

# THE STATE OF DEMOCRACY: 2000

BY ADRIAN KARATNYCKY

**I**N A year when freedom did not make dramatic further strides in the world, it is important to remember that—despite fits and starts—human liberty has been on an upward trajectory throughout the 20th century. When viewed from the perspective of the century as a whole, democracy has made important and dramatic progress.

A look at the political maps of the world in 1900, 1950, and 2000 reveals monumental shifts in the number and nature of sovereign polities. At the beginning of the 20th century, there were 55 sovereign polities, 55 entities that were governed by colonial and imperial systems, and 20 protectorates under the sway or protection of foreign powers. No polity enjoyed competitive multiparty politics with universal suffrage, essential characteristics of an electoral democracy. A mere 12.4 percent of mankind lived under a form of government that could be deemed somewhat democratic, although suffrage was generally limited to males. In the United

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States, women could not vote, and the voting rights of racial minorities and the poor were restricted. Twenty-four other countries with some form of democratic government maintained similarly restrictive democratic practices, denying voting rights to women, racial minorities, and those without property. By contrast, 55.8 percent of the world's population lived under some form of monarchy (with 36.6 percent of the global population under absolute monarchic rule), and an additional 30.2 percent lived under colonial and imperial domination.

By 1950, the number of sovereign polities had risen to 80. With colonialism on the decline, the number of entities still under colonial and imperial rule had fallen to 43, while 31 entities remained protectorates, many of them former colonies making the transition to independence. In the aftermath of World War II, there was also a significant expansion in the number of democratically elected governments. In 1950, 22 democratic states accounted for 31 percent of the world's population. Countries with restrictive democratic practices (that is, countries with systems in which a single party exercised long-term political dominance and the role of opposition parties was limited [for example, the Philippines and Cuba in 1950] and countries in which women or ethnic minorities were excluded from the electoral process [for example, Colombia and Switzerland in 1950])



ILLUSTRATED BY BOBBI PRATTE

accounted for a further 11.9 percent of the world population. The middle of the 20th century also witnessed the spread of totalitarian communism as an alternative form of government, under which a third of the world's population then lived.

By the end of the 20th century, sovereignty and electoral democracy both registered dramatic gains. The number of sovereign states more than doubled, from 80 in 1950 to 192 in 1999 (which includes the international protectorates of East Timor and Bosnia-Herzegovina). The end of the century has also seen the virtual elimination of colonial and imperial rule. Today, 58.2 percent of the world's population lives under democratically elected leadership, while another 5 percent resides in states with restricted democratic practices (such as Malaysia, where the ruling party enjoys overwhelming electoral advantages and systematically works to suppress political space for opposition parties, and Mexico, whose parliament was elected in a democratic process but whose presidential election of 1994 was conducted in a less than free

## Freedom in the World

*Freedom in the World* is an evaluation of political rights and civil liberties in the world that Freedom House has provided on an annual basis since 1973. (Established in New York in 1941, Freedom House is a nonprofit organization that monitors political rights and civil liberties around the world.) The survey assesses a country's freedom by examining its record in these two areas: A country grants its citizens *political rights* when it permits them to form political parties that represent a significant range of voter choice and whose leaders can openly compete for and be elected to positions of power in government. A country upholds its citizens' *civil liberties* when it respects and protects their religious, ethnic, economic, linguistic, and other rights, including gender and family rights, personal freedoms, and freedoms of the press, belief, and association. The survey rates each country on a seven-point scale for both political rights and civil liberties (1 representing the most free and 7 the least free) and then divides the world into three broad categories: "Free" (countries whose ratings average 1-3); "Partly Free" (countries whose ratings average 3-5.5); and "Not Free" (countries whose ratings average 5.5-7).

The ratings are not merely assessments of the conduct of governments. Rather, they are intended to reflect the reality of daily life. Thus a country with a benign government facing violent forces (for example, terrorist movements or insurgencies) hostile to an open society will be graded on the basis of the on-the-ground conditions that determine whether the population is able to exercise its freedoms. The survey enables scholars and policymakers both to assess the direction of global change annually and to examine trends in freedom over time and on a comparative basis across regions with different political and economic systems.

and fair fashion). In sum, electoral democracies constitute 120 of the 192 internationally recognized independent polities. Indeed the idea of national sovereignty has generally been accompanied by the idea of personal sovereignty within a democratically accountable state.

The trend toward democratically elected government has been accompanied by a trend toward broader political freedom and enhanced civil liberties. The adoption in 1948 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights helped spark a growing global awareness of human freedom. Central to the spread of this awareness has been the ongoing revolution in communications technology, which has decentralized state control of information and allowed for its cheaper and more rapid dissemination.

