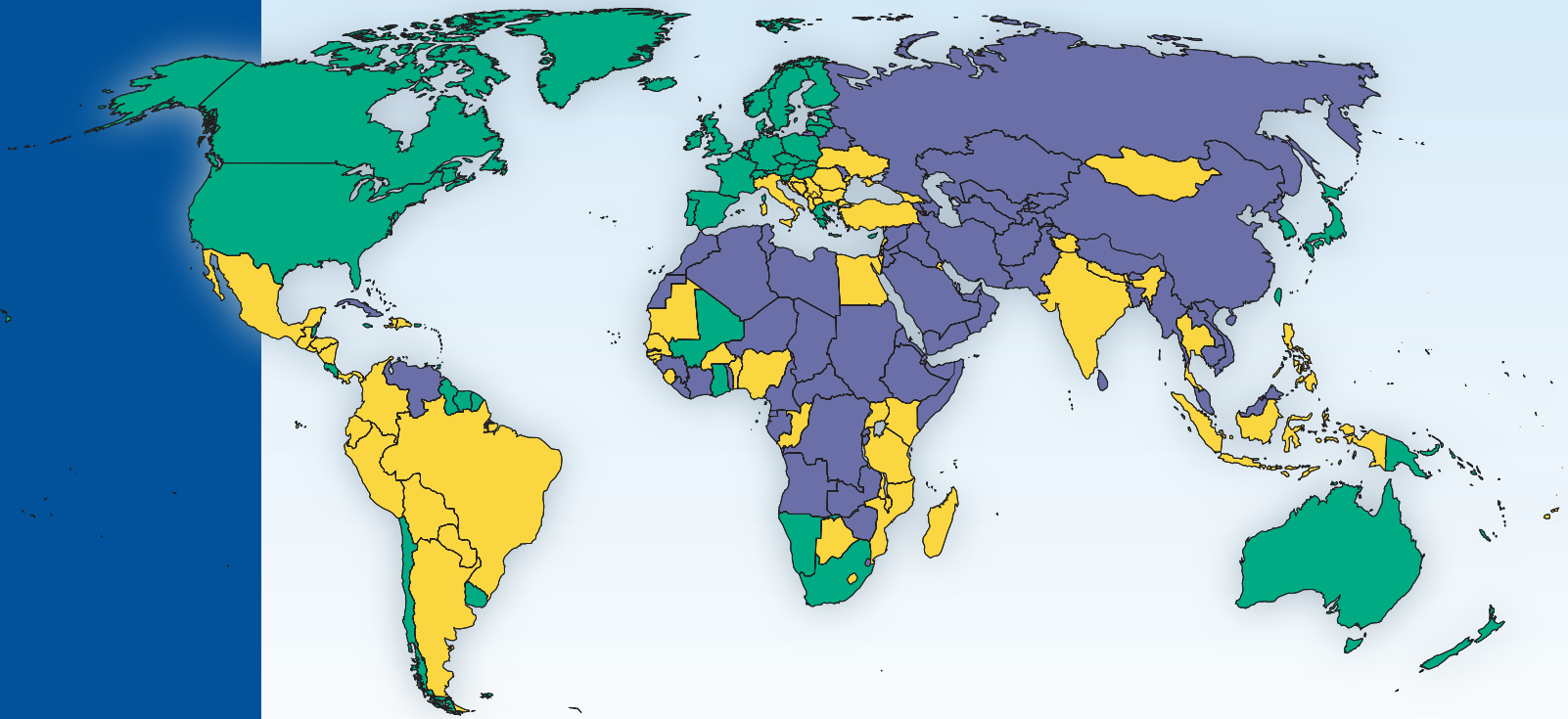




Freedom of the Press 2009



FURTHER DECLINES IN GLOBAL MEDIA INDEPENDENCE

SELECTED DATA FROM FREEDOM HOUSE'S
ANNUAL SURVEY OF PRESS FREEDOM



FREEDOM OF THE PRESS 2009:

FURTHER DECLINES IN GLOBAL MEDIA INDEPENDENCE

A free press plays a key role in sustaining a healthy democracy, and contributes to greater accountability, good governance, and economic development. Freedom House has been at the forefront in monitoring threats to media independence for nearly three decades. Its annual index, *Freedom of the Press*, tracks trends in global press freedom and draws attention to countries and regions where such freedom is in jeopardy.

The index, produced since 1980, assesses the degree of print, broadcast, and internet freedom in every country in the world, analyzing the events of each calendar year. Ratings are determined through an examination of three categories: the legal environment in which media outlets operate; political influences on reporting and access to information; and economic pressures on content and the dissemination of news. In the legal category, analysts assess the laws and regulations that affect the media as well as the extent to which the government and private actors use these mechanisms to restrict news outlets' ability to operate. The political category encompasses a variety of issues, including editorial pressure by the government or other actors; censorship and self-censorship; the ability of reporters to cover the news; and the extralegal intimidation of and violence against journalists. Finally, the index's economic category covers topics such as the structure, transparency, and concentration of media ownership; the costs of production and distribution; and the impact of advertising, subsidies, and bribery on content.

Ratings reflect not just government actions and policies, but also the influence of nonstate actors and the behavior of the press itself in testing boundaries, even in more restrictive environments. The ratings system is designed to capture the varied ways in which pressure can be placed on the flow of information and the ability of print, broadcast, and internet-based news outlets to function freely and without fear of repercussions. In short, the index seeks to provide a picture of the entire "enabling environment" in which the media in each country operate. It also assesses the diversity of news and information available to the public in any given country, from either local or transnational sources. Each country receives a numerical rating from 0 (the most free) to 100 (the least free), which serves as the basis for an overall press freedom designation of Free, Partly Free, or Not Free.

