in Soviet Russia. In March 1991, a reported 99 percent of South Ossetian referendum voters endorsed independence, and 90 percent voted in favor of seeking to join Russia in a January 1992 referendum, after the final dissolution of the Soviet Union. Both plebiscites were rejected by Tbilisi.

In June 1992, a ceasefire agreement established a Russian-led peacekeeping force, and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) was put in charge of monitoring the ceasefire and facilitating negotiations on a permanent resolution of the conflict.

Torez Kulumbegov led separatist South Ossetia from 1992 to 1993. He was succeeded by Lyudvig Chibirov, who went on to win the newly created post of president in 1996. After a period of relatively cordial relations with Tbilisi, the 2001 election of hard-liner Eduard Kokoity as president of South Ossetia renewed tensions. His Unity Party took the majority of seats in 2004 parliamentary elections; though four seats were reserved for the territory's ethnic Georgian population, only five separatist regime's elections went unrecognized by Georgia and the international community.

In May 2004, recently elected Georgian president Mikheil Saakashvili ordered a campaign to dismantle the multimillion-dollar smuggling operation controlled by Kokoity's regime, triggering skirmishes and causing Ossetians to rally around Kokoity. By August 19, the two sides had agreed to a ceasefire, and in September, Saakashvili offered a proposal for expanded South Ossetian autonomy, which was rejected by Tskhinvali.

South Ossetia held a joint referendum and presidential election in November 2006, with 99.8 percent of voters on Ossetian-controlled territory reaffirming the bid for independence, according to Tskhinvali. Kokoity, who faced no genuine opposition, was reelected with a reported 98.1 percent of the vote. On the same day, Tbilisi organized a similarly lopsided election and referendum in South Ossetia's Georgian-controlled areas, but the resulting pro-Georgian government was never able to draw significant support away from separatist institutions.

Following weeks of skirmishes along the border, Tbilisi launched an attack on Tskhinvali on August 7, 2008. Russia immediately retaliated by sending troops into South Ossetia, pushing back Georgian forces. Russia then expanded the zone of conflict by invading Georgia via Abkhazia—another breakaway Georgian territory in the northwest—and by blocking Georgian ports and bombing Georgian towns from the air.

Both sides had signed a French-brokered ceasefire pact by August 16, and Russia eventually withdrew its troops to the confines of South Ossetia and Abkhazia. However, separatist forces retained portions of the territories that were previously controlled by Tbilisi. Moscow, defying international criticism, formally recognized South Ossetia and Abkhazia as independent states on August 26 and subsequently concluded bilateral security agreements with the separatist governments.

Russia continued to tighten its grip on South Ossetia during 2009. In addition to the construction of new Russian military facilities in the territory, an agreement signed between Moscow and Tskhinvali in April established a formal and permanent role for the Russian border guards who had patrolled the de facto border since 2008.

In May 2009, South Ossetia held parliamentary elections that resulted in a legislature dominated by Kokoity loyalists. The victory came amid accusations that Kokoity had shut out and threatened opposition parties.

Despite infusions of Russian aid, the postwar reconstruction process remained painfully slow in 2009 and 2010, and many Ossetians accused Kokoity of embezzlement. In December 2009, Russian officials released a report finding that only a fraction of the aid to Tskhinvali had been used for its intended purposes.

Tskhinvali residents and unpaid workers mounted several protests over the reconstruction issue in 2010. In response to the growing criticism, officials loyal to Kokoity brought criminal embezzlement charges in April against South Ossetian prime minister Vadim Brovtsev, a Russian businessman who had allegedly been selected for the post by Moscow to oversee the reconstruction funds. A series of tit-for-tat accusations between the two factions raised concerns of a major political crisis, and in late May, Russian prime minister Vladimir Putin intervened, reportedly pressuring Kokoity to end his campaign against Brovtsev. In August, Russian prosecutors opened 11 of their own criminal embezzlement investigations. In addition to its political interests, Russia had a strong incentive to protect the territory's finances, as it reportedly supplied 98 percent of South Ossetia's budget.

As of the end of 2010, only Nicaragua, Venezuela, and Nauru had joined Russia in recognizing the independence of South Ossetia.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Under the separatist constitution, the president and the 33-seat parliament are elected for five-year terms. South Ossetian elections are not monitored by independent observers or recognized by the international community. Most ethnic Georgians have either declined to or been unable to participate in such elections. During the May 2009 parliamentary elections, opposition parties reported significant violations, including mishandling of ballot boxes, restrictions on observer access to polling stations, and alleged coercion of voters in favor of President Eduard Kokoity's supporters. Opposition representation in the new parliament was also reduced as a result of election laws enacted in 2008, which set a 7 percent vote threshold for parties to enter the parliament and required all lawmakers to be elected by proportional representation.

Russia exerts a dominant influence on South Ossetian politics, and its degree of control increased substantially after the 2008 war. In October 2008, Kokoity dismissed his cabinet and replaced most ministers with officials from Russia. Russian businessman Vadim Brovtsev was appointed as prime minister in August 2009, reportedly under pressure from Moscow, and Russian intervention in May 2010 apparently thwarted Kokoity's alleged attempts to oust him.

In July 2010, Colonel Valery Yakhnovets, a Russian officer, was appointed as South Ossetia's defense minister, becoming the fifth consecutive Russian military officer to hold the post. At the time of his appointment, the South Ossetian armed forces consisted of about 1,250 men, having been reduced by some 1,000 since the spring.

Corruption is believed to be extensive. In 2010, Kokoity's administration faced pressure from Russia and the public to curb the alleged embezzlement of funds earmarked for postwar reconstruction. Before the war, the territory reportedly hosted extensive smuggling and black-market activities, including the counterfeiting of U.S. currency.

South Ossetia's electronic and print media are entirely controlled by separatist authorities, and private broadcasts are prohibited. However, power struggles between Kokoity loyalists and Moscow appear to have provided an opportunity for some journalists to publicly criticize Kokoity on such issues as corruption. In June 2010, South Ossetian opposition journalist Fatima Margiyeva received a suspended two-year prison sentence for illegal weapons possession in a case that was widely seen as retaliation for her critical reporting on Kokoity. In July, Timur Tskhovrebov, editor of the independent newspaper *21st Century*, was attacked by 10 assailants, allegedly including three members of the South Ossetian parliament, after he signed a joint appeal with Georgian activists calling for improvements in the humanitarian situation in the territory.

The South Ossetian Orthodox Church, which falls under the jurisdiction of the Greek Orthodox Church and which the Georgian and Russian Orthodox Churches do not recognize, continues to operate freely, according to the religious monitoring group Forum 18. While the majority of the population is Orthodox, there is a sizeable Muslim community, many members of which migrated from the North Caucasus. The educational system reflects government views, and many South Ossetians receive higher education in Russia.

While antigovernment protests were extremely rare before the 2008 war, opposition groups mounted demonstrations following the flawed 2009 elections, and Tskhinvali residents protested repeatedly in 2009 and 2010 in response to the slow construction of new homes and charges of government corruption. Several nongovernmental organizations operate in South Ossetia, but at least one that claims to be independent has been linked to the government, and all organizations operate under the close scrutiny of the authorities.

South Ossetia's criminal code adheres to the Soviet Georgian and 1996 Russian models. The justice system has been manipulated to punish perceived opponents of the separatist leadership, while government allies allegedly violate the law with relative impunity. It was unclear in 2010 whether Russian prosecutors' steps to curb malfeasance would be effective, as the Russian court system itself remains deeply flawed.

Indiscriminate attacks by both sides in the 2008 war killed and displaced civilians, and Ossetian forces seized or razed property in previously Georgian-controlled villages. According to an August 2010 Amnesty International report, about 26,000 people, most of them ethnic Georgians, remained displaced from their homes in and around South Ossetia.

South Ossetian authorities have barred ethnic Georgians from returning to the territory unless they renounce their Georgian citizenship and accept Russian passports. A UN envoy reported in August 2009 that South Ossetia's tiny remaining ethnic Georgian population had complained of being pressured to accept Russian passports and vote in the May parliamentary elections under threat of expulsion. In September 2010, Kokoity announced plans to issue new passports, birth certificates,

and other documents to all residents of South Ossetia by June 2011. Russian authorities have prevented ethnic Ossetians from entering Georgia, but travel to Russia is unimpeded.

Tibet

Political Rights: 7

Civil Liberties: 7

Status: Not Free

Population: 3,000,000 [Note: This figure from China's 2010 census covers only the Tibet Autonomous Region. Areas of eastern Tibet that were incorporated into neighboring Chinese provinces are also assessed in the report below.]

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline For Year Under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
7/7NF									

Overview: The atmosphere of tight security established in 2008 generally remained in place in 2010. Repression intensified in March ahead of the anniversary of the Dalai Lama's 1959 flight from Tibet. During the year, the list of those facing detention expanded beyond the monastic and activist communities to include intellectual, cultural, and business figures, some of whom had previously been favored by the Chinese government.

The Tibetan plateau, or substantial parts of it, was ruled by a Dalai Lama or his government from the mid-17th century onward. Chinese Communist forces entered Tibet in 1950 and defeated the Tibetan army. The region was formally incorporated into the People's Republic of China the following year. In 1959, Chinese troops suppressed a major uprising in Lhasa, reportedly killing tens of thousands of people. Tibet's spiritual and political leader—the 14th Dalai Lama, Tenzin Gyatso—was forced to flee to India with some 80,000 supporters. During the next six years, China closed 97 percent of the region's Buddhist monasteries and defrocked about 100,000 monks and nuns. Most Tibetan territory was reorganized as the Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR) in 1965, but some eastern portions of the Tibetan plateau were included in separate Chinese provinces. During the Chinese Cultural Revolution (1966-76), nearly all of Tibet's estimated 6,200 monasteries were destroyed.

Under reforms introduced in 1980, limited religious practice was allowed again, and tourism was permitted in certain areas. Between 1987 and 1989, some 200 mostly peaceful demonstrations were mounted in Lhasa and surrounding areas. After the antigovernment protests escalated in March 1989, martial law was imposed; it was not lifted until May 1990.

In the 1990s, Beijing reinvigorated its efforts to control religious affairs and undermine the exiled Dalai Lama's authority. Six-year-old Gendun Choekyi Nyima was detained by the authorities in 1995, and his selection by the Dalai Lama as the 11th Panchen Lama was rejected; he subsequently disappeared from public view, and Beijing orchestrated the selection of another six-year-old boy as the Panchen

Lama. Since one of the roles of the Panchen Lama is to identify the reincarnated Dalai Lama, the move was widely seen as a bid to control the eventual selection of the 15th Dalai Lama.

China hosted envoys of the Dalai Lama in 2002, marking the first formal contact since 1993. The Tibetan government-in-exile sought to begin talks on genuine autonomy for Tibet, particularly to ensure the survival of its Buddhist culture, but no progress was made during subsequent rounds of dialogue, and the Chinese side said repeatedly that it would only discuss the return of the Dalai Lama and not broader conditions in Tibet. Meanwhile, other Tibetan exile groups increasingly demanded independence.

Under Zhang Qingli, who was appointed as secretary of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) in the TAR in 2005, the authorities amplified their repressive policies. To protest religious restrictions and arrests, a group of 300 monks conducted a peaceful march in Lhasa on March 10, 2008, the 49th anniversary of the 1959 uprising; security agents suppressed the march. A riot erupted four days later, with some Tibetans attacking ethnic Chinese and burning Chinese- or Hui-owned businesses and government offices. The authorities reported that 19 people were killed, primarily in fires. Over 150 other protests, most of them reportedly peaceful, soon broke out in Tibetan-populated areas of the TAR and other provinces. The government responded with a massive deployment of armed forces and barred entry to foreign journalists and tourists. The Chinese authorities admitted to the death of three Tibetan protesters in Lhasa, but overseas Tibetan groups claimed that between 100 and 218 Tibetans were killed as security forces suppressed the demonstrations.

Although the region was accessible to tourists and journalists under special conditions for parts of 2009 and 2010, the high level of repression established in 2008 was generally maintained. Security measures were especially tight surrounding politically sensitive dates, such as the March anniversary of the 1959 uprising and 2008 events. As part of a "strike hard" campaign in March 2010, uniformed and plainclothes police rigorously checked residential permits in Lhasa, searched hotels and private homes, and detained approximately 400 Tibetans.

In April 2010, a powerful earthquake struck Tibetan areas of Qinghai Province, leaving over 2,000 people dead and 10,000 injured, according to official figures. Chinese security forces and civilian organizations assisted in rescue efforts, but the government ordered a large number of Tibetan monks who provided extensive help to locals, particularly in handling the bodies of the dead, to leave the area, and generally denied official recognition for their work. The government rejected the Dalai Lama's request to visit the region to console victims and perform burial rites.

