

# **Democracy Index 2018: Me too?**

## **Political participation, protest and democracy**

A report by The Economist Intelligence Unit



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## Introduction

The Economist Intelligence Unit's Democracy Index provides a snapshot of the state of democracy worldwide for 165 independent states and two territories. This covers almost the entire population of the world and the vast majority of the world's states (microstates are excluded). The Democracy Index is based on five categories: *electoral process and pluralism; civil liberties; the functioning of government; political participation; and political culture*. Based on its scores on a range of indicators within these categories, each country is then itself classified as one of four types of regime: "full democracy", "flawed democracy", "hybrid regime" and "authoritarian regime". A full methodology and explanations can be found in the Appendix.

This is the 11th edition of the Democracy Index, which began in 2006. It records how global democracy fared in 2018. The results are mixed. For the first time in three years, the global score for democracy remained stable. This result disguises some movement across regions and across categories. One country, Costa Rica, moved from a flawed democracy to a full democracy; at the other end of the spectrum, one country, Nicaragua, moved from flawed regime to authoritarian regime. A total of 42 countries experienced a decline in their total score compared with 2017; 48 registered an increase in total score. But as a percentage of the world's population, fewer people lived in some form of democracy (47.7%, compared with 49.3% in 2017). Very few of these (4.5%) were classified as living in a full democracy. Just over one-third of the population lived under authoritarian rule, with a large share represented by China.

### Democracy Index 2018, by regime type

	No. of countries	% of countries	% of world population
Full democracies	20	12.0	4.5
Flawed democracies	55	32.9	43.2
Hybrid regimes	39	23.4	16.7
Authoritarian regimes	53	31.7	35.6

Note. "World" population refers to the total population of the 167 countries covered by the Index. Since this excludes only micro states, this is nearly equal to the entire estimated world population.

Source: The Economist Intelligence Unit.

## Political participation on the rise

A particular focus of this report is *political participation*, with good reason. In 2018 it was the only one of five categories in the Democracy Index to register an improvement. At a global level, political participation has in fact been improving in the index throughout the past decade. In 2018 the improvement was enough to halt the slide in the Democracy Index, for the first time in three years. The growth of *political participation* is, moreover, a trend that is evident in almost every region of the world. Only the Middle East and North Africa registered a decline in *political participation* in 2018; here the Arab Spring revolt in the early 2010s has had far-reaching repercussions, with the reassertion of power by authoritarian or hybrid regimes in all but one (Tunisia) of the countries affected.

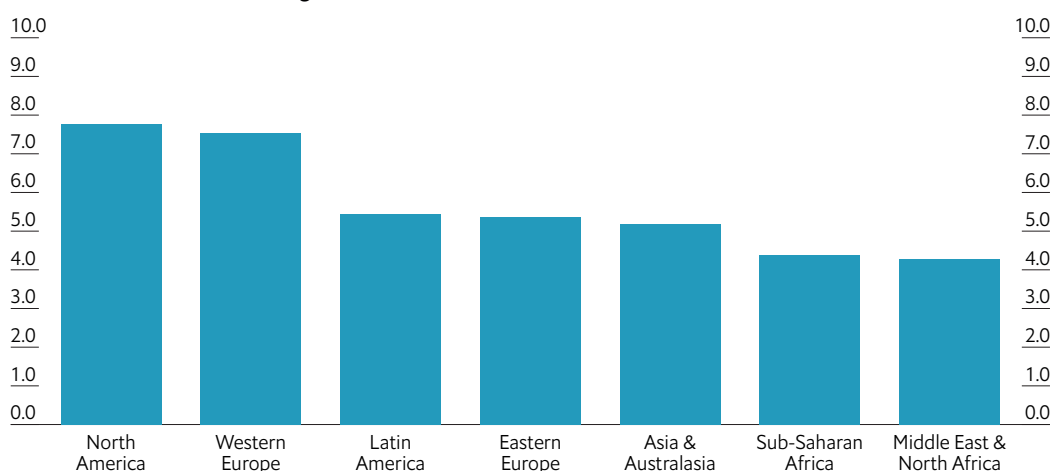
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The results indicate that voters around the world are in fact not disengaged from democracy. They are clearly disillusioned with formal political institutions but have been spurred into action. At a global level, voter turnout and membership of political parties, for example, both bucked their trend of recent years and started to increase in 2018. Not every indicator of participation improved in 2018. At a global level, participation by minority groups, for example, continued to stagnate. But in several other measures of *political participation*, there was evidence of improvement. Adult literacy (which is correlated with increased engagement) rose, as did the proportion of the population with an interest in following politics in the news. There was also a jump in the proportion of the population willing to engage in lawful demonstrations around the world, almost without exception. Even in the Middle East and North Africa, where the population is increasingly disillusioned with electoral politics (in the countries in the region where elections are at least somewhat meaningful), there has been a noticeable increase over the past year in public willingness to engage in public protest, both through traditional means and, increasingly, using social media and other tools.

#### Political participation, by region, 2018

(Index score out of 10, 10 being best)



Source: The Economist Intelligence Unit.

But perhaps the most striking advance in *political participation*, in 2018 and in the past decade, has been in the participation of women. In fact, in the past decade, of all 60 indicators in the Democracy Index, women's political participation has improved more than any other single indicator in our model. Formal and informal barriers to women's political participation, including discriminatory laws and socioeconomic obstacles, are gradually being knocked down. In many cases, advances have required quotas; around the world, around half of countries have legislative gender quotas in place. Some of these take the form of quotas for candidates, while others take the form of reserved seats for women. Quotas themselves have provoked debate, with some criticising them as undemocratic, but they have clearly been effective in creating more inclusive legislatures, and they are being established in an increasing number of countries. Japan, for example, introduced new legislation in mid-2018 that

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encourages gender parity in the selection of parliamentary candidates (although there is no penalty for non-compliance).

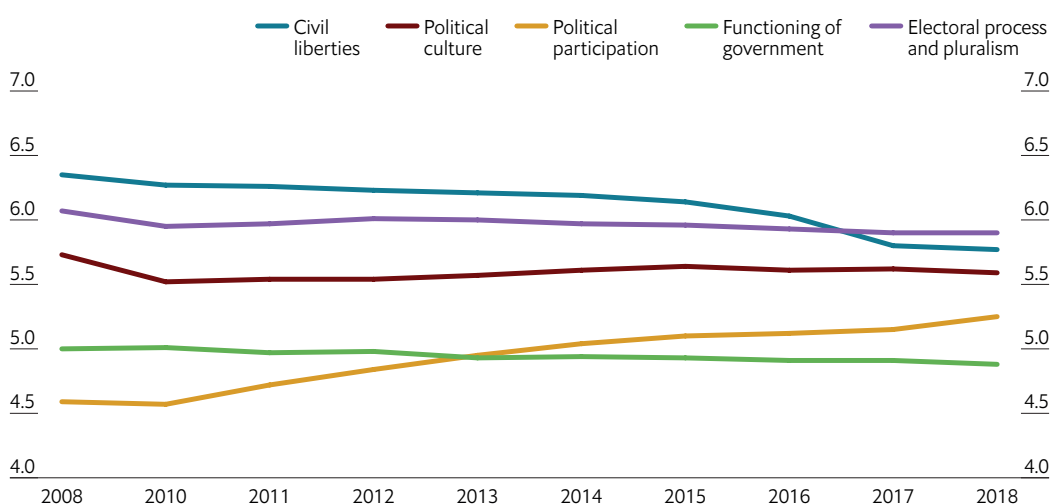
In perhaps the most notable advance in women's participation in 2018, quotas proved unnecessary; in the wake of the US mid-term election in November 2018, participation of women in Congress reached an all-time high of 20.3%. This is just above the top threshold in our model, which sits at just 20%, reflecting the historical reality of extremely limited female legislative representation. In time, this threshold may well be raised, but for now it is sufficient to separate the more inclusive legislatures from the more restrictive ones.

### Turning anger into action

The improvement in *political participation* in our index is all the more striking for taking place amid a deterioration of trust in democracy that was evident in the worsening of most categories in the Democracy Index 2018. The global score for *electoral process and pluralism* remained unchanged in 2018, after a long-term decline in evidence ever since the Democracy Index began. In every other category, there were notable declines in 2018, continuing the deterioration of democracy in evidence now for several years. Disillusionment with the practice of democracy is most clear in the *functioning of government* category. It is the lowest-ranking category in the Democracy Index, with consistently low scores for transparency, accountability and corruption. In all of these areas, on a global scale, there was little to no progress in 2018, as in the entire history of the Democracy Index. In the worst-scoring question in the *functioning of government* category (and in the entire index), on confidence in political parties, the score actually continued to fall in 2018.

#### Evolution of democracy by category

(Index score out of 10, 10 being best)



Source: The Economist Intelligence Unit.

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Disillusionment with traditional political parties and their ability to address clear weaknesses in the practice of democracy has fed through more broadly into support for democratic values, into belief that democratic systems support greater economic prosperity and security, and ultimately, into confidence in democracy itself. Various global surveys that we consider in the Democracy Index, such as the World Values Survey (WVS), Eurobarometer, Latinobarometro and Afrobarometer, have demonstrated that confidence in democracy is on the wane. In fact, in 2018 the score for perceptions of democracy suffered its biggest fall in the index since 2010.

At the same time, *civil liberties* that form the bedrock of democratic values are continuing to be eroded. As the Democracy Index 2017: Free speech under attack highlighted, despite the enormous potential for the expansion of free speech represented by the internet and social media, in practice free speech is increasingly being restricted by both state and non-state actors. In the past decade, in fact, no scores in the Democracy Index have deteriorated more than those related to freedom of expression and the presence of free print and electronic media. These trends continued into 2018 and were compounded by a disturbing deterioration in scores related to the use of torture by the state, and to the perception that human rights are well protected.

### What to make of it?

In a context of disillusionment with democracy in practice and in principle, and of declining *civil liberties*, the rise in political participation is remarkable. Clear disenchantment with formal democratic institutions is not preventing the population from participating in them. Even as confidence in political parties falls, membership of political parties and other political organisations has ticked up. The deterioration in *functioning of government* and in *political culture* is likely, in fact, to be helping drive the rise in political participation around the world. Increased voter turnout in the US mid-term elections, for example, appears to have been driven by a deep division over the direction of government that appears to have engaged voters on both sides of the debate. In Latin America, where voters have become deeply disillusioned with politics amid widespread high-profile corruption scandals in recent years, voter turnout in a big election year was high.

The increase in political participation in 2018 is responsible for a stabilisation of the Democracy Index after its recent decline. But increased political participation alone is not sufficient to reverse the “democracy recession” chronicled by one of the world’s leading democracy scholars, Larry Diamond. What happens next will depend on how political participation influences governance, *political culture*, and *civil liberties*. In all these areas, there are big questions over future developments, particularly as increased engagement, voter turnout and activism have in many countries around the world been in the name of anti-establishment parties and politicians who could shake up political systems and the practice of democracy in unexpected ways.

A rise of identity politics and of “strongman” leaders who have harnessed disillusionment with democracy in their countries to gain power poses a strong risk that the institutions of representative democracy will be weakened further. Alternatively, a strengthening of political institutions, and a tackling of the issues of transparency, accountability and corruption, would go some way towards improving confidence in democracy and democratic values.

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This is a big ask as, although voters are engaged, they are also deeply divided. One question in the Democracy Index looks at social cohesion and asks whether there is a sufficient degree of societal consensus and cohesion to underpin a stable, functioning democracy. The score here has deteriorated for several years, suggesting a deepening of political polarisation that could complicate political effectiveness and weaken the quality of policymaking and of institutions. In this context, it seems too soon, despite the results of the 2018 Democracy Index, to suggest that the “democracy recession” has bottomed out. In fact, the rise in engagement, combined with a continued crackdown on *civil liberties*, is a potentially volatile mix, and could be a recipe for instability and social unrest in 2019.



## Democracy Index highlights

### Democracy stagnates

For the first time in three years, the Democracy Index did not deteriorate in 2018. But nor did it register any progress on a global scale. Across the globe, deep disillusionment with the *functioning of government* was evident, knocking confidence in political institutions, and ultimately in democracy itself. The decline in *civil liberties* seen in previous years also continued apace. But despite this disenchantment with democracy, at a global level, *political participation*, one of five key components of our broad measure of democracy, increased. Far from being apathetic or disengaged from politics, the population turned out to vote, and to protest. This evidence of engagement prevented the Democracy Index from sliding further in 2018.

### Political participation rises

A host of indicators The Economist Intelligence Unit looks at to assess the scale of *political participation* improved in 2018. On average, scores for voter turnout increased; there was also an uptick in membership of political parties and organisations—even amid signs that confidence in political parties had reached fresh lows during the year—and growing engagement with politics in the news. What happens as a result of this increased engagement will depend on how *political participation* influences governance, *political culture* and *civil liberties*. In all these areas, there are big questions over future progress, particularly as increased engagement has often been in the name of anti-establishment movements that could shake up political systems and the practice of democracy. Moreover, a rise in engagement, combined with a continued deterioration of *civil liberties*, could be a recipe for instability and social unrest.

### Women's political participation makes progress

While many indicators of *political participation* improved in 2018, none improved more than women's *political participation*—as measured by the proportion of women represented in the legislature. In fact, of all 60 indicators in the Democracy Index, in the history of the report none has improved more than that for women's *political participation*. In part, this reflects the low maximum threshold in our model—which is in turn a reflection of historically low levels of women's participation. In 2018 one of the most notable increases in women's *political participation* came in the US, where female candidates performed well in the November mid-terms.

### Top and bottom

There was little change at the very top and the very bottom of the Index. Once again, Norway came out on top and North Korea bottom. One of the more notable moves was that of Costa Rica, the only country to join the ranks of “full democracies” in 2018, and to break into the top 20, rising three places from 23rd to 20th. Western Europe continues to feature heavily among the index's “full democracies”; apart from North Korea, the bottom 20 features countries from the Middle East and North Africa, Sub-Saharan Africa and eastern Europe heavily.

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#### Winners and losers

Although there was no big movement at the top and bottom of the index, there were big movements in the rankings elsewhere. The two countries to fall the most in the rankings in 2018 were both from Latin America: Nicaragua and Venezuela. Both fell by 17 places, causing Nicaragua to fall from “hybrid regime” to “authoritarian regime”, and causing Venezuela, already an authoritarian regime, to sink further towards the bottom of the ranking. There were some notable falls in eastern and western Europe, too. Italy’s ranking fell by 12 places, Turkey’s by ten and Russia’s by nine places. There were notable improvements registered in Armenia, Macedonia, Ecuador, Haiti and Tunisia.

#### Regional trends

After falling in 2017, eastern Europe, Asia and Australasia, and Sub-Saharan Africa all saw an improvement in 2018, mostly reflecting higher scores for *political participation*. That said, the scores for all three regions remain below recent historical peaks. In Latin America and western Europe there were continued deteriorations, maintaining a trend that has been in evidence in both regions for three years. Eastern Europe remains the region that has deteriorated most since the Democracy Index began in 2006; Asia is the region to have recorded the most progress, from a low base.

#### The return of populism in Latin America

Elections in Mexico and Brazil in 2018 showed that, in Latin America, rumours of the death of populism were greatly exaggerated. In both countries, voters—disgusted by corruption, violence, and high levels of poverty and inequality—turned to populists to “stop the rot”. Although Mexico’s new president, Andrés Manuel López Obrador, and Brazil’s new president, Jair Bolsonaro, share similarities in their ascent to power, the two men have little in common ideologically. Mr López Obrador is a traditional left-wing firebrand, albeit one who served as a relatively moderate mayor of Mexico City in 2000-05. Mr Bolsonaro, in contrast, is a right-wing law-and-order retired military officer, who has praised Brazil’s 1964-85 military dictatorship and promised to be tough on crime. Despite Mr Bolsonaro’s tougher language, it is Mr López Obrador who could have a bigger impact on democracy—for good or bad. Mr López Obrador has a majority in both houses of Mexico’s Congress, making him the most powerful president since Mexico’s return to democracy in 2000.

#### Europe’s democratic malaise persists

There were substantial declines in the rankings for several important European countries, including Italy, Turkey and Russia. In Italy, plummeting confidence in traditional politics produced a resounding victory in the parliamentary election in March for the anti-establishment Movimento 5 Stelle (M5S) and the Eurosceptic anti-immigrant Lega, which formed a coalition government that has taken a hardline stance against immigration. Turkey’s score declined further in 2018 as the country consolidated amid weakening checks on the presidency. A presidential election in June, won by the incumbent, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, was held under a state of emergency and appeared mostly free, but largely unfair. Meanwhile, in Russia, a sharp decline in its score for civil liberties caused the country’s overall ranking to slip substantially.

## Democracy around the regions

The developed OECD countries of Europe and North America continue to dominate among the world's "full democracies"; there are also the two Australasian countries (but no Asian ones), two Latin American countries (Uruguay and Costa Rica) and one African country (Mauritius). The almost complete predominance of OECD countries among those ranked as "full democracies" suggests that a low level of economic development is a significant, if not a binding, constraint on democratic development. "Flawed democracies" are concentrated in Latin America, eastern Europe and Asia, although western Europe now also has several. Eastern Europe does not have a single "full democracy". Eastern Europe is also the region of the world that has deteriorated the most since the Democracy Index was established in 2006. It is followed by western Europe, indicating that the democratic malaise of the past decade has been felt most keenly in Europe.

### Democracy across the regions

	No. of countries	Democracy index average	Full democracies	Flawed democracies	Hybrid regimes	Authoritarian regimes
North America						
2018	2	8.56	1	1	0	0
2017	2	8.56	1	1	0	0
Western Europe						
2018	21	8.35	14	6	1	0
2017	21	8.38	14	6	1	0
Eastern Europe						
2018	28	5.42	0	12	9	7
2017	28	5.40	0	12	9	7
Latin America & the Caribbean						
2018	24	6.24	2	14	5	3
2017	24	6.26	1	16	5	2
Asia & Australasia						
2018	28	5.67	2	13	6	7
2017	28	5.63	2	13	6	7
Middle East & North Africa						
2018	20	3.54	0	2	4	14
2017	20	3.54	0	2	4	14
Sub-Saharan Africa						
2018	44	4.36	1	7	14	22
2017	44	4.35	1	7	14	22
Total						
2018	167	5.48	20	55	39	53
2017	167	5.48	19	57	39	52

Source: The Economist Intelligence Unit.

