

Political Freedom

Definitions of “Free,” “Partly Free,” and “Not Free”

Free: Free states are those in which there are generally free and fair elections, there are multiple political parties, the rule of law is respected, and there is a fairly low level of government indifference and corruption. Free states also have a high level of protection for civil liberties, such as freedom of expression, freedom of assembly, freedom of association, and freedom of religion. The Free status does not mean that a country enjoys perfect freedom or that all of the criteria listed above are expressed. Rather it means that most of the criteria are applicable.

Partly Free: Partly Free states are those that have many of the characteristics of Free states, but also have many damaging elements, such as political corruption and discrimination against minorities. Military and/or foreign elements often influence the political system, and there may not be an independent judiciary. Partly Free states have some degree of protection for civil liberties, but some liberties are restricted.

Not Free: Not Free countries include those in which there are several conditions that weaken political rights, such as civil war, military involvement in politics, or one-party domination. However, some rights may still exist, such as the ability to organize. These countries also suffer from an increasing level of oppression and censorship, as well as fewer religious and social freedoms. Military juntas or dictators rule a large portion of those countries with the Not Free status.