Findings of *Freedom of the Press 2009*

Of the 195 countries and territories assessed in *Freedom of the Press 2009*, which covers events and conditions in 2008, a total of 70 (36 percent) were rated Free, 61 (31 percent) were rated Partly Free, and 64 (33 percent) were rated Not Free. The previous year's index yielded 72 Free countries, 59 Partly Free countries, and 64 Not Free countries.

In terms of population, the 2009 survey found that only 17 percent of the world's inhabitants lived in countries that enjoyed a Free press, while 41 percent had a Partly Free press and 42 percent had a Not Free press. The percentage of those enjoying Free media in 2008 declined, while the percentage of people who lived in countries with a Partly Free media environment expanded slightly, as four countries moved into the Partly Free range.

The overall level of press freedom worldwide, as measured by the global average score, worsened slightly in 2008, continuing a seven-year downward trend. The averages for the legal, political, and economic categories all worsened as well, with the political category showing the largest decline.

The year featured no positive regional trends, with declines predominating in every part of the world. The largest regionwide declines were seen in the former Soviet Union and the Middle East and North Africa, while smaller negative trends were apparent in the Americas, Asia-Pacific, sub-Saharan Africa, and Western Europe. There were setbacks in a number of Free settings, including Hong Kong, Israel, and Italy, as well as in more authoritarian countries.

The declines in the **Middle East and North Africa** region stood in contrast to the previous year. Israel, which had been the only country in the region rated Free, moved into the Partly Free category due to the conflict in Gaza, which included increased travel restrictions on both Israeli and foreign reporters; official attempts to influence media coverage within Israel; and heightened self-censorship and biased reporting, particularly amid the outbreak of war in late December. A number of other countries registered small numerical declines in the region, which consistently has the worst average level of press freedom worldwide.

Central and Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union saw no status changes or large numerical movements, as the trends of previous years solidified. Considerable gaps remained between the levels of press freedom in the new European Union member states, those in the Balkans, and those in the former Soviet republics. However, backsliding in the former Soviet Union continued, with a number of countries—including Armenia, Kyrgyzstan, and Russia—showing further numerical declines, in large part due to legal pressure and attempts to control broadcast media outlets. Balkan countries like Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, and Croatia showed negative trends linked to increased physical threats and harassment of journalists.

Unlike in previous years, there were no status changes in **sub-Saharan Africa**, but a number of countries registered declines, including Senegal, Madagascar, Mauritania, Chad, Botswana, and South Africa. Official harassment of the press as well as increased use of legal means to restrict media freedom were key factors in many declines.

Asia-Pacific presented a mixed picture. Status downgrades were noted for Hong Kong, which declined from Free to Partly Free, and Cambodia, which dropped from Partly Free to Not Free. Numerical declines took place in Afghanistan, Sri Lanka, Fiji, Mongolia, and Taiwan, in most cases due to increased civil strife and the resulting pressure on media coverage and outlets. However, the region featured several bright spots as well, particularly in South Asia. The Maldives was upgraded from Not Free to Partly Free as part of a wider political transformation that included competitive elections, a change in president, and a new constitution that expanded protections for freedom of expression. Meanwhile, Bangladesh and Pakistan recovered from declines in the previous year, as emergency restrictions were removed and coverage of political events grew easier.

The Americas featured a positive status change for Guyana, from Partly Free to Free, thanks to a decrease in attacks against the media and the end of a government advertising boycott, as well as some positive trends in Haiti and Uruguay. Elsewhere in the region, significant numerical slippage was seen in Mexico, Bolivia, Ecuador, and Argentina, as attacks and hostile official rhetoric aimed at the media escalated.

Western Europe also saw negative movements in 2008, with a downgrade for Italy from Free to Partly Free due to the increased use of courts and libel laws to limit free speech, heightened physical and extralegal intimidation of journalists by both organized crime and far-right groups, and concerns over concentration of media ownership. Malta and Greece also suffered small numerical declines.

The world's worst-rated countries include Burma, Cuba, Eritrea, Libya, North Korea, and Turkmenistan. In these states, independent media are either nonexistent or barely able to operate, and citizens' access to unbiased information is severely limited. Rounding out the 10 most repressive media environments are two countries in the former Soviet Union—Belarus and Uzbekistan—and two in Africa—Equatorial Guinea and Zimbabwe—where media remain heavily restricted.

Karin Deutsch Karlekar, a senior researcher at Freedom House, served as managing editor of Freedom of the Press 2009. Overall guidance for the project was provided by Arch Puddington, director of research, and Christopher Walker, director of studies. Extensive research, editorial, and administrative assistance was provided by Denelle Burns, as well as by Tyler Royslance, Elizabeth Floyd, Joanna Perry, Joshua Siegel, Charles Liebling, and Aidan Gould. We would also like to thank our consultant writers and other members of the survey team for their contributions.

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The Lynde and Harry Bradley Foundation
National Endowment for Democracy
The Nicholas B. Ottaway Foundation
Taiwan Foundation for Democracy

Additional historical data, country reports, and findings from the annual index can be found at www.freedomhouse.org.