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But Europe is not alone in experiencing a long-term decline in democracy: there have been significant declines since 2006 in Latin America and in North America. In fact, only Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa have registered significant improvement since the index was introduced, albeit from a low base, as fledgling democracies have consolidated (although not without setbacks). The Middle East and North Africa (MENA) has had a turbulent time since the Democracy Index began but its net gain has been close to zero; for a time, it appeared that the Arab Spring, which began in late 2010, might herald a period of political transformation analogous to that in eastern Europe in the 1990s. However, only Tunisia has consolidated any democratic gains, graduating into a flawed democracy in 2014.

In 2018 the global score remained unchanged, but this disguises substantial movement in the different regions of the world. Three regions saw an improvement in score in the year, another two saw a deterioration, and two remained unchanged. After falling in 2017, eastern Europe, Asia and Australasia, and Sub-Saharan Africa all saw a renewed improvement in score, mostly reflecting improvements in scores for political participation. That said, the scores for all three regions remain below recent historical peaks. In Latin America and western Europe there was a continued deterioration in score, maintaining a trend that has been in evidence in both regions for three years. The following section looks in more detail at all these trends, region by region.

#### Democracy Index 2006-18 by region

	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011	2010	2008	2006
Asia & Australasia	5.67	5.63	5.74	5.74	5.70	5.61	5.56	5.51	5.53	5.58	5.44
Eastern Europe	5.42	5.40	5.43	5.55	5.58	5.53	5.51	5.50	5.55	5.67	5.76
Latin America	6.24	6.26	6.33	6.37	6.36	6.38	6.36	6.35	6.37	6.43	6.37
Middle East & North Africa	3.54	3.54	3.56	3.58	3.65	3.68	3.73	3.62	3.43	3.54	3.53
North America	8.56	8.56	8.56	8.56	8.59	8.59	8.59	8.59	8.63	8.64	8.64
Western Europe	8.35	8.38	8.40	8.42	8.41	8.41	8.44	8.40	8.45	8.61	8.60
Sub-Saharan Africa	4.36	4.35	4.37	4.38	4.34	4.36	4.32	4.32	4.23	4.28	4.24
World average	5.48	5.48	5.52	5.55	5.55	5.53	5.52	5.49	5.46	5.55	5.52

Source: The Economist Intelligence Unit.

## North America

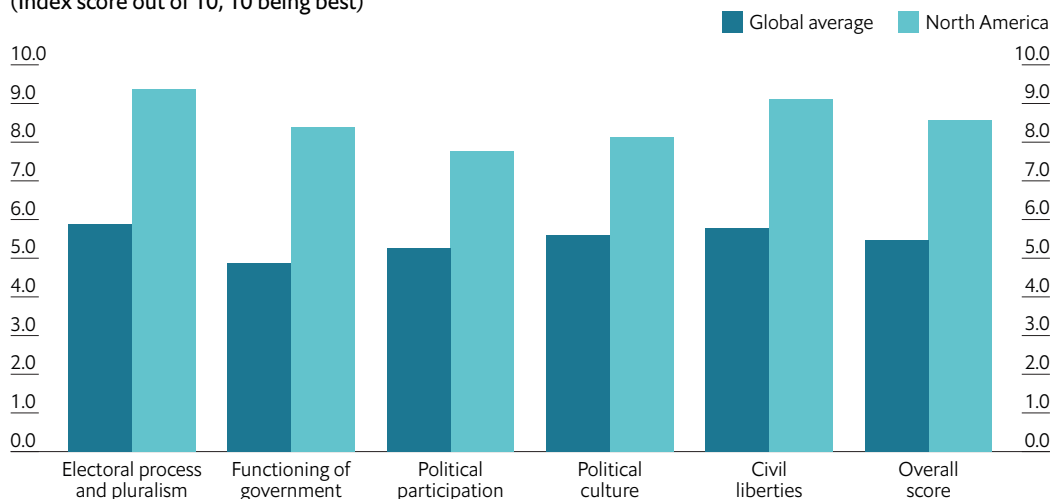
North America retains the highest average score of any region in the Democracy Index. The regional average was unchanged at 8.56 in the 2018 index, compared with an average of 8.35 in western Europe, the second-highest ranking region in the index. North America's score held steady despite a slight deterioration in the US's individual score, from 7.98 to 7.96. Canada performed better. Its score was unchanged in 2018, at 9.15. It remains in joint sixth place globally and is classified as a "full democracy". The US fell below the threshold for a "full democracy" in 2016, however, primarily owing to a serious decline in public trust in US institutions that year. In 2018, the US fell further in the global ranking, to 25th place, from 21st in 2017 (although this partly reflects movement by other countries). It continues to be rated a "flawed democracy".

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#### Democracy index by category - North America

(Index score out of 10, 10 being best)



Source: The Economist Intelligence Unit.

#### North America 2018

	Overall score	Overall rank	Regional rank	I Electoral process and pluralism	II Functioning of government	III Political participation	IV Political culture	V Civil liberties	Regime type
Canada	9.15	6=	1	9.58	9.64	7.78	8.75	10.00	Full democracy
United States of America	7.96	25	2	9.17	7.14	7.78	7.50	8.24	Flawed democracy

Source: The Economist Intelligence Unit.

#### Conflicting trends in the US

The US has fallen in the global rankings over the past decade, from 18th place in the 2008 Democracy Index, to 25th in 2018. This primarily reflects a deterioration in the *functioning of government* category, as political polarisation has become more pronounced and public confidence in institutions has weakened. Public frustration with institutions has been brewing for years; according to Gallup polls from January to mid-November 2018, the number of Americans who approve of the way that Congress is handling its job had fallen to an average of 18%, down from 40% in 2000 and 20% in 2010. The highly partisan nature of Washington politics is contributing to this trend, as parties are increasingly seen as being focused on blocking one another's agenda, to the detriment of policymaking. The president, Donald Trump, has not proven to be the savvy, across-the-aisle dealmaker that he promised to be. Rather, he has tapped into partisan tensions in an effort to rally his conservative political and voter base, particularly around the sensitive issues of immigration and security.

Disappointed with many of his appointees and blocked by deep internal divisions within the Republican party, Mr Trump has taken a much more direct role in policymaking in the second year

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of his presidency. Most of the major policy actions in 2018—including the escalation of the trade war with China; diplomatic engagement with North Korea; and extensive deregulation of the energy, mining, and automotive industries—have not required congressional approval. Moreover, Mr Trump has repeatedly called into question the independence and competence of the US judicial system with regard to the ongoing federal investigation, led by Robert Mueller, into potential ties between Mr Trump's presidential campaign and Russia, and various courts' efforts to block some of his policy orders, particularly regarding immigration. Although we expect the US system of checks and balances to remain intact, this internal conflict risks further undermining public confidence in institutions. As a result, the score for *political culture* declined in the 2018 index.

On a positive note, the score for *political participation* has improved, reflecting greater representation of women. Female candidates, particularly Democratic candidates, performed well in the 2018 mid-term elections for the House of Representatives (the lower house) and the Senate (the upper house). The percentage of representatives that will serve in the 115th Congress (2019-21) who are women has risen to 23%, up from 19% under the previous Congress (2016-18) and an all-time high for the US.

#### **Canada continues to perform well**

Canada has scored consistently well in the Democracy Index, thanks to its history of stable, democratic government. It continues to occupy sixth place in the global ranking, and has never fallen outside of the top ten. Of the index's five pillars, Canada scores particularly highly in the electoral process and the functioning of government categories, as well as civil liberties. Freedom of expression and religious and cultural tolerance are supported by the Canadian state, which is important given Canada's large French-speaking and native minorities. Although some tensions remain, the government and businesses regularly seek permission from First Nations communities for land and natural resource development projects. All Canadians enjoy equality under the law.

Canada maintains a democratic advantage over the US in a number of areas. Federal and provincial governments continue to compete over the allocation of resources and provincial politics, most recently surrounding the development of a crude oil pipeline in western Canada. Nonetheless, tensions have eased following the victory of the federalist Parti Liberal in the Quebec provincial elections in 2014, which has all but eliminated concerns surrounding the Quebecois secessionist movement.

Canada receives a higher score than the US on several indicators, including that concerning the political power and influence of interest groups. However, there is scope for improvement in political participation, which is a problem that many developed nations share. This mainly reflects poor voter turnout, low membership of political parties and a general lack of political engagement. Canada scores relatively poorly here, at 7.78, which is on a par with the US, Spain and Switzerland but behind many of its other peers in Western Europe.

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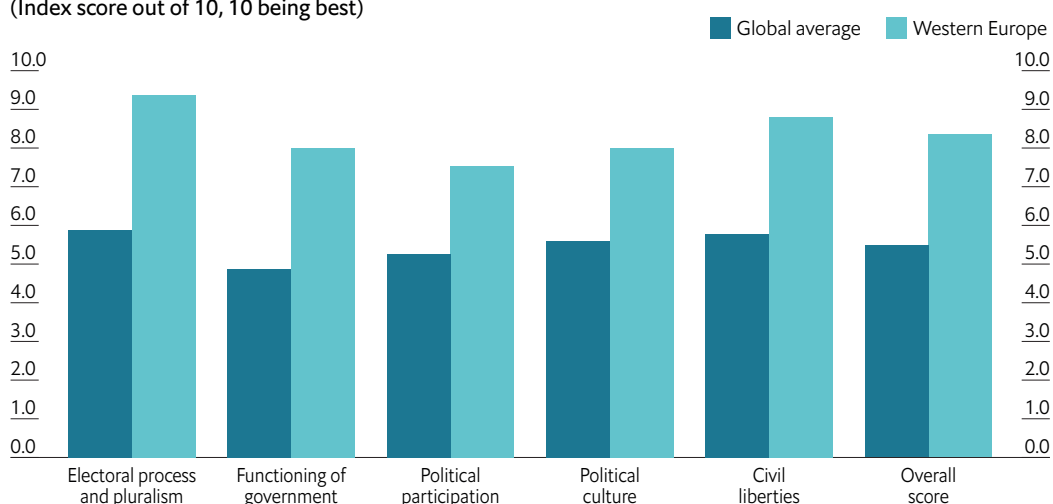
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## Western Europe

Western Europe's average score in the Democracy Index declined slightly for the third consecutive year, to 8.35, from 8.38 in 2017 and 8.42 in 2015. The decline was driven by a marginal deterioration in the scores for four out of five categories of the Democracy Index—*political culture*, *functioning of government*, *electoral process and pluralism*, and *civil liberties*. The region's average score for *political participation* increased, however, from 7.49 in 2017 to 7.54 in 2018.

### Democracy index by category - Western Europe

(Index score out of 10, 10 being best)



Source: The Economist Intelligence Unit.

Despite the negative trend, countries in western Europe continue to occupy seven of the top ten places in the global Democracy Index, including the top three spots. It has the second-highest regional score, with 14 “full democracies”, six “flawed democracies”, and one “hybrid regime” (Turkey). Only three countries improved their scores in 2018: Finland, Germany and Malta. Three countries saw a deterioration in their overall scores: Turkey, Italy and Austria. All other scores stagnated. Once again, none of western Europe’s “flawed democracies”—Italy, Portugal, France, Belgium, Cyprus and Greece—moved into the “full democracy” category.

A persistent decline in the quality of democracy has increased support for anti-establishment parties in western Europe, on both the left and right. Between December 2017 and November 2018, anti-establishment parties entered office in both Italy and Austria, in a reflection of the continued failure of mainstream parties to address the concerns and insecurities of significant swathes of the population. Actions taken by these new parties dragged down the region's scores for *political culture*, *functioning of government* and *civil liberties* in 2018.

In Austria, a coalition government that includes the right-wing populist Freedom Party (FPÖ), an anti-immigrant party, took office in December 2017. The government’s move in June to close seven mosques, to expel up to 40 imams on the grounds of breaches of Austrian Islam Law, and more

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#### Western Europe 2018

	Overall score	Global Rank	Regional rank	I Electoral process and pluralism	II Functioning of government	III Political participation	IV Political culture	V Civil liberties	Regime type
Norway	9.87	1	1	10.00	9.64	10.00	10.00	9.71	Full democracy
Iceland	9.58	2	2	10.00	9.29	8.89	10.00	9.71	Full democracy
Sweden	9.39	3	3	9.58	9.64	8.33	10.00	9.41	Full democracy
Denmark	9.22	5	4	10.00	9.29	8.33	9.38	9.12	Full democracy
Ireland	9.15	6=	5	9.58	7.86	8.33	10.00	10.00	Full democracy
Finland	9.14	8	6	10.00	8.93	8.33	8.75	9.71	Full democracy
Switzerland	9.03	10	7	9.58	9.29	7.78	9.38	9.12	Full democracy
Netherlands	8.89	11	8	9.58	9.29	8.33	8.13	9.12	Full democracy
Luxembourg	8.81	12	9	10.00	8.93	6.67	8.75	9.71	Full democracy
Germany	8.68	13	10	9.58	8.57	8.33	7.50	9.41	Full democracy
United Kingdom	8.53	14	11	9.58	7.50	8.33	8.13	9.12	Full democracy
Austria	8.29	16	12	9.58	7.86	8.33	6.88	8.82	Full democracy
Malta	8.21	18	13	9.17	8.21	6.11	8.75	8.82	Full democracy
Spain	8.08	19	14	9.17	7.14	7.78	7.50	8.82	Full democracy
Portugal	7.84	27	15	9.58	7.50	6.11	6.88	9.12	Flawed democracy
France	7.80	29	16	9.58	7.50	7.78	5.63	8.53	Flawed democracy
Belgium	7.78	31	17	9.58	8.93	5.00	6.88	8.53	Flawed democracy
Italy	7.71	33	18	9.58	6.07	7.78	6.88	8.24	Flawed democracy
Cyprus	7.59	35	19	9.17	6.43	6.67	6.88	8.82	Flawed democracy
Greece	7.29	39	20	9.58	5.36	6.11	6.88	8.53	Flawed democracy
Turkey	4.37	110	21	4.50	5.00	5.00	5.00	2.35	Hybrid regime

Source: The Economist Intelligence Unit.

restricted media access to government policymaking are among the issues denting the country's score in the 2018 index.

In Italy, a parliamentary election held in March resulted in a resounding victory for the anti-establishment Movimento 5 Stelle (M5S), which won 33% of the vote, and the Eurosceptic anti-immigrant Lega, which secured 17%. Following prolonged post-election negotiations, the two parties agreed to form a coalition at end-May. The election, which dealt a crushing defeat to the incumbent centre-left Partito Democratico (PD), highlighted popular discontent linked to economic malaise and concerns over immigration. Since the formation of the government, Matteo Salvini, the leader of the Lega, minister of the interior and deputy prime minister, has dominated the political agenda with his hardline stance against immigration.

Turkey's score declined further in 2018 as the country consolidated the shift to a presidential system of government, which grants the executive wide-ranging powers and greatly weakens parliament. In June Recep Tayyip Erdogan, the incumbent president, won the presidential election, which was held under a state of emergency. The election process appeared mostly free, but largely unfair. Opposition



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candidates received little to no media coverage; the pro-Kurdish People's Democratic Party (HDP) candidate, Selahattin Demirtas, had to campaign from prison; and the government restrained freedom of speech and freedom of association. A state of emergency expired on July 18th, but parliament then passed a security law on July 25th that imposes stringent restrictions on freedoms.

#### Italy's anti-establishment government and the threat to civil liberties

Italy suffered a substantial drop in its global ranking in the 2018 Democracy Index, to 33rd, from 21st in 2017, as deep disillusionment with political institutions, including parliament and political parties, fed through into increasing support for "strongmen" who bypass political institutions, and into a weakening of the *political culture* component of the index. This disillusionment culminated in the formation of an anti-establishment government in 2018 that includes the far-right, anti-immigrant Lega.

The minister of the interior, deputy prime minister and leader of the Lega, Matteo Salvini, has often used anti-foreigner rhetoric that has been widely criticised by human rights associations. As minister of interior, Mr Salvini supported evictions of members of the minority Roma community from "illegal" houses in cities such as Rome and Turin in July, despite a stop order issued by the European Court of Human Rights. In September the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Michelle Bachelet, said that she wanted to send UN teams to Italy to investigate the rising number of attacks against asylum seekers and the Roma population.

Italy's new government has also taken a harder line on immigration than had its predecessors. In June and July the government refused to accept

ships carrying migrants rescued while en route to Europe. In late August it threatened to withhold its EU budget contribution unless all 150 migrants on an Italian coastguard vessel, the *Ubaldo Diciotti*, waiting for permission to dock in the port of Catania, were taken in by other EU countries. In September Ms Bachelet said that the government's decision to refuse entry to rescue ships carrying migrants had "serious consequences for the most vulnerable".

All this contributes to the risk of a deterioration in civil liberties. In addition to looking explicitly at human rights protection and discrimination, the Democracy Index considers the extent to which the government invokes new threats as an excuse to curb civil liberties. In late November the Italian parliament approved the government's so-called Security Decree, which could end humanitarian protection status for an estimated 100,000 migrants. The government has also threatened to suspend its participation in an international mission intended to support the Libyan coastguard if other EU member countries do not agree to accept more of the migrants the mission rescues, most of whom will disembark in Italian ports. Finally, Italy has joined the group of countries opposed to a non-binding UN Global Compact on Migration, signalling the country's willingness to challenge traditional institutions over migration policy.

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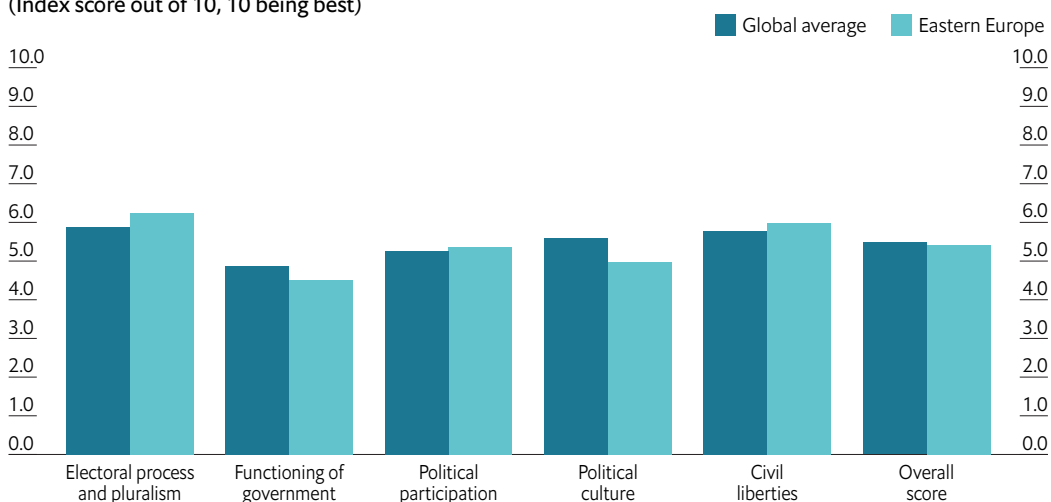
### POLITICAL PARTICIPATION, PROTEST AND DEMOCRACY

## Eastern Europe

In 2018 eastern Europe's overall score in the Democracy Index actually improved marginally, to 5.42, up from 5.40 in 2017, its lowest level ever. But this small uptick leaves the region far below its score of 5.76 registered in 2006, when the index was first compiled. A marginal improvement in the overall regional score was driven by substantial improvements in the scores for just a few countries, including Armenia, Estonia and Macedonia, which more than offset a sharp drop in scores for Russia and Georgia, and stagnation elsewhere. In fact, scores for many countries in the region (11 out of 28) stagnated. In total, eight countries experienced a deterioration in score while nine registered an improvement, often from a low base.