Talks between the government and representatives of the Dalai Lama, which had last taken place in November 2008, resumed in 2010, but neither side reported any substantive progress. President Hu Jintao in January touted the government's existing, deeply unpopular religious and economic policies in Tibet, and both state-run media and "patriotic education" campaigns continued to vilify the Dalai Lama during the year. Beijing also pursued an increasingly aggressive and often effective policy of pressuring foreign leaders to refrain from meeting with the Dalai Lama and publicly express support for the official Chinese position on Tibet.

The government's economic development programs have disproportionately benefited ethnic Chinese and a select category of Tibetans, such as businessmen or

government employees. Most other Tibetans cannot take advantage of economic development and related opportunities for higher education and employment. The development activity has also increased Chinese migration to the region and stoked Tibetan fears of cultural assimilation.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: The Chinese government rules Tibet through administration of the TAR and 12 Tibetan autonomous prefectures or counties in the nearby provinces of Sichuan, Qinghai, Gansu, and Yunnan. Under the Chinese constitution, autonomous areas have the right to formulate their own regulations and implement national legislation in accordance with local conditions. In practice, decision-making power is concentrated in the hands of senior CCP officials; in the case of the TAR, Zhang Qingli, an ethnic Chinese, has served as the region's CCP secretary since 2005. The few Tibetans who occupy senior positions serve mostly as figureheads, often echoing official statements that condemn the Dalai Lama and emphasize Beijing's role in developing Tibet's economy. In January 2010, Padma Thrinley (named "Pema Choling" in the Chinese press), a Tibetan, was appointed to replace Jampa Phuntsog as chairman of the TAR government.

Since 1960, the Dalai Lama has overseen the partial democratization of the government-in-exile in Dharamsala, India. Current institutions include a popularly elected Assembly of Tibetan People's Deputies, a Supreme Judicial Commission that adjudicates civil disputes, and—since 2001—a directly elected prime minister. Buddhist scholar and lama Samdhong Rinpoche was chosen as prime minister in 2001 and reelected in 2006. The electorate consisted of Tibetans living in India, Nepal, the United States, and Europe; an estimated 100,000 are eligible to vote, but voter turnout was reportedly about 30 percent. Observers have noted that such arrangements fall short of a fully democratic system due to the absence of political parties and the ongoing role of the unelected Dalai Lama in decision making. In November 2010, the Dalai Lama hinted he may retire from his political responsibilities within a year, though a significant number in the exile community have resisted such proposals in the past.

Corruption is believed to be extensive in Tibet, as in the rest of China. Nevertheless, little information was available during the year on the scale of the problem or official measures to combat it. Tagyal, a Tibetan intellectual, was detained in April 2010 and held for six months after he signed an open letter warning residents not to donate earthquake relief funds through government channels due to corruption concerns.

Chinese authorities control the flow of information in Tibet, tightly restricting all media. International broadcasts are jammed. Increased internet penetration in urban areas has provided educated residents with more access to information, but the online restrictions and internet cafe surveillance in place across China are enforced even more stringently in the TAR. Security forces periodically confiscate communications devices from monasteries and private homes, and routinely monitor calls in and out of the region. Tibetans who transmit information abroad often suffer repercussions including long prison sentences, while some internet users have been arrested solely for accessing banned information. During 2010, the list of targets for detention expanded beyond the monastic and activist communities to include intellectuals and cultural figures, some of whom were previously favored by the Chi-

nese government. In one prominent example, environmentalist and art dealer Karma Samdrup was sentenced in June to 15 years in prison on tomb-raiding charges. The case was widely seen as a trumped-up attempt to punish him for trying to free his brothers, who had been detained after starting an environmental protection group in their village and accusing local officials of poaching. According to overseas Tibetan groups, over 60 Tibetan writers, intellectuals, and cultural figures have been arrested since 2008, with some sentenced to lengthy prison terms. In December 2010, three Tibetan writers were sentenced to between three and four years in prison on charges of "inciting subversion," having published articles about the protests of March 2008 in a Tibetan-language magazine, *Shar Dugri*.

Authorities continued to restrict access to the TAR for foreign journalists in 2010, though restrictions in eastern Tibetan areas were not as tight. Foreign reporters were denied entry around politically sensitive dates and high-profile events like the April 2010 earthquake in Qinghai. During other periods, they were required to travel in groups and obtain prior official permission; Tibet was the only area of China to require such special authorization. Residents who assisted foreign journalists were reportedly harassed.

The authorities regularly suppress religious activities, particularly those seen as forms of political dissent or advocacy of Tibetan independence. Possession of Dalai Lama-related materials can lead to official harassment and punishment, though many Tibetans secretly possess such items. CCP members, government employees, and their family members are not allowed to practice Buddhism, at least within the TAR. The Religious Affairs Bureaus (RABs) control who can study religion in monasteries and nunneries; officials allow only men and women over the age of 18 to become monks and nuns, and they are required to sign a declaration rejecting Tibetan independence, expressing loyalty to the Chinese government, and denouncing the Dalai Lama. Regulations announced in 2007 require government approval for the religious recognition and education of reincarnated Buddhist clergy. In March 2010, the Beijing-selected Panchen Lama joined the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, an advisory body closely linked to the CCP. The government manages the daily operations of monasteries through Democratic Management Committees (DMCs) and the RABs. Only monks and nuns deemed loyal to the CCP may lead DMCs, and laypeople have also been appointed to these committees.

Since March 2008, the authorities have intensified ideological education campaigns that had been conducted sporadically since 1996 and began to escalate after Zhang Qingli's appointment in 2005. These campaigns have occasionally been extended beyond monasteries to reach Tibet's general population, forcing students, civil servants, farmers, and merchants to recognize the CCP claim that China "liberated" Tibet and to denounce the Dalai Lama. Monks and nuns who refuse face expulsion from their religious institutions, while others risk loss of employment or arrest. In January 2010, the state-run Buddhist association announced measures to reregister monks and nuns, raising concerns that the process would be used to weed out disloyal clergy; little information was available about the implementation of the measures as of year's end.

University professors cannot lecture on certain topics, and many must attend political indoctrination sessions. The government restricts course materials to prevent the circulation of unofficial versions of Tibetan history.

Freedoms of assembly and association are severely restricted in practice. Independent trade unions and human rights groups are illegal, and even nonviolent protests are often harshly punished. In May 2010, a crackdown on protests in Xiahe County against the expansion of a cement factory left 15 Tibetans injured. In August, police in Baiyu County, Sichuan Province, opened fire on people protesting extensive gold-mining operations, killing at least 1 and reportedly wounding 30. Nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) focused on development and health care operate under highly restrictive agreements.

Despite the risks, Tibetans continue to seek avenues for peacefully expressing dissatisfaction with government policies. In the largest protests since 2008, hundreds of students in Qinghai demonstrated against the establishment of Mandarin as the primary language of instruction in October 2010. The authorities responded by increasing the security presence around high schools and colleges, but they reportedly did not use violence to punish demonstrators.

The judicial system in Tibet remains abysmal, and torture is reportedly widespread. Defendants lack access to meaningful legal representation. Trials are closed if state security is invoked, and sometimes even when no political crime is listed. Chinese lawyers who offer to defend Tibetan suspects have been harassed or disbarred. Security forces routinely engage in detention without due process. Periodic waves of arbitrary arrests continued in 2010, though not on the same scale as in 2008. Though precise figures were unavailable, a partial list of political prisoners published by the U.S. Congressional-Executive Commission on China included 824 Tibetans as of September 2010, the vast majority of whom were arrested on or after March 10, 2008.

Heightened restrictions on freedom of movement—including troop deployments, roadblocks, and passport restrictions—were employed sporadically during 2010, particularly surrounding politically sensitive anniversaries. Increased security efforts kept the number of Tibetans who successfully crossed the border into Nepal at around 800 during the year, compared with over 2,000 in 2007. In the first incident of its kind since 2003, the Nepalese authorities in June 2010 repatriated three Tibetan refugees to China, where they were immediately detained.

As members of an officially recognized minority group, Tibetans receive preferential treatment in university admission examinations, but this is often not enough to secure entrance. The dominant role of the Chinese language in education and employment limits opportunities for many Tibetans. Private sector employers favor ethnic Chinese for many jobs, especially in urban areas. Tibetans reportedly find it more difficult than Chinese residents to obtain permits and loans to open businesses. Since 2003, the authorities have intensified efforts to resettle rural Tibetans—either by force or with inducements—in permanent housing areas with little economic infrastructure. According to official reports, over 300,000 farmers and herders have been resettled since 2008, both within the TAR and in surrounding provinces. Many have reportedly tried to return to their previous lands, risking conflict with officials if they are discovered.

China's restrictive family planning policies are more leniently enforced for Tibetans and other ethnic minorities than for ethnic Chinese. Officials limit urban Tibetans to having two children and encourage—but do not usually require—rural Tibetans to stop at three children.

Transnistria

Political Rights: 6

Population: 523,000

Civil Liberties: 6

Status: Not Free

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline For Year Under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
6,6NF									

Overview: Multilateral negotiations on Transnistria's status remained stalled in 2010, as Russia continued to defend its troop presence in the region, and the Moldovan central government was mired in a constitutional crisis after inconclusive 2009 elections. Also during the year, the Transnistrian authorities imprisoned an independent journalist on espionage charges and temporarily detained a number of Moldovans who entered the territory. In elections for the Transnistrian parliament in December, the pro-Russian Obnovleniye (Renéwal) party retained its majority.

The Pridnestrovskaya Moldavskaya Respublika (PMR), bounded by the Dniester River to the west and the Ukrainian border to the east, is a breakaway region in eastern Moldova with a large population of ethnic Russians and ethnic Ukrainians. In the rest of Moldova, where the dominant language is nearly identical to Romanian, the separatist region is commonly known as Transnistria. It was attached to the territory that became Moldova when the borders were redrawn under Soviet leader Joséph Stalin in 1940. As the Soviet Union began to collapse in 1990, pro-Russian separatists in Transnistria, fearing that Moldova would unite with neighboring Romania, declared independence from Moldova and established the PMR under an authoritarian presidential system.

With weapons and other assistance from the Russian army, the PMR fought a military conflict with Moldova that ended with a 1992 ceasefire. A new Moldovan constitution in 1994 gave the territory substantial autonomy, but the conflict remained unresolved, and the separatist regime maintained a de facto independence that was not recognized internationally. The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), Russia, and Ukraine have attempted to mediate a final settlement between Moldova and the PMR. In 2005, the United States and the European Union (EU) were invited to join the negotiations as observers, creating the so-called 5+2 format.

The latest round of formal multilateral talks collapsed in early 2006. In the absence of active 5+2 negotiations, Moldovan president Vladimir Voronin pursued bilateral talks with Russia and took a number of steps to bring Moldova's foreign policy into line with the Kremlin's. In March 2009, Russian president Dmitri Medvedev hosted Voronin and PMR president Igor Smirnov in Russia, and together they signed the so-called Moscow Declaration, which called for Russian troops in Transnistria to be replaced by an OSCE peacekeeping mission, but only after a political settlement had been reached. Critics of the document said it amounted to a Moldovan acceptance

of the Russian troop presence, and argued that Russia could use its leverage with the PMR to delay a political settlement indefinitely.

An opposition victory in Moldovan national elections in July 2009 drove Voronin and his Communist Party from power, but the new government did not have the parliamentary supermajority needed to elect a president, and the country remained in a constitutional crisis for much of 2010. Meanwhile, Medvedev and newly elected Ukrainian president Viktor Yanukovich signed a joint statement in May 2010 that seemed to envision a continued Russian troop presence in Transnistria even after a political settlement had been reached. Under Yanukovich's predecessor, Ukraine—with EU assistance—had imposed tighter customs controls along its border with Transnistria and the rest of Moldova, and the EU mission was extended by two years at the end of 2009. Transnistria's economy relies heavily on smuggling.

In another sign of the Kremlin's determination to maintain a foothold in the country, Russia imposed a ban on Moldovan wine imports after acting Moldovan president Mihai Ghimpu issued a decree in June 2010 that directly called on Russia to withdraw its troops. The decree's main purpose was to establish a day of commemoration for the 1940 Soviet occupation that severed most of modern Moldova from Romania; it was later overturned after a court challenge by the Communist Party.

The pro-Russian *Obnovleniye* (Renéwal) party kept its majority in tightly controlled December 2010 elections for Transnistria's 43-seat legislature, increasing its share of seats from 23 to 25. Party leader Anatoly Kaminsky was reelected as speaker of the body. The official turnout for the balloting was 42.5 percent, somewhat lower than in previous elections.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Residents of Transnistria cannot elect their leaders democratically, and they are unable to participate freely in Moldovan elections. While the PMR maintains its own legislative, executive, and judicial branches of government, no country recognizes its independence. Both the president and the 43-seat, unicameral Supreme Council are elected to five-year terms. Having won reelection in December 2006 with 82 percent of the vote, Igor Smimov is now serving his fourth term as president. The international community has generally considered the presidential and parliamentary elections held since 1992 to be neither free nor fair, although they have not been monitored.