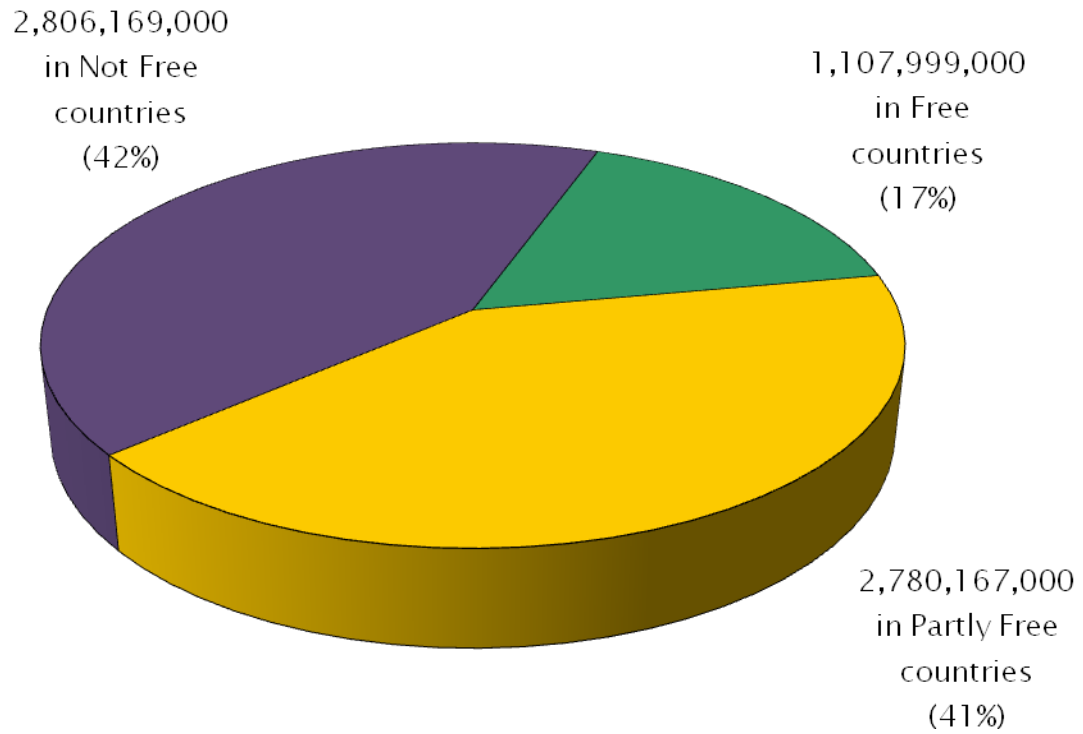
For more information about our press freedom work, please contact Karin Deutsch Karlekar, Senior Researcher and Managing Editor, Freedom of the Press, at karlekar@freedomhouse.org.