### Democracy index by category - Eastern Europe

(Index score out of 10, 10 being best)



Source: The Economist Intelligence Unit.

No countries moved category, meaning that none of the region's 28 countries qualifies as a full democracy; 12 countries are characterised as "flawed democracies" (these include all the 11 EU member states plus Serbia); nine as "hybrid regimes" (the western Balkan states other than Serbia, Ukraine, Moldova, Armenia, Georgia and the Kyrgyz Republic); and the remainder are "authoritarian regimes".

This mixed picture suggests that, despite the small uptick in score in 2018, eastern Europe's democratic malaise persists, amid a weak political culture, difficulties in safeguarding the rule of law, endemic corruption, a rejection by some countries of liberal democratic values, and a preference for "strongmen" who bypass political institutions, all of which creates a weak foundation for democracy.

### "Flawed democracies" fall further

Among the "flawed democracies" in the region, Estonia, the Czech Republic, Lithuania and Latvia experienced an improvement in score, while Slovakia, Hungary, Croatia and Romania recorded a deterioration. Slovakia maintained its global rank of 44 but saw a drop in its score to 7.10 from 7.16 previously, owing to a fall in its score for *civil liberties*—a result of the murder of an investigative

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#### Eastern Europe 2018

	Overall score	Global Rank	Regional rank	I Electoral process and pluralism	II Functioning of government	III Political participation	IV Political culture	V Civil liberties	Regime type
Estonia	7.97	23=	1	9.58	8.21	6.67	6.88	8.53	Flawed democracy
Czech Republic	7.69	34	2	9.58	6.79	6.67	6.88	8.53	Flawed democracy
Slovenia	7.50	36=	3=	9.58	6.79	6.67	6.25	8.24	Flawed democracy
Lithuania	7.50	36=	3=	9.58	6.43	6.11	6.25	9.12	Flawed democracy
Latvia	7.38	38	5	9.58	6.07	5.56	6.88	8.82	Flawed democracy
Slovakia	7.10	44	6	9.58	6.79	5.56	5.63	7.94	Flawed democracy
Bulgaria	7.03	46	7	9.17	6.43	7.22	4.38	7.94	Flawed democracy
Poland	6.67	54=	8	9.17	6.07	6.11	4.38	7.65	Flawed democracy
Hungary	6.63	57=	9	8.75	6.07	5.00	6.25	7.06	Flawed democracy
Croatia	6.57	60	10	9.17	6.07	5.56	5.00	7.06	Flawed democracy
Serbia	6.41	63=	11	8.25	5.36	6.11	5.00	7.35	Flawed democracy
Romania	6.38	66=	12	9.17	5.71	5.00	4.38	7.65	Flawed democracy
Albania	5.98	76	13	7.00	4.71	5.56	5.00	7.65	Hybrid regime
Macedonia	5.87	78	14	6.50	5.36	6.67	3.75	7.06	Hybrid regime
Moldova	5.85	79=	15	7.08	4.64	6.11	4.38	7.06	Hybrid regime
Montenegro	5.74	81=	16	6.08	5.36	6.11	4.38	6.76	Hybrid regime
Ukraine	5.69	84	17	6.17	3.21	6.67	6.25	6.18	Hybrid regime
Georgia	5.50	89	18	7.83	3.57	6.11	4.38	5.59	Hybrid regime
Kyrgyz Republic	5.11	98=	19	6.58	2.93	6.67	4.38	5.00	Hybrid regime
Bosnia and Herzegovina	4.98	101	20	6.50	2.93	5.56	3.75	6.18	Hybrid regime
Armenia	4.79	103	21	5.67	4.64	5.56	2.50	5.59	Hybrid regime
Belarus	3.13	137	22	0.92	2.86	3.89	5.63	2.35	Authoritarian
Kazakhstan	2.94	144=	23=	0.50	2.14	4.44	4.38	3.24	Authoritarian
Russia	2.94	144=	23=	2.17	1.79	5.00	2.50	3.24	Authoritarian
Azerbaijan	2.65	149	25	0.50	2.14	3.33	3.75	3.53	Authoritarian
Uzbekistan	2.01	156	26	0.08	1.86	2.22	5.00	0.88	Authoritarian
Tajikistan	1.93	159=	27	0.08	0.79	1.67	6.25	0.88	Authoritarian
Turkmenistan	1.72	162	28	0.00	0.79	2.22	5.00	0.59	Authoritarian

Source: The Economist Intelligence Unit.

journalist, Jan Kuciak, and his fiancée, Martina Kusnirova, in February 2018, an incident that has received international attention and has undermined the government's credibility and stability. In Hungary, the illiberal policies pursued by the prime minister, Viktor Orban, have earned the ire of the EU and resulted in a decline in Hungary's score for *political culture*.

Romania's score for *civil liberties* dropped following the implementation in 2018 of several laws that curtail the effectiveness and independence of the judiciary. The chief prosecutor of the National Anti-Corruption Directorate (DNA) was also dismissed in 2018 at the request of the minister of justice and against the views of the Superior Council of Magistracy.

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Meanwhile, Estonia fared the best among the region's flawed democracies in 2018, improving its score to 7.97 and its rank to joint 23rd, from 7.79 and 30th in 2017. This was mainly owing to a significant improvement in *political participation* and in perceived confidence in the government and in political parties.

#### **"Hybrid regimes": Armenia up, Georgia down**

Armenia saw the most improvement among all "hybrid regime" countries in eastern Europe in 2018, raising its score to 4.79, from 4.11 in 2017. This led to a jump in its ranking from 111 to 103. The "Velvet Revolution" against an attempt by Serzh Sargsyan, the former president, to stay in power by switching to the post of prime minister resulted in the appointment of Nikol Pashinian, an opposition leader, as prime minister. Mr Pashinian's opposition coalition subsequently swept the Yerevan municipal election and won a staggering 70% of the vote in a parliamentary election in December 2018. These developments, and Mr Pashinian's subsequent anti-corruption campaign, improved the country's scores for government accountability and transparency. They also resulted in a vast improvement in citizens' perception of corruption and confidence in the government and political parties. The Velvet Revolution resulted in an increase in voter turnout and in the percentage of citizens actively participating in demonstrations to remove Mr Sargsyan from power.

Macedonia, Montenegro and Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) also recorded improvements in their overall scores, while Moldova and Georgia experienced a fall in score in 2018. Georgia's fall (5.50, down from 5.93 in 2017) was the steepest in the entire region. Georgia's billionaire former prime minister, Bidzina Ivanishvili, returned to politics in May, resumed leadership of the ruling party, Georgian Dream-Democratic Georgia, and, despite not holding elected office, redirected government policy. The prime minister, Giorgi Kvirikashvili, resigned in June, citing his disagreements with Mr Ivanishvili, rather than widespread popular discontent with the government, as the key factor in his decision. Under Mr Ivanishvili's influence, the government also intervened in the second-round presidential election, offering a debt write-off to 600,000 citizens two weeks after election day. This appeared to provide the government with a sizeable campaigning advantage over the opposition.

#### **"Authoritarian": Russia down sharply, Uzbekistan up slightly**

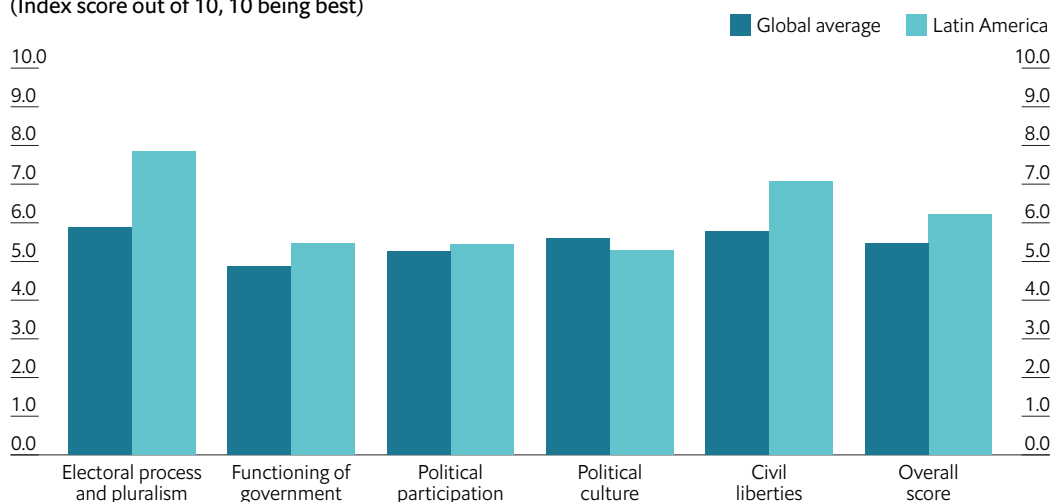
Only one of eastern Europe's seven authoritarian regimes—Uzbekistan—improved its position in the 2018 Democracy Index ranking. The scores for both Kazakhstan and Russia deteriorated. Russia's global ranking fell to 144th from 135th in 2017, putting it in the same position as Kazakhstan, whose ranking fell from 141st in 2017. Russia's score declined to 2.94 in 2018 from 3.17 in 2017, driven by a sharp decline in its score for *civil liberties* to 3.24, from 4.41 a year ago. The remaining four eastern European countries in the authoritarian regime category—Belarus, Azerbaijan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan—all maintained their scores, albeit low ones. Belarus, Azerbaijan and the four central Asian states (Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan) remain dictatorships, most of whose leaders have stayed in place for decades. We expect little to no improvement in the scores for these countries over the coming years, as there appears to be no credible possibility in any of them of the political opposition gaining power.

## Latin America and the Caribbean

Latin America and the Caribbean remains the most democratic region in the developing world but has suffered another year of democratic deterioration: the region's overall score fell from 6.26 in 2017 to 6.24 in 2018. This deterioration bucks the trend among other regions of the developing world (Asia, eastern Europe, Sub-Saharan Africa and the Middle East), which saw their scores stabilise or improve. Globally, only western Europe and Latin America registered declines this year.

### Democracy index by category - Latin America and the Caribbean

(Index score out of 10, 10 being best)



Source: The Economist Intelligence Unit.

As in previous years, Latin America's trouble with democracy has stemmed from worsening scores for *electoral process and pluralism*, *functioning of government* and *civil liberties*. Deterioration here has been only partly offset by ongoing improvements in the remaining two pillars of our measure of democracy, *political participation* and *political culture*. Despite recent setbacks, Latin America still boasts some of the world's highest scores for *electoral process and pluralism*, and for *civil liberties*. It has historically performed less well in those categories relating to the practice of democracy: *functioning of government*, *political participation* and *political culture*. Latin American governments have continued to be beset by corruption and the effects of transnational organised crime, and persistent deficiencies in governance and the practice of democracy have given way to a declining confidence in government, in formal political institutions, and in democracy itself.

2018 was a big election year in Latin America, and a big test of the *electoral process and pluralism*, with a change of government occurring in eight countries, representing most of the region's population: Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Mexico, Paraguay and Venezuela. By and large, these transfers of power occurred peacefully and without incident. Higher levels of voter engagement were evident in high turnouts. In the region's two largest economies, Mexico and Brazil, voters, disgusted by rising crime, government corruption, lingering poverty and high levels of inequality, turned to populists

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#### Latin America and the Caribbean 2018

	Overall score	Global Rank	Regional rank	I Electoral process and pluralism	II Functioning of government	III Political participation	IV Political culture	V Civil liberties	Regime type
Uruguay	8.38	15	1	10.00	8.57	6.11	7.50	9.71	Full democracy
Costa Rica	8.07	20	2	9.58	7.50	6.67	7.50	9.12	Full democracy
Chile	7.97	23=	3	9.58	8.57	4.44	8.13	9.12	Flawed democracy
Trinidad and Tobago	7.16	43	4	9.58	7.14	6.11	5.63	7.35	Flawed democracy
Panama	7.05	45	5	9.58	6.07	6.67	5.00	7.94	Flawed democracy
Argentina	7.02	47=	6	9.17	5.36	6.11	6.25	8.24	Flawed democracy
Jamaica	7.02	47=	7	8.75	7.14	4.44	6.25	8.53	Flawed democracy
Suriname	6.98	49	8	9.17	6.43	6.67	5.00	7.65	Flawed democracy
Brazil	6.97	50	9	9.58	5.36	6.67	5.00	8.24	Flawed democracy
Colombia	6.96	51	10	9.17	6.79	5.00	5.63	8.24	Flawed democracy
Guyana	6.67	54=	11	9.17	5.71	6.11	5.00	7.35	Flawed democracy
Peru	6.60	59	12	9.17	5.00	5.56	5.63	7.65	Flawed democracy
Dominican Republic	6.54	61	13	9.17	5.36	6.11	5.00	7.06	Flawed democracy
Ecuador	6.27	68	14	8.75	5.36	6.11	4.38	6.76	Flawed democracy
Paraguay	6.24	70	15	8.75	5.71	5.00	4.38	7.35	Flawed democracy
Mexico	6.19	71=	16	8.33	6.07	7.22	3.13	6.18	Flawed democracy
El Salvador	5.96	77	17	9.17	4.29	5.56	3.75	7.06	Hybrid regime
Bolivia	5.70	83	18	7.50	4.64	5.56	3.75	7.06	Hybrid regime
Honduras	5.63	85	19	8.50	4.64	4.44	4.38	6.18	Hybrid regime
Guatemala	5.60	87	20	7.92	5.36	3.89	4.38	6.47	Hybrid regime
Haiti	4.91	102	21	5.58	2.93	3.89	6.25	5.88	Hybrid regime
Nicaragua	3.63	122	22	2.67	1.86	3.89	5.63	4.12	Authoritarian
Venezuela	3.16	134=	23	1.67	1.79	4.44	4.38	3.53	Authoritarian
Cuba	3.00	142	24	1.08	3.57	3.33	4.38	2.65	Authoritarian

Source: The Economist Intelligence Unit.

to resolve their respective countries' ills, with Mexicans opting for the left-wing Andrés Manuel López Obrador in July, and Brazilians for the right-wing Jair Bolsonaro in October.

Populist candidates also posed a threat in the Costa Rican presidential election in April and the Colombian election in May, although in both races more mainstream candidates were ultimately successful. Nevertheless, fear of outsider candidates and their policies had the effect of increasing engagement and voter turnout in these countries too, significantly boosting the region's overall score for *political participation* (placing it just barely above the global average, but still ahead of other emerging regions).

### **The Return of Populism**

Elections in Mexico and Brazil in 2018 showed that, in Latin America, rumours of the death of populism were greatly exaggerated. In both countries disillusioned voters turned to populist candidates to “stop the rot”. Although both candidates—the left-wing Andrés Manuel López Obrador in Mexico, and the right-wing Jair Bolsonaro in Brazil—have been in politics for decades, they were able to position themselves as political outsiders who were uniquely qualified to throw out the political establishment and address their countries’ ills. In both countries, parties that have dominated the political scene for decades saw their voter support plummet.

Apart from similarities in their ascent to power, the two men have little in common. Mr López Obrador is a traditional left-wing firebrand, but one who served as a relatively moderate mayor of Mexico City in 2000–05. He has twice previously competed for the presidency (in 2006 and 2012), and his campaign platform sought to assuage investors frightened by his left-wing bona fides by promising to respect investments and fiscal probity. Mr Bolsonaro, in contrast, is a right-wing law-and-order retired military officer, who has praised Brazil’s 1964–85 military dictatorship and promised to allow police to be tougher on criminals. He also, in his three-decade career as a federal deputy, made public racist, misogynistic and homophobic comments. Worries about his ascent to the presidency prompted large protests in Brazil, under the banner “Ele Não” (“Not Him”).

Despite Mr Bolsonaro’s tougher language, it is Mr López Obrador who could yet pose a great risk to democracy. Mr López Obrador won 53% of the

vote in a four-way presidential race, and his left-wing Movimiento Regeneración Nacional (Morena) party and its allies hold majorities in both houses of Mexico’s Congress. This makes Mr López Obrador the most powerful president since Mexico’s return to democracy in 2000. By contrast, although Mr Bolsonaro won 55% of the vote in a second-round run-off, his right-wing Partido Social Liberal won just 10% of the seats in Brazil’s Congress, which will force it to seek support from other parties in Congress. In addition, as president-elect, Mr López Obrador turned to unofficial popular consultations to gain approval for policy decisions—a practice he has vowed to continue as president (he took office on December 1st). These have the potential to undermine the rule of the legislature—the traditional check on executive power—if Mr López Obrador uses them as an expression of the “will of the people” to browbeat Congress into approving them.

Mr López Obrador also takes office with fewer macroeconomic constraints than does Mr Bolsonaro (Mexico has a stronger economy, lower public debt as a percentage of GDP, and lower fiscal pressure than Brazil), which will also increase his ability to pursue more populist policies should he choose to do so. Mr Bolsonaro, who took office on January 1st, has, at least so far, moderated his language since his election victory, perhaps recognising the difficulty of the task of securing congressional support for his agenda. But in both countries, substantial uncertainty surrounding policymaking persists, and it is not yet clear how these two leaders might change democracy in their respective countries, and perhaps the region at large, over the coming years.