The majority party in the legislature is *Obnovleniye*, which has pressed the government for business-oriented reforms but—like other parties operating in the territory—is generally viewed as part of the PMR establishment. It is associated with Transnistria's monopolistic business conglomerate, Sheriff Enterprises, and maintains a cordial relationship with the ruling party in Russia. *Obnovleniye* leader Yevgeny Shevchuk, who became speaker of parliament after the 2005 elections, stepped down in July 2009, after a disagreement with Smirnov over constitutional reform. He was replaced as party leader and speaker by Anatoly Kaminsky.

Native Moldovan speakers are not represented in government and are under constant political pressure. As in previous years, the authorities did not allow voting in Moldovan national elections to take place on PMR-controlled territory in December 2010, though a few thousand Transnistrians were able to cast ballots at special voting sites on the west bank of the Dniester.

Corruption and organized crime are serious problems in Transnistria. The authori-

ties are entrenched in the territory's economic activities, which rely in large part on smuggling schemes designed to evade Moldovan and Ukrainian import taxes. Russia also has a major stake in the Transnistrian economy and supports the PMR through loans, direct subsidies, and low-cost natural gas. Upon resigning as parliament Speaker in 2009, Shevchuk reportedly accused the government of corruption, nepotism, and economic mismanagement. Russia suspended social subsidies for several months in 2010 because of transparency concerns.

The media environment is restrictive. Nearly all media are state owned or controlled and refrain from criticizing the authorities. The few independent print outlets have small circulations. Critical reporting draws harassment by the government, which also uses tactics such as bureaucratic obstruction and the withholding of information to inhibit independent media. Independent journalist Ernest Vardanean, who had worked for outlets including a Moldovan newspaper and Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, was arrested in April 2010, and in a video recording televised in May, he confessed to spying for Moldovan authorities. He was sentenced in December to 15 years in prison. Sheriff Enterprises, which dominates the private broadcasting and cable television sectors, is the territory's only internet service provider.

Religious freedom is limited. Orthodox Christianity is the dominant faith, and authorities have denied registration to several smaller religious groups, at times in defiance of court decisions. Other court rulings in favor of minority faiths have been routinely overturned. Unregistered groups, including Jehovah's Witnesses and Pentecostals, have difficulty renting space for prayer meetings and face harassment by police and Orthodox opponents.

Although several thousand students study Moldovan using the Latin script, this practice is restricted. The Moldovan language and Latin alphabet are associated with support for unity with Moldova, while Russian and the Cyrillic alphabet are associated with separatist goals. Parents who send their children to schools using Latin script, and the schools themselves, have faced routine harassment from the security services. The authorities severely restrict freedom of assembly and rarely issue required permits for public protests. Freedom of association is similarly circumscribed. All nongovernmental activities must be coordinated with local authorities, and groups that do not comply face harassment, including visits from security officials. The region's trade unions are holdovers from the Soviet era, and the United Council of Labor Collectives works closely with the government.

The judiciary is subservient to the executive and generally implements the will of the authorities. Defendants do not receive fair trials, and the legal framework falls short of international standards. Politically motivated arrests and detentions are common. Both Vardanean and tax official Ilie Cazac, another espionage suspect arrested in March 2010, were reportedly denied access to lawyers of their choice, and OSCE representatives were not allowed to attend Vardanean's trial. Cazac purportedly confessed in a June letter, but both his and Vardanean's confessions were widely seen as coerced. Cazac's case remained pending at year's end. Human rights groups have received accounts of torture in custody in the PMR, and prison conditions are considered harsh and unsanitary. Suspicious deaths of military conscripts occur periodically amid reports of routine mistreatment.

Authorities discriminate against ethnic Moldovans, who make up about 40 percent of the population. It is believed that ethnic Russians and ethnic Ukrainians together

form a slim majority, and as many as a third of the region's residents reportedly hold Russian passports.

Outsiders are frequently detained and questioned by the PMR authorities. Among those held temporarily in 2010 was the head of Moldova's election commission, who was traveling from Ukraine to central Moldova.

Women are underrepresented in most positions of authority, and domestic violence against women is a problem. Transnistria is a significant source and transit point for trafficking in women for the purpose of prostitution. Homosexuality is illegal in Transnistria.

West Bank

Political Rights: 6

Population: 2,500,000

Civil Liberties: 5

Status: Not Free

Note: Whereas previous editions of *Freedom in the World* featured one report for Israeli-occupied portions of the West Bank and Gaza Strip and another for Palestinian-administered portions, the present edition divides the territories based on geography, with one report for the West Bank and another for the Gaza Strip. As in previous years, Israel is examined in a separate report.

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline For Year Under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)



Overview: Although the Palestinian Authority was credited with facilitating economic and security improvements in the West Bank in 2010, President Mahmoud Abbas continued to serve after the 2009 expiration of his elected term, and his appointed government functioned without an elected legislature. No new elections had been scheduled by year's end. A short period of direct peace talks between Abbas's government and Israel ended in late September after Israel refused to extend a moratorium on settlement construction, and the territory suffered from regular, often violent confrontations over land and other issues during the year.

The West Bank was demarcated as part of the 1949 armistice agreement between Israel and Jordan following the 1948 Arab-Israeli war. It consists of the land between the armistice line in the west and the Jordan River in the east. The territory was subsequently occupied and annexed by Jordan. During the 1967 Six-Day War, Israel conquered the West Bank along with the Gaza Strip and other territories, and subsequently annexed East Jerusalem, leaving the rest of the West Bank and Gaza under a military administration.

After 1967, Israel began establishing Jewish settlements in the West Bank, a process that—along with the annexation of East Jerusalem—was regarded as illegal

by most of the international community. Israel maintained that the settlements were legal since under international law, the West Bank was a disputed territory. In what became known as the first intifada (uprising), in 1987, Palestinians living in the West Bank and Gaza staged massive demonstrations, acts of civil disobedience, and attacks against Israeli settlers and Israel Defense Forces (IDF) troops in the territories, as well as attacks within Israel proper. Israel and Yasser Arafat's Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) reached an agreement in 1993 that provided for a PLO renunciation of terrorism and recognition of Israel, Israeli troop withdrawals, and phased Palestinian autonomy in the West Bank and Gaza.

In subsequent years, the new Palestinian Authority (PA) took control of 40 percent of West Bank territory, including 98 percent of the Palestinian population outside of East Jerusalem. As stalled negotiations on a final settlement and the creation of a Palestinian state headed toward collapse, a second intifada began in September 2000, and the IDF reentered most PA-administered areas.

After Arafat died in November 2004, the PA in January 2005 held its second-ever presidential election, which had been repeatedly postponed; the first voting for president and the Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC) had taken place in 1996. Mahmoud Abbas of Arafat's Fatah faction won the 2005 contest, with 62 percent of the vote in the West Bank and Gaza. In municipal voting in the West Bank, Fatah won most municipalities, but the Islamist faction Hamas posted impressive gains. Each group accused the other of fraud, and there was some election-related violence.

Hamas won the January 2006 elections for the PLC with 74 of 132 seats, while Fatah took just 45. Fatah and Hamas then formed a unity government headed by Prime Minister Ismail Haniya of Hamas. Israel, the United States, and the European Union (EU) refused to recognize the new government, citing Hamas's involvement in terrorism and its refusal to recognize Israel or past Israel-PA agreements. The United States and the EU, then the largest donors to the PA, cut off assistance to the government.

Armed clashes between Hamas and Fatah supporters escalated in 2007, and in June, Hamas militants seized Fatah-controlled facilities in Gaza. Thousands of Gazans, particularly those loyal to Fatah, fled along with most Fatah militants to the West Bank. Abbas subsequently dismissed the Hamas-led government, declared a state of emergency, and appointed an emergency cabinet led by former finance minister Salam Fayad. This resulted in a bifurcated PA, with Hamas governing Gaza and Abbas and Fayad governing the roughly 40 percent of the West Bank not directly administered by Israel. Fatah later cracked down on Hamas in the West Bank, arresting its officials and supporters, shutting down its affiliated civic organizations and media outlets, and allegedly torturing some detainees.

In the years after the split, the Fatah-controlled PA in the West Bank benefited from renewed U.S. and EU aid as well as tax revenues released by Israeli authorities. So-called confidence-building measures between Israel and the PA in the West Bank included the release of hundreds of Palestinian prisoners held in Israel, the wider deployment of Palestinian security forces, and the lifting of a number of Israeli checkpoints.

Nevertheless, the IDF reportedly still controlled about 60 percent of the West Bank, and construction continued on a security barrier that ran roughly along the West Bank side of the 1949 armistice line and often jutted farther into the territory to place

densely populated Jewish settlements on the Israeli side. Palestinians complained that the barrier, which by the end of 2010 was about 70 percent complete, expropriated West Bank land and collectively punished ordinary Palestinians for acts committed by terrorists. Since construction of the barrier began, attacks inside Israel have decreased by 90 percent. The International Court of Justice declared the barrier illegal in 2004.

Countering a trend of settlement expansion in recent years, Israel froze settlement construction in the West Bank for most of 2010, though construction continued in East Jerusalem. The freeze was initiated under U.S. pressure for the resumption of direct peace talks between Israel and the West Bank PA, which began in early September. The PA soon broke off the talks after Israel declined to extend its moratorium on settlement construction after it expired later that month.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: In 1988, Jordan rescinded citizenship for West Bank Palestinians, and Israel never granted them citizenship. Most Palestinian residents are citizens of the Palestinian Authority (PA), a quasi-sovereign entity created by the 1993 Oslo Accords. Jewish settlers in the West Bank are all Israeli citizens.

The PA president is elected to four-year terms. The prime minister is nominated by the president but requires the support of the unicameral, 132-seat Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC), which also serves four-year terms. Voting in the West Bank during the 2005 presidential and 2006 PLC elections was deemed largely free and fair by international observers. However, there were credible reports of PA resources being used to benefit Fatah candidates in 2006, and some voters said they had difficulty reaching polling stations because of Israeli roadblocks.

After the bifurcation of the PA in 2007, elected officials on both sides were prevented from holding office and performing their duties. President Mahmoud Abbas appointed a new cabinet in the West Bank that lacked the PLC's approval. In 2008, PA security forces aligned with Abbas arrested hundreds of Hamas members and supporters. The rift, combined with Israel's detention of many Palestinian lawmakers, prevented the PLC from functioning, and its term expired in 2010.

Abbas's term as president expired in 2009. However, because presidential and legislative elections were tentatively scheduled for 2010, PA officials in the West Bank contended that he was entitled to serve another year under the PA's Basic Law, and the PLO indefinitely extended his term in December 2009. The January election date was subsequently canceled, and no new date had been set by the end of 2010.

Also in 2009, Abbas issued a law permitting the Fatah-affiliated minister of local government to dissolve municipal councils after their four-year mandates expired. The law was executed in October 2009, and nearly all Hamas-controlled municipal officials were replaced by Fatah officials.

After Israel annexed East Jerusalem in 1967, Arab residents were issued Israeli identity cards and given the option of obtaining Israeli citizenship. However, many choose not to seek citizenship out of solidarity with Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, believing East Jerusalem should be the capital of an independent Palestinian state. Those who do not choose Israeli citizenship can vote in municipal as well as PA elections, but are subject to restrictions imposed by the Israeli municipality of Jerusalem. In the 2006 PLC elections, Israel barred Hamas from campaigning in the city. By law, Israel strips Arabs of their Jerusalem residency if they remain outside the

city for more than three months. East Jerusalem's Arab population does not receive a share of municipal services proportionate to its size.

Corruption remains a major problem in the West Bank, though Abbas has overseen some improvements. Prime Minister Salam Fayad, appointed by Abbas in 2007, is highly regarded for his commitment to transparent government, and has been credited with significantly reducing corruption at the higher levels of the PA.

The media are not free in the West Bank. Under a 1995 PA press law, journalists may be fined and jailed, and newspapers closed, for publishing "secret information" on PA security forces or news that might harm national unity or incite violence. Several small media outlets are routinely pressured to provide favorable coverage of the PA and Fatah. Journalists who criticize the PA or Fatah face arbitrary arrests, threats, and physical abuse. Since 2007, both the PA and Israeli forces have shut down Hamas-affiliated radio and television stations in the West Bank. In February 2010, a PA military court sentenced Hamas-affiliated Al-Aqsa television correspondent Tareq Abu Zaid to a year and a half in prison for "transferring information and money," despite a Palestinian Supreme Court ruling calling for his release. In July, the PA Ministry of Communications issued notices to 19 radio and 25 television stations to stop broadcasting for one month and "correct their positions" or face permanent closure, according to the Palestinian Center for Development and Media Freedoms (MADA). International press freedom groups regularly criticize Israel for blocking journalists' access to conflict zones, harming and sometimes killing reporters during battles, and harassing Palestinian journalists. Israel insists that reporters risk getting caught in crossfire but are not targeted deliberately. Both Palestinian and Israeli security forces were accused of assaulting and arbitrarily detaining several journalists in 2010.