Freedom House's end-of-century survey of *Freedom in the World* finds that 85 of the world's 192 countries (44 percent) are Free, meaning that these countries maintain a high degree of political and economic freedom and respect basic civil liberties. This figure represented a drop of three from last year. Another 59 countries (31 percent of all states) were rated as Partly Free, enjoying more limited political rights and civil liberties, often in a context of corruption, weak rule of law, ethnic strife, or civil war. This represented an increase of six from the previous year. Finally, 48 countries (25 percent of all states) that deny their citizens basic rights and civil liberties were rated as Not Free, a decrease of two from the previous year. In all, 38.9 percent of the world's population currently lives in Free countries, 25.3 percent lives in Partly Free states, and 35.8 percent lives in countries that are Not Free.

A closer look at the dynamics of political change in 1999 helps to give some definition to the broader trends. Two of the world's most populous developing countries, Indonesia and Nigeria, both made transitions to electoral democracy and improved their freedom scores (while remaining within the "Partly Free" category). Fiji entered the ranks of Free countries as a consequence of an improved political environment, which included the holding of successful elections within the framework of new, fairer electoral laws. Progress was also registered in Djibouti, which advanced from Not Free to Partly Free status as a result of the free and fair outcome of presidential elections held in April 1999 and the subsequent release of some 40 political prisoners. East Timor, which is currently a UN protectorate, saw its status improve from Not Free to Partly Free as a result of the end of violence by Indonesian military, security, and paramilitary forces. In Niger, which also advanced from Not Free to Partly Free status, free and fair presidential elections were held in November 1999, following a referendum that returned the country to democratic rule. Togo advanced from Not Free to Partly Free as a result of more open political discourse signaled by the return from exile of one of the country's main opposition leaders. With the end of Slobodan Milošević's terror campaign in Kosovo and the establishment of a United Nations protectorate in that territory, Yugoslavia saw the resurgence of independent civic life, a vibrant opposition print media, and local television that broadcast opposition views. These factors raised Yugoslavia's rating from Not Free

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to Partly Free.

Venezuela exited the ranks of Free countries and is now rated Partly Free, in large measure due to the authoritarian actions of its new president, Hugo Chávez. He restricted the power of the democratically elected congress, created what amounts to a parallel government of military cronies, and further eroded the country's system of checks and balances by effectively ending judicial independence. Nicaragua's rating dropped from Free to Partly Free because what appear to be trumped-up charges were filed against the country's comptroller general, who was vigorously investigating serious allegations of high-level corruption. Honduras declined from Free to Partly Free, as the elected civilian government faced serious challenges of military insubordination. Malawi also declined to Partly Free status as a result of political violence accompanying the June presidential elections that targeted Muslims in a stronghold of an opposition candidate.

Two states declined from Partly Free to Not Free status in 1999. The biggest setback for democracy occurred in Pakistan, where the military toppled an ineffective elected government that had been losing popular legitimacy due to rising political corruption and violence. Eritrea also exited the ranks of Partly Free states and is now Not Free, as a result of the government's hostile attitude toward independent civil society and its increasing restriction of opposition political parties, which has effectively put an end to any semblance of a multiparty system. Eritrea's move toward authoritarianism has been exacerbated by an ongoing war with Ethiopia.

The dramatic gains for freedom registered in the 1980s and earlier in the 1990s did not continue in

1999. Nevertheless, the survey's findings registered more significant upward than downward change by a margin of 27 to 18.

In all, 27 countries registered significant gains in freedom, either moving up to a higher category (Free or Partly Free) or improving their freedom scores (on a 1-to-7 scale for political rights and for civil liberties) while remaining within the same category. In addition to the six countries whose category rating improved (Djibouti, East Timor, Fiji, Niger, Togo, and Yugoslavia), 20 countries registered numerical gains signifying positive change. By contrast, six countries saw their freedom category rating drop to Partly Free or Not Free (Eritrea, Honduras, Malawi, Nicaragua, Pakistan, and Venezuela), and 12 other countries registered a decline in their freedom scores.