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#### Costa Rica up, Nicaragua down

Of the 24 Latin American and Caribbean countries tracked in our Democracy Index, 13 saw their scores improve from 2017, while the remaining 11 saw deteriorations. The region now counts two full democracies, 14 flawed democracies, five hybrid regimes, and three authoritarian regimes. Notably, two countries saw their classifications shift: Costa Rica and Nicaragua. On the positive side, Costa Rica moved from flawed democracy to full democracy, joining Uruguay as the only other Latin American country in this category. The improvement owed to increased public support for democracy, which improved scores for *political participation* and *political culture*. Other notable improvements in score occurred in Colombia and Ecuador (both owing to higher levels of *political participation*) and Haiti (owing to increased independence of the legislature and citizen participation in protests).

Meanwhile, at the other end of the spectrum, neighbouring Nicaragua moved from hybrid regime to authoritarian regime, joining Venezuela and Cuba. The president, Daniel Ortega, has been in office since 2007, during which time he has consolidated power across all public institutions. However, even with such a tight grip on power, Mr Ortega was faced in 2018 with the most destabilising political crisis Nicaragua has seen since the 1980s. The crisis was set into motion in April, when student protests against a reform of the pension system were met with repression by state security forces, parapolice and other groups linked to the government. Although the reform was almost immediately repealed, and a commission established to investigate the acts of violence, this did little to prevent a wave of civil unrest breaking across the nation, as protestors' demands mushroomed to include far-reaching political reforms, the resignation of the president and the holding of early elections. The resistance movement, known as the Civic Alliance for Justice and Democracy—a broad coalition of students, peasant farmers, civil society groups and business people—initially wrong-footed the government and paved the way for a “National Dialogue” mediated by the local Catholic Church. However, the National Dialogue made little progress in reaching an agreement to end the crisis and was suspended soon after its inception.

All the while, pro-government forces continued to use violence to put down peaceful demonstrations. The aggressive repression strategy adopted by pro-government forces effectively put the brakes on the resistance movement, but at the cost of numerous human rights violations, resulting in over 300 deaths and more than 500 people being taken political prisoner, according to The Nicaraguan Center for Human Rights, a local NGO. According to the UN Human Rights Council, during the crisis state authorities violated the right to life, the right to free speech, the right to liberty and security, as well as due-process rights. The growing international attention being paid to Nicaragua's humanitarian crisis has led the US to impose a litany of economic sanctions on various government officials, hoping to pressure the government into restarting the National Dialogue. However, prospects for a negotiated solution remain bleak, and Mr Ortega remains defiant, deeming the crisis the result of an “attempted coup” by a political opposition in cahoots with hostile foreign elements. He has so far refused to step down or bring forward elections that are due in 2021 (although polls show strong support for such a move).

Other notable deteriorations in scores were registered in Mexico and El Salvador (given increased dissatisfaction with democracy as evidenced by growing support for military rule), and in authoritarian Venezuela (given political apathy among the Venezuelan opposition and sham elections held this year,



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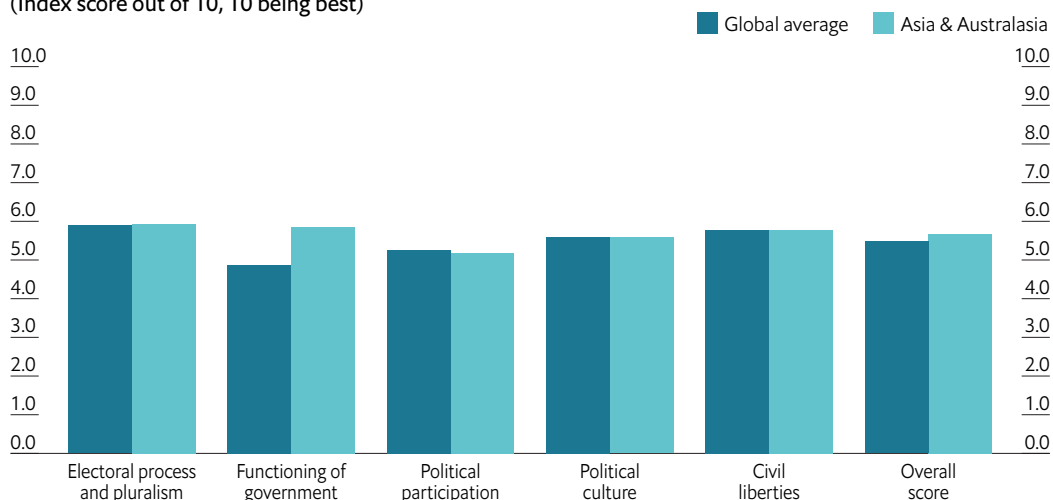
which saw the proscription of opposition parties). Cuba also saw its score deteriorate amid a transfer of power that saw the revolutionary leader, Raúl Castro, hand over power as president to a handpicked successor, Miguel Díaz-Canel, but retain important levers of power, including chairmanship of the ruling Partido Comunista de Cuba.

## Asia and Australasia

Since we began producing the Democracy Index, Asia and Australasia has made more headway in advancing democracy than any other region, and, after a tumultuous two years during which the process of democratisation appeared to be going into reverse, the region made modest renewed gains in 2018. Nevertheless, at 5.67, the score remains substantially lower than its historical peak of 5.74, registered in 2015-16. Furthermore, Asian democracies continued to lag behind North America (8.56), Western Europe (8.35) and Latin America (6.24). Asia also remained the region with the biggest deviation in scores among its countries: top scoring New Zealand (9.26) retained its 4th position in the global ranking (out of 167 countries), while persistent laggard North Korea (1.08), ranked last at 167th. Australia and New Zealand remained the only two “full democracies” in the region.

### Democracy index by category - Asia & Australasia

(Index score out of 10, 10 being best)



Source: The Economist Intelligence Unit.

### A story of participation and change

The improvement in the region's score in 2018 was driven by rising *political participation* across the region. The improvement was most significant for Malaysia (currently ranked 52nd) and Afghanistan (143rd). Both countries successfully held major elections in 2018. Voter turnout for Malaysia's general election in May was close to 80%, and it delivered a surprise upset for the incumbent. In Afghanistan voter turnout (3m out of 8.8m registered voters cast their ballot) was healthy, considering the extreme threat to security from terrorist groups that oppose the country's democratic institutions.

A majority of countries saw their ranking improve in 2018, although regime types in all instances remained the same. It was the region's least democratic nations that saw the most significant

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### POLITICAL PARTICIPATION, PROTEST AND DEMOCRACY

#### Asia & Australasia 2018

	Overall score	Global Rank	Regional rank	I Electoral process and pluralism	II Functioning of government	III Political participation	IV Political culture	V Civil liberties	Regime type
New Zealand	9.26	4	1	10.00	9.29	8.89	8.13	10.00	Full democracy
Australia	9.09	9	2	10.00	8.93	7.78	8.75	10.00	Full democracy
South Korea	8.00	21	3	9.17	7.86	7.22	7.50	8.24	Flawed democracy
Japan	7.99	22	4	8.75	8.21	6.67	7.50	8.82	Flawed democracy
Taiwan	7.73	32	5	9.58	8.21	6.11	5.63	9.12	Flawed democracy
India	7.23	41	6	9.17	6.79	7.22	5.63	7.35	Flawed democracy
Timor-Leste	7.19	42	7	9.08	6.79	5.56	6.88	7.65	Flawed democracy
Malaysia	6.88	52	8	7.75	7.86	6.67	6.25	5.88	Flawed democracy
Philippines	6.71	53	9	9.17	5.71	7.22	4.38	7.06	Flawed democracy
Mongolia	6.50	62	10	9.17	5.71	5.56	5.00	7.06	Flawed democracy
Indonesia	6.39	65	11	6.92	7.14	6.67	5.63	5.59	Flawed democracy
Singapore	6.38	66=	12	4.33	7.86	6.11	6.25	7.35	Flawed democracy
Sri Lanka	6.19	71=	13	7.83	5.71	5.00	6.25	6.18	Flawed democracy
Hong Kong	6.15	73=	14	3.08	6.07	5.56	7.50	8.53	Flawed democracy
Papua New Guinea	6.03	75	15	6.92	6.07	3.89	5.63	7.65	Flawed democracy
Fiji	5.85	79=	16	6.58	5.36	6.11	5.63	5.59	Hybrid regime
Bangladesh	5.57	88	17	7.83	5.07	5.56	4.38	5.00	Hybrid regime
Bhutan	5.30	94	18	8.75	6.79	2.78	4.38	3.82	Hybrid regime
Nepal	5.18	97	19	4.33	5.36	5.00	5.63	5.59	Hybrid regime
Thailand	4.63	106=	20	3.00	4.29	5.00	5.00	5.88	Hybrid regime
Pakistan	4.17	112	21	6.08	5.36	2.22	2.50	4.71	Hybrid regime
Myanmar	3.83	118	22	3.67	3.93	3.89	5.63	2.06	Authoritarian
Cambodia	3.59	125	23	1.33	5.00	2.78	5.63	3.24	Authoritarian
China	3.32	130	24	0.00	5.00	3.89	6.25	1.47	Authoritarian
Afghanistan	2.97	143	25	2.92	1.14	4.44	2.50	3.82	Authoritarian
Laos	2.37	151=	26	0.83	2.86	1.67	5.00	1.47	Authoritarian
North Korea	1.08	167	27	0.00	2.50	1.67	1.25	0.00	Authoritarian

Source: The Economist Intelligence Unit.

improvements in rank in 2018. China rose nine places in the global ranking, although it remains classified as an authoritarian regime and its climb in the index mainly reflects the worsening scores of other countries in the index, particularly in Latin America and Eastern Europe.

Sri Lanka fell back more than any other country in the region. It saw a marked decrease in its score from 6.48 in 2017 to 6.19, driven by a worsening in the *functioning of government* and in *civil liberties*. The country was plunged into a constitutional crisis in late October when the president, Maithripala Sirisena, announced the dismissal of the prime minister, Ranil Wickremesinghe, replacing him with an ally, Mahinda Rajapaksa (who served as president in 2005-15). This overreach of the president's powers has dampened public confidence in government.

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#### Calm before the storm

Little change was felt in Asia's two largest democracies: India (ranked 41st) and Indonesia (65th). Both are readying themselves for elections in 2019. The campaign period in Indonesia kicked off in September. Running for a second term, the president, Joko Widodo (known as Jokowi), will lack the advantage he had when he ran in 2014 of being a newcomer pressing for reform. Over the course of his first term, the democratic landscape in Indonesia has become more complicated. Identity politics has become a key feature of domestic politics, suggesting that reformist and liberal candidates could struggle in future. In India, the ruling National Democratic Alliance (NDA) coalition has struggled to maintain its dominance in state elections. To some extent, this is in fact a reflection of the strength of the country's democratic institutions, which has yielded upsets for the government, despite various coercive tactics used by the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) to consolidate power.

#### A long way to go

Among the democracies of East Asia, Japan experienced the largest increase in its score, owing to recent efforts to increase women's and youth participation in democracy. Hong Kong, by contrast, saw a slight decline in its overall score. In September the government banned the Hong Kong National Party, a separatist political party, in a clear setback for Hong Kong's already weak democracy. The territory's election commission is now also screening candidates more aggressively and has barred several who support greater autonomy from mainland China from standing for office.

Although Asia's score in the Democracy Index improved marginally in 2018, and although there were some clear bright spots, such as Malaysia, there were dampeners: rigged elections in Cambodia, a controversy over electoral irregularities in Pakistan, the jailing of two local journalists belonging to the foreign press corps in Myanmar, and legal attacks made by the government of the Philippines against any form of opposition. All this served as a reminder that there is still a long way to go for democratic values to be entrenched in Asia.

#### The resurgence of the opposition

The victory of opposition candidates in key elections in Asia in 2018 served to bolster the region's scores for the electoral process and pluralism. On May 9th 2018 Malaysia's opposition Pakatan Harapan (PH) won a surprise victory in the general election, ousting the BN government from power after six decades, amid increasing voter frustration with corruption and rising costs of living. Following the PH's victory, 93-year-old Mahatir Mohamed took over as prime minister. Mr Mohamed, by no means a political newcomer, staged a surprising comeback with a dynamic campaign based on anti-corruption and clean

government. He had previously served as prime minister for 22 years in 1981-2003. Mr Mohamed's victory was all the more remarkable for taking place despite gerrymandering and served to demonstrate that even a seemingly untouchable incumbent with a strong system of patronage was ultimately answerable to the electorate.

Equally striking were developments in Pakistan. After a fiercely contested election, the ruling Pakistan Muslim League (Nawaz), or PML (N), lost power to the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), led by Imran Khan. The polls took a sour turn when the defeated parties alleged widespread election rigging. Although electoral malpractice has been a long-running feature of voting in Pakistan,

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the scale of abuses on this occasion appears to have been substantially larger than during the last election in 2013. Pakistan's democracy is not a sturdy one. In fact, in the 2018 Democracy Index, its position declines to 112th from 110th previously. Nevertheless, an argument can be made that, flawed as the polls were, the Pakistani electorate still managed to push out the incumbent government for high levels of corruption and lack of transparency. Nawaz Sharif, the honorary leader of the Pakistan Muslim League (Nawaz), or the PML (N), was disqualified as prime minister by a Supreme Court ruling in July 2017, based on a preliminary investigation into corruption charges stemming from a set of leaked financial documents known as the Panama Papers.

#### Food for thought

The advance of the opposition in these elections provides food for thought as elections approach in the region's two largest democracies, India and Indonesia. Although our core forecast is for the incumbents in these two countries to hold on to power, some of the concerns expressed by voters in Pakistan and Malaysia are similar to those evident in India and Indonesia. In India, the image of the prime minister, Narendra Modi, resonates with an aspiring middle class, and Mr Modi has also maintained the support of business. But Mr Modi is not unassailable; a lack of attention to the rural economy has fuelled anti-government protests by farmers. In his term, moreover, job growth has been poor, institutional reforms have been slow to come, and those that have been passed have been poorly implemented. So far, Mr Modi has managed to deflect criticism, but his party, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)—the largest in the ruling

National Democratic Alliance (NDA) coalition—will be contesting the 2019 elections on a weak footing at state level. Having also lost the support of many small regional parties, the coalition could fail to gain a clear majority in parliament.

In Indonesia, meanwhile, the incumbent president, Joko Widodo (known as Jokowi), will be vying for a second term in May 2019. When he took office in 2014, Jokowi's "man of the people" image appealed to his young support base, which was keen to shift away from the traditional political elite. Expectations from Jokowi were therefore high. Five years on, the president's performance has been patchy. Jokowi has delivered on many of the reforms to the business environment that he had promised. In particular, he has managed to put in place a team of technocrats to manage the economy and streamline policymaking. But the benefits of these efforts have been slow to arrive, and in the meantime the economy has grown at around 5%, below the rates registered by Indonesia's regional peers. Jokowi's rival in the 2019 presidential election will be Prabowo Subianto, the current leader of the opposition, who ran unsuccessfully against Jokowi in 2014. Mr Subianto—a former three star general—harks back to the era of strongman governments under the presidency of his father-in-law, General Suharto (1968-98). True to form, Mr Subianto's campaign platform is a nationalist one tinged with identity politics and heavily laden with criticism of Jokowi's form. According to opinion polls, he is not the favourite, but he is a vociferous campaigner with an effective campaign team, which could still produce an upset on polling day. Judging by results in key regional elections in 2018, such a result is not out of the question.

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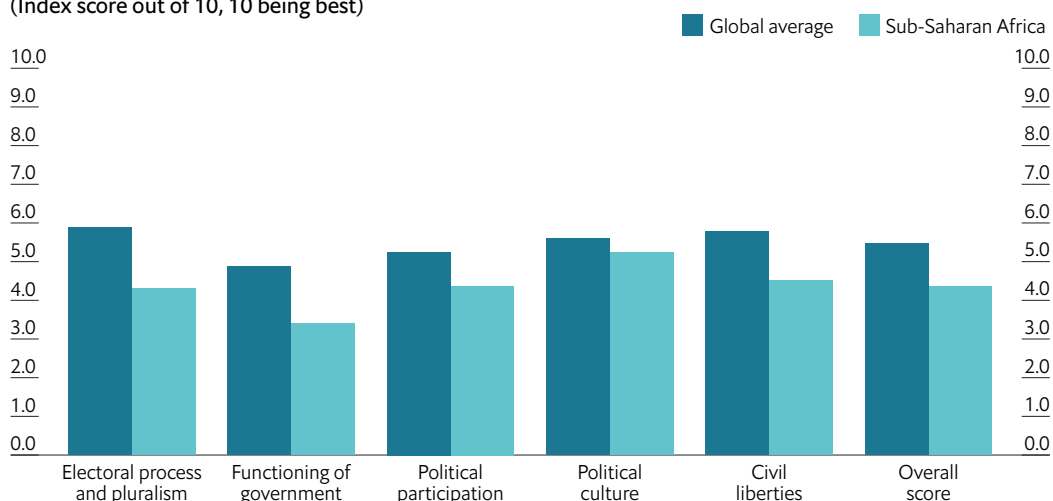
### POLITICAL PARTICIPATION, PROTEST AND DEMOCRACY

## Sub-Saharan Africa

The state of democracy in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) has remained poor over the years. A concentration of authoritarian regimes continues to characterise the region, which contains seven of the 15 lowest-ranked countries in the world. Although the regional average score in the Democracy Index improved marginally in 2018, to 4.36 (up from 4.35 in 2017), developments across the region were decidedly mixed, with a relatively small number of significant improvements offsetting a wider trend of stagnation or deterioration across much of the continent. Only 12 out of the 44 SSA countries in the Democracy Index recorded any improvement in their overall score, nine worsened, and around half of the countries were unchanged.

### Democracy index by category - Sub-Saharan Africa

(Index score out of 10, 10 being best)



Source: The Economist Intelligence Unit.

This scant progress is reflected in the SSA region's relatively flat score in the Democracy Index throughout the past half-decade. That said, a notable improvement has been made in the *political participation* category over the past five years (although there were a few notable exceptions), as elections have become commonplace across much of the region. In 2018 SSA's average score for the category improved to 4.37 (up from 4.32 in 2017). Improvements in six SSA countries drove this rise, including in Djibouti, where representation of women in parliament rose to around 26% following the holding of elections in February 2018. Progress in this area has also been supported by increased political activism and protests throughout 2018 in Uganda, highlighting a growing willingness of the population to demand political reforms.