The PA generally respects freedom of religion, though no law specifically protects religious expression. The Basic Law declares Islam to be the official religion of Palestine and also states that "respect and sanctity of all other heavenly religions (Judaism and Christianity) shall be maintained." Personal status law, which governs marriage and divorce, is based on religious law; for Muslims, it is derived from Sharia (Islamic law), and for Christians, it is governed by ecclesiastical courts. Some Palestinian Christians have experienced intimidation and harassment by radical Islamist groups and PA officials. In late October, blogger Waleed Hasayin was arrested on charges of defaming Islam and the Koran and violating the PA's blasphemy laws; Hasayin was still being detained at year's end while the PA investigated the allegations.

Israel generally recognizes the right to freedom of worship and religion in the West Bank. On a few occasions following clashes in 2010, Israeli forces restricted Muslim men under age 50 from praying at the Temple Mount/Haram al-Sharif compound in Jerusalem. Also during the year, Jewish settler militants attacked and desecrated mosques in Beit Fajjar, Lubban al-Sharqiya, and Hawara. In November, local Palestinians alleged that Israeli authorities demolished a mosque near the village of Khirbet Yarza, though the IDF claimed that the building was temporary and built in a military free-fire zone.

The PA has authority over all levels of education. Israeli military closures, curfews, and the West Bank security barrier restrict access to Palestinian academic institutions. Schools have sometimes been damaged during military actions, and student travel between the West Bank and the Gaza Strip has been limited. Israeli academic

institutions in the West Bank are increasingly subject to international boycotts. In August 2010, over 150 Israeli academics announced their refusal to lecture or work at such institutions. According to the Association for Civil Rights in Israel (ACRI), East Jerusalem's schools are badly underfunded compared with schools in West Jerusalem.

The PA requires permits for demonstrations and prohibits violence and racist sloganeering, though the latter are routinely on display during anti-Israel protests. Protests against PA policies are generally disallowed and forcibly dispersed, and Hamas has been effectively banned from holding demonstrations in the West Bank. The IDF sometimes respects freedom of assembly, though permission is required and demonstrations are routinely broken up with force. In 2010, Israeli authorities renewed the use of Military Order 101, which requires an IDF permit for all "political" demonstrations of more than 10 people. Israeli forces continued to restrict and break up frequent and sometimes violent demonstrations in opposition to the security barrier, especially those near the towns of Bil'in and Nil'in. In March, Israeli authorities barred foreigners and Israelis from the towns and declared the nearby protest areas to be closed military zones every Friday for six months. The IDF—which cited over 100 injuries to its personnel—regularly used rubber-coated bullets, stun grenades, and tear gas against the protesters, and has repeatedly been accused by human rights groups of using live fire, a charge it denies. In October, an Israeli military court sentenced Abdallah Abu Ramah, a protest leader from Bil'in, to one year in prison for "incitement and riot" and protesting without a legal permit. Arrested in December 2009, Abu Ramah had already served 10 months of his sentence, which was condemned by human rights groups as well as the EU; he was released in December 2010.

A broad range of Palestinian nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and civic groups operate in the West Bank, and their activities are generally unrestricted. Since 2007, however, many Hamas-affiliated civic associations have been shut down for political reasons. Workers may establish and join unions without government authorization. Palestinian workers seeking to strike must submit to arbitration by the PA Labor Ministry. There are no laws in the PA-ruled areas to protect the rights of striking workers. Palestinian workers in Jerusalem are subject to Israeli labor law.

The PA judicial system is only somewhat independent in practice, and Palestinian judges lack proper training and experience. Laws in effect in the West Bank derive from Ottoman, British Mandate, Jordanian, Israeli, and PA legislation, as well as Israeli military orders. The High Judicial Council handles most legal proceedings. Israel's Supreme Court hears petitions from non-Israeli residents of the West Bank regarding home demolitions, land confiscations, road closures, and IDF tactics. Decisions in favor of Palestinian petitioners, while rare, have increased in recent years. Though most applications have been rejected, the Israeli Supreme Court has repeatedly ordered changes to the route of the West Bank security barrier after hearing petitions from NGOs and Palestinians. By the end of 2010, the Ministry of Defense had altered or pledged to alter the route in response to four of six such rulings.

The PA also features a military court system, which lacks almost all due process rights. These courts are used to try detainees suspected of a range of security offenses, collaborating with Israel, and drug trafficking. There are reportedly hundreds of administrative detainees currently in Palestinian jails. According to the Palestinian Human Rights Monitoring Group, alleged collaborators are routinely tortured. These

practices are not prohibited under Palestinian law. Defendants in military courts are not granted the right to appeal sentences; trials are often summary and occasionally result in death sentences.

Palestinians accused of broadly defined security offenses by Israel are tried in Israeli military courts, which grant some due process protections but limit rights to counsel, bail, and appeal. Administrative detention without charge or trial is widely used. According to the human rights group B'Tselem, by year's end, there were 5,705 Palestinians in Israeli jails: 4,662 serving sentences, 153 detainees, 683 being detained until the conclusion of legal proceedings, 204 administrative detainees, and 3 being detained under the Illegal Combatants Law. Most convictions in Israeli military courts are based on confessions, sometimes obtained through coercion. Israel outlawed the use of torture to extract security information in 2000, but milder forms of coercion are permissible when the prisoner is believed to have vital information about impending terrorist attacks. Human rights groups criticize Israel for continuing to engage in what they consider torture. Interrogation methods include binding detainees to a chair in painful positions, slapping, kicking, and threatening violence against detainees and their relatives.

While violence in the West Bank has dropped precipitously since the 2007 PA schism, there were a number of clashes in 2010. The IDF staged numerous raids, mostly aimed at Hamas militants and officials, and repeatedly confronted Palestinian protesters. Israeli settlers were frequently and at times fatally attacked by Palestinian militants, while settler militants targeted people and property in several Palestinian villages, mosques, and farms. According to B'Tselem, in 2009 and 2010, a total of 33 Palestinians were killed by Israeli security forces in the West Bank, including 7 minors and 16 noncombatants, while 8 Israelis were killed by Palestinian militants, including 1 minor and 7 noncombatants. In February 2010, Israel's inclusion of two holy sites in the West Bank—revered by both Jews and Muslims—on a list of its national heritage sites set off a strike and riots in Hebron, East Jerusalem, and Bethlehem.

Israeli soldiers accused of harassing or assaulting Palestinian civilians are subject to Israeli military law. In 2010, a number of soldiers posted photographs and videos of themselves apparently abusing Palestinian detainees on the internet, prompting an IDF investigation. A September report by B'Tselem accused the IDF of failing to adequately investigate and prosecute cases of civilian deaths in the West Bank, citing only 23 criminal investigations out of the 148 recommended by the group between 2006 and 2009. Nevertheless, several soldiers were prosecuted in 2010. However, because most soldiers are investigated and tried internally, a low percentage of them are prosecuted and convicted, and most receive relatively light sentences. In April, a military court reprimanded three officers and demoted one for their roles in a violent clash with protesters near Iraq-Burin in which four civilians were killed. In August, a Jerusalem court found the Israeli border police responsible for the death of a 10-year-old Palestinian girl who was struck by a rubber bullet in 2007, ordering the state to pay compensation to her family.

The easing of checkpoints and roadblocks and the wider deployment of PA security forces contributed to improved economic conditions in the West Bank in 2010, particularly in Nablus, Ramallah, and Jenin. However, as of August, the IDF maintained 59 permanent checkpoints and over 400 roadblocks within the territory. These impose extensive delays on local travel, stunt internal and external trade, and

restrict Palestinian access to jobs, hospitals, and schools. Israel's security barrier has also cut off many Palestinians from their farms and other parts of the West Bank. While most roads are open to both Israelis and Palestinians, about 10 are open only to drivers with Israeli documents, ostensibly for security reasons. In May 2010, the IDF opened the controversial Highway 443 to Palestinian traffic following a 2009 Israeli Supreme Court ruling to that effect; Palestinians still cannot access Ramallah or East Jerusalem from the road.

All West Bank residents must have identification cards to obtain entry permits to Israel, including East Jerusalem; Israel often denies permits. In 2010, the IDF broadened the definition of "infiltrator" in the West Bank to include Palestinians who are not in the PA population registry and do not have a permit to live in the territory, exposing them to deportation within 72 hours, imprisonment, and other penalties. Human rights groups alleged that the change could subject thousands of Palestinians with Gaza residency permits to sudden deportation; Israel claimed that the change affected only a small number of people and was intended to speed up military hearings for potential deportees. As of April 2010, five people had been deported under the new rule; in addition, a number of prisoners were released into Gaza instead of the West Bank.

The Israeli NGOs Peace Now and B'Tselem report that Israel denies construction permits and demolishes unauthorized housing at a far higher rate for Palestinian residents than for Israeli settlers. In 2010, B'Tselem found that while built-up settlements occupy 1 percent of the West Bank's land, 21 percent of that is private Palestinian land. Throughout 2009 and 2010, a property dispute in the East Jerusalem neighborhood of Sheikh Jarrah—where a number of Palestinian families have been evicted in favor of Jewish residents—prompted weekly protests by both Palestinians and Israelis. In January 2010, police detained a number of activists at the protests, which have been declared illegal. In December, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) reported that Israeli authorities razed 396 buildings in 2010 for lacking permits, up from 275 in 2009. An earlier UNRWA report stated that Palestinians can legally build in an area comprising about 13 percent of East Jerusalem and that over 28 percent of Arab homes are built illegally.

While Palestinian women are underrepresented in most professions and encounter discrimination in employment, they have full access to universities and to many professions. Palestinian laws and societal norms, derived in part from Sharia, put women at a disadvantage in matters of marriage, divorce, and inheritance. Rape, domestic abuse, and "honor killings," in which women are murdered by relatives for perceived sexual or moral transgressions, are not uncommon. These murders often go unpunished.

Western Sahara

Political Rights: 7

Population: 490,000

Civil Liberties: 6

Status: Not Free

Ten-Year Ratings Timeline For Year Under Review (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, Status)

2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
7,6NF									

Overview: Morocco and the proindependence Polisario Front made little progress in mediated negotiations on Western Sahara's status in 2010, and violent clashes between Sahrawi protesters and Moroccan security forces led to a number of deaths in November. Sahrawi activists continued to face harassment and detention during the year.

Western Sahara was ruled by Spain for nearly a century until Spanish troops withdrew in 1976, following a bloody guerrilla conflict with the proindependence Popular Front for the Liberation of Saguia el-Hamra and Rio de Oro (Polisario Front). Mauritania and Morocco both claimed the resource-rich region for themselves, agreeing to a partition in which Morocco received the northern two-thirds. However, the Polisario Front proclaimed an independent Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic and continued its guerrilla campaign. Mauritania renounced its claim to the region in 1979, and Morocco filled the vacuum by annexing the entire territory.

Moroccan and Polisario forces engaged in a low-intensity armed conflict until the United Nations brokered a ceasefire in 1991. The agreement called for residents of Western Sahara to vote in a referendum on independence the following year, to be supervised by the newly established UN Mission for a Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO). However, the vote never took place, with the two sides failing to agree on voter eligibility.

Morocco tried to bolster its annexation by offering financial incentives for Moroccans to move to Western Sahara and for Sahrawis to move to Morocco. Morocco also used more coercive measures to assert its control, engaging in forced resettlements of Sahrawis and long-term detention and "disappearances" of proindependence activists. In 2004, the Polisario Front accepted a UN Security Council plan that called for up to five years of autonomy followed by a referendum on the territory's status. However, Morocco rejected the plan, as it could lead to independence, and in 2007 offered its own autonomy plan.

Because the Polisario Front remained committed to an eventual referendum on independence, the two sides failed to make meaningful progress in four rounds of formal talks and three informal meetings that started in 2007 and continued in 2010. Talks in November 2010 were overshadowed by a confrontation on November 8 in the Gadaym Izik protest camp outside Western Sahara's main city of Laayoune, in which Moroccan forces used helicopters, tear gas, and water cannons to disperse residents who had mobilized within the camp. According to Human Rights Watch, 11 officers and 2 civilians were killed, although it emphasized that these were Moroccan

estimates and that independent verification was made impossible by the Moroccan authorities. The Polisario claimed that 11 civilians died, 700 were wounded, and many were arrested. Each side accused the other of attempting to disrupt the ongoing negotiations.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties: As the occupying force in Western Sahara, Morocco controls local elections and works to ensure that independence-minded leaders are excluded from both the local political process and the Moroccan Parliament.

Western Sahara is not listed separately on Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index, but reports of corruption are widespread. The territory possesses extensive natural resources, including phosphate, iron-ore deposits, hydrocarbon reserves, and fisheries. Nevertheless, the local population remains largely impoverished.

According to the Moroccan constitution, the press is free, but this is not the case in practice. There is little independent Sahrawi media activity. Moroccan authorities are sensitive to any reporting that is not in line with the state's official position on Western Sahara, and they continue to expel or detain Sahrawi, Moroccan, and foreign reporters who write critically on the issue. Online media and independent satellite broadcasts are largely unavailable to the impoverished population.