FREEDOM OF THE PRESS: A HISTORICAL REVIEW

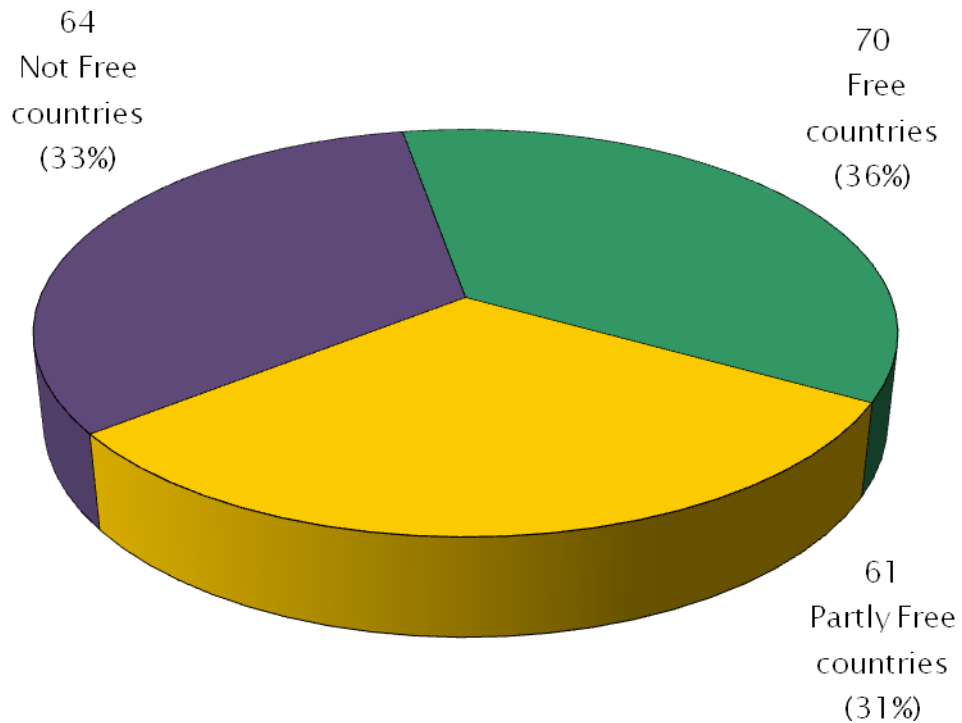


PRESS FREEDOM IN THE WORLD 2009

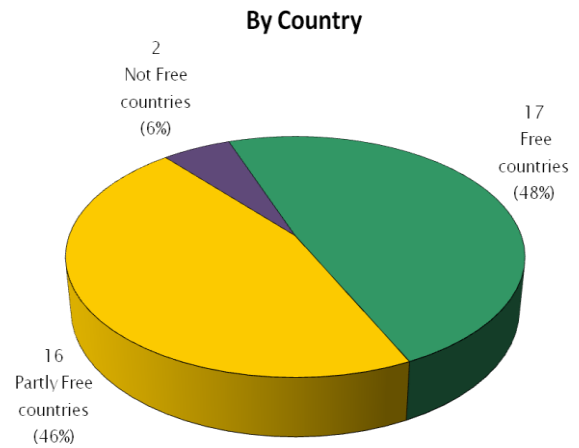
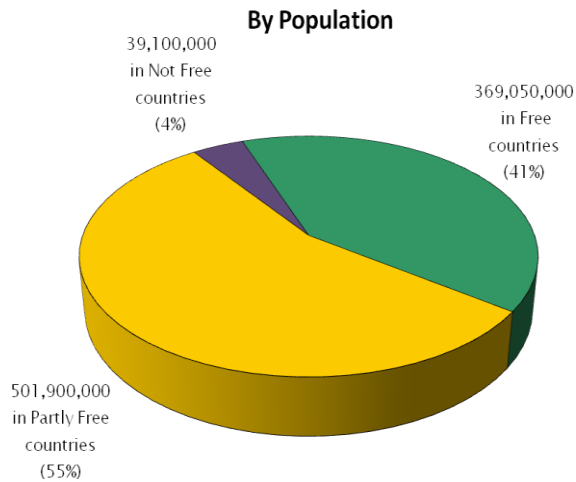
By Population



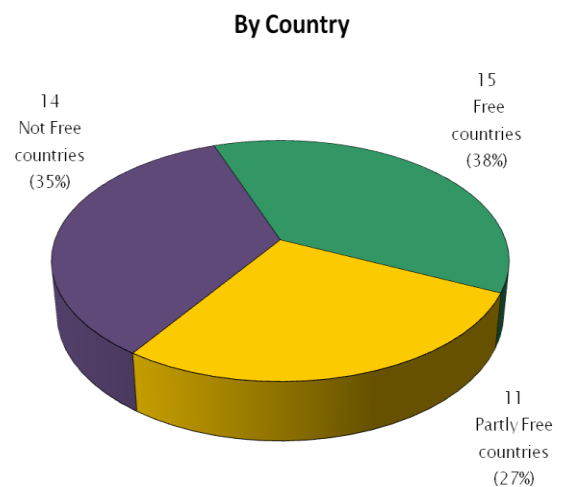
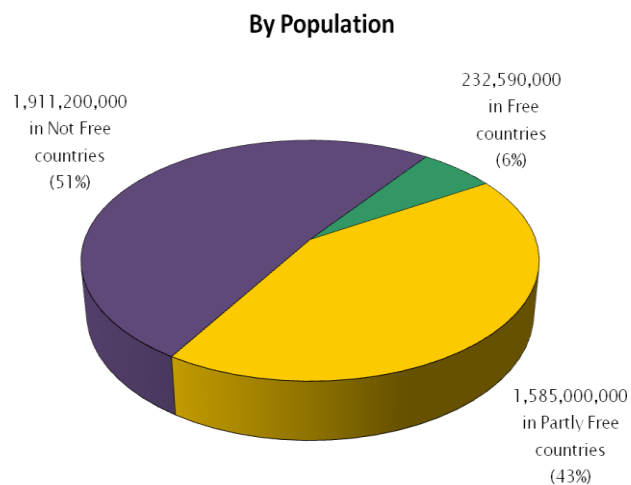
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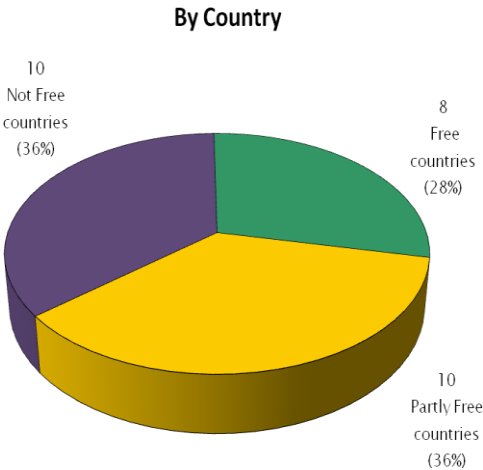
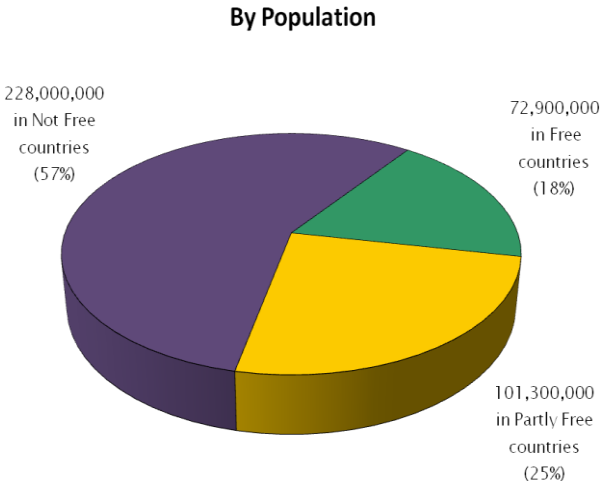
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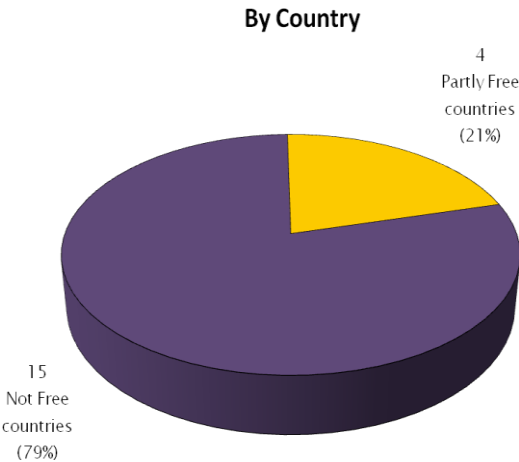
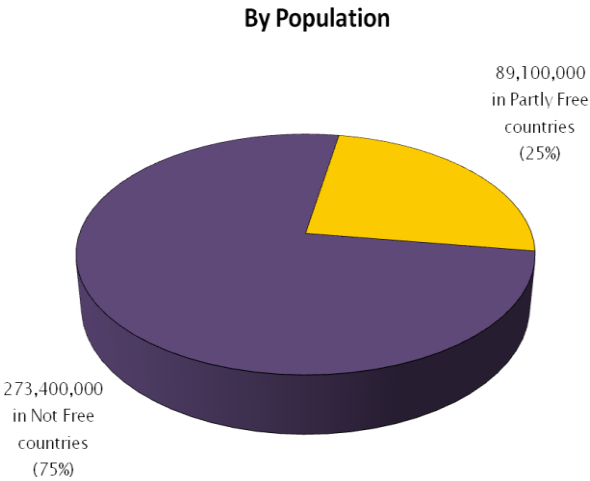
PRESS FREEDOM IN ASIA-PACIFIC