Meanwhile, the score for *electoral process* weakened slightly to 4.30 in 2018 (down from 4.31 in 2017). Although elections have become commonplace across much of the region, the regional score for electoral processes has been persistently low, reflecting a lack of genuine pluralism in most SSA countries. This is also reflected in the fact that around 18 African presidents have been in power for

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#### Sub-Saharan Africa 2018

	Overall score	Global Rank	Regional rank	I Electoral process and pluralism	II Functioning of government	III Political participation	IV Political culture	V Civil liberties	Regime type
Mauritius	8.22	17	1	9.17	8.21	5.56	8.75	9.41	Full democracy
Cabo Verde	7.88	26	2	9.17	7.86	6.67	6.88	8.82	Flawed democracy
Botswana	7.81	28	3	9.17	7.14	6.11	7.50	9.12	Flawed democracy
South Africa	7.24	40	4	7.42	7.50	8.33	5.00	7.94	Flawed democracy
Lesotho	6.64	56	5	9.17	5.00	6.67	5.63	6.76	Flawed democracy
Ghana	6.63	57=	6	8.33	5.71	6.67	6.25	6.18	Flawed democracy
Namibia	6.25	69	7	5.67	5.36	6.67	5.63	7.94	Flawed democracy
Senegal	6.15	73=	8	7.50	6.07	4.44	6.25	6.47	Flawed democracy
Benin	5.74	81=	9	6.50	5.71	5.00	5.63	5.88	Hybrid regime
Zambia	5.61	86	10	6.17	4.64	3.89	6.88	6.47	Hybrid regime
Malawi	5.49	90	11	6.58	4.29	4.44	6.25	5.88	Hybrid regime
Tanzania	5.41	91=	12=	7.00	5.00	5.00	5.63	4.41	Hybrid regime
Mali	5.41	91=	12=	7.42	3.93	3.89	5.63	6.18	Hybrid regime
Liberia	5.35	93	14	7.42	2.57	5.56	5.63	5.59	Hybrid regime
Madagascar	5.22	95	15	6.08	3.57	6.11	5.63	4.71	Hybrid regime
Uganda	5.20	96	16	5.25	3.57	4.44	6.88	5.88	Hybrid regime
Kenya	5.11	98=	17	3.50	5.36	6.67	5.63	4.41	Hybrid regime
Burkina Faso	4.75	104	18	4.42	4.29	4.44	5.63	5.00	Hybrid regime
Sierra Leone	4.66	105	19	6.58	1.86	3.33	6.25	5.29	Hybrid regime
Nigeria	4.44	108	20	6.08	4.64	3.33	3.75	4.41	Hybrid regime
Gambia	4.31	111	21	4.48	4.29	3.33	5.63	3.82	Hybrid regime
Côte d'Ivoire	4.15	113	22	4.83	2.86	3.33	5.63	4.12	Hybrid regime
Mozambique	3.85	116=	23	3.58	2.14	5.00	5.00	3.53	Authoritarian
Mauritania	3.82	119	24	3.00	3.57	5.00	3.13	4.41	Authoritarian
Niger	3.76	120	25	5.25	1.14	3.33	4.38	4.71	Authoritarian
Comoros	3.71	121	26	4.33	2.21	4.44	3.75	3.82	Authoritarian
Angola	3.62	123	27	1.75	2.86	5.56	5.00	2.94	Authoritarian
Gabon	3.61	124	28	2.58	2.21	4.44	5.00	3.82	Authoritarian
Ethiopia	3.35	128=	29=	0.00	3.57	5.56	5.00	2.65	Authoritarian
Rwanda	3.35	128=	29=	1.67	5.00	2.78	4.38	2.94	Authoritarian
Congo (Brazzaville)	3.31	131	31	3.17	2.50	3.89	3.75	3.24	Authoritarian
Cameroon	3.28	132	32	3.17	2.86	3.33	4.38	2.65	Authoritarian
Zimbabwe	3.16	134=	33	0.50	2.00	4.44	5.63	3.24	Authoritarian
Guinea	3.14	136	34	3.50	0.43	4.44	4.38	2.94	Authoritarian
Togo	3.10	138	35	3.17	0.79	3.33	5.00	3.24	Authoritarian
Swaziland	3.03	141	36	0.92	2.86	2.22	5.63	3.53	Authoritarian

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### POLITICAL PARTICIPATION, PROTEST AND DEMOCRACY

#### Sub-Saharan Africa 2018

	Overall score	Global Rank	Regional rank	I Electoral process and pluralism	II Functioning of government	III Political participation	IV Political culture	V Civil liberties	Regime type
Djibouti	2.87	146	37	0.42	1.79	3.89	5.63	2.65	Authoritarian
Eritrea	2.37	151=	38	0.00	2.14	1.67	6.88	1.18	Authoritarian
Burundi	2.33	153	39	0.00	0.43	3.89	5.00	2.35	Authoritarian
Guinea-Bissau	1.98	157	40	1.67	0.00	2.78	3.13	2.35	Authoritarian
Equatorial Guinea	1.92	161	41	0.00	0.43	3.33	4.38	1.47	Authoritarian
Chad	1.61	163	42	0.00	0.00	1.67	3.75	2.65	Authoritarian
Central African Republic	1.52	164	43	2.25	0.00	1.11	1.88	2.35	Authoritarian
Democratic Republic of Congo	1.49	165	44	0.50	0.71	2.22	3.13	0.88	Authoritarian

Source: The Economist Intelligence Unit.

over a decade, some of them since the countries gained independence. For this reason, marginal gains made in a few countries such as Rwanda were counterbalanced by worsening political environments elsewhere. This was the case in Cameroon, where the president secured a seventh term in elections held in October. The poll was characterised by low voter turnout amid poor security and severe irregularities that have left Cameroonians disillusioned with the fairness of the process.

With the authorities gradually gaining control of the country's full territory, Côte d'Ivoire's score for *functioning of government* has improved, helping to lift the regional score to 3.39 in 2018 (up from 3.36 in 2017). Domestic gains in Gambia and Benin have also supported an improvement in this category. The president of Benin, Patrice Talon, for example, has taken steps to stamp out corruption by establishing a special court to handle economic crimes and by eliminating the parliamentary immunity of former ministers accused of fraud. This worked towards improving government efficiency in 2018. Gains made in Côte d'Ivoire, Gambia and Benin have also helped offset a poorer government performance in Zambia, the only country to register a worsening score in this category (reflecting increasing foreign influence in government policymaking).

The regional score for *political culture*, which assesses the population's perceptions of democracy, deteriorated to 5.24 in 2018 (from 5.27 in 2017). Developments in Mali contributed to this deterioration as slow progress in boosting security and order (especially ahead of the mid-2018 presidential election) is likely to have increased frustration with the government and weakened the perception that democracy helps to maintain public order.

SSA's average score for *civil liberties* also remains poor relative to global standards, weighed down by continued attacks on the media and on freedom of expression by governments in several countries. In Tanzania, for example, the government in 2018 introduced prohibitive regulations on online content providers via expensive licensing requirements. Demonstrations have also remained difficult to attend in some countries, with security forces taking a harder line on a growing number of protesters demanding political reform. Over the course of 2018, the Togolese government has regularly placed bans on opposition protests denouncing the rule of the Gnassingbé family. That said, SSA's average

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### POLITICAL PARTICIPATION, PROTEST AND DEMOCRACY

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score for *civil liberties* actually improved marginally in 2018, to an average 4.51, up from 4.5 in 2017. Contributing to this improvement were greater civilian freedoms in Gambia (where the president has taken steps to promote media freedom) and in Ethiopia (where several political prisoners were released during the course of 2018).

At country level, two countries changed classification in 2018. Mozambique's score deteriorated to 3.85 in the Democracy Index, as a result of which we now classify it as an authoritarian regime (it was previously classified as a hybrid regime). The deterioration in Mozambique was triggered by a disputed municipal election in October 2018, which risks destabilising an ongoing peace process between the ruling party, the Frente de Libertação de Moçambique, and an armed opposition party, the Resistência Nacional Moçambicana. In contrast, Côte d'Ivoire was upgraded to a hybrid regime. Democratic improvements were recorded in three categories (*electoral process*, *functioning of government* and *civil liberties*) following the country's organisation of broadly free and fair municipal elections in October 2018, and the gradual regaining of full territorial control following the end of a civil conflict in 2011.

Overall, a global comparison suggests that SSA remains a long way off other regions in the advance of democracy. This is true for all categories evaluated in our index, where SSA remains well below the global average. Mauritius is the only full democracy in the region; in many other countries, scores have improved in some years only to falter in others (often around electoral cycles). All this suggests that, although there is the potential for a further consolidation of democracy, there are still few signs that this is gathering real momentum.

#### Ethiopia's newfound freedoms stoke instability

Ethiopia's experience of liberalisation demonstrates both the potential for democratisation in Sub-Saharan Africa, and the challenge of liberalising countries with a history of violent conflict. From 2012 to February 2018, Hailemariam Desalegn, the former prime minister, led an ethnic Tigray-dominated government, which largely sought to repress the Oromia and Amhara, the country's two largest ethnically based provinces. However, at the end of 2016 a wave of protests demanding the release of opposition leaders and an end to ethnic marginalisation emerged. It gradually weakened the administration, forcing it to release political prisoners in January 2018. The symbolic move failed to pacify protestors, which eventually led to the resignation of Mr Desalegn in February 2018.

This paved the way for the appointment of a new reformist prime minister, Abiy Ahmed, who was inaugurated in April 2018 and rapidly set about upending Ethiopian politics. He spoke about his intention to move towards a multiparty democracy, supported by strong institutions that respect human rights and the rule of law. Under Mr Abiy's leadership, thousands of political prisoners have already been released, a peace deal with Eritrea has been signed, bans on websites and other media have been lifted, and Ethiopia's first female head of state has been appointed.

These improvements in *civil liberties* and *political participation* are positive signs and necessary steps for Ethiopia to be upgraded from its authoritarian status. Unfortunately, despite Mr Abiy's pro-democratic and reformist stance, reforms have been accompanied by an increase in violence in the country. The authorities are struggling to manage Ethiopia's more liberated—



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and more chaotic—political space as newfound freedoms have developed in a country with a history of ethnically motivated conflict and decades-old regional disputes. In September-October another wave of protests rattled the government from various regions and was met with live fire from security services. The use of lethal force to retain order is casting doubt on the administration’s ability to improve the country’s human rights record.

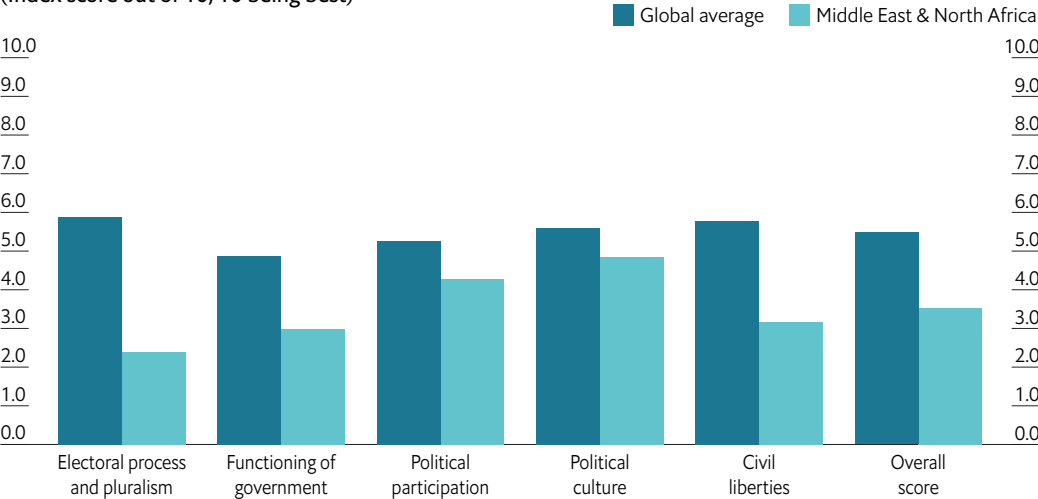
These developments point to the fact that this

new political space, although supposedly freer, has not yet been sufficient to support the development of a healthy, cohesive democratic political culture in the country. This will take time to emerge, given the country’s ethnic complexity. However, Mr Abiy’s democratic plans, moderate reformist stance and popularity (spread across ethnicities) send positive signals of his ability to engineer a shift towards stabilisation, electoral pluralism and improved democratic credentials in the longer run.

### Middle East and North Africa

The Middle East and North Africa (MENA) continues to be the poorest performing of the regions in the Democracy Index. However, after political and social turmoil earlier in the decade, 2018 was a period of little movement for the region in the index, with the average score virtually unchanged and most countries registering only marginal score changes; only Morocco, Yemen, Libya (which saw a deterioration) and Tunisia (which registered an improvement) recorded score changes of more than 0.1 points in their overall score.

**Democracy index by category - Middle East & North Africa**  
(Index score out of 10, 10 being best)



Source: The Economist Intelligence Unit.

The Arab Spring revolt in the early 2010s had deep repercussions, with the reassertion of power by authoritarian or hybrid regimes in all but one (Tunisia) of the countries affected—while others continue to be mired in conflict, including Syria, Yemen and Libya. The prolonged instability ushered in with

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#### Middle East & North Africa 2018

	Overall score	Global Rank	Regional rank	I Electoral process and pluralism	II Functioning of government	III Political participation	IV Political culture	V Civil liberties	Regime type
Israel	7.79	30	1	9.17	7.50	8.89	7.50	5.88	Flawed democracy
Tunisia	6.41	63=	2	6.42	5.71	7.78	6.25	5.88	Flawed democracy
Morocco	4.99	100	3	5.25	4.64	5.00	5.63	4.41	Hybrid regime
Lebanon	4.63	106=	4	3.92	2.21	6.67	5.63	4.71	Hybrid regime
Palestine	4.39	109	5	3.83	2.14	7.78	4.38	3.82	Hybrid regime
Iraq	4.06	114	6	4.75	0.07	6.67	5.00	3.82	Hybrid regime
Jordan	3.93	115	7	3.58	4.29	3.89	4.38	3.53	Authoritarian
Kuwait	3.85	116=	8	3.17	4.29	3.89	4.38	3.53	Authoritarian
Algeria	3.50	126	9	2.58	2.21	3.89	5.00	3.82	Authoritarian
Egypt	3.36	127	10	3.58	3.21	3.33	3.75	2.94	Authoritarian
Qatar	3.19	133	11	0.00	4.29	2.22	5.63	3.82	Authoritarian
Oman	3.04	140	12	0.00	3.93	2.78	4.38	4.12	Authoritarian
United Arab Emirates	2.76	147	13	0.00	3.93	2.22	5.00	2.65	Authoritarian
Bahrain	2.71	148	14	0.83	3.21	2.78	4.38	2.35	Authoritarian
Iran	2.45	150	15	0.00	3.21	4.44	3.13	1.47	Authoritarian
Libya	2.19	154	16	1.00	0.36	1.67	5.00	2.94	Authoritarian
Sudan	2.15	155	17	0.00	1.79	2.78	5.00	1.18	Authoritarian
Yemen	1.95	158	18	0.00	0.00	3.89	5.00	0.88	Authoritarian
Saudi Arabia	1.93	159=	19	0.00	2.86	2.22	3.13	1.47	Authoritarian
Syria	1.43	166	20	0.00	0.00	2.78	4.38	0.00	Authoritarian

Source: The Economist Intelligence Unit.

the Arab Spring has made the citizens of many countries hesitant to seek radical political change and has increased disengagement with formal politics. Nevertheless, while electoral politics is increasingly being viewed with disdain, even in the few countries in the region where elections are at least somewhat meaningful, there has been a noticeable increase over the past year in public willingness to engage in public protest, both through traditional means and, increasingly, using social media and other tools.

Israel (30th of 170 countries in our Index and unchanged from the previous year) and Tunisia (joint 63rd following an improvement in score and rank) are the only two countries in the region that are classified as democracies of any kind, although both are “flawed” rather than full democracies. The remaining 18 countries in the region are either hybrid regimes or authoritarian regimes, with Syria featuring second from last in the Index, just above North Korea, and Yemen, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Libya, Bahrain and Iran all in the bottom 20 of the rankings. Aside from Israel and Tunisia, all the countries in the MENA region are ranked 100 or below in the Democracy Index.

#### Restrictions on freedom of the press

Media freedom has historically been weak in the region but further crackdowns, especially in the Gulf region, suggest that conditions will remain highly restrictive for the press. Notably in Saudi Arabia, the

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killing of a well-known journalist, Jamal Khashoggi, at the Saudi consulate in the Turkish city of Istanbul in October by forces connected to the powerful crown prince of Saudi Arabia, Mohammed bin Salman, has drawn international attention to the increasingly authoritarian and unpredictable nature of the crown prince's leadership. However, Saudi Arabia already had an extremely poor reputation for media freedom and the Khashoggi killing has had little impact on the Kingdom's placing in the Democracy Index.

One of the more noticeable trends over the past year—apparent both in countries with functioning parliamentary systems and varying degrees of electoral freedom, as well as in more repressive states—has been the increased resort to public protest. Although the average score in the region increased marginally, the longer-term trend for *electoral process and pluralism* has been of decline, from an already weak base. It is the region's weakest scoring category, whereas *political culture* and *political participation* have remained the strongest Democracy Index categories in MENA. Voter turnout in several Arab states that held long-delayed parliamentary polls fell to new lows, including in Lebanon and in Iraq, which both held parliamentary elections in mid-2018. Iraq has a government after several months of delay, but even then it has not completely finalised the government formation process. Meanwhile, Lebanon is still awaiting significant progress in this direction, with intense sectarian rivalries overlaid by sharply contrasting regional loyalties that continue to hamper politics severely. In Lebanon, this has led to the emergence of civil society groups seeking to address some of the serious shortcomings of the state that the fractured political system has enabled, including corruption and poor infrastructure. The continued disillusionment with parliamentary politics saw voter turnout fall to below 50% despite a nine-year wait for the poll. The electoral system gives little space for civil society and other groups without a specific confessional basis to progress, and this has led the public to engage politically through other means. In the Gulf, only Kuwait has allowed elected representatives a modicum of real power and most states remain highly repressive. Bahrain has seen significant public protest in recent years, principally from the marginalised Shia community. However, the Sunni ruling family, supported by Saudi Arabia and the UAE, will continue to respond harshly to dissent.

Elsewhere in the region, public protest has proved more effective in influencing policy. In Jordan, protests among poorer and more marginalised communities, and among university students, have continued on a small scale and sporadically over the past year. However, 2018 also saw a more significant public engagement when opposition over changes to taxation, and austerity measures including subsidy changes, spurred larger protests, including street demonstrations in early June in the capital, Amman, and other cities for three days in a row, demanding a rollback of austerity measures and the sacking of the then prime minister, Hani Mulki, and his cabinet, which they managed to effect.