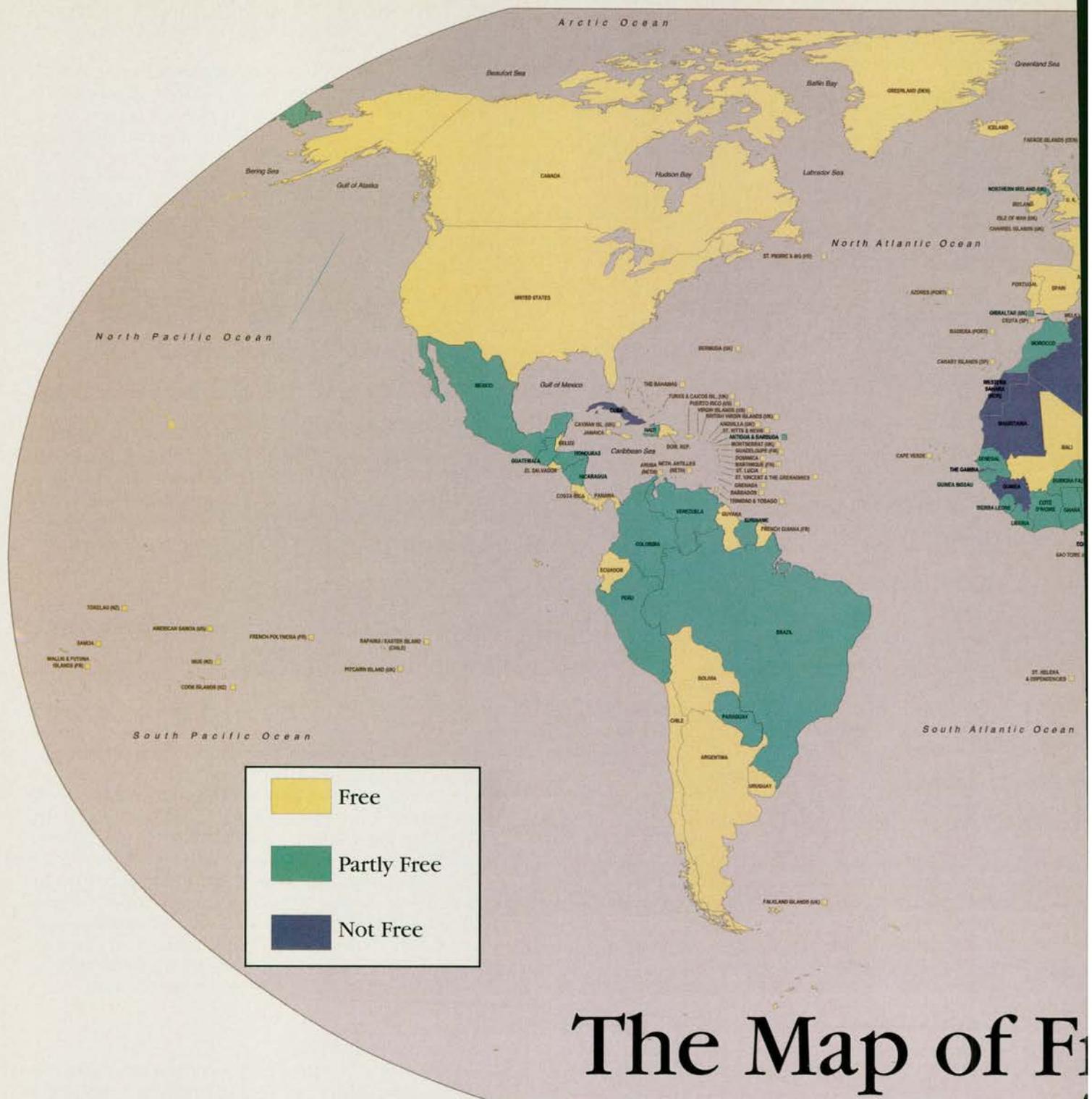
Most significantly, the Islamic world, long resistant to democratic change, is beginning to show signs of liberalization that include modest democratic reforms and, in several cases, growing democratic ferment.

At the end of the century that witnessed the emergence of democracy as the preeminent form of government, there remained 47 states that denied their citizens a broad range of basic freedoms. Among these states, 13 have been given the survey's lowest rating of 7 for political rights and 7 for civil liberties. The 13 "worst-rated" countries represent a narrow range of systems and cultures. Three (Cuba, North Korea, and Vietnam) are one-party Marxist-Leninist regimes, and eight are majority Islamic countries (Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, and Turkmenistan). Of the latter, Turkmenistan is a postcommunist country; Iraq, Libya, and Syria are led by secular Ba'athist or socialist parties; Afghanistan is a fundamentalist Islamic theocracy; Sudan is led by a government that embraces fundamentalist Islamic rhetoric; and Saudi Arabia has made important concessions to conservative clerics. The remaining "worst-rated" countries are Burma and Equatorial Guinea, both tightly controlled military dictatorships. One "worst-rated" territory (Tibet) is under the jurisdiction of China's one-party communist rule; the other (Chechnya) is under brutal attack by Russia. More importantly, of the 13 "worst-rated" countries and the two "worst-rated" territories, all but two (Saudi Arabia and Equatorial Guinea) have experienced a significant period of one-party socialist rule in the last 15 years.

### Regional Patterns

Democracy and freedom have been on the upswing since the mid-1970s. Few would dispute that this trend has been visible across all continents and in most cultures, underscoring that human liberty and democracy are not Western constructs but universal aspirations. Yet while the expansion of democracy and freedom has been global, it has not everywhere proceeded at the same pace. There have been important geographical and cultural variations that deserve attention and deeper understanding.