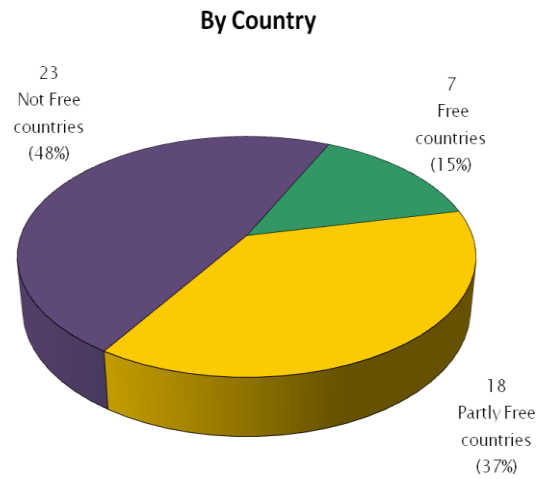
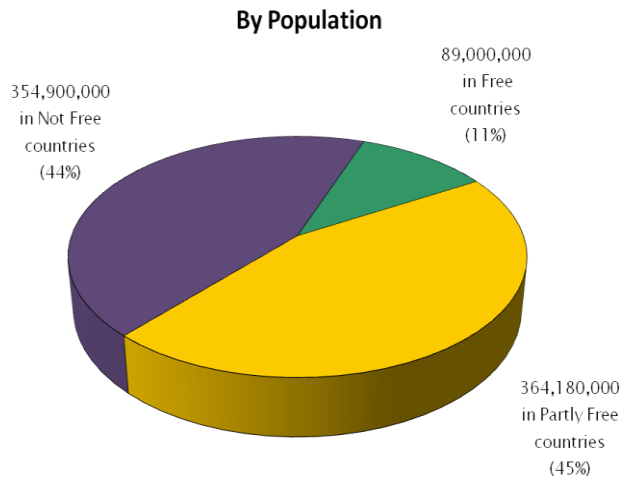
PRESS FREEDOM IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE / FORMER SOVIET UNION



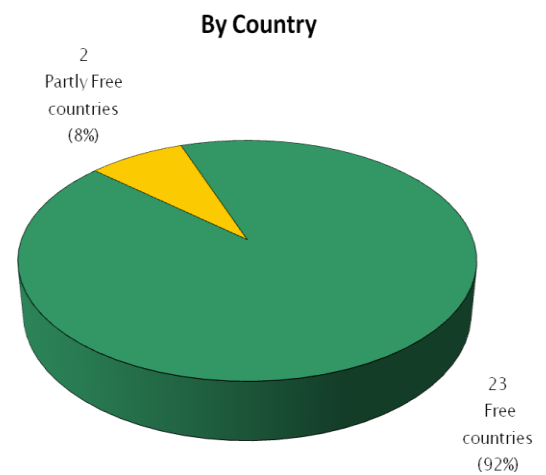
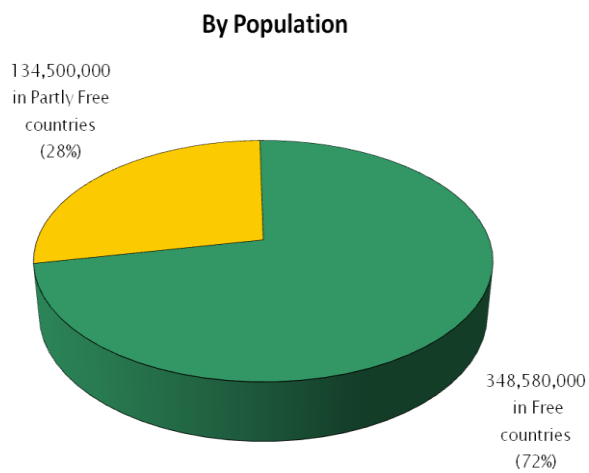
PRESS FREEDOM IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA



PRESS FREEDOM IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA



PRESS FREEDOM IN WESTERN EUROPE



FREEDOM OF THE PRESS 2009

Table of Global Press Freedom Rankings

Rank 2009	Country	Rating	Status
1	Iceland	9	Free
2	Finland	10	Free
	Norway	10	Free
4	Denmark	11	Free
	Sweden	11	Free
6	Belgium	12	Free
	Luxembourg	12	Free
8	Andorra	13	Free
	Netherlands	13	Free
	Switzerland	13	Free
11	Liechtenstein	14	Free
	New Zealand	14	Free
	Palau	14	Free
14	Estonia	15	Free
	Ireland	15	Free
	Jamaica	15	Free
	St Lucia	15	Free
18	Germany	16	Free
	Monaco	16	Free
	Portugal	16	Free
21	Marshall Islands	17	Free
	San Marino	17	Free
	St Vincent & Grenadines	17	Free
24	Czech Republic	18	Free
	Lithuania	18	Free
	United States	18	Free
27	Barbados	19	Free
	Canada	19	Free
	Costa Rica	19	Free
	St Kitts & Nevis	19	Free
	United Kingdom	19	Free
32	Bahamas	20	Free
33	Austria	21	Free
	Belize	21	Free
	Hungary	21	Free
	Japan	21	Free
	Micronesia	21	Free