In North Africa, public protests have increased but they have not been driven by a desire for regime change. In Egypt occasional but brief protests have continued into 2018 as the popularity of the president, Abdel Fattah el Sisi, has significantly diminished since the onset of tough economic reforms in 2016. Nevertheless, the kind of instability that prevailed in the aftermath of the Arab Spring will not be repeated as Mr Sisi exercises tight control of security and puts pressure on the press and other critics of his rule. In Algeria, widespread and growing public discontent has led to an upsurge in public protests since late 2017. These have focused on rising prices, a lack of access to public services, public-sector pay, continued high unemployment and housing shortages, as well as security issues and regional inequalities. The protests have forced the government to reverse its position on some austerity

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measures. Moreover, political opposition groups have started to call for the ailing incumbent president, Abdelaziz Bouteflika, to stand down in 2019, rather than run for a fifth term.

In Morocco, turnout at the last parliamentary election in 2016 was also below 50%. However, political and business elites continue to be challenged by a nationwide surge in discontent over the rising cost of living, exacerbated by a successful social media campaign calling on ordinary Moroccans to boycott several consumer products. The king has tried to address popular grievances by granting a royal pardon in August 2018 to over 180 people arrested during protests in the northern Rif region in 2017. He has also criticised the government's current development strategy. However, it is unlikely that the underlying causes of the unrest (such as the entanglement of politics and big business and widespread inequality) will be fully addressed in the near term.

In Iran, participation in the formal political process has traditionally been strong, with high voter turnout in national elections. The president, Hassan Rouhani, was re-elected comfortably in May 2017. However, with public discontent intensifying over poor economic management—a situation that is intensifying following the re-imposition of US sanctions against Iran in 2018—unrest has increased. Protests have occasionally turned violent. Widespread protests in December 2017 and January 2018 revealed disquiet among poorer Iranians over inequality and rising prices, reflecting the fact that any benefits from the international nuclear deal have not fed through to the wider population. Protests emerged across Iran between late March and early April 2018 as a consequence of water shortages. However, the lack of a clear leader for protesters to unite around and the strength of the security services has meant that the regime has not come under threat.

Overall, the picture in the region is one of a continued disengagement on the part of a disillusioned public, which is moving away from formal *political participation* and towards non-electoral modes of political expression and participation. These have been mostly peaceful, but in some cases, such as in Iran and Tunisia (where firebombs and stone-throwing at government buildings have marred protests), violence has been a concern. The effectiveness of such protests will be constrained by the strength of the security services in the region, which means that regime change is unlikely in those countries that are not already democracies, but they will continue to have a significant impact on political stability and on government policies.

### **Iraq: Growing public discontent with formal politics**

Developments in Iraq in 2018 suggest growing disillusionment with formal political institutions that could ultimately threaten democratic gains. Having conducted a parliamentary election in May 2018, which was largely peaceful, Iraq made some improvement in the electoral process and pluralism category in The Economist Intelligence Unit's 2018 Democracy Index. But this was not enough to prevent a fall in the country's overall score and ranking. The latter in fact dropped from 112 in 2017 to 114 in 2018 globally, reflecting a weakening of the score for political participation. Voter turnout in the May election was less than 45% of eligible voters, compared with about 60% in the previous poll in 2014, indicating a sense of apathy among Iraqis towards many of the political parties contesting the election. Growing public discontent has resulted in violent protests in many instances, especially among the minority Kurds and Sunnis. More alarming protests have emerged in the southern Shia-dominated Basra

region. These began in July and were driven by a lack of water and electricity that resulted from a combination of peak summer power demand, a shortage of hydroelectricity and a decline in electricity imports. Basrawis have long felt aggrieved, given that the bulk of Iraq's oil wealth is produced in their province, which has nonetheless fallen behind in terms of development. Meanwhile, the newly formed coalition government, with Adel Abdul Mahdi from the Islamic Supreme Council of Iraq as the prime minister, is highly fragmented, implying that much-needed infrastructure and reconstruction efforts will be delayed owing to continued political gridlock. Unemployment remains high, especially among the well-educated Iraqi youth population and the standard of living remains deplorable owing to a lack of basic services. Growing disillusionment among young Iraqis makes them vulnerable to extremist ideologies. Jihadi groups such as Islamist State (IS, which has been territorially defeated in Iraq) and al-Qaida will try to push through their agendas, gain support from the public and channel this against the government, threatening democratic gains.

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## Global tables

Democracy Index 2018

	Rank	Overall score	Electoral process and pluralism	Functioning of government	Political participation	Political culture	Civil liberties
Full democracies							
Norway	1	9.87	10.00	9.64	10.00	10.00	9.71
Iceland	2	9.58	10.00	9.29	8.89	10.00	9.71
Sweden	3	9.39	9.58	9.64	8.33	10.00	9.41
New Zealand	4	9.26	10.00	9.29	8.89	8.13	10.00
Denmark	5	9.22	10.00	9.29	8.33	9.38	9.12
Canada	6=	9.15	9.58	9.64	7.78	8.75	10.00
Ireland	6=	9.15	9.58	7.86	8.33	10.00	10.00
Finland	8	9.14	10.00	8.93	8.33	8.75	9.71
Australia	9	9.09	10.00	8.93	7.78	8.75	10.00
Switzerland	10	9.03	9.58	9.29	7.78	9.38	9.12
Netherlands	11	8.89	9.58	9.29	8.33	8.13	9.12
Luxembourg	12	8.81	10.00	8.93	6.67	8.75	9.71
Germany	13	8.68	9.58	8.57	8.33	7.50	9.41
United Kingdom	14	8.53	9.58	7.50	8.33	8.13	9.12
Uruguay	15	8.38	10.00	8.57	6.11	7.50	9.71
Austria	16	8.29	9.58	7.86	8.33	6.88	8.82
Mauritius	17	8.22	9.17	8.21	5.56	8.75	9.41
Malta	18	8.21	9.17	8.21	6.11	8.75	8.82
Spain	19	8.08	9.17	7.14	7.78	7.50	8.82
Costa Rica	20	8.07	9.58	7.50	6.67	7.50	9.12
Flawed democracies							
South Korea	21	8.00	9.17	7.86	7.22	7.50	8.24
Japan	22	7.99	8.75	8.21	6.67	7.50	8.82
Chile	23=	7.97	9.58	8.57	4.44	8.13	9.12
Estonia	23=	7.97	9.58	8.21	6.67	6.88	8.53
United States of America	25	7.96	9.17	7.14	7.78	7.50	8.24
Cabo Verde	26	7.88	9.17	7.86	6.67	6.88	8.82
Portugal	27	7.84	9.58	7.50	6.11	6.88	9.12
Botswana	28	7.81	9.17	7.14	6.11	7.50	9.12
France	29	7.80	9.58	7.50	7.78	5.63	8.53
Israel	30	7.79	9.17	7.50	8.89	7.50	5.88
Belgium	31	7.78	9.58	8.93	5.00	6.88	8.53
Taiwan	32	7.73	9.58	8.21	6.11	5.63	9.12
Italy	33	7.71	9.58	6.07	7.78	6.88	8.24
Czech Republic	34	7.69	9.58	6.79	6.67	6.88	8.53
Cyprus	35	7.59	9.17	6.43	6.67	6.88	8.82
Slovenia	36=	7.50	9.58	6.79	6.67	6.25	8.24

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### POLITICAL PARTICIPATION, PROTEST AND DEMOCRACY

#### Democracy Index 2018

	Rank	Overall score	Electoral process and pluralism	Functioning of government	Political participation	Political culture	Civil liberties
Lithuania	36=	7.50	9.58	6.43	6.11	6.25	9.12
Latvia	38	7.38	9.58	6.07	5.56	6.88	8.82
Greece	39	7.29	9.58	5.36	6.11	6.88	8.53
South Africa	40	7.24	7.42	7.50	8.33	5.00	7.94
India	41	7.23	9.17	6.79	7.22	5.63	7.35
Timor-Leste	42	7.19	9.08	6.79	5.56	6.88	7.65
Trinidad and Tobago	43	7.16	9.58	7.14	6.11	5.63	7.35
Slovakia	44	7.10	9.58	6.79	5.56	5.63	7.94
Panama	45	7.05	9.58	6.07	6.67	5.00	7.94
Bulgaria	46	7.03	9.17	6.43	7.22	4.38	7.94
Argentina	47=	7.02	9.17	5.36	6.11	6.25	8.24
Jamaica	47=	7.02	8.75	7.14	4.44	6.25	8.53
Suriname	49	6.98	9.17	6.43	6.67	5.00	7.65
Brazil	50	6.97	9.58	5.36	6.67	5.00	8.24
Colombia	51	6.96	9.17	6.79	5.00	5.63	8.24
Malaysia	52	6.88	7.75	7.86	6.67	6.25	5.88
Philippines	53	6.71	9.17	5.71	7.22	4.38	7.06
Poland	54=	6.67	9.17	6.07	6.11	4.38	7.65
Guyana	54=	6.67	9.17	5.71	6.11	5.00	7.35
Lesotho	56	6.64	9.17	5.00	6.67	5.63	6.76
Ghana	57=	6.63	8.33	5.71	6.67	6.25	6.18
Hungary	57=	6.63	8.75	6.07	5.00	6.25	7.06
Peru	59	6.60	9.17	5.00	5.56	5.63	7.65
Croatia	60	6.57	9.17	6.07	5.56	5.00	7.06
Dominican Republic	61	6.54	9.17	5.36	6.11	5.00	7.06
Mongolia	62	6.50	9.17	5.71	5.56	5.00	7.06
Serbia	63=	6.41	8.25	5.36	6.11	5.00	7.35
Tunisia	63=	6.41	6.42	5.71	7.78	6.25	5.88
Indonesia	65	6.39	6.92	7.14	6.67	5.63	5.59
Singapore	66=	6.38	4.33	7.86	6.11	6.25	7.35
Romania	66=	6.38	9.17	5.71	5.00	4.38	7.65
Ecuador	68	6.27	8.75	5.36	6.11	4.38	6.76
Namibia	69	6.25	5.67	5.36	6.67	5.63	7.94
Paraguay	70	6.24	8.75	5.71	5.00	4.38	7.35
Sri Lanka	71=	6.19	7.83	5.71	5.00	6.25	6.18
Mexico	71=	6.19	8.33	6.07	7.22	3.13	6.18
Hong Kong	73=	6.15	3.08	6.07	5.56	7.50	8.53
Senegal	73=	6.15	7.50	6.07	4.44	6.25	6.47

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#### Democracy Index 2018

	Rank	Overall score	Electoral process and pluralism	Functioning of government	Political participation	Political culture	Civil liberties
Papua New Guinea	75	6.03	6.92	6.07	3.89	5.63	7.65
Hybrid regime							
Albania	76	5.98	7.00	4.71	5.56	5.00	7.65
El Salvador	77	5.96	9.17	4.29	5.56	3.75	7.06
Macedonia	78	5.87	6.50	5.36	6.67	3.75	7.06
Moldova	79=	5.85	7.08	4.64	6.11	4.38	7.06
Fiji	79=	5.85	6.58	5.36	6.11	5.63	5.59
Montenegro	81=	5.74	6.08	5.36	6.11	4.38	6.76
Benin	81=	5.74	6.50	5.71	5.00	5.63	5.88
Bolivia	83	5.70	7.50	4.64	5.56	3.75	7.06
Ukraine	84	5.69	6.17	3.21	6.67	6.25	6.18
Honduras	85	5.63	8.50	4.64	4.44	4.38	6.18
Zambia	86	5.61	6.17	4.64	3.89	6.88	6.47
Guatemala	87	5.60	7.92	5.36	3.89	4.38	6.47
Bangladesh	88	5.57	7.83	5.07	5.56	4.38	5.00
Georgia	89	5.50	7.83	3.57	6.11	4.38	5.59
Malawi	90	5.49	6.58	4.29	4.44	6.25	5.88
Tanzania	91=	5.41	7.00	5.00	5.00	5.63	4.41
Mali	91=	5.41	7.42	3.93	3.89	5.63	6.18
Liberia	93	5.35	7.42	2.57	5.56	5.63	5.59
Bhutan	94	5.30	8.75	6.79	2.78	4.38	3.82
Madagascar	95	5.22	6.08	3.57	6.11	5.63	4.71
Uganda	96	5.20	5.25	3.57	4.44	6.88	5.88
Nepal	97	5.18	4.33	5.36	5.00	5.63	5.59
Kenya	98=	5.11	3.50	5.36	6.67	5.63	4.41
Kyrgyz Republic	98=	5.11	6.58	2.93	6.67	4.38	5.00
Morocco	100	4.99	5.25	4.64	5.00	5.63	4.41
Bosnia and Hercegovina	101	4.98	6.50	2.93	5.56	3.75	6.18
Haiti	102	4.91	5.58	2.93	3.89	6.25	5.88
Armenia	103	4.79	5.67	4.64	5.56	2.50	5.59
Burkina Faso	104	4.75	4.42	4.29	4.44	5.63	5.00
Sierra Leone	105	4.66	6.58	1.86	3.33	6.25	5.29
Lebanon	106=	4.63	3.92	2.21	6.67	5.63	4.71
Thailand	106=	4.63	3.00	4.29	5.00	5.00	5.88
Nigeria	108	4.44	6.08	4.64	3.33	3.75	4.41
Palestine	109	4.39	3.83	2.14	7.78	4.38	3.82
Turkey	110	4.37	4.50	5.00	5.00	5.00	2.35
Gambia	111	4.31	4.48	4.29	3.33	5.63	3.82



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#### Democracy Index 2018

	Rank	Overall score	Electoral process and pluralism	Functioning of government	Political participation	Political culture	Civil liberties
Pakistan	112	4.17	6.08	5.36	2.22	2.50	4.71
Côte d'Ivoire	113	4.15	4.83	2.86	3.33	5.63	4.12
Iraq	114	4.06	4.75	0.07	6.67	5.00	3.82
Authoritarian							
Jordan	115	3.93	3.58	4.29	3.89	4.38	3.53
Mozambique	116=	3.85	3.58	2.14	5.00	5.00	3.53
Kuwait	116=	3.85	3.17	4.29	3.89	4.38	3.53
Myanmar	118	3.83	3.67	3.93	3.89	5.63	2.06
Mauritania	119	3.82	3.00	3.57	5.00	3.13	4.41
Niger	120	3.76	5.25	1.14	3.33	4.38	4.71
Comoros	121	3.71	4.33	2.21	4.44	3.75	3.82
Nicaragua	122	3.63	2.67	1.86	3.89	5.63	4.12
Angola	123	3.62	1.75	2.86	5.56	5.00	2.94
Gabon	124	3.61	2.58	2.21	4.44	5.00	3.82
Cambodia	125	3.59	1.33	5.00	2.78	5.63	3.24
Algeria	126	3.50	2.58	2.21	3.89	5.00	3.82
Egypt	127	3.36	3.58	3.21	3.33	3.75	2.94
Ethiopia	128=	3.35	0.00	3.57	5.56	5.00	2.65
Rwanda	128=	3.35	1.67	5.00	2.78	4.38	2.94
China	130	3.32	0.00	5.00	3.89	6.25	1.47
Congo (Brazzaville)	131	3.31	3.17	2.50	3.89	3.75	3.24
Cameroon	132	3.28	3.17	2.86	3.33	4.38	2.65
Qatar	133	3.19	0.00	4.29	2.22	5.63	3.82
Zimbabwe	134=	3.16	0.50	2.00	4.44	5.63	3.24
Venezuela	134=	3.16	1.67	1.79	4.44	4.38	3.53
Guinea	136	3.14	3.50	0.43	4.44	4.38	2.94
Belarus	137	3.13	0.92	2.86	3.89	5.63	2.35
Togo	138	3.10	3.17	0.79	3.33	5.00	3.24
Vietnam	139	3.08	0.00	3.21	3.89	5.63	2.65
Oman	140	3.04	0.00	3.93	2.78	4.38	4.12
Swaziland	141	3.03	0.92	2.86	2.22	5.63	3.53
Cuba	142	3.00	1.08	3.57	3.33	4.38	2.65
Afghanistan	143	2.97	2.92	1.14	4.44	2.50	3.82
Kazakhstan	144=	2.94	0.50	2.14	4.44	4.38	3.24
Russia	144=	2.94	2.17	1.79	5.00	2.50	3.24
Djibouti	146	2.87	0.42	1.79	3.89	5.63	2.65
United Arab Emirates	147	2.76	0.00	3.93	2.22	5.00	2.65
Bahrain	148	2.71	0.83	3.21	2.78	4.38	2.35

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#### Democracy Index 2018

	Rank	Overall score	Electoral process and pluralism	Functioning of government	Political participation	Political culture	Civil liberties
Azerbaijan	149	2.65	0.50	2.14	3.33	3.75	3.53
Iran	150	2.45	0.00	3.21	4.44	3.13	1.47
Eritrea	151=	2.37	0.00	2.14	1.67	6.88	1.18
Laos	151=	2.37	0.83	2.86	1.67	5.00	1.47
Burundi	153	2.33	0.00	0.43	3.89	5.00	2.35
Libya	154	2.19	1.00	0.36	1.67	5.00	2.94
Sudan	155	2.15	0.00	1.79	2.78	5.00	1.18
Uzbekistan	156	2.01	0.08	1.86	2.22	5.00	0.88
Guinea-Bissau	157	1.98	1.67	0.00	2.78	3.13	2.35
Yemen	158	1.95	0.00	0.00	3.89	5.00	0.88
Saudi Arabia	159=	1.93	0.00	2.86	2.22	3.13	1.47
Tajikistan	159=	1.93	0.08	0.79	1.67	6.25	0.88
Equatorial Guinea	161	1.92	0.00	0.43	3.33	4.38	1.47
Turkmenistan	162	1.72	0.00	0.79	2.22	5.00	0.59
Chad	163	1.61	0.00	0.00	1.67	3.75	2.65
Central African Republic	164	1.52	2.25	0.00	1.11	1.88	2.35
Democratic Republic of Congo	165	1.49	0.50	0.71	2.22	3.13	0.88
Syria	166	1.43	0.00	0.00	2.78	4.38	0.00
North Korea	167	1.08	0.00	2.50	1.67	1.25	0.00

Source: The Economist Intelligence Unit.