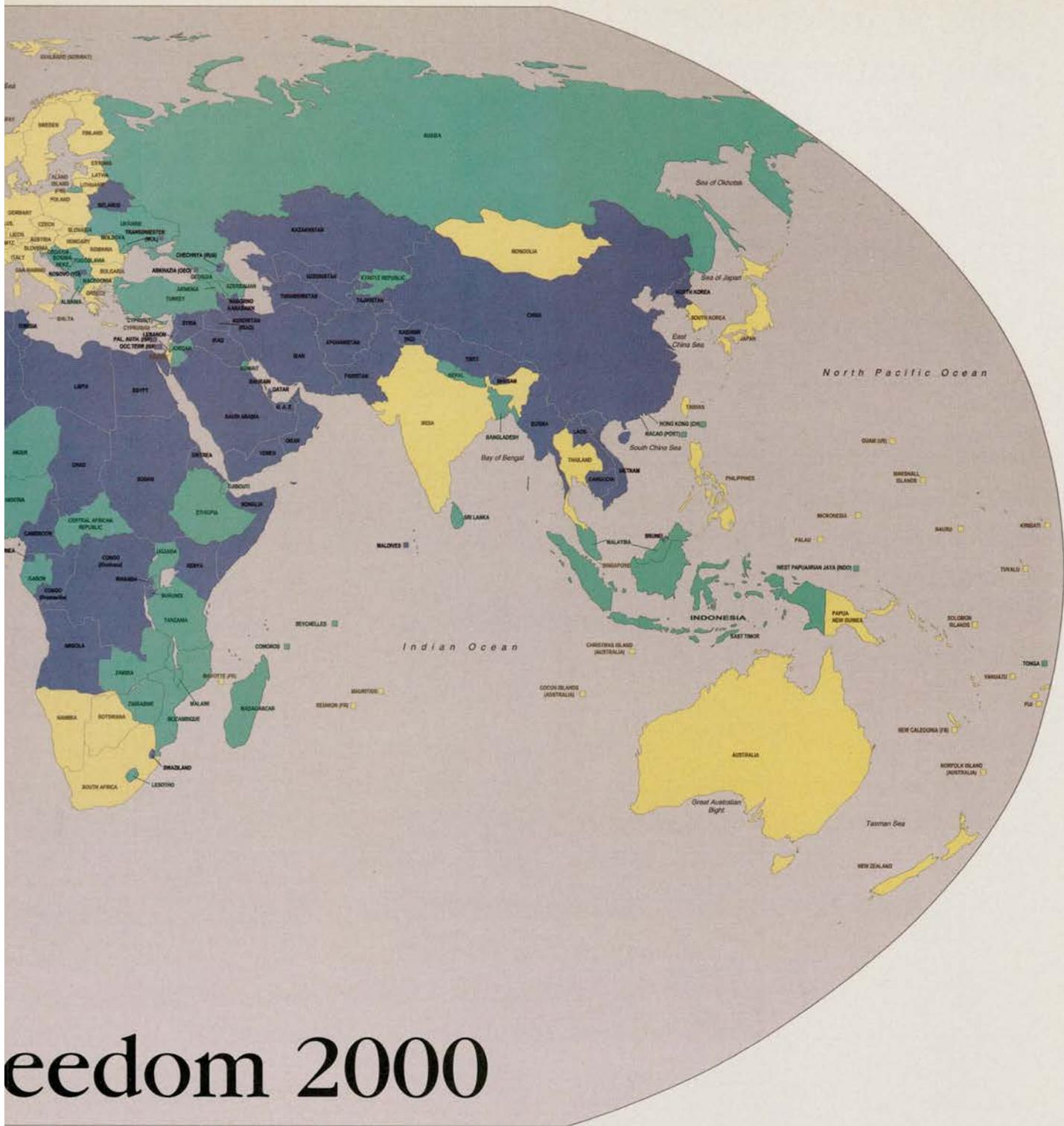
At the dawn of the new millennium, democracy and freedom are the dominant trends in Western and East-Central Europe, in the Americas, and increasingly in  
*(Text continues on page 30)*



# The Map of Freedom

The Map of Freedom reflects the findings of Freedom House's 1999-2000 survey *Freedom in the World*. *Freedom in the World* is an annual institutional effort that monitors the gains and losses for political rights and civil liberties in 192 nations and 60 related and disputed territories. For each country, the Survey provides a concise report on political and human rights developments, along with ratings of political rights and civil liberties. Based on these ratings, countries are divided into three categories: Free, Partly Free, and Not Free, as reflected in the Map of Freedom.