Rank 2009	Country	Rating	Status
38	Australia	22	Free
	Cyprus	22	Free
	Dominica	22	Free
	France	22	Free
	Malta	22	Free
43	Latvia	23	Free
	Slovakia	23	Free
	Suriname	23	Free
	Taiwan	23	Free
	Trinidad & Tobago	23	Free
	Vanuatu	23	Free
49	Grenada	24	Free
	Poland	24	Free
	Slovenia	24	Free
	Spain	24	Free
53	Ghana	26	Free
	Mali	26	Free
	Mauritius	26	Free
	Papua New Guinea	26	Free
	Tuvalu	26	Free
	Uruguay	26	Free
59	Kiribati	27	Free
60	Cape Verde	28	Free
	Nauru	28	Free
	Sao Tome and Principe	28	Free
63	Chile	29	Free
	Greece	29	Free
	Samoa	29	Free
66	Guyana	30	Free
	Namibia	30	Free
	Solomon Islands	30	Free
	South Africa	30	Free
	South Korea	30	Free
71	Benin	31	Partly Free
	Israel	31	Partly Free
73	Italy	32	Partly Free
	Tonga	32	Partly Free
75	Hong Kong	33	Partly Free
76	Bulgaria	36	Partly Free
	India	36	Partly Free
78	Botswana	37	Partly Free
	East Timor	37	Partly Free
	Montenegro	37	Partly Free

Rank 2009	Country	Rating	Status
81	Antigua & Barbuda	38	Partly Free
	Croatia	38	Partly Free
83	Serbia	39	Partly Free
84	Dominican Republic	40	Partly Free
	Fiji	40	Partly Free
86	Burkina Faso	41	Partly Free
	Mongolia	41	Partly Free
	Mozambique	41	Partly Free
89	Bolivia	42	Partly Free
	Brazil	42	Partly Free
	El Salvador	42	Partly Free
92	Ecuador	44	Partly Free
	Panama	44	Partly Free
	Peru	44	Partly Free
	Romania	44	Partly Free
96	Nicaragua	45	Partly Free
	Philippines	45	Partly Free
98	Bosnia–Herzegovina	47	Partly Free
	Macedonia	47	Partly Free
99	Lesotho	48	Partly Free
100	Argentina	49	Partly Free
101	Albania	50	Partly Free
	Comoros	50	Partly Free
	Tanzania	50	Partly Free
	Turkey	50	Partly Free
106	Madagascar	51	Partly Free
107	Guinea–Bissau	52	Partly Free
	Honduras	52	Partly Free
109	Congo (Brazzaville)	53	Partly Free
	Haiti	53	Partly Free
	Senegal	53	Partly Free
	Uganda	53	Partly Free
113	Indonesia	54	Partly Free
	Nigeria	54	Partly Free
115	Kuwait	55	Partly Free
	Mexico	55	Partly Free
	Ukraine	55	Partly Free
118	Lebanon	56	Partly Free
	Malawi	56	Partly Free
	Maldives	56	Partly Free
	Sierra Leone	56	Partly Free
122	Nepal	57	Partly Free
	Thailand	57	Partly Free

Rank 2009	Country	Rating	Status
124	Mauritania	58	Partly Free
125	Colombia	59	Partly Free
	Paraguay	59	Partly Free
	Seychelles	59	Partly Free
128	Egypt	60	Partly Free
	Georgia	60	Partly Free
	Guatemala	60	Partly Free
	Kenya	60	Partly Free
132	Angola	61	Not Free
	Bhutan	61	Not Free
	Cambodia	61	Not Free
	Central African Republic	61	Not Free
136	Algeria	62	Not Free
	Pakistan	62	Not Free
138	Bangladesh	63	Not Free
	Liberia	63	Not Free
140	Jordan	64	Not Free
	Morocco	64	Not Free
	Niger	64	Not Free
143	Cameroon	65	Not Free
	Malaysia	65	Not Free
	Qatar	65	Not Free
	Zambia	65	Not Free
147	Guinea	66	Not Free
148	Cote d'Ivoire	67	Not Free
	Iraq	67	Not Free
	Moldova	67	Not Free
151	Armenia	68	Not Free
	Singapore	68	Not Free
153	Gabon	69	Not Free
	United Arab Emirates	69	Not Free
155	Sri Lanka	70	Not Free
156	Bahrain	71	Not Free
	Oman	71	Not Free
158	Kyrgyzstan	72	Not Free
	Togo	72	Not Free
160	Djibouti	73	Not Free
	Venezuela	73	Not Free
162	Afghanistan	74	Not Free
163	Brunei	75	Not Free
	Burundi	75	Not Free
165	Chad	76	Not Free
	Ethiopia	76	Not Free