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#### Democracy Index 2006-18

	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011	2010	2008	2006
Canada	9.15	9.15	9.15	9.08	9.08	9.08	9.08	9.08	9.08	9.07	9.07
US	7.96	7.98	7.98	8.05	8.11	8.11	8.11	8.11	8.18	8.22	8.22
average	8.56	8.56	8.56	8.56	8.59	8.59	8.59	8.59	8.63	8.64	8.64
Austria	8.29	8.42	8.41	8.54	8.54	8.48	8.62	8.49	8.49	8.49	8.69
Belgium	7.78	7.78	7.77	7.93	7.93	8.05	8.05	8.05	8.05	8.16	8.15
Cyprus	7.59	7.59	7.65	7.53	7.40	7.29	7.29	7.29	7.29	7.70	7.60
Denmark	9.22	9.22	9.20	9.11	9.11	9.38	9.52	9.52	9.52	9.52	9.52
Finland	9.14	9.03	9.03	9.03	9.03	9.03	9.06	9.06	9.19	9.25	9.25
France	7.80	7.80	7.92	7.92	8.04	7.92	7.88	7.77	7.77	8.07	8.07
Germany	8.68	8.61	8.63	8.64	8.64	8.31	8.34	8.34	8.38	8.82	8.82
Greece	7.29	7.29	7.23	7.45	7.45	7.65	7.65	7.65	7.92	8.13	8.13
Iceland	9.58	9.58	9.50	9.58	9.58	9.65	9.65	9.65	9.65	9.65	9.71
Ireland	9.15	9.15	9.15	8.85	8.72	8.68	8.56	8.56	8.79	9.01	9.01
Italy	7.71	7.98	7.98	7.98	7.85	7.85	7.74	7.74	7.83	7.98	7.73
Luxembourg	8.81	8.81	8.81	8.88	8.88	8.88	8.88	8.88	8.88	9.10	9.10
Malta	8.21	8.15	8.39	8.39	8.39	8.28	8.28	8.28	8.28	8.39	8.39
Netherlands	8.89	8.89	8.80	8.92	8.92	8.84	8.99	8.99	8.99	9.53	9.66
Norway	9.87	9.87	9.93	9.93	9.93	9.93	9.93	9.80	9.80	9.68	9.55
Portugal	7.84	7.84	7.86	7.79	7.79	7.65	7.92	7.81	8.02	8.05	8.16
Spain	8.08	8.08	8.30	8.30	8.05	8.02	8.02	8.02	8.16	8.45	8.34
Sweden	9.39	9.39	9.39	9.45	9.73	9.73	9.73	9.50	9.50	9.88	9.88
Switzerland	9.03	9.03	9.09	9.09	9.09	9.09	9.09	9.09	9.09	9.15	9.02
Turkey	4.37	4.88	5.04	5.12	5.12	5.63	5.76	5.73	5.73	5.69	5.70
UK	8.53	8.53	8.36	8.31	8.31	8.31	8.21	8.16	8.16	8.15	8.08
average	8.35	8.38	8.40	8.42	8.41	8.41	8.44	8.40	8.45	8.61	8.60
Albania	5.98	5.98	5.91	5.91	5.67	5.67	5.67	5.81	5.86	5.91	5.91
Armenia	4.79	4.11	3.88	4.00	4.13	4.02	4.09	4.09	4.09	4.09	4.15
Azerbaijan	2.65	2.65	2.65	2.71	2.83	3.06	3.15	3.15	3.15	3.19	3.31
Belarus	3.13	3.13	3.54	3.62	3.69	3.04	3.04	3.16	3.34	3.34	3.34
Bosnia and Hercegovina	4.98	4.87	4.87	4.83	4.78	5.02	5.11	5.24	5.32	5.70	5.78
Bulgaria	7.03	7.03	7.01	7.14	6.73	6.83	6.72	6.78	6.84	7.02	7.10
Croatia	6.57	6.63	6.75	6.93	6.93	6.93	6.93	6.73	6.81	7.04	7.04
Czech Republic	7.69	7.62	7.82	7.94	7.94	8.06	8.19	8.19	8.19	8.19	8.17
Estonia	7.97	7.79	7.85	7.85	7.74	7.61	7.61	7.61	7.68	7.68	7.74
Georgia	5.50	5.93	5.93	5.88	5.82	5.95	5.53	4.74	4.59	4.62	4.90
Hungary	6.63	6.64	6.72	6.84	6.90	6.96	6.96	7.04	7.21	7.44	7.53
Kazakhstan	2.94	3.06	3.06	3.06	3.17	3.06	2.95	3.24	3.30	3.45	3.62
Kyrgyz Republic	5.11	5.11	4.93	5.33	5.24	4.69	4.69	4.34	4.31	4.05	4.08

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### POLITICAL PARTICIPATION, PROTEST AND DEMOCRACY

#### Democracy Index 2006-18

	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011	2010	2008	2006
Latvia	7.38	7.25	7.31	7.37	7.48	7.05	7.05	7.05	7.05	7.23	7.37
Lithuania	7.50	7.41	7.47	7.54	7.54	7.54	7.24	7.24	7.24	7.36	7.43
Macedonia	5.87	5.57	5.23	6.02	6.25	6.16	6.16	6.16	6.16	6.21	6.33
Moldova	5.85	5.94	6.01	6.35	6.32	6.32	6.32	6.32	6.33	6.50	6.50
Montenegro	5.74	5.69	5.72	6.01	5.94	5.94	6.05	6.15	6.27	6.43	6.57
Poland	6.67	6.67	6.83	7.09	7.47	7.12	7.12	7.12	7.05	7.30	7.30
Romania	6.38	6.44	6.62	6.68	6.68	6.54	6.54	6.54	6.60	7.06	7.06
Russia	2.94	3.17	3.24	3.31	3.39	3.59	3.74	3.92	4.26	4.48	5.02
Serbia	6.41	6.41	6.57	6.71	6.71	6.67	6.33	6.33	6.33	6.49	6.62
Slovakia	7.10	7.16	7.29	7.29	7.35	7.35	7.35	7.35	7.35	7.33	7.40
Slovenia	7.50	7.50	7.51	7.57	7.57	7.88	7.88	7.76	7.69	7.96	7.96
Tajikistan	1.93	1.93	1.89	1.95	2.37	2.51	2.51	2.51	2.51	2.45	2.45
Turkmenistan	1.72	1.72	1.83	1.83	1.83	1.72	1.72	1.72	1.72	1.72	1.83
Ukraine	5.69	5.69	5.70	5.70	5.42	5.84	5.91	5.94	6.30	6.94	6.94
Uzbekistan	2.01	1.95	1.95	1.95	2.45	1.72	1.72	1.74	1.74	1.74	1.85
average	5.42	5.40	5.43	5.55	5.58	5.53	5.51	5.50	5.55	5.67	5.76
Argentina	7.02	6.96	6.96	7.02	6.84	6.84	6.84	6.84	6.84	6.63	6.63
Bolivia	5.70	5.49	5.63	5.75	5.79	5.79	5.84	5.84	5.92	6.15	5.98
Brazil	6.97	6.86	6.90	6.96	7.38	7.12	7.12	7.12	7.12	7.38	7.38
Chile	7.97	7.84	7.78	7.84	7.80	7.80	7.54	7.54	7.67	7.89	7.89
Colombia	6.96	6.67	6.67	6.62	6.55	6.55	6.63	6.63	6.55	6.54	6.40
Costa Rica	8.07	7.88	7.88	7.96	8.03	8.03	8.10	8.10	8.04	8.04	8.04
Cuba	3.00	3.31	3.46	3.52	3.52	3.52	3.52	3.52	3.52	3.52	3.52
Dominican Republic	6.54	6.66	6.67	6.67	6.67	6.74	6.49	6.20	6.20	6.20	6.13
Ecuador	6.27	6.02	5.81	5.87	5.87	5.87	5.78	5.72	5.77	5.64	5.64
El Salvador	5.96	6.43	6.64	6.64	6.53	6.53	6.47	6.47	6.47	6.40	6.22
Guatemala	5.60	5.86	5.92	5.92	5.81	5.81	5.88	5.88	6.05	6.07	6.07
Guyana	6.67	6.46	6.25	6.05	5.91	6.05	6.05	6.05	6.05	6.12	6.15
Haiti	4.91	4.03	4.02	3.94	3.82	3.94	3.96	4.00	4.00	4.19	4.19
Honduras	5.63	5.72	5.92	5.84	5.84	5.84	5.84	5.84	5.76	6.18	6.25
Jamaica	7.02	7.29	7.39	7.39	7.39	7.39	7.39	7.13	7.21	7.21	7.34
Mexico	6.19	6.41	6.47	6.55	6.68	6.91	6.90	6.93	6.93	6.78	6.67
Nicaragua	3.63	4.66	4.81	5.26	5.32	5.46	5.56	5.56	5.73	6.07	5.68
Panama	7.05	7.08	7.13	7.19	7.08	7.08	7.08	7.08	7.15	7.35	7.35
Paraguay	6.24	6.31	6.27	6.33	6.26	6.26	6.26	6.40	6.40	6.40	6.16
Peru	6.60	6.49	6.65	6.58	6.54	6.54	6.47	6.59	6.40	6.31	6.11
Suriname	6.98	6.76	6.77	6.77	6.77	6.77	6.65	6.65	6.65	6.58	6.52
Trinidad and Tobago	7.16	7.04	7.10	7.10	6.99	6.99	6.99	7.16	7.16	7.21	7.18
Uruguay	8.38	8.12	8.17	8.17	8.17	8.17	8.17	8.17	8.10	8.08	7.96

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### POLITICAL PARTICIPATION, PROTEST AND DEMOCRACY

#### Democracy Index 2006-18

	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011	2010	2008	2006
Venezuela	3.16	3.87	4.68	5.00	5.07	5.07	5.15	5.08	5.18	5.34	5.42
average	6.24	6.26	6.33	6.37	6.36	6.38	6.36	6.35	6.37	6.43	6.37
Afghanistan	2.97	2.55	2.55	2.77	2.77	2.48	2.48	2.48	2.48	3.02	3.06
Australia	9.09	9.09	9.01	9.01	9.01	9.13	9.22	9.22	9.22	9.09	9.09
Bangladesh	5.57	5.43	5.73	5.73	5.78	5.86	5.86	5.86	5.87	5.52	6.11
Bhutan	5.30	5.08	4.93	4.93	4.87	4.82	4.65	4.57	4.68	4.30	2.62
Cambodia	3.59	3.63	4.27	4.27	4.78	4.60	4.96	4.87	4.87	4.87	4.77
China	3.32	3.10	3.14	3.14	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.14	3.14	3.04	2.97
Fiji	5.85	5.85	5.64	5.69	5.61	3.61	3.67	3.67	3.62	5.11	5.66
Hong Kong	6.15	6.31	6.42	6.50	6.46	6.42	6.42	5.92	5.92	5.85	6.03
India	7.23	7.23	7.81	7.74	7.92	7.69	7.52	7.30	7.28	7.80	7.68
Indonesia	6.39	6.39	6.97	7.03	6.95	6.82	6.76	6.53	6.53	6.34	6.41
Japan	7.99	7.88	7.99	7.96	8.08	8.08	8.08	8.08	8.08	8.25	8.15
Laos	2.37	2.37	2.37	2.21	2.21	2.21	2.32	2.10	2.10	2.10	2.10
Malaysia	6.88	6.54	6.54	6.43	6.49	6.49	6.41	6.19	6.19	6.36	5.98
Mongolia	6.50	6.50	6.62	6.62	6.62	6.51	6.35	6.23	6.36	6.60	6.60
Myanmar	3.83	3.83	4.20	4.14	3.05	2.76	2.35	1.77	1.77	1.77	1.77
Nepal	5.18	5.18	4.86	4.77	4.77	4.77	4.16	4.24	4.24	4.05	3.42
New Zealand	9.26	9.26	9.26	9.26	9.26	9.26	9.26	9.26	9.26	9.19	9.01
North Korea	1.08	1.08	1.08	1.08	1.08	1.08	1.08	1.08	1.08	0.86	1.03
Pakistan	4.17	4.26	4.33	4.40	4.64	4.64	4.57	4.55	4.55	4.46	3.92
Papua New Guinea	6.03	6.03	6.03	6.03	6.03	6.36	6.32	6.32	6.54	6.54	6.54
Philippines	6.71	6.71	6.94	6.84	6.77	6.41	6.30	6.12	6.12	6.12	6.48
Singapore	6.38	6.32	6.38	6.14	6.03	5.92	5.88	5.89	5.89	5.89	5.89
South Korea	8.00	8.00	7.92	7.97	8.06	8.06	8.13	8.06	8.11	8.01	7.88
Sri Lanka	6.19	6.48	6.48	6.42	5.69	5.69	5.75	6.58	6.64	6.61	6.58
Taiwan	7.73	7.73	7.79	7.83	7.65	7.57	7.57	7.46	7.52	7.82	7.82
Thailand	4.63	4.63	4.92	5.09	5.39	6.25	6.55	6.55	6.55	6.81	5.67
Timor Leste	7.19	7.19	7.24	7.24	7.24	7.24	7.16	7.22	7.22	7.22	6.41
Vietnam	3.08	3.08	3.38	3.53	3.41	3.29	2.89	2.96	2.94	2.53	2.75
average	5.67	5.63	5.74	5.74	5.70	5.61	5.56	5.51	5.53	5.58	5.44
Algeria	3.50	3.56	3.56	3.95	3.83	3.83	3.83	3.44	3.44	3.32	3.17
Bahrain	2.71	2.71	2.79	2.79	2.87	2.87	2.53	2.92	3.49	3.38	3.53
Egypt	3.36	3.36	3.31	3.18	3.16	3.27	4.56	3.95	3.07	3.89	3.90
Iran	2.45	2.45	2.34	2.16	1.98	1.98	1.98	1.98	1.94	2.83	2.93
Iraq	4.06	4.09	4.08	4.08	4.23	4.10	4.10	4.03	4.00	4.00	4.01
Israel	7.79	7.79	7.85	7.77	7.63	7.53	7.53	7.53	7.48	7.48	7.28
Jordan	3.93	3.87	3.96	3.86	3.76	3.76	3.76	3.89	3.74	3.93	3.92

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	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011	2010	2008	2006
Kuwait	3.85	3.85	3.85	3.85	3.78	3.78	3.78	3.74	3.88	3.39	3.09
Lebanon	4.63	4.72	4.86	4.86	5.12	5.05	5.05	5.32	5.82	5.62	5.82
Libya	2.19	2.32	2.25	2.25	3.80	4.82	5.15	3.55	1.94	2.00	1.84
Morocco	4.99	4.87	4.77	4.66	4.00	4.07	4.07	3.83	3.79	3.88	3.90
Oman	3.04	3.04	3.04	3.04	3.15	3.26	3.26	3.26	2.86	2.98	2.77
Palestine	4.39	4.46	4.49	4.57	4.72	4.80	4.80	4.97	5.44	5.83	6.01
Qatar	3.19	3.19	3.18	3.18	3.18	3.18	3.18	3.18	3.09	2.92	2.78
Saudi Arabia	1.93	1.93	1.93	1.93	1.82	1.82	1.71	1.77	1.84	1.90	1.92
Sudan	2.15	2.15	2.37	2.37	2.54	2.54	2.38	2.38	2.42	2.81	2.90
Syria	1.43	1.43	1.43	1.43	1.74	1.86	1.63	1.99	2.31	2.18	2.36
Tunisia	6.41	6.32	6.40	6.72	6.31	5.76	5.67	5.53	2.79	2.96	3.06
UAE	2.76	2.69	2.75	2.75	2.64	2.52	2.58	2.58	2.52	2.60	2.42
Yemen	1.95	2.07	2.07	2.24	2.79	2.79	3.12	2.57	2.64	2.95	2.98
average	3.54	3.54	3.56	3.58	3.65	3.68	3.73	3.62	3.43	3.54	3.53
Angola	3.62	3.62	3.40	3.35	3.35	3.35	3.35	3.32	3.32	3.35	2.41
Benin	5.74	5.61	5.67	5.72	5.65	5.87	6.00	6.06	6.17	6.06	6.16
Botswana	7.81	7.81	7.87	7.87	7.87	7.98	7.85	7.63	7.63	7.47	7.60
Burkina Faso	4.75	4.75	4.70	4.70	4.09	4.15	3.52	3.59	3.59	3.60	3.72
Burundi	2.33	2.33	2.40	2.49	3.33	3.41	3.60	4.01	4.01	4.51	4.51
Cabo Verde	7.88	7.88	7.94	7.81	7.81	7.92	7.92	7.92	7.94	7.81	7.43
Cameroon	3.28	3.61	3.46	3.66	3.41	3.41	3.44	3.41	3.41	3.46	3.27
Central African Republic	1.52	1.52	1.61	1.57	1.49	1.49	1.99	1.82	1.82	1.86	1.61
Chad	1.61	1.50	1.50	1.50	1.50	1.50	1.62	1.62	1.52	1.52	1.65
Comoros	3.71	3.71	3.71	3.71	3.52	3.52	3.52	3.52	3.41	3.58	3.90
Congo (Brazzaville)	3.31	3.25	2.91	2.91	2.89	2.89	2.89	2.89	2.89	2.94	3.19
Côte d'Ivoire	4.15	3.93	3.81	3.31	3.53	3.25	3.25	3.08	3.02	3.27	3.38
Democratic Republic of Congo	1.49	1.61	1.93	2.11	1.75	1.83	1.92	2.15	2.15	2.28	2.76
Djibouti	2.87	2.76	2.83	2.90	2.99	2.96	2.74	2.68	2.20	2.37	2.37
Equatorial Guinea	1.92	1.81	1.70	1.77	1.66	1.77	1.83	1.77	1.84	2.19	2.09
Eritrea	2.37	2.37	2.37	2.37	2.44	2.40	2.40	2.34	2.31	2.31	2.31
Ethiopia	3.35	3.42	3.60	3.83	3.72	3.83	3.72	3.79	3.68	4.52	4.72
Gabon	3.61	3.61	3.74	3.76	3.76	3.76	3.56	3.48	3.29	3.00	2.72
Gambia	4.31	4.06	2.91	2.97	3.05	3.31	3.31	3.38	3.38	4.19	4.39
Ghana	6.63	6.69	6.75	6.86	6.33	6.33	6.02	6.02	6.02	5.35	5.35
Guinea	3.14	3.14	3.14	3.14	3.01	2.84	2.79	2.79	2.79	2.09	2.02
Guinea-Bissau	1.98	1.98	1.98	1.93	1.93	1.26	1.43	1.99	1.99	1.99	2.00
Kenya	5.11	5.11	5.33	5.33	5.13	5.13	4.71	4.71	4.71	4.79	5.08
Lesotho	6.64	6.64	6.59	6.59	6.66	6.66	6.66	6.33	6.02	6.29	6.48
Liberia	5.35	5.23	5.31	4.95	4.95	4.95	4.95	5.07	5.07	5.25	5.22

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#### Democracy Index 2006-18

	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011	2010	2008	2006
Madagascar	5.22	5.11	5.07	4.85	4.42	4.32	3.93	3.93	3.94	5.57	5.82
Malawi	5.49	5.49	5.55	5.55	5.66	6.00	6.08	5.84	5.84	5.13	4.97
Mali	5.41	5.64	5.70	5.70	5.79	5.90	5.12	6.36	6.01	5.87	5.99
Mauritania	3.82	3.82	3.96	3.96	4.17	4.17	4.17	4.17	3.86	3.91	3.12
Mauritius	8.22	8.22	8.28	8.28	8.17	8.17	8.17	8.04	8.04	8.04	8.04
Mozambique	3.85	4.02	4.02	4.60	4.66	4.77	4.88	4.90	4.90	5.49	5.28
Namibia	6.25	6.31	6.31	6.31	6.24	6.24	6.24	6.24	6.23	6.48	6.54
Niger	3.76	3.76	3.96	3.85	4.02	4.08	4.16	4.16	3.38	3.41	3.54
Nigeria	4.44	4.44	4.50	4.62	3.76	3.77	3.77	3.83	3.47	3.53	3.52
Rwanda	3.35	3.19	3.07	3.07	3.25	3.38	3.36	3.25	3.25	3.71	3.82
Senegal	6.15	6.15	6.21	6.08	6.15	6.15	6.09	5.51	5.27	5.37	5.37
Sierra Leone	4.66	4.66	4.55	4.55	4.56	4.64	4.71	4.51	4.51	4.11	3.57
South Africa	7.24	7.24	7.41	7.56	7.82	7.90	7.79	7.79	7.79	7.91	7.91
Swaziland	3.03	3.03	3.03	3.09	3.09	3.20	3.20	3.26	2.90	3.04	2.93
Tanzania	5.41	5.47	5.76	5.58	5.77	5.77	5.88	5.64	5.64	5.28	5.18
Togo	3.10	3.05	3.32	3.41	3.45	3.45	3.45	3.45	3.45	2.43	1.75
Uganda	5.20	5.09	5.26	5.22	5.22	5.22	5.16	5.13	5.05	5.03	5.14
Zambia	5.61	5.68	5.99	6.28	6.39	6.26	6.26	6.19	5.68	5.25	5.25
Zimbabwe	3.16	3.16	3.05	3.05	2.78	2.67	2.67	2.68	2.64	2.53	2.62
average	4.36	4.35	4.37	4.38	4.34	4.36	4.32	4.32	4.23	4.28	4.24
World average	5.48	5.48	5.52	5.55	5.55	5.53	5.52	5.49	5.46	5.55	5.52

Source: The Economist Intelligence Unit.