In Free countries, citizens enjoy a high degree of political and civil freedom. Partly Free countries are characterized by some restrictions on political rights and civil liberties, often in the context of corruption, weak rule of law, ethnic strife, or civil war. In Not Free countries, the political process is tightly controlled and basic freedoms are denied.



# Freedom 2000

In 2000, there are 2.324 billion people living in Free societies, representing 38.90 percent of the world's population. There are 1.529 billion people living in Partly Free societies, representing 25.58 percent of the world's population. There are 2.122 billion people living in Not Free societies, representing 35.51 percent of the world's population.

This map is available as a 20" x 30" poster; contact Freedom House at 202/296-5101, or e-mail [fh@freedomhouse.org](mailto:fh@freedomhouse.org).



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# Table of Independent Countries: Comparative Measures of Freedom

TREND ARROW	COUNTRY	POLITICAL RIGHTS	CIVIL LIBERTIES	FREEDOM RATING
	Afghanistan	7	7	Not Free
	Albania	4	5	Partly Free
	Algeria	6	5	Not Free
	Andorra	1	1	Free
↘	Angola	6	6	Not Free
	Antigua and Barbuda	4	3	Partly Free
	Argentina	2 ▲	3	Free
	Armenia	4	4	Partly Free
	Australia	1	1	Free
	Austria	1	1	Free
	Azerbaijan	6	4	Partly Free
	Bahamas	1	1 ▲	Free
	Bahrain	7	6	Not Free
	Bangladesh	3 ▼	4	Partly Free
	Barbados	1	1	Free
↘	Belarus	6	6	Not Free
	Belgium	1	2	Free
	Belize	1	1	Free
	Benin	2	3 ▼	Free
	Bhutan	7	6	Not Free
↘	Bolivia	1	3	Free
↘	Bosnia-Herzegovina	5	5	Partly Free
	Botswana	2	2	Free
↘	Brazil	3	4	Partly Free
	Brunei	7	5	Not Free
	Bulgaria	2	3	Free
	Burkina Faso	4 ▲	4	Partly Free
	Burma	7	7	Not Free
	Burundi	6 ▲	6	Not Free
	Cambodia	6	6	Not Free
	Cameroon	7	6 ▼	Not Free
	Canada	1	1	Free
	Cape Verde	1	2	Free
▲	Central African Republic	3	4	Partly Free
	Chad	6	5 ▼	Not Free
	Chile	2 ▲	2	Free
	China (PRC)	7	6	Not Free
	Colombia	4 ▼	4	Partly Free
	Comoros	6 ▼	4	Partly Free
	Congo (Brazzaville)	6 ▲	5	Not Free
	Congo (Kinshasa)	7	6	Not Free
↘	Costa Rica	1	2	Free
	Cote D'Ivoire	6	4	Partly Free
	Croatia	4	4	Partly Free
	Cuba	7	7	Not Free
	Cyprus (Greek)	1	1	Free
	Czech Republic	1	2	Free
	Denmark	1	1	Free

TREND ARROW	COUNTRY	POLITICAL RIGHTS	CIVIL LIBERTIES	FREEDOM RATING
	Djibouti	4 ▲	6	Partly Free
	Dominica	1	1	Free
↘	Dominican Republic	2	3	Free
	East Timor	6 ▲	4 ▲	Partly Free
↘	Ecuador	2	3	Free
	Egypt	6	5 ▲	Not Free
	El Salvador	2	3	Free
	Equatorial Guinea	7	7	Not Free
	Eritrea	7 ▼	5 ▼	Not Free
	Estonia	1	2	Free
	Ethiopia	5 ▼	5 ▼	Partly Free
	Fiji	2 ▲	3	Free
	Finland	1	1	Free
	France	1	2	Free
	Gabon	5	4	Partly Free
	The Gambia	7	5	Not Free
	Georgia	3	4	Partly Free
	Germany	1	2	Free
	Ghana	3	3	Partly Free
	Greece	1	3	Free
	Grenada	1	2	Free
	Guatemala	3	4	Partly Free
	Guinea	6	5	Not Free
▲	Guinea-Bissau	3	5	Partly Free
	Guyana	2	2	Free
	Haiti	5	5	Partly Free
	Honduras	3 ▼	3	Partly Free
	Hungary	1	2	Free
	Iceland	1	1	Free
	India	2	3	Free
	Indonesia	4 ▲	4	Partly Free
	Iran	6	6	Not Free
	Iraq	7	7	Not Free
	Ireland	1	1	Free
	Israel	1	2 ▲	Free
	Italy	1	2	Free
	Jamaica	2	2	Free
	Japan	1	2	Free
	Jordan	4	4 ▲	Partly Free
	Kazakhstan	6	5	Not Free
	Kenya	6	5	Not Free
	Kiribati	1	1	Free
	Korea, North	7	7	Not Free
	Korea, South	2	2	Free
	Kuwait	4 ▲	5	Partly Free
	Kyrgyz Republic	5	5	Partly Free
	Laos	7	6	Not Free
	Latvia	1	2	Free
	Lebanon	6	5	Not Free
	Lesotho	4	4	Partly Free
	Liberia	4	5	Partly Free