Nearly all Sahrawis are Sunni Muslims, as are most Moroccans, and Moroccan authorities generally do not interfere with their freedom of worship. There are no major universities or institutions of higher learning in Western Sahara.

Sahrawis are not permitted to form independent political or nongovernmental organizations, and their freedom of assembly is severely restricted. As in previous years, activists supporting independence and their suspected foreign sympathizers were subject to harassment. In April 2010, activists faced harassment at the Laayoune airport upon their return from the Polisario-controlled refugee camps in Tindouf, Algeria. Sahrawis are technically subject to Moroccan labor laws, but there is little organized labor activity in the territory.

International human rights groups have criticized Morocco's record in Western Sahara for decades. In the aftermath of the November 2010 clashes outside Laayoune, Amnesty International renewed its call for independent monitoring of human rights violations. Three Sahrawi activists who had been arrested in Morocco in October 2009—Brahim Dahane, Ali Salem Tamek, and Ahmed Naciri—remained in detention throughout 2010, and their pending trial was postponed in November after disruptions in the courtroom, largely by pro-Moroccan spectators. The Polisario Front has also been accused of disregarding human rights. In September 2010, the Polisario Front arrested a Sahrawi dissenter, Mostapha Selma Sidi Mouloud, as he returned to the Tindouf camps after publicly endorsing Morocco's autonomy plan in Western Sahara.

Morocco and the Polisario Front both restrict free movement in potential conflict areas. Morocco has been accused of using force and financial incentives to alter the composition of Western Sahara's population.

Sahrawi women face much of the same cultural and legal discrimination as Moroccan women. Conditions are generally worse for women living in rural areas, where poverty and illiteracy rates are higher.

Freedom in the World 2011

Methodology

INTRODUCTION

The *Freedom in the World* survey provides an annual evaluation of the state of global freedom as experienced by individuals. The survey measures freedom—the opportunity to act spontaneously in a variety of fields outside the control of the government and other centers of potential domination—according to two broad categories: political rights and civil liberties. Political rights enable people to participate freely in the political process, including the right to vote freely for distinct alternatives in legitimate elections, compete for public office, join political parties and organizations, and elect representatives who have a decisive impact on public policies and are accountable to the electorate. Civil liberties allow for the freedoms of expression and belief, associational and organizational rights, rule of law, and personal autonomy without interference from the state.

The survey does not rate governments or government performance per se, but rather the real-world rights and freedoms enjoyed by individuals. Thus, while Freedom House considers the presence of legal rights, it places a greater emphasis on whether these rights are implemented in practice. Furthermore, freedoms can be affected by government officials, as well as by nonstate actors, including insurgents and other armed groups.

Freedom House does not maintain a culture-bound view of freedom. The methodology of the survey is grounded in basic standards of political rights and civil liberties, derived in large measure from relevant portions of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. These standards apply to all countries and territories, irrespective of geographical location, ethnic or religious composition, or level of economic development. The survey operates from the assumption that freedom for all peoples is best achieved in liberal democratic societies.

The survey includes both analytical reports and numerical ratings for 194 countries and 14 select territories.¹ Each country and territory report includes an overview section, which provides historical background and a brief description of the year's major developments, as well as a section summarizing the current state of political rights and civil liberties. In addition, each country and territory is assigned

1. These territories are selected based on their political significance and size. Freedom House divides territories into two categories: related territories and disputed territories. Related territories consist mostly of colonies, protectorates, and island dependencies of sovereign states that are in some relation of dependency to that state, and whose relationship is not currently in serious legal or political dispute. Disputed territories are areas within internationally recognized sovereign states whose status is in serious political or violent dispute, and whose conditions differ substantially from those of the relevant sovereign states. They are often outside of central government control and characterized by intense, longtime, and widespread insurgency or independence movements that enjoy popular support. Generally, the dispute faced by a territory is between independence for the territory or domination by an established state.

a numerical rating—on a scale of 1 to 7—for political rights and an analogous rating for civil liberties; a rating of 1 indicates the highest degree of freedom and 7 the lowest level of freedom. These ratings, which are calculated based on the methodological process described below, determine whether a country is classified as Free, Partly Free, or Not Free by the survey.

The survey findings are reached after a multilayered process of analysis and evaluation by a team of regional experts and scholars. Although there is an element of subjectivity inherent in the survey findings, the ratings process emphasizes intellectual rigor and balanced and unbiased judgments.

HISTORY OF THE SURVEY

Freedom House's first year-end reviews of freedom began in the 1950s as the *Balance Sheet of Freedom*. This modest report provided assessments of political trends and their implications for individual freedom. In 1972, Freedom House launched a new, more comprehensive annual study called *The Comparative Study of Freedom*. Raymond Gastil, a Harvard-trained specialist in regional studies from the University of Washington in Seattle, developed the survey's methodology, which assigned political rights and civil liberties ratings to 151 countries and 45 territories and—based on these ratings—categorized them as Free, Partly Free, or Not Free. The findings appeared each year in Freedom House's *Freedom at Issue* bimonthly journal (later titled *Freedom Review*). The survey first appeared in book form in 1978 under the title *Freedom in the World* and included short, explanatory narratives for each country and territory rated in the study, as well as a series of essays by leading scholars on related issues. *Freedom in the World* continued to be produced by Gastil until 1989, when a larger team of in-house survey analysts was established. In the mid-1990s, the expansion of *Freedom in the World's* country and territory narratives demanded the hiring of outside analysts—a group of regional experts from the academic, media, and human rights communities. The survey has continued to grow in size and scope; the 2011 edition is the most exhaustive in its history.

RESEARCH AND RATINGS REVIEW PROCESS

This year's survey covers developments from January 1, 2010, through December 31, 2010, in 194 countries and 14 territories. The research and ratings process involved 52 analysts and 18 senior-level academic advisers—the largest number to date. The analysts used a broad range of sources of information—including foreign and domestic news reports, academic analyses, nongovernmental organizations, think tanks, individual professional contacts, and visits to the region—in preparing the country and territory reports and ratings.

The country and territory ratings were proposed by the analyst responsible for each related report. The ratings were reviewed individually and on a comparative basis in a series of six regional meetings—Asia-Pacific, Central and Eastern Europe and the Former Soviet Union, Latin America and the Caribbean, Middle East and North Africa, sub-Saharan Africa, and Western Europe—involving the analysts, academic advisers with expertise in each region, and Freedom House staff. The ratings were compared to the previous year's findings, and any major proposed numerical shifts or category changes were subjected to more intensive scrutiny. These reviews were followed by cross-regional assessments in which efforts were made to ensure

comparability and consistency in the findings. Many of the key country reports were also reviewed by the academic advisers.

CHANGES TO THE 2011 EDITION OF *FREEDOM IN THE WORLD*

The survey's methodology is reviewed periodically by an advisory committee of political scientists with expertise in methodological issues. Over the years, the committee has made a number of modest methodological changes to adapt to evolving ideas about political rights and civil liberties. At the same time, the time series data are not revised retroactively, and any changes to the methodology are introduced incrementally in order to ensure the comparability of the ratings from year to year.

The Palestinian territories were previously scored in two distinct reports: Palestinian Authority-Administered Territories and Israeli-Occupied Territories. Beginning with the 2011 edition of the survey, the Palestinian territories are divided along fixed geographical rather than shifting jurisdictional lines, with one report for the West Bank and one for the Gaza Strip. This arrangement more closely matches the approach of other *Freedom in the World* reports. As noted above, the survey is meant to assess rights and freedoms as experienced by individuals in a given country or territory, as opposed to the performance of a particular governing entity.

RATINGS PROCESS

(NOTE: see the complete checklist questions and keys to political rights and civil liberties ratings and status at the end of the methodology essay.)

Scores - The ratings process is based on a checklist of 10 political rights questions and 15 civil liberties questions. The political rights questions are grouped into three subcategories: Electoral Process (3 questions), Political Pluralism and Participation (4), and Functioning of Government (3). The civil liberties questions are grouped into four subcategories: Freedom of Expression and Belief (4 questions), Associational and Organizational Rights (3), Rule of Law (4), and Personal Autonomy and Individual Rights (4). Scores are awarded to each of these questions on a scale of 0 to 4, where a score of 0 represents the smallest degree and 4 the greatest degree of rights or liberties present. The political rights section also contains two additional discretionary questions: question A (For traditional monarchies that have no parties or electoral process, does the system provide for genuine, meaningful consultation with the people, encourage public discussion of policy choices, and allow the right to petition the ruler?) and question B (Is the government or occupying power deliberately changing the ethnic composition of a country or territory so as to destroy a culture or tip the political balance in favor of another group?). For additional discretionary question A, a score of 1 to 4 may be added, as applicable, while for discretionary question B, a score of 1 to 4 may be subtracted (the worse the situation, the more that may be subtracted). The highest score that can be awarded to the political rights checklist is 40 (or a total score of 4 for each of the 10 questions). The highest score that can be awarded to the civil liberties checklist is 60 (or a total score of 4 for each of the 15 questions).

The scores from the previous survey edition are used as a benchmark for the current year under review. In general, a score is changed only if there has been a real-world development during the year that warrants a change (e.g., a crackdown on the media, the country's first free and fair elections) and is reflected accordingly in the narrative.

In answering both the political rights and civil liberties questions, Freedom House does not equate constitutional or other legal guarantees of rights with the on-the-ground fulfillment of these rights. While both laws and actual practices are factored into the ratings decisions, greater emphasis is placed on the latter.

For states and territories with small populations, the absence of pluralism in the political system or civil society is not necessarily viewed as a negative situation unless the government or other centers of domination are deliberately blocking its operation. For example, a small country without diverse political parties or media outlets or significant trade unions is not penalized if these limitations are determined to be a function of size and not overt restrictions.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties Ratings - The total score awarded to the political rights and civil liberties checklist determines the political rights and civil liberties rating. Each rating of 1 through 7, with 1 representing the highest and 7 the lowest level of freedom, corresponds to a range of total scores (see tables 1 and 2).

Status of Free, Partly Free, Not Free - Each pair of political rights and civil liberties ratings is averaged to determine an overall status of "Free," "Partly Free," or "Not Free." Those whose ratings average 1.0 to 2.5 are considered Free, 3.0 to 5.0 Partly Free, and 5.5 to 7.0 Not Free (see table 3). The designations of Free, Partly Free, and Not Free each cover a broad third of the available scores. Therefore, countries and territories within any one category, especially those at either end of the category, can have quite different human rights situations. In order to see the distinctions within each category, a country or territory's political rights and civil liberties ratings should be examined. For example, countries at the lowest end of the Free category (2 in political rights and 3 in civil liberties, or 3 in political rights and 2 in civil liberties) differ from those at the upper end of the Free group (1 for both political rights and civil liberties). Also, a designation of Free does not mean that a country enjoys perfect freedom or lacks serious problems, only that it enjoys comparably more freedom than Partly Free or Not Free (or some other Free) countries.

Indications of Ratings and/or Status Changes - Each country or territory's political rights rating, civil liberties rating, and status is included in a statistics section that precedes each country or territory report. A change in a political rights or civil liberties rating since the previous survey edition is indicated with a symbol next to the rating that has changed. A brief ratings change explanation is included in the statistics section.

Trend Arrows - Positive or negative developments in a country or territory may also be reflected in the use of upward or downward trend arrows. A trend arrow is based on a particular development (such as an improvement in a country's state of religious freedom), which must be linked to a score change in the corresponding checklist question (in this case, an increase in the score for checklist question D2, which covers religious freedom). However, not all score increases or decreases warrant trend arrows. Whether a positive or negative development is significant enough to warrant a trend arrow is determined through consultations among the report writer, the regional academic advisers, and Freedom House staff. Also, trend arrows are assigned only

in cases where score increases or decreases are not sufficient to warrant a ratings change; thus, a country cannot receive both a ratings change and a trend arrow during the same year. A trend arrow is indicated with an arrow next to the name of the country or territory that appears before the statistics section at the top of each country or territory report. A brief trend arrow explanation is included in the statistics section.

GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF EACH POLITICAL RIGHTS AND CIVIL LIBERTIES RATING

POLITICAL RIGHTS

Rating of 1 - Countries and territories with a rating of 1 enjoy a wide range of political rights, including free and fair elections. Candidates who are elected actually rule, political parties are competitive, the opposition plays an important role and enjoys real power, and minority groups have reasonable self-government or can participate in the government through informal consensus.

Rating of 2 - Countries and territories with a rating of 2 have slightly weaker political rights than those with a rating of 1 because of such factors as some political corruption, limits on the functioning of political parties and opposition groups, and foreign or military influence on politics.

Ratings of 3, 4, 5 - Countries and territories with a rating of 3, 4, or 5 include those that moderately protect almost all political rights to those that more strongly protect some political rights while less strongly protecting others. The same factors that undermine freedom in countries with a rating of 2 may also weaken political rights in those with a rating of 3, 4, or 5, but to an increasingly greater extent at each successive rating.