Rank 2009	Country	Rating	Status
	Swaziland	76	Not Free
168	Azerbaijan	78	Not Free
	Kazakhstan	78	Not Free
	Sudan	78	Not Free
	Tajikistan	78	Not Free
172	The Gambia	79	Not Free
	Yemen	79	Not Free
174	Russia	80	Not Free
175	Congo (Kinshasa)	81	Not Free
176	Saudi Arabia	82	Not Free
	Tunisia	82	Not Free
178	Syria	83	Not Free
	Vietnam	83	Not Free
180	Somalia	84	Not Free
181	China	85	Not Free
	Iran	85	Not Free
	Rwanda	85	Not Free
184	IOT/PA*	86	Not Free
	Laos	86	Not Free
186	Zimbabwe	88	Not Free
187	Equatorial Guinea	90	Not Free
188	Belarus	91	Not Free
189	Uzbekistan	93	Not Free
190	Cuba	94	Not Free
	Eritrea	94	Not Free
	Libya	94	Not Free
193	Burma	96	Not Free
	Turkmenistan	96	Not Free
195	North Korea	98	Not Free

Status	Number of Countries	Percentage of Total
Free	70	36%
Partly Free	61	31%
Not Free	64	33%
TOTAL	195	100%

* Israeli–Occupied Territories/Palestinian Authority

FREEDOM OF THE PRESS 2009

Press Freedom Rankings by Region

AMERICAS

Rank 2009	Country	Rating	Status
1	Jamaica	15	Free
	St Lucia	15	Free
3	St Vincent & Grenadines	17	Free
4	United States	18	Free
5	Barbados	19	Free
	Canada	19	Free
	Costa Rica	19	Free
	St Kitts & Nevis	19	Free
9	Bahamas	20	Free
10	Belize	21	Free
11	Dominica	22	Free
12	Suriname	23	Free
	Trinidad & Tobago	23	Free
14	Grenada	24	Free
15	Uruguay	26	Free
16	Chile	29	Free
17	Guyana	30	Free
18	Antigua & Barbuda	38	Partly Free
19	Dominican Republic	40	Partly Free
20	Bolivia	42	Partly Free
	Brazil	42	Partly Free
	El Salvador	42	Partly Free
23	Ecuador	44	Partly Free
	Panama	44	Partly Free
	Peru	44	Partly Free
26	Nicaragua	45	Partly Free
27	Argentina	49	Partly Free
28	Honduras	52	Partly Free
29	Haiti	53	Partly Free
30	Mexico	55	Partly Free

Rank 2009	Country	Rating	Status
31	Colombia	59	Partly Free
	Paraguay	59	Partly Free
33	Guatemala	60	Partly Free
34	Venezuela	73	Not Free
35	Cuba	94	Not Free

Status	Number of Countries	Percentage of Total
Free	17	48%
Partly Free	16	46%
Not Free	2	6%
TOTAL	35	100%

ASIA-PACIFIC

Rank 2009	Country	Rating	Status
1	New Zealand	14	Free
	Palau	14	Free
3	Marshall Islands	17	Free
4	Japan	21	Free
	Micronesia	21	Free
6	Australia	22	Free
7	Taiwan	23	Free
	Vanuatu	23	Free
9	Papua New Guinea	26	Free
	Tuvalu	26	Free
11	Kiribati	27	Free
12	Nauru	28	Free
13	Samoa	29	Free
14	Solomon Islands	30	Free
	South Korea	30	Free
16	Tonga	32	Partly Free
17	Hong Kong	33	Partly Free
18	India	36	Partly Free
19	East Timor	37	Partly Free
20	Fiji	40	Partly Free
21	Mongolia	41	Partly Free
22	Philippines	45	Partly Free
23	Indonesia	54	Partly Free
24	Maldives	56	Partly Free
25	Nepal	57	Partly Free
	Thailand	57	Partly Free
27	Bhutan	61	Not Free
	Cambodia	61	Not Free
29	Pakistan	62	Not Free
30	Bangladesh	63	Not Free
31	Malaysia	65	Not Free
32	Singapore	68	Not Free
33	Sri Lanka	70	Not Free
34	Afghanistan	74	Not Free
35	Brunei	75	Not Free

Rank 2009	Country	Rating	Status
36	Vietnam	83	Not Free
37	China	85	Not Free
38	Laos	86	Not Free
39	Burma	96	Not Free
40	North Korea	98	Not Free

Status	Number of Countries	Percentage of Total
Free	15	38%
Partly Free	11	27%
Not Free	14	35%
<i>TOTAL</i>	40	100%

CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE / FORMER SOVIET UNION

Rank 2009	Country	Rating	Status
1	Estonia	15	Free
2	Czech Republic	18	Free
	Lithuania	18	Free
4	Hungary	21	Free
5	Latvia	23	Free
	Slovakia	23	Free
7	Poland	24	Free
	Slovenia	24	Free
9	Bulgaria	36	Partly Free
10	Montenegro	37	Partly Free
11	Croatia	38	Partly Free
12	Serbia	39	Partly Free
13	Romania	44	Partly Free
14	Bosnia-Herzegovina	47	Partly Free
	Macedonia	47	Partly Free
16	Albania	50	Partly Free
17	Ukraine	55	Partly Free
18	Georgia	60	Partly Free
19	Moldova	67	Not Free
20	Armenia	68	Not Free
21	Kyrgyzstan	72	Not Free
22	Azerbaijan	78	Not Free
	Kazakhstan	78	Not Free
	Tajikistan	78	Not Free
25	Russia	80	Not Free
26	Belarus	91	Not Free
27	Uzbekistan	93	Not Free
28	Turkmenistan	96	Not Free

Status	Number of Countries	Percentage of Total
Free	8	28%
Partly Free	10	36%
Not Free	10	36%
TOTAL	28	100%

MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA

Rank 2009	Country	Rating	Status
1	Israel	31	Partly Free
2	Kuwait	55	Partly Free
3	Lebanon	56	Partly Free
4	Egypt	60	Partly Free
5	Algeria	62	Not Free
6	Jordan	64	Not Free
	Morocco	64	Not Free
8	Qatar	65	Not Free
9	Iraq	67	Not Free
10	United Arab Emirates	69	Not Free
11	Bahrain	71	Not Free
	Oman	71	Not Free
13	Yemen	79	Not Free
14	Saudi Arabia	82	Not Free
	Tunisia	82	Not Free
16	Syria	83	Not Free
17	Iran	85	Not Free
18	IOT/PA*	86	Not Free
19	Libya	94	Not Free

Status	Number of Countries	Percentage of Total
Free	0	0%
Partly Free	4	21%
Not Free	15	79%
TOTAL	19	100%

* Israeli–Occupied Territories/Palestinian Authority

SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

Rank 2009	Country	Rating	Status
1	Ghana	26	Free
	Mali	26	Free
	Mauritius	26	Free
4	Cape Verde	28	Free
	Sao Tome and Principe	28	Free
6	Namibia	30	Free
	South Africa	30	Free
8	Benin	31	Partly Free
9	Botswana	37	Partly Free
10	Burkina Faso	41	Partly Free
	Mozambique	41	Partly Free
12	Lesotho	48	Partly Free
13	Comoros	50	Partly Free
	Tanzania	50	Partly Free
15	Madagascar	51	Partly Free
16	Guinea-Bissau	52	Partly Free
17	Congo (Brazzaville)	53	Partly Free
	Senegal	53	Partly Free
	Uganda	53	Partly Free
20	Nigeria	54	Partly Free
21	Malawi	56	Partly Free
	Sierra Leone	56	Partly Free
23	Mauritania	58	Partly Free
24	Seychelles	59	Partly Free
25	Kenya	60	Partly Free
26	Angola	61	Not Free
	Central African Republic	61	Not Free
28	Liberia	63	Not Free
29	Niger	64	Not Free
30	Cameroon	65	Not Free
	Zambia	65	Not Free
32	Guinea	66	Not Free
33	Cote d'Ivoire	67	Not Free
34	Gabon	69	Not Free
35	Togo	72	Not Free
34	Djibouti	73	Not Free
37	Burundi	75	Not Free

Rank 2009	Country	Rating	Status
38	Chad	76	Not Free
	Ethiopia	76	Not Free
	Swaziland	76	Not Free
41	Sudan	78	Not Free
42	The Gambia	79	Not Free
43	Congo (Kinshasa)	81	Not Free
44	Somalia	84	Not Free
45	Rwanda	85	Not Free
46	Zimbabwe	88	Not Free
47	Equatorial Guinea	90	Not Free
48	Eritrea	94	Not Free

Status	Number of Countries	Percentage of Total
Free	7	14.6%
Partly Free	18	37.5%
Not Free	23	47.9%
TOTAL	48	100.0%

WESTERN EUROPE

Rank	Country	Rating	Status
1	Iceland	9	Free
2	Finland	10	Free
	Norway	10	Free
4	Denmark	11	Free
	Sweden	11	Free
6	Belgium	12	Free
	Luxembourg	12	Free
8	Andorra	13	Free
	Netherlands	13	Free
	Switzerland	13	Free
11	Liechtenstein	14	Free
12	Ireland	15	Free
13	Germany	16	Free
	Monaco	16	Free
	Portugal	16	Free
16	San Marino	17	Free
17	United Kingdom	19	Free
18	Austria	21	Free
19	Cyprus	22	Free
	France	22	Free
	Malta	22	Free
22	Spain	24	Free
23	Greece	29	Free
24	Italy	32	Partly Free
25	Turkey	50	Partly Free

Status	Number of Countries	Percentage of Total
Free	23	92%
Partly Free	2	8%
Not Free	0	0%
TOTAL	25	100%



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Freedom House is an independent private organization supporting the expansion of freedom throughout the world.

Freedom is possible only in democratic political systems in which governments are accountable to their own people, the rule of law prevails, and freedoms of expression, association, and belief are guaranteed. Working directly with courageous men and women around the world to support nonviolent civic initiatives in societies where freedom is threatened, Freedom House functions as a catalyst for change through its unique mix of analysis, advocacy, and action.

- **Analysis.** Freedom House's rigorous research methodology has earned the organization a reputation as the leading source of information on the state of freedom around the globe. Since 1972, Freedom House has published *Freedom in the World*, an annual survey of political rights and civil liberties experienced in every country of the world. The survey is complemented by an annual review of press freedom, an analysis of transitions in the post-communist world, and other publications.
- **Advocacy.** Freedom House seeks to encourage American policymakers, as well as other governments and international institutions, to adopt policies that advance human rights and democracy around the world. Freedom House has been instrumental in the founding of the worldwide Community of Democracies, has actively campaigned for a reformed Human Rights Council at the United Nations, and presses the Millennium Challenge Corporation to adhere to high standards of eligibility for recipient countries.
- **Action.** Through exchanges, grants, and technical assistance, Freedom House provides training and support to human rights defenders, civil society organizations, and members of the media in order to strengthen indigenous reform efforts in countries around the globe.

Founded in 1941 by Eleanor Roosevelt, Wendell Willkie, and other Americans concerned with mounting threats to peace and democracy, Freedom House has long been a vigorous proponent of democratic values and a steadfast opponent of dictatorships of the far left and the far right. The organization's diverse Board of Trustees is composed of a bipartisan mix of business and labor leaders, former senior government officials, scholars, and journalists who agree that the promotion of democracy and human rights abroad is vital to America's interests abroad.