TREND ARROW	COUNTRY	POLITICAL RIGHTS	CIVIL LIBERTIES	FREEDOM RATING
	Libya	7	7	Not Free
	Liechtenstein	1	1	Free
	Lithuania	1	2	Free
	Luxembourg	1	1	Free
↓	Macedonia	3	3	Partly Free
	Madagascar	2	4	Partly Free
	Malawi	3 ▼	3	Partly Free
	Malaysia	5	5	Partly Free
	Maldives	6	5	Not Free
	Mali	3	3	Free
	Malta	1	1	Free
	Marshall Islands	1	1	Free
	Mauritania	6	5	Not Free
	Mauritius	1	2	Free
↑	Mexico	3	4	Partly Free
	Micronesia	1	2	Free
	Moldova	2	4	Partly Free
	Monaco	2	1	Free
↑	Mongolia	2	3	Free
↑	Morocco	5	4	Partly Free
	Mozambique	3	4	Partly Free
	Namibia	2	3	Free
	Nauru	1	3	Free
	Nepal	3	4	Partly Free
	Netherlands	1	1	Free
	New Zealand	1	1	Free
	Nicaragua	3 ▼	3	Partly Free
	Niger	5 ▲	5	Partly Free
	Nigeria	4 ▲	3 ▲	Partly Free
	Norway	1	1	Free
	Oman	6	6	Not Free
	Pakistan	7 ▼	5	Not Free
	Palau	1	2	Free
	Panama	1 ▲	2 ▲	Free
	Papua New Guinea	2	3	Free
	Paraguay	4	3	Partly Free
	Peru	5	4	Partly Free
	Philippines	2	3	Free
	Poland	1	2	Free
	Portugal	1	1	Free
	Qatar	6 ▲	6	Not Free
	Romania	2	2	Free
	Russia	4	5 ▼	Partly Free
	Rwanda	7	6	Not Free
	St. Kitts and Nevis	1	2	Free
	St. Lucia	1	2	Free
	St. Vincent and Grenadines	2	1	Free
	Samoa	2	2 ▲	Free
	San Marino	1	1	Free
	Sao Tome and Principe	1	2	Free
	Saudi Arabia	7	7	Not Free

TREND ARROW	COUNTRY	POLITICAL RIGHTS	CIVIL LIBERTIES	FREEDOM RATING
↑	Senegal	4	4	Partly Free
	Seychelles	3	3	Partly Free
↑	Sierre Leone	3	5	Partly Free
	Singapore	5	5	Partly Free
	Slovakia	1 ▲	2	Free
	Slovenia	1	2	Free
	Solomon Islands	1	2	Free
	Somalia	7	7	Not Free
	South Africa	1	2	Free
	Spain	1	2	Free
	Sri Lanka	3	4	Partly Free
	Sudan	7	7	Not Free
	Suriname	3	3	Partly Free
	Swaziland	6	5 ▼	Not Free
	Sweden	1	1	Free
	Switzerland	1	1	Free
	Syria	7	7	Not Free
	Taiwan (Rep. of China)	2	2	Free
	Tajikistan	6	6	Not Free
	Tanzania	4 ▲	4	Partly Free
	Thailand	2	3	Free
	Togo	5 ▲	5	Partly Free
	Tonga	5	3	Partly Free
	Trinidad and Tobago	1	2	Free
	Tunisia	6	5	Not Free
	Turkey	4	5	Partly Free
	Turkmenistan	7	7	Not Free
	Tuvalu	1	1	Free
	Uganda	5 ▼	5 ▼	Partly Free
↓	Ukraine	3	4	Partly Free
	United Arab Emirates	6	5	Not Free
	United Kingdom*	1	2	Free
	United States	1	1	Free
	Uruguay	1	2	Free
↓	Uzbekistan	7	6	Not Free
	Vanuatu	1	3	Free
	Venezuela	4 ▼	4 ▼	Partly Free
	Vietnam	7	7	Not Free
	Yemen	5	6	Not Free
	Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro)	5 ▲	5 ▲	Partly Free
	Zambia	5	4	Partly Free
	Zimbabwe	6 ▼	5	Partly Free

1 represents the most free and 7 the least free rating.

↑ ↓ up or down indicates a general trend in freedom.

▲ ▼ up or down indicates a change in political rights or civil liberties since the last Survey.

\* excluding Northern Ireland

The Freedom Rating is an overall judgment based on survey results. See the sidebar on page 24 for more details on the Survey methodology.