Rating of 6 - Countries and territories with a rating of 6 have very restricted political rights. They are ruled by one-party or military dictatorships, religious hierarchies, or autocrats. They may allow a few political rights, such as some representation or autonomy for minority groups, and a few are traditional monarchies that tolerate political discussion and accept public petitions.

Rating of 7 - Countries and territories with a rating of 7 have few or no political rights because of severe government oppression, sometimes in combination with civil war. They may also lack an authoritative and functioning central government and suffer from extreme violence or warlord rule that dominates political power.

CIVIL LIBERTIES

Rating of 1 - Countries and territories with a rating of 1 enjoy a wide range of civil liberties, including freedom of expression, assembly, association, education, and religion. They have an established and generally fair system of the rule of law (including an independent judiciary), allow free economic activity, and tend to strive for equality of opportunity for everyone, including women and minority groups.

Rating of 2 - Countries and territories with a rating of 2 have slightly weaker civil liberties than those with a rating of 1 because of such factors as some limits

on media independence, restrictions on trade union activities, and discrimination against minority groups and women.

Ratings of 3,4, 5 - Countries and territories with a rating of 3, 4, or 5 include those that moderately protect almost all civil liberties to those that more strongly protect some civil liberties while less strongly protecting others. The same factors that undermine freedom in countries with a rating of 2 may also weaken civil liberties in those with a rating of 3, 4, or 5, but to an increasingly greater extent at each successive rating.

Rating of 6 - Countries and territories with a rating of 6 have very restricted civil liberties. They strongly limit the rights of expression and association and frequently hold political prisoners. They may allow a few civil liberties, such as some religious and social freedoms, some highly restricted private business activity, and some open and free private discussion.

Rating of 7 - Countries and territories with a rating of 7 have few or no civil liberties. They allow virtually no freedom of expression or association, do not protect the rights of detainees and prisoners, and often control or dominate most economic activity.

Countries and territories generally have ratings in political rights and civil liberties that are within two ratings numbers of each other. For example, without a well-developed civil society, it is difficult, if not impossible, to have an atmosphere supportive of political rights. Consequently, there is no country in the survey with a rating of 6 or 7 for civil liberties and, at the same time, a rating of 1 or 2 for political rights.

ELECTORAL DEMOCRACY DESIGNATION

In addition to providing numerical ratings, the survey assigns the designation "electoral democracy" to countries that have met certain minimum standards. In determining whether a country is an electoral democracy, Freedom House examines several key factors concerning the last major national election or elections.

To qualify as an electoral democracy, a state must have satisfied the following criteria:

1. A competitive, multiparty political system;
2. Universal adult suffrage for all citizens (with exceptions for restrictions that states may legitimately place on citizens as sanctions for criminal offenses);
3. Regularly contested elections conducted in conditions of ballot secrecy, reasonable ballot security, and in the absence of massive voter fraud, and that yield results that are representative of the public will;
4. Significant public access of major political parties to the electorate through the media and through generally open political campaigning.

The numerical benchmark for a country to be listed as an electoral democracy is a subtotal score of 7 or better (out of a possible total score of 12) for the politi-

cal rights checklist subcategory A (the three questions on Electoral Process) and an overall political rights score of 20 or better (out of a possible total score of 40). In the case of presidential/parliamentary systems, both elections must have been free and fair on the basis of the above criteria; in parliamentary systems, the last nationwide elections for the national legislature must have been free and fair. The presence of certain irregularities during the electoral process does not automatically disqualify a country from being designated an electoral democracy. A country cannot be an electoral democracy if significant authority for national decisions resides in the hands of an unelected power, whether a monarch or a foreign international authority. A country is removed from the ranks of electoral democracies if its last national election failed to meet the criteria listed above, or if changes in law significantly eroded the public's possibility for electoral choice.

Freedom House's term "electoral democracy" differs from "liberal democracy" in that the latter also implies the presence of a substantial array of civil liberties. In the survey, all Free countries qualify as both electoral and liberal democracies. By contrast, some Partly Free countries qualify as electoral, but not liberal, democracies.

FREEDOM IN THE WORLD 2011 CHECKLIST QUESTIONS AND GUIDELINES

Each numbered checklist question is assigned a score of 0-4 (except for discretionary question A, for which a score of 1-4 may be added, and discretionary question B, for which a score of 1-4 may be subtracted), according to the survey methodology. The bulleted sub-questions are intended to provide guidance to the writers regarding what issues are meant to be considered in scoring each checklist question; the authors do not necessarily have to consider every sub-question when scoring their countries.

POLITICAL RIGHTS CHECKLIST

A. ELECTORAL PROCESS

1. Is the head of government or other chief national authority elected through free and fair elections?

- Did established and reputable national and/or international election monitoring organizations judge the most recent elections for head of government to be free and fair? (Note: Heads of government chosen through various electoral frameworks, including direct elections for president, indirect elections for prime minister by parliament, and the electoral college system for electing presidents, are covered under this and the following sub-questions. In cases of indirect elections for the head of government, the elections for the legislature that chose the head of government, as well as the selection process of the head of government himself, should be taken into consideration.
- Have there been undue, politically motivated delays in holding the most recent election for head of government?
- Is the registration of voters and candidates conducted in an accurate, timely, transparent, and nondiscriminatory manner?
- Can candidates make speeches, hold public meetings, and enjoy media access throughout the campaign free of intimidation?

- Does voting take place by secret ballot or by equivalent free voting procedure?
 - Are voters able to vote for the candidate or party of their choice without undue pressure or intimidation?
 - Is the vote count transparent, and is it reported honestly with the official results made public? Can election monitors from independent groups and representing parties/candidates watch the counting of votes to ensure their honesty?
 - Is each person's vote given equivalent weight to those of other voters in order to ensure equal representation?
 - Has a democratically elected head of government who was chosen in the most recent election subsequently been overthrown in a violent coup? (Note: Although a peaceful, "velvet coup" may ultimately lead to a positive outcome—particularly if it replaces a head of government who was not freely and fairly elected—the new leader has not been freely and fairly elected and cannot be treated as such.)
 - In cases where elections for regional, provincial, or state governors and/or other subnational officials differ significantly in conduct from national elections, does the conduct of the subnational elections reflect an opening toward improved political rights in the country, or, alternatively, a worsening of political rights?
2. Are the national legislative representatives elected through free and fair elections?
- Did established and reputable domestic and/or international election monitoring organizations judge the most recent national legislative elections to be free and fair?
 - Have there been undue, politically motivated delays in holding the most recent national legislative election?
 - Is the registration of voters and candidates conducted in an accurate, timely, transparent, and nondiscriminatory manner?
 - Can candidates make speeches, hold public meetings, and enjoy media access throughout the campaign free of intimidation?
 - Does voting take place by secret ballot or by equivalent free voting procedure?
 - Are voters able to vote for the candidate or party of their choice without undue pressure or intimidation?
 - Is the vote count transparent, and is it reported honestly with the official results made public? Can election monitors from independent groups and representing parties/candidates watch the counting of votes to ensure their honesty?
 - Is each person's vote given equivalent weight to those of other voters in order to ensure equal representation?
 - Have the representatives of a democratically elected national legislature who were chosen in the most recent election subsequently been overthrown in a violent coup? (Note: Although a peaceful, "velvet coup" may ultimately lead

to a positive outcome—particularly if it replaces a national legislature whose representatives were not freely and fairly elected—members of the new legislature have not been freely and fairly elected and cannot be treated as such.)

- In cases where elections for subnational councils/parliaments differ significantly in conduct from national elections, does the conduct of the subnational elections reflect an opening toward improved political rights in the country, or, alternatively, a worsening of political rights?

3. Are the electoral laws and framework fair?

- Is there a clear, detailed, and fair legislative framework for conducting elections? (Note: Changes to electoral laws should not be made immediately preceding an election if the ability of voters, candidates, or parties to fulfill their roles in the election is infringed.)
- Are election commissions or other election authorities independent and free from government or other pressure and interference?
- Is the composition of election commissions fair and balanced?
- Do election commissions or other election authorities conduct their work in an effective and competent manner?
- Do adult citizens enjoy universal and equal suffrage? (Note: Suffrage can be suspended or withdrawn for reasons of legal incapacity, such as mental incapacity or conviction of a serious criminal offense.)
- Is the drawing of election districts conducted in a fair and nonpartisan manner, as opposed to gerrymandering for personal or partisan advantage?
- Has the selection of a system for choosing legislative representatives (such as proportional versus majoritarian) been manipulated to advance certain political interests or to influence the electoral results?

B. POLITICAL PLURALISM AND PARTICIPATION

1. Do the people have the right to organize in different political parties or other competitive political groupings of their choice, and is the system open to the rise and fall of these competing parties or groupings?

- Do political parties encounter undue legal or practical obstacles in their efforts to be formed and to operate, including onerous registration requirements, excessively large membership requirements, etc.?
- Do parties face discriminatory or onerous restrictions in holding meetings, rallies, or other peaceful activities?
- Are party members or leaders intimidated, harassed, arrested, imprisoned, or subjected to violent attacks as a result of their peaceful political activities?

2. Is there a significant opposition vote and a realistic possibility for the opposition to increase its support or gain power through elections?

- Are various legal/administrative restrictions selectively applied to opposition parties to prevent them from increasing their support base or successfully competing in elections?
- Are there legitimate opposition forces in positions of authority, such as in the national legislature or in subnational governments?
- Are opposition party members or leaders intimidated, harassed, arrested, imprisoned, or subjected to violent attacks as a result of their peaceful political activities?

3. Are the people's political choices free from domination by the military, foreign powers, totalitarian parties, religious hierarchies, economic oligarchies, or any other powerful group?

- Do such groups offer bribes to voters and/or political figures in order to influence their political choices?
- Do such groups intimidate, harass, or attack voters and/or political figures in order to influence their political choices?
- Does the military control or enjoy a preponderant influence over government policy and activities, including in countries that nominally are under civilian control?
- Do foreign governments control or enjoy a preponderant influence over government policy and activities by means including the presence of foreign military troops, the use of significant economic threats or sanctions, etc.?

4. Do cultural, ethnic, religious, or other minority groups have full political rights and electoral opportunities?

- Do political parties of various ideological persuasions address issues of specific concern to minority groups?
- Does the government inhibit the participation of minority groups in national or subnational political life through laws and/or practical obstacles?
- Are political parties based on ethnicity, culture, or religion that espouse peaceful, democratic values legally permitted and de facto allowed to operate?

C. FUNCTIONING OF GOVERNMENT

1. Do the freely elected head of government and national legislative representatives determine the policies of the government?

- Are the candidates who were elected freely and fairly duly installed in office?
- Do other appointed or non-freely elected state actors interfere with or prevent freely elected representatives from adopting and implementing legislation and making meaningful policy decisions?
- Do nonstate actors, including criminal gangs, the military, and foreign govern-

ments, interfere with or prevent elected representatives from adopting and implementing legislation and making meaningful policy decisions?

2. Is the government free from pervasive corruption?

- Has the government implemented effective anticorruption laws or programs to prevent, detect, and punish corruption among public officials, including conflict of interest?
- Is the government free from excessive bureaucratic regulations, registration requirements, or other controls that increase opportunities for corruption?
- Are there independent and effective auditing and investigative bodies that function without impediment or political pressure or influence?
- Are allegations of corruption by government officials thoroughly investigated and prosecuted without prejudice, particularly against political opponents?
- Are allegations of corruption given wide and extensive airing in the media?
- Do whistle-blowers, anticorruption activists, investigators, and journalists enjoy legal protections that make them feel secure about reporting cases of bribery and corruption?

What was the latest Transparency International Corruption Perceptions Index score for this country?

3. Is the government accountable to the electorate between elections, and does it operate with openness and transparency?

- Are civil society groups, interest groups, journalists, and other citizens able to comment on and influence pending policies of legislation?
- Do citizens have the legal right and practical ability to obtain information about government operations and the means to petition government agencies for it?
- Is the budget-making process subject to meaningful legislative review and public scrutiny?
- Does the government publish detailed accounting expenditures in a timely fashion?
- Does the state ensure transparency and effective competition in the awarding of government contracts?
- Are the asset declarations of government officials open to public and media scrutiny and verification?

ADDITIONAL DISCRETIONARY POLITICAL RIGHTS QUESTIONS:

A. For traditional monarchies that have no parties or electoral process, does the system provide for genuine, meaningful consultation with the people, encourage public discussion of policy choices, and allow the right to petition the ruler?

- Is there a non-elected legislature that advises the monarch on policy issues?
- Are there formal mechanisms for individuals or civic groups to speak with or petition the monarch?
- Does the monarch take petitions from the public under serious consideration?

B. Is the government or occupying power deliberately changing the ethnic composition of a country or territory so as to destroy a culture or tip the political balance in favor of another group?

- Is the government providing economic or other incentives to certain people in order to change the ethnic composition of a region or regions?
- Is the government forcibly moving people in or out of certain areas in order to change the ethnic composition of those regions?
- Is the government arresting, imprisoning, or killing members of certain ethnic groups in order to change the ethnic composition of a region or regions?

CIVIL LIBERTIES CHECKLIST

D. FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AND BELIEF

1. Are there free and independent media and other forms of cultural expression? (Note: In cases where the media are state controlled but offer pluralistic points of view, the survey gives the system credit.)

- Does the government directly or indirectly censor print, broadcast, and/or internet-based media?
- Is self-censorship among journalists common, especially when reporting on politically sensitive issues, including corruption or the activities of senior officials?
- Does the government use libel and security laws to punish those who scrutinize government officials and policies through either onerous fines or imprisonment?
- Is it a crime to insult the honor and dignity of the president and/or other government officials? How broad is the range of such prohibitions, and how vigorously are they enforced?
- If media outlets are dependent on the government for their financial survival, does the government withhold funding in order to propagandize, primarily provide official points of view, and/or limit access by opposition parties and civic critics?
- Does the government attempt to influence media content and access through means including politically motivated awarding of broadcast frequencies and newspaper registrations, unfair control and influence over printing facilities and distribution networks, selective distribution of advertising, onerous registration requirements, prohibitive tariffs, and bribery?
- Are journalists threatened, arrested, imprisoned, beaten, or killed by government or nongovernmental actors for their legitimate journalistic activities, and if such cases occur, are they investigated and prosecuted fairly and expeditiously?

- Are works of literature, art, music, or other forms of cultural expression censored or banned for political purposes?

2. Are religious institutions and communities free to practice their faith and express themselves in public and private?

- Are registration requirements employed to impede the free functioning of religious institutions?
- Are members of religious groups, including minority faiths and movements, harassed, fined, arrested, or beaten by the authorities for engaging in their religious practices?
- Does the government appoint or otherwise influence the appointment of religious leaders?
- Does the government control the production and distribution of religious books and other materials and the content of sermons?
- Is the construction of religious buildings banned or restricted?
- Does the government place undue restrictions on religious education? Does the government require religious education?

3. Is there academic freedom, and is the educational system free of extensive political indoctrination?

- Are teachers and professors free to pursue academic activities of a political and quasi-political nature without fear of physical violence or intimidation by state or nonstate actors?
- Does the government pressure, strongly influence, or control the content of school curriculums for political purposes?
- Are student associations that address issues of a political nature allowed to function freely?
- Does the government, including through school administration or other officials, pressure students and/or teachers to support certain political figures or agendas, including pressuring them to attend political rallies or vote for certain candidates? Conversely, does the government, including through school administration or other officials, discourage or forbid students and/or teachers from supporting certain candidates and parties?

4. Is there open and free private discussion?

- Are people able to engage in private discussions, particularly of a political nature (in places including restaurants, public transportation, and their homes) without fear of harassment or arrest by the authorities?
- Does the government employ people or groups to engage in public surveillance and to report alleged antigovernment conversations to the authorities?

E. ASSOCIATIONAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL RIGHTS

1. Is there freedom of assembly, demonstration, and open public discussion?

- Are peaceful protests, particularly those of a political nature, banned or severely restricted?
- Are the legal requirements to obtain permission to hold peaceful demonstrations particularly cumbersome and time consuming?
- Are participants of peaceful demonstrations intimidated, arrested, or assaulted?
- Are peaceful protestors detained by police in order to prevent them from engaging in such actions?

2. Is there freedom for nongovernmental organizations? (Note: This includes civic organizations, interest groups, foundations, etc.)

- Are registration and other legal requirements for nongovernmental organizations particularly onerous and intended to prevent them from functioning freely?
- Are laws related to the financing of nongovernmental organizations unduly complicated and cumbersome?
- Are donors and flinders of nongovernmental organizations free of government pressure?
- Are members of nongovernmental organizations intimidated, arrested, imprisoned, or assaulted because of their work?

3. Are there free trade unions and peasant organizations or equivalents, and is there effective collective bargaining? Are there free professional and other private organizations?

- Are trade unions allowed to be established and to operate free from government interference?
- Are workers pressured by the government or employers to join or not to join certain trade unions, and do they face harassment, violence, or dismissal from their jobs if they do?
- Are workers permitted to engage in strikes, and do members of unions face reprisals for engaging in peaceful strikes? (Note: This question may not apply to workers in essential government services or public safety jobs.)
- Are unions able to bargain collectively with employers and able to negotiate collective bargaining agreements that are honored in practice?
- For states with very small populations or primarily agriculturally based economies that do not necessarily support the formation of trade unions, does the government allow for the establishment of peasant organizations or their equivalents? Is there legislation expressly forbidding the formation of trade unions?

- Are professional organizations, including business associations, allowed to operate freely and without government interference?

F. RULE OF LAW

1. Is there an independent judiciary?

- Is the judiciary subject to interference from the executive branch of government or from other political, economic, or religious influences?
- Are judges appointed and dismissed in a fair and unbiased manner?
- Do judges rule fairly and impartially, or do they commonly render verdicts that favor the government or particular interests, whether in return for bribes or other reasons?
- Do executive, legislative, and other governmental authorities comply with judicial decisions, and are these decisions effectively enforced?
- Do powerful private concerns comply with judicial decisions, and are decisions that run counter to the interests of powerful actors effectively enforced?

2. Does the rule of law prevail in civil and criminal matters? Are police under direct civilian control?

- Are defendants' rights, including the presumption of innocence until proven guilty, protected?
- Are detainees provided access to independent, competent legal counsel?
- Are defendants given a fair, public, and timely hearing by a competent, independent, and impartial tribunal?
- Are prosecutors independent of political control and influence?
- Are prosecutors independent of powerful private interests, whether legal or illegal?
- Is there effective and democratic civilian state control of law enforcement officials through the judicial, legislative, and executive branches?
- Are law enforcement officials free from the influence of nonstate actors, including organized crime, powerful commercial interests, or other groups?

3. Is there protection from political terror, unjustified imprisonment, exile, or torture, whether by groups that support or oppose the system? Is there freedom from war and insurgencies?

- Do law enforcement officials make arbitrary arrests and detentions without warrants or fabricate or plant evidence on suspects?
- Do law enforcement officials beat detainees during arrest and interrogation or use excessive force or torture to extract confessions?

- Are conditions in pretrial facilities and prisons humane and respectful of the human dignity of inmates?
- Do citizens have the means of effective petition and redress when their rights are violated by state authorities?

Is violent crime either against specific groups or within the general population widespread?

- Is the population subjected to physical harm, forced removal, or other acts of violence or terror due to civil conflict or war?

4. Do laws, policies, and practices guarantee equal treatment of various segments of the population?

- Are members of various distinct groups—including ethnic and religious minorities, homosexuals, and the disabled—able to exercise effectively their human rights with full equality before the law?
- Is violence against such groups widespread, and if so, are perpetrators brought to justice?
- Do members of such groups face legal and/or de facto discrimination in areas including employment, education, and housing because of their identification with a particular group?
- Do women enjoy full equality in law and in practice as compared to men?
- Do noncitizens—including migrant workers and noncitizen immigrants—enjoy basic internationally recognized human rights, including the right not to be subjected to torture or other forms of ill-treatment, the right to due process of law, and the rights of freedom of association, expression, and religion?
- Do the country's laws provide for the granting of asylum or refugee status in accordance with the 1951 UN Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, its 1967 Protocol, and other regional treaties regarding refugees? Has the government established a system for providing protection to refugees, including against refoulement (the return of persons to a country where there is reason to believe they fear persecution)?

G. PERSONAL AUTONOMY AND INDIVIDUAL RIGHTS

1. Do citizens enjoy freedom of travel or choice of residence, employment, or institution of higher education?

Are there restrictions on foreign travel, including the use of an exit visa system, which may be issued selectively?

- Is permission required from the authorities or nonstate actors to move within the country?
- Do state or nonstate actors determine or otherwise influence a person's type and place of employment?

- Are bribes or other inducements needed to obtain the necessary documents to travel, change one's place of residence or employment, enter institutions of higher education, or advance in school?

2. Do citizens have the right to own property and establish private businesses? Is private business activity unduly influenced by government officials, the security forces, political parties/organizations, or organized crime?

- Are people legally allowed to purchase and sell land and other property, and can they do so in practice without undue interference from the government or nonstate actors?
- Does the government provide adequate and timely compensation to people whose property is expropriated under eminent domain laws?
- Are people legally allowed to establish and operate private businesses with a reasonable minimum of registration, licensing, and other requirements?
- Are bribes or other inducements needed to obtain the necessary legal documents to operate private businesses?
- Do private/nonstate actors, including criminal groups, seriously impede private business activities through such measures as extortion?

3. Are there personal social freedoms, including gender equality, choice of marriage partners, and size of family?

- Is violence against women, including wife-beating and rape, widespread, and are perpetrators brought to justice?
- Is the trafficking of women and/or children abroad for prostitution widespread, and is the government taking adequate efforts to address the problem?
- Do women face de jure and de facto discrimination in economic and social matters, including property and inheritance rights, divorce proceedings, and child custody matters?
- Does the government directly or indirectly control choice of marriage partners through means such as requiring large payments to marry certain individuals (e.g., foreign citizens) or by not enforcing laws against child marriage or dowry payments?
- Does the government determine the number of children that a couple may have?
- Does the government engage in state-sponsored religious/cultural/ethnic indoctrination and related restrictions on personal freedoms?
- Do private institutions, including religious groups, unduly infringe on the rights of individuals, including choice of marriage partner, dress, etc.?

4. Is there equality of opportunity and the absence of economic exploitation?

- Does the government exert tight control over the economy, including through state ownership and the setting of prices and production quotas?
- Do the economic benefits from large state industries, including the energy sector, benefit the general population or only a privileged few?
- Do private interests exert undue influence on the economy through monopolistic practices, cartels, or illegal blacklists, boycotts, or discrimination?
- Is entrance to institutions of higher education or the ability to obtain employment limited by widespread nepotism and the payment of bribes?
- Are certain groups, including ethnic or religious minorities, less able to enjoy certain economic benefits than others? For example, are certain groups restricted from holding particular jobs, whether in the public or the private sector, because of de jure or de facto discrimination?
- Do state or private employers exploit their workers through activities including unfairly withholding wages and permitting or forcing employees to work under unacceptably dangerous conditions, as well as through adult slave labor and child labor?

KEY TO SCORES, PR AND CL RATINGS, AND STATUS			
Table 1		Table 2	
Political Rights (PR)		Civil Liberties (CL)	
Total Scores	PR Rating	Total Scores	CL Rating
36-40	1	53-60	1
30-35	2	44-52	2
24-29	3	35-43	3
18-23	4	26-34	4
12-17	5	17-25	5
6-11	6	8-16	6
0-5*	7	0-7	7

Table 3	
Combined Average of the PR and CL Ratings	Country Status
1.0-2.5	Free
3.0-5.0	Partly Free
5.5-7.0	Not Free

* It is possible for a country's total political rights score to be less than zero (between -1 and -4) if it receives mostly or all zeros for each of the 10 political rights questions and it receives a sufficiently negative score for political rights discretionary question B. In such a case, a country would still receive a final political rights rating of 7.