(Continued from page 25)

the Asia-Pacific region. In the former Soviet Union, the picture remains mixed, with freedom's further expansion stalled and a number of countries becoming increasingly authoritarian. In Africa, Free societies and electoral democracies remain a distinct minority. While there are no democracies or Free states within the Arab world, and there is a low proportion of Free and democratic states in other predominantly Muslim societies, 1999 was a year of democratic ferment in the Islamic world.

Of the 53 countries in Africa, eight are Free (15 percent), 25 are Partly Free (47 percent), and 20 are Not Free (38 percent). With democratic elections in Djibouti, Niger, and Nigeria, 20 African countries (38 percent) are electoral democracies. At the end of 1999, Malawi dropped from Free to Partly Free and Eritrea from Partly Free to Not Free, while Djibouti, Niger, and Togo rose from Not Free to Partly Free. The survey also records significant improvement (but without a category change) in Nigeria, more modest progress in Burkina Faso, Burundi, and Tanzania, and modest declines in freedom in Benin, Cameroon, Chad, Comoros, Ethiopia, Uganda, and Zimbabwe.

In the Asia-Pacific region, nine of the 26 larger countries are Free (35 percent), seven are Partly Free (27 percent), and 10 are Not Free (38 percent). Despite the looming presence of communist China and the rhetoric of "Asian values," 14 (54 percent) of the re-

gion's polities are electoral democracies.

Of the 13 smaller Asia-Pacific island countries, 11 are Free, one (Tonga) is Partly Free, and one (the Sultanate of Brunei) is Not Free. With the exception of Tonga and Brunei, the other 11 island-countries are electoral democracies.

In East-Central Europe and the former USSR, there are growing signs of a deepening chasm. In Central Europe and parts of Eastern Europe, including the Baltic states, democracy and freedom prevail; in the former USSR, however, progress toward the emergence of open societies has stalled or failed. Overall, 19 of the 27 postcommunist countries of East-Central Europe and the former USSR are electoral democracies. Ten of the region's states are Free, 12 are Partly Free, and five are Not Free. However, all of the Not Free states are from the former USSR; with the exception of the Baltic States, none of the former Soviet Republics is Free. Stagnation and reversals for freedom characterized virtually all the non-Baltic Soviet states. Russia's war in Chechnya resumed with a brutal vengeance and has been accompanied by the growing influence of representatives from the security services in the upper echelons of power. Belarus's dictatorship under the erratic tyrant Alyaksandr Lukashenka remained Eastern Europe's most repressive state. A modest revival of civic opposition activity in Yugoslavia resulted in that country's improved freedom status.

Western Europe remains the preserve of Free coun-

## Freedom House on the Web

Founded in 1941, Freedom House counts among its early leaders Eleanor Roosevelt and Wendell Wilkie. Freedom House sponsors a variety of projects and publications devoted to the study and advocacy of freedom. It also conducts programs to build civil society, a free press, and human rights in a number of countries abroad.

Freedom House is best known for its surveys of freedom. In most cases, these surveys are conducted annually, and are used widely by scholars, teachers, government officials, and journalists.

These surveys can be accessed on the Freedom House Web site. They are available in their entirety and can be downloaded and used for teaching purposes.

The Freedom House Web address is [www.freedomhouse.org](http://www.freedomhouse.org). Freedom House currently publishes three major freedom surveys:

**Freedom in the World:** This is a comprehensive report on the state of freedom in every country in the world. The freedom survey has been published since 1973, and is widely used by scholars and government agencies. The survey is written in non-academic language that is easily accessible to students. The survey can be accessed by clicking on [www.freedomhouse.org/survey99](http://www.freedomhouse.org/survey99).

**World Press Freedom Survey:** The press freedom survey includes ratings for every country in the world. The most recent edition devotes special attention to the efforts of governments to censor access to the Internet. The press freedom survey can be accessed by clicking on [www.freedomhouse.org/pfs2000](http://www.freedomhouse.org/pfs2000).

**Nations in Transit:** The NIT is a comprehensive report on the condition of political, economic, and social reform in the post-communist world. It can be accessed by clicking on [www.freedomhouse.org/nit98](http://www.freedomhouse.org/nit98).

**Freedom Maps:** Freedom House publishes two multicolored maps on which are displayed the condition of world freedom—

- The Map of Freedom depicts the condition of political rights and civil liberties in each country
- The Map of Press Freedom indicates the condition of world press freedom.

The freedom maps are a useful visual tool for teaching about the state of freedom. They can be obtained by contacting Freedom House at 202/296-5101 or at its e-mail address: [fh@freedomhouse.org](mailto:fh@freedomhouse.org).



tries and democracies, with all 24 states both Free and democratic.