Tables and Ratings

Table of Independent Countries

Country	PR	CL	Freedom Rating	Country	PR	CL	Freedom Rating
🇦🇫 Afghanistan	6	6	Not Free	Djibouti	6▼	5	Not Free▼
🇦🇱 Albania*	3	3	Partly Free	Dominica*	1	1	Free
🇦🇷 Algeria	6	5	Not Free	Dominican Republic*	2	2	Free
🇦🇩 Andorra*	1	1	Free	East Timor*	3	4	Partly Free
🇦🇴 Angola	6	5	Not Free	Ecuador*	3	3	Partly Free
🇦🂄 Antigua and Barbuda*	3	2	Free	🇪🇬 Egypt	6	5	Not Free
🇦🇷 Argentina*	2	2	Free	El Salvador*	2	3	Free
🇦🇲 Armenia	6	4	Partly Free	Equatorial Guinea	7	7	Not Free
🇦🇺 Australia*	1	1	Free	Eritrea	7	7	Not Free
🇦🇹 Austria*	1	1	Free	Estonia*	1	1	Free
🇦🇿 Azerbaijan	6	5	Not Free	Ethiopia	6▼	6▼	Not Free▼
🇧🇲 Bahamas*	1	1	Free	🇫🇯 Fiji	6	4	Partly Free
🇧🇭 Bahrain	6	5	Not Free	Finland*	1	1	Free
🇧🇩 Bangladesh*	3	4	Partly Free	🇫🇷 France*	1	1	Free
🇧🇧 Barbados*	1	1	Free	Gabon	6	5	Not Free
🇧🇪 Belarus	7	6	Not Free	The Gambia	5	5	Partly Free
🇧🇪 Belgium*	1	1	Free	Georgia	4	3▲	Partly Free
🇧🇿 Belize*	1	2	Free	Germany*	1	1	Free
🇧🇯 Benin*	2	2	Free	Ghana*	1	2	Free
🇧🇹 Bhutan	4	5	Partly Free	Greece*	1	2	Free
🇧🇴 Bolivia*	3	3	Partly Free	Grenada*	1	2	Free
🇧🇦 Bosnia and Herzegovina*	4	3	Partly Free	Guatemala*	4	4	Partly Free
🇧🇼 Botswana*	3	2	Free	Guinea	5▲	5▲	Partly Free▲
🇧🇷 Brazil*	2	2	Free	Guinea-Bissau	4	4	Partly Free
🇧🇷 Brunei	6	5	Not Free	Guyana*	2	3	Free
🇧🇮 Bulgaria*	2	2	Free	🇮🇪 Haiti	4	5	Partly Free
🇧🇫 Burkina Faso	5	3	Partly Free	Honduras	4	4	Partly Free
🇧🇲 Burma	7	7	Not Free	🇮🇪 Hungary*	1	1	Free
🇧🇷 Burundi*	5▼	5	Partly Free	Iceland*	1	1	Free
🇰🇲 Cambodia	6	5	Not Free	India*	2	3	Free
🇨🇲 Cameroon	6	6	Not Free	Indonesia*	2	3	Free
🇨🇦 Canada*	1	1	Free	🇮🇷 Iran	6	6	Not Free
🇨🇻 Cape Verde*	1	1	Free	Iraq	5	6	Not Free
🇨🇩 Central African Republic	5	5	Partly Free	Ireland*	1	1	Free
🇨🇩 Chad	7	6	Not Free	Israel*	1	2	Free
🇨🇱 Chile*	1	1	Free	Italy*	1	2	Free
🇨🇳 China	7	6	Not Free	Jamaica*	2	3	Free
🇨🇰 Colombia*	3	4	Partly Free	Japan*	1	2	Free
🇰🇲 Comoros*	3	4	Partly Free	Jordan	6	5	Not Free
🇨🇬 Congo (Brazzaville)	6	5	Not Free	Kazakhstan	6	5	Not Free
🇨🇬 Congo (Kinshasa)	6	6	Not Free	Kenya	4	3▲	Partly Free
🇨🇷 Costa Rica*	1	1	Free	Kiribati*	1	1	Free
🇨🇮 Côte d'Ivoire	7▼	6▼	Not Free	Kosovo	5	4	Partly Free
🇨🇷 Croatia*	1	2	Free	Kuwait	4	5▼	Partly Free
🇨🇺 Cuba	7	6	Not Free	Kyrgyzstan	5▲	5	Partly Free▲
🇨🇾 Cyprus*	1	1	Free	Laos	7	6	Not Free
🇨🇪 Czech Republic*	1	1	Free	Latvia*	2	2▼	Free
🇩🇰 Denmark*	1	1	Free	Lebanon	5	3	Partly Free
				Lesotho*	3	3	Partly Free
				Liberia*	3	4	Partly Free

Country	PR	CL	Freedom Rating	Country	PR	CL	Freedom Rating
Libya	7	7	Not Free	Senegal*	3	3	Partly Free
Liechtenstein*	1	1	Free	Serbia*	2	2	Free
Lithuania*	1	1	Free	Seychelles*	3	3	Partly Free
Luxembourg*	1	1	Free	Sierra Leone*	3	3	Partly Free
Macedonia*	3	3	Partly Free	Singapore	5	4	Partly Free
Madagascar	6	4	Partly Free	Slovakia*	1	1	Free
Malawi*	3	4	Partly Free	Slovenia*	1	1	Free
Malaysia	4	4	Partly Free	Solomon Islands	4	3	Partly Free
Maldives*	3	4	Partly Free	Somalia	7	7	Not Free
Mali*	2	3	Free	South Africa*	2	2	Free
Malia*	1	1	Free	South Korea*	1	2	Free
Marshall Islands*	1	1	Free	Spain*	1	1	Free
Mauritania	6	5	Not Free	Sri Lanka*	5▼	4	Partly Free
Mauritius*	1	2	Free	Sudan	7	7	Not Free
Mexico*	3▼	3	Partly Free▼	Suriname*	2	2	Free
Micronesia*	1	1	Free	Swaziland	7	5	Not Free
Moldova*	3	3▲	Partly Free	Sweden*	1	1	Free
Monaco*	2	1	Free	Switzerland*	1	1	Free
Mongolia*	2	2	Free	Syria	7	6	Not Free
Montenegro*	3	2	Free	Taiwan*	1	2	Free
Morocco	5	4	Partly Free	Tajikistan	6	5	Not Free
Mozambique	4	3	Partly Free	Tanzania*	3▲	3	Partly Free
Namibia*	2	2	Free	Thailand	5	4	Partly Free
Nauru*	1	1	Free	Togo	5	4	Partly Free
Nepal	4	4	Partly Free	Tonga	3▲	3	Partly Free
Netherlands*	1	1	Free	Trinidad and Tobago*	2	2	Free
New Zealand*	1	1	Free	Tunisia	7	5	Not Free
Nicaragua*	4	4	Partly Free	Turkey*	3	3	Partly Free
Niger	5	4	Partly Free	Turkmenistan	7	7	Not Free
Nigeria	4▲	4	Partly Free	Tuvalu*	1	1	Free
North Korea	7	7	Not Free	Uganda	5	4	Partly Free
Norway*	1	1	Free	Ukraine*	3	3▼	Partly Free▼
Oman	6	5	Not Free	United Arab Emirates	6	5	Not Free
Pakistan	4	5	Partly Free	United Kingdom*	1	1	Free
Palau*	1	1	Free	United States*	1	1	Free
Panama*	1	2	Free	Uruguay*	1	1	Free
Papua New Guinea*	4	3	Partly Free	Uzbekistan	7	7	Not Free
Paraguay*	3	3	Partly Free	Vanuatu*	2	2	Free
Peru*	2	3	Free	Venezuela	5	5▼	Partly Free
Philippines	3▲	3	Partly Free	Vietnam	7	5	Not Free
Poland*	1	1	Free	Yemen	6	5	Not Free
Portugal*	1	1	Free	Zambia*	3	4	Partly Free
Qatar	6	5	Not Free	Zimbabwe	6	6	Not Free
Romania*	2	2	Free				
Russia	6	5	Not Free				
Rwanda	6	5	Not Free				
St. Kitts and Nevis*	1	1	Free				
St. Lucia*	1	1	Free				
St. Vincent and the Grenadines*	1▲	1	Free				
Samoa*	2	2	Free				
San Marino*	1	1	Free				
São Tomé and Príncipe*	2	2	Free				
Saudi Arabia	7	6	Not Free				

PR and CL stand for Political Rights and Civil Liberties, respectively; 1 represents the most free and 7 the least free rating.

▼▲ up or down indicates an improvement or decline in ratings or status since the last survey.

★ up or down indicates a trend of positive or negative changes that took place but were not sufficient to result in a change in political rights or civil liberties ratings.

* indicates a country's status as an electoral democracy.

Note: The ratings reflect global events from January 1, 2010, through December 31, 2010.

Table of Related Territories

Territory	PR	CL	Freedom Rating
Hong Kong	5	2	Partly Free
Puerto Rico	1	1	Free

Table of Disputed Territories

Country	PR	CL	Freedom Rating
Abkhazia	5	5	Partly Free
Gaza Strip	6	6	Not Free
Indian Kashmir	4	5▼	Partly Free
Nagorno-Karabakh	6▼	5	Not Free ▼
Northern Cyprus	2	2	Free
Pakistani Kashmir	6	5	Not Free
Somaliland	4▲	5	Partly Free
South Ossetia	7	6	Not Free
Tibet	7	7	Not Free
Transnistria	6	6	Not Free
West Bank	6	5	Not Free
Western Sahara	7	6	Not Free

Combined Average Ratings: Independent Countries

FREE			NOT FREE
1.0	Grenada	Tonga	5.5
Andorra	Israel	Turkey	Algeria
Australia	Italy	Ukraine	Angola
Austria	Japan		Azerbaijan
Bahamas	Mauritius	3.5	Bahrain
Barbados	Monaco	Bangladesh	Brunei
Belgium	Panama	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Cambodia
Canada	South Korea	Colombia	Congo (Brazzaville)
Cape Verde	Taiwan	Comoros	Djibouti
Chile		East Timor	Egypt
Costa Rica	2.0	Georgia	Gabon
Cyprus	Argentina	Kenya	Iraq
Czech Republic	Benin	Liberia	Jordan
Denmark	Brazil	Malawi	Kazakhstan
Dominica	Bulgaria	Maldives	Mauritania
Estonia	Dominican Republic	Mozambique	Oman
Finland	Latvia	Papua New Guinea	Qatar
France	Mongolia	Solomon Islands	Russia
Germany	Namibia	Zambia	Rwanda
Hungary	Romania		Tajikistan
Iceland	Samoa	4.0	United Arab Emirates
Ireland	Sao Tome and	Burkina Faso	Yemen
Kiribati	Principe	Guatemala	
Liechtenstein	Serbia	Guinea-Bissau	6.0
Lithuania	South Africa	Honduras	Afghanistan
Luxembourg	Suriname	Lebanon	Cameroon
Malta	Trinidad and Tobago	Malaysia	Congo (Kinshasa)
Marshall Islands	Vanuatu	Nepal	Ethiopia
Micronesia		Nicaragua	Iran
Nauru	2.5	Nigeria	Swaziland
Netherlands	Antigua and Barbuda		Tunisia
New Zealand	Botswana	4.5	Vietnam
Norway	El Salvador	Bhutan	Zimbabwe
Palau	Guyana	Haiti	
Poland	India	Kosovo	6.5
Portugal	Indonesia	Kuwait	Belarus
Saint Kitts and Nevis	Jamaica	Morocco	Chad
Saint Lucia	Mali	Niger	China
Saint Vincent and the	Montenegro	Pakistan	
Grenadines	Peru	Singapore	Cuba
San Marino		Sri Lanka	Laos
Slovakia	PARTLY FREE	Thailand	Saudi Arabia
Slovenia	3.0	Togo	Syria
Spain	Albania	Uganda	
Sweden	Bolivia		7.0
Switzerland	Ecuador	Armenia	Burma
Tlivalu	Lesotho	Burundi	Equatorial Guinea
United Kingdom	Macedonia	Central African Republic	Eritrea
United States	Mexico	Fiji	Libya
Uruguay	Moldova	The Gambia	North Korea
	Paraguay	Guinea	Somalia
1.5	Philippines	Kyrgyzstan	Sudan
Belize	Senegal	Madagascar	Turkmenistan
Croatia	Seychelles	Venezuela	Uzbekistan
Ghana	Sierra Leone		
Greece	Tanzania		

**Combined Average
Ratings:
Related Territories**

FREE
1.0
Puerto Rico

PARTLY FREE
3.5
Hong Kong

Combined Average Ratings: Disputed Territories

FREE
2.0
Northern Cyprus

PARTLY FREE
4.5
Indian Kashmir
Somaliland

5.0
Abkhazia

NOT FREE
5.5
Nagorno-Karabakh
Pakistani Kashmir
West Bank

6.0
Gaza Strip
Transnistria

6.5
South Ossetia
Western Sahara

7.0
Tibet

Electoral Democracies (115)

Albania	Indonesia
Andorra	Ireland
Antigua and Barbuda	Israel
Argentina	Italy
Australia	Jamaica
Austria	Japan
Bahamas	Kiribati
Bangladesh	Latvia
Barbados	Lesotho
Belgium	Liberia
Belize	Liechtenstein
Benin	Lithuania
Bolivia	Luxembourg
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Macedonia
Botswana	Malawi
Brazil	Maldives
Bulgaria	Mali
Canada	Malta
Cape Verde	Marshall Islands
Chile	Mauritius
Colombia	Mexico
Comoros	Micronesia
Costa Rica	Moldova
Croatia	Monaco
Cyprus	Mongolia
Czech Republic	Montenegro
Denmark	Namibia
Dominica	Nauru
Dominican Republic	Netherlands
East Timor	New Zealand
Ecuador	Nicaragua
El Salvador	Norway
Estonia	Palau
Finland	Panama
France	Papua New Guinea
Germany	Paraguay
Ghana	Peru
Greece	Philippines
Grenada	Poland
Guatemala	Portugal
Guyana	Romania
Hungary	St. Kitts and Nevis
Iceland	St. Lucia
India	St. Vincent and the Grenadines

Samoa
San Marino
Sao Tome and Principe
Senegal
Serbia
Seychelles
Sierra Leone
Slovakia
Slovenia
South Africa
South Korea
Spain
Suriname
Sweden

Switzerland
Taiwan
Tanzania
Tonga
Trinidad and Tobago
Turkey
Tuvalu
Ukraine
United Kingdom
United States
Uruguay
Vanuatu
Zambia

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850 *Freedom in the World—2011*

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854 *Freedom in the World—2011*

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