Among the 35 countries in the Americas, 31 are electoral democracies (Mexico, Peru, Cuba, and Antigua and Barbuda are the exceptions). Twenty-two states are rated as Free, 12 are Partly Free, and one (Cuba) is Not Free. Negative trends produced a lower freedom rating for Honduras, Nicaragua and Venezuela, all of which declined from Free to Partly Free.

In the Middle East (excluding North Africa), the roots of democracy and freedom are the weakest. In this region, only one country is rated Free (Israel), three are rated Partly Free (Jordan, Kuwait, and Turkey) and 10 are Not Free. Israel and Turkey are the region's only two electoral democracies. Among the 16 states with an Arab majority in the Middle East and North Africa, there are no Free countries. Three predominantly Arab states—Jordan, Kuwait, and Morocco—are Partly Free. And while the year saw some evidence of modest democratic reforms in several Arab states, there remain no electoral democracies in the Arab world.

The survey continues to reveal interesting patterns in the relationship between cultures and political development. While there are broad differences within civilizations, and while democracy and human rights find expression in a wide array of cultures and beliefs, the survey shows some important variations in the relationship between religious belief or tradition and political freedom.

Of the 85 countries that are rated Free, 76 are majority Christian by tradition or belief. Of the nine Free countries that are not majority Christian, one is Israel, often considered part of a Judeo-Christian tradition, and two others, Mauritius and South Korea, have significant Christian communities representing at least a third of their population. Of the six remaining Free countries, Mali is predominantly Muslim; nearly half of Taiwan's population is Buddhist; Mongolia and Thailand are chiefly Buddhist; Japan has a majority that observes both Buddhist and Shinto traditions; and India is predominantly Hindu. Thirteen of the 63 countries with the poorest record in terms of political rights and civil liberties are predominantly Christian. By this indicator, a predominantly Christian country is more than five times as likely to be Free and democratic as it is to be repressive and nondemocratic. There is also a strong correlation between electoral democracy and Hinduism (India, Mauritius, and Nepal), and there is a significant number of Free countries among traditionally Buddhist societies and societies in which Buddhism is the most widespread faith (Japan, Mongolia, Taiwan, and Thailand).

The Islamic world remains most resistant to the spread of democracy and civil liberties, especially the Arab countries. Only one country with a Muslim majority (Mali) is Free, 14 are Partly Free, and 26 are Not Free. Eight of the 41 countries with a predominantly Muslim population—a net increase of two from last year—are electoral democracies: Albania, Bangladesh, Djibouti, Indonesia, Kyrgyzstan, Mali, Niger, and Turkey. Nevertheless, even as Pakistan exited this group, there were growing signs of political ferment and modest democratic reform in many Islamic countries.

## The 13 Worst Rated Countries

Afghanistan	Saudi Arabia
Burma	Somalia
Cuba	Sudan
Equatorial Guinea	Syria
Iraq	Turkmenistan
North Korea	Vietnam
Libya	

## The 2 Worst Rated Disputed Territories

Chechnya (Russia)	Tibet (China)
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In Indonesia, the world's most populous Islamic country, and in Nigeria, where it is estimated that roughly half the population is Muslim, political openings resulted in competitive democratic elections and an orderly transfer of power. Similarly, predominantly Muslim Djibouti and Niger held free and fair elections. Significantly, these four countries represent nearly one-quarter of the world's Muslims. If we factor in the Muslims living in the electoral democracies of Europe, the Americas, and India, a majority of the world's Muslims (roughly 600 million out of 1.15 billion) live under democratically elected governments.

Democratic ferment has also become a major current in the political life of Iran. The year saw a major struggle pitting civil society (which includes an active student movement) and pro-reform members of the government against government hard-line conservatives and unofficial paramilitary groups supporting them. President Khatami, a cleric who was elected in 1997 on a platform of moderate liberalization, declared in 1999: "A lively and democratic human society is one which thinks, one which is free, one which is based on the rule of law, and one which criticizes."

A major engine for the spread of the ideas of openness and democratic practices is the Al-Jazeera satellite television station, which broadcasts from Qatar and is viewed throughout the Arab world. Al-Jazeera offers news and commentary programs that include theological debates and appearances by political dissidents and exiles from across the region. In Qatar, which remains an extremely conservative society but where the emir is a major proponent of liberalization, 1999 saw the advent of elections based on universal suffrage to municipal councils with limited powers.

Yemen held its first direct presidential election in September 1999. Onerous restrictions kept the candidate of the major opposition Yemen Socialist Party from qualifying for the ballot, but the country nevertheless conducted a vote based on universal suffrage. In Morocco, positive trends included increased tolerance for opposition parties and the return of some political exiles to the country. In Jordan, a restrictive press law was relaxed and municipal elections were held in which opposition parties, including one linked

*(Continued on page 49)*