## Appendix

### Defining and measuring democracy

There is no consensus on how to measure democracy. Definitions of democracy are contested, and there is a lively debate on the subject. The issue is not only of academic interest. For example, although democracy promotion is high on the list of US foreign-policy priorities, there is no consensus within the US government as to what constitutes a democracy. As one observer put it: “The world’s only superpower is rhetorically and militarily promoting a political system that remains undefined—and it is staking its credibility and treasure on that pursuit,” (Horowitz, 2006, p. 114).

Although the terms “freedom” and “democracy” are often used interchangeably, the two are not synonymous. Democracy can be seen as a set of practices and principles that institutionalise, and thereby, ultimately, protect freedom. Even if a consensus on precise definitions has proved elusive, most observers today would agree that, at a minimum, the fundamental features of a democracy include government based on majority rule and the consent of the governed; the existence of free and fair elections; the protection of minority rights; and respect for basic human rights. Democracy presupposes equality before the law, due process and political pluralism. A question arises as to whether reference to these basic features is sufficient for a satisfactory concept of democracy. As discussed below, there is a question as to how far the definition may need to be widened.

Some insist that democracy is, necessarily, a dichotomous concept: a state is either democratic or not. But most measures now appear to adhere to a continuous concept, with the possibility of varying degrees of democracy. At present, the best-known measure is produced by the US-based Freedom House organisation. The average of its indexes, on a 1 to 7 scale, of *political freedom* (based on 10 indicators) and of *civil liberties* (based on 15 indicators) is often taken to be a measure of democracy.

The Freedom House measure is available for all countries, and stretches back to the early 1970s. It has been used heavily in empirical investigations of the relationship between democracy and various economic and social variables. The so-called Polity Project provides, for a smaller number of countries, measures of democracy and regime types, based on rather minimalist definitions, stretching back to the 19th century. These have also been used in empirical work.

Freedom House also measures a narrower concept, that of “electoral democracy”. Democracies in this minimal sense share at least one common, essential characteristic. Positions of political power are filled through regular, free and fair elections between competing parties, and it is possible for an incumbent government to be turned out of office through elections. Freedom House’s criteria for an electoral democracy include:

- 1) A competitive, multi-party political system.
- 2) Universal adult suffrage.
- 3) Regularly contested elections conducted on the basis of secret ballots, reasonable ballot security and the absence of massive voter fraud.
- 4) Significant public access of major political parties to the electorate through the media and through generally open political campaigning.



The Freedom House definition of political freedom is more demanding (although not much) than its criteria for electoral democracy—that is, it classifies more countries as electoral democracies than as “free” (some “partly free” countries are also categorised as “electoral democracies”). At the end of 2015, 125 out of 193 states were classified as “electoral democracies”; of these, on a more stringent criterion, 89 states were classified as “free”. The Freedom House political-freedom measure covers the electoral process and political pluralism and, to a lesser extent, the functioning of government and a few aspects of participation.

A key difference in measures is between “thin”, or minimalist, and “thick”, or wider, concepts of democracy (Coppedge, 2005). The thin concepts correspond closely to an immensely influential academic definition of democracy, that of Dahl’s concept of *polyarchy* (Dahl, 1970). Polyarchy has eight components, or institutional requirements: almost all adult citizens have the right to vote; almost all adult citizens are eligible for public office; political leaders have the right to compete for votes; elections are free and fair; all citizens are free to form and join political parties and other organisations; all citizens are free to express themselves on all political issues; diverse sources of information about politics exist and are protected by law; and government policies depend on votes and other expressions of preference.

The Freedom House electoral democracy measure is a thin concept. Its measure of democracy based on political rights and civil liberties is “thicker” than the measure of “electoral democracy”. Other definitions of democracy have broadened to include aspects of society and political culture in democratic societies.

### **The Economist Intelligence Unit measure**

The Economist Intelligence Unit’s index is based on the view that measures of democracy which reflect the state of political freedoms and civil liberties are not thick enough. They do not encompass sufficiently, or, in some cases, at all, the features that determine how substantive democracy is. Freedom is an essential component of democracy, but not, in itself, sufficient. In existing measures, the elements of political participation and functioning of government are taken into account only in a marginal and formal way.

Our Democracy Index is based on five categories: *electoral process and pluralism*; *civil liberties*; *the functioning of government*; *political participation*; and *political culture*. The five categories are interrelated and form a coherent conceptual whole. The condition of holding free and fair competitive elections, and satisfying related aspects of political freedom, is clearly the *sine qua non* of all definitions.

All modern definitions, except the most minimalist, also consider civil liberties to be a vital component of what is often called “liberal democracy”. The principle of the protection of basic human rights is widely accepted. It is embodied in constitutions throughout the world, as well as in the UN Charter and international agreements such as the Helsinki Final Act (the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe). Basic human rights include freedom of speech, expression and of the press; freedom of religion; freedom of assembly and association; and the right to due judicial process. All democracies are systems in which citizens freely make political decisions by majority rule. But rule by the majority is not necessarily democratic. In a democracy, majority rule must be combined with

guarantees of individual human rights and the rights of minorities. Most measures also include aspects of the minimum quality of functioning of government. If democratically based decisions cannot be or are not implemented, then the concept of democracy is not very meaningful.

Democracy is more than the sum of its institutions. A democratic political culture is also crucial for the legitimacy, smooth functioning and, ultimately, the sustainability of democracy. A culture of passivity and apathy—an obedient and docile citizenry—is not consistent with democracy. The electoral process periodically divides the population into winners and losers. A successful democratic political culture implies that the losing parties and their supporters accept the judgment of the voters and allow for the peaceful transfer of power.

Participation is also a necessary component, as apathy and abstention are enemies of democracy. Even measures that focus predominantly on the processes of representative, liberal democracy include (albeit inadequately or insufficiently) some aspects of participation. In a democracy, government is only one element in a social fabric of many and varied institutions, political organisations and associations. Citizens cannot be required to take part in the political process, and they are free to express their dissatisfaction by not participating. However, a healthy democracy requires the active, freely chosen participation of citizens in public life. Democracies flourish when citizens are willing to participate in public debate, elect representatives and join political parties. Without this broad, sustaining participation, democracy begins to wither and become the preserve of small, select groups.

At the same time, even our thicker, more inclusive and wider measure of democracy does not include other aspects—which some authors argue are also crucial components of democracy—such as levels of economic and social wellbeing. Therefore, our Index respects the dominant tradition that holds that a variety of social and economic outcomes can be consistent with political democracy, which is a separate concept.

## Methodology

The Economist Intelligence Unit's index of democracy, on a 0 to 10 scale, is based on the ratings for 60 indicators, grouped into five categories: *electoral process and pluralism*; *civil liberties*; the *functioning of government*; *political participation*; and *political culture*. Each category has a rating on a 0 to 10 scale, and the overall Index is the simple average of the five category indexes.

The category indexes are based on the sum of the indicator scores in the category, converted to a 0 to 10 scale. Adjustments to the category scores are made if countries do not score a 1 in the following critical areas for democracy:

1. Whether national elections are free and fair.
2. The security of voters.
3. The influence of foreign powers on government.
4. The capability of the civil service to implement policies.

If the scores for the first three questions are 0 (or 0.5), one point (0.5 point) is deducted from the index in the relevant category (either the *electoral process and pluralism* or the *functioning of government*). If the score for 4 is 0, one point is deducted from the *functioning of government* category index.

The index values are used to place countries within one of four types of regime:

1. Full democracies: scores greater than 8
2. Flawed democracies: scores greater than 6, and less than or equal to 8
3. Hybrid regimes: scores greater than 4, and less than or equal to 6
4. Authoritarian regimes: scores less than or equal to 4

**Full democracies:** Countries in which not only basic political freedoms and civil liberties are respected, but which also tend to be underpinned by a political culture conducive to the flourishing of democracy. The functioning of government is satisfactory. Media are independent and diverse. There is an effective system of checks and balances. The judiciary is independent and judicial decisions are enforced. There are only limited problems in the functioning of democracies.

**Flawed democracies:** These countries also have free and fair elections and, even if there are problems (such as infringements on media freedom), basic civil liberties are respected. However, there are significant weaknesses in other aspects of democracy, including problems in governance, an underdeveloped political culture and low levels of political participation.

**Hybrid regimes:** Elections have substantial irregularities that often prevent them from being both free and fair. Government pressure on opposition parties and candidates may be common. Serious weaknesses are more prevalent than in flawed democracies—in political culture, functioning of government and political participation. Corruption tends to be widespread and the rule of law is weak. Civil society is weak. Typically, there is harassment of and pressure on journalists, and the judiciary is not independent.

**Authoritarian regimes:** In these states, state political pluralism is absent or heavily circumscribed. Many countries in this category are outright dictatorships. Some formal institutions of democracy may exist, but these have little substance. Elections, if they do occur, are not free and fair. There is disregard for abuses and infringements of civil liberties. Media are typically state-owned or controlled by groups connected to the ruling regime. There is repression of criticism of the government and pervasive censorship. There is no independent judiciary.

### The scoring system

We use a combination of a dichotomous and a three-point scoring system for the 60 indicators. A dichotomous 1-0 scoring system (1 for a yes and 0 for a no answer) is not without problems, but it has several distinct advantages over more refined scoring scales (such as the often-used 1-5 or 1-7). For many indicators, the possibility of a 0.5 score is introduced, to capture “grey areas”, where a simple yes (1) or no (0) is problematic, with guidelines as to when that should be used. Consequently, for many indicators there is a three-point scoring system, which represents a compromise between simple dichotomous scoring and the use of finer scales.

The problems of 1-5 or 1-7 scoring scales are numerous. For most indicators under such systems, it is extremely difficult to define meaningful and comparable criteria or guidelines for each score. This can lead to arbitrary, spurious and non-comparable scorings. For example, a score of 2 for one country may be scored a 3 in another, and so on. Alternatively, one expert might score an indicator for a particular country in a different way to another expert. This contravenes a basic principle of measurement,

that of so-called *reliability*—the degree to which a measurement procedure produces the same measurements every time, regardless of who is performing it. Two- and three-point systems do not guarantee reliability, but make it more likely.

Second, comparability between indicator scores and aggregation into a multi-dimensional index appears more valid with a two- or three-point scale for each indicator (the dimensions being aggregated are similar across indicators). By contrast, with a 1-5 system, the scores are more likely to mean different things across the indicators (for example, a 2 for one indicator may be more comparable to a 3 or 4 for another indicator). The problems of a 1-5 or 1-7 system are magnified when attempting to extend the index to many regions and countries.

### **Features of The Economist Intelligence Unit's Index**

#### *Public opinion surveys*

A crucial, differentiating aspect of our measure is that, in addition to experts' assessments, we use, where available, public-opinion surveys—mainly the World Values Survey. Indicators based on the surveys predominate heavily in the *political participation* and *political culture* categories, and a few are used in the *civil liberties* and *functioning of government* categories.

In addition to the World Values Survey, other sources that can be leveraged include the Eurobarometer surveys, Gallup polls, Asian Barometer, Latin American Barometer, Afrobarometer and national surveys. In the case of countries for which survey results are missing, survey results for similar countries and expert assessment are used to fill in gaps.

#### *Participation and voter turnout*

After increasing for many decades, there has been a trend of decreasing voter turnout in most established democracies since the 1960s. Low turnout may be due to disenchantment, but it can also be a sign of contentment. Many, however, see low turnout as undesirable, and there is much debate over the factors that affect turnout and how to increase it.

A high turnout is generally seen as evidence of the legitimacy of the current system. Contrary to widespread belief, there is, in fact, a close correlation between turnout and overall measures of democracy—that is, developed, consolidated democracies have, with very few exceptions, higher turnouts (generally above 70%) than less established democracies.

#### *The legislative and executive branches*

The appropriate balance between these is much disputed in political theory. In our model, the clear predominance of the legislature is rated positively, as there is a very strong correlation between legislative dominance and measures of overall democracy.

**The model****I Electoral process and pluralism**

1. Are elections for the national legislature and head of government free?  
Consider whether elections are competitive in that electors are free to vote and are offered a range of choices.  
1: Essentially unrestricted conditions for the presentation of candidates (for example, no bans on major parties).  
0.5: There are some restrictions on the electoral process.  
0: A single-party system or major impediments exist (for example, bans on a major party or candidate).
2. Are elections for the national legislature and head of government fair?  
1: No major irregularities in the voting process.  
0.5: Significant irregularities occur (intimidation, fraud), but do not significantly affect the overall outcome.  
0: Major irregularities occur and affect the outcome.  
Score 0 if score for question 1 is 0.
3. Are municipal elections both free and fair?  
1: Are free and fair.  
0.5: Are free, but not fair.  
0: Are neither free nor fair.
4. Is there universal suffrage for all adults?  
Bar generally accepted exclusions (for example, non-nationals; criminals; members of armed forces in some countries).  
1: Yes.  
0: No.
5. Can citizens cast their vote free of significant threats to their security from state or non-state bodies?  
1: Yes.  
0: No.
6. Do laws provide for broadly equal campaigning opportunities?  
1: Yes.  
0.5: Formally, yes, but, in practice, opportunities are limited for some candidates.  
0: No.
7. Is the process of financing political parties transparent and generally accepted?  
1: Yes.  
0.5: Not fully transparent.  
0: No.

8. Following elections, are the constitutional mechanisms for the orderly transfer of power from one government to another clear, established and accepted?  
1: All three criteria are satisfied.  
0.5: Two of the three criteria are satisfied.  
0: Only one or none of the criteria is satisfied.
9. Are citizens free to form political parties that are independent of the government?  
1: Yes.  
0.5: There are some restrictions.  
0: No.
10. Do opposition parties have a realistic prospect of achieving government?  
1: Yes.  
0.5: There is a dominant two-party system, in which other political forces never have any effective chance of taking part in national government.  
0: No.
11. Is potential access to public office open to all citizens?  
1: Yes.  
0.5: Formally unrestricted, but, in practice, restricted for some groups, or for citizens from some parts of the country.  
0: No.
12. Are citizens allowed to form political and civic organisations, free of state interference and surveillance?  
1: Yes.  
0.5: Officially free, but subject to some unofficial restrictions or interference.  
0: No.

**II Functioning of government**

13. Do freely elected representatives determine government policy?  
1: Yes.  
0.5: Exercise some meaningful influence.  
0: No.
14. Is the legislature the supreme political body, with a clear supremacy over other branches of government?  
1: Yes.  
0: No.
15. Is there an effective system of checks and balances on the exercise of government authority?  
1: Yes.  
0.5: Yes, but there are some serious flaws.  
0: No.

16. Government is free of undue influence by the military or the security services.  
1: Yes.  
0.5: Influence is low, but the defence minister is not a civilian. If the current risk of a military coup is extremely low, but the country has a recent history of military rule or coups.  
0: No.
17. Foreign powers and organisations do not determine important government functions or policies.  
1: Yes.  
0.5: Some features of a protectorate.  
0: No (significant presence of foreign troops; important decisions taken by foreign power; country is a protectorate).
18. Do special economic, religious or other powerful domestic groups exercise significant political power, parallel to democratic institutions?  
1: Yes.  
0.5: Exercise some meaningful influence.  
0: No.
19. Are sufficient mechanisms and institutions in place for ensuring government accountability to the electorate in between elections?  
1: Yes.  
0.5: Yes, but serious flaws exist.  
0: No.
20. Does the government's authority extend over the full territory of the country?  
1: Yes.  
0: No.
21. Is the functioning of government open and transparent, with sufficient public access to information?  
1: Yes.  
0.5: Yes, but serious flaws exist.  
0: No.
22. How pervasive is corruption?  
1: Corruption is not a major problem.  
0.5: Corruption is a significant issue.  
0: Pervasive corruption exists.
23. Is the civil service willing to and capable of implementing government policy?  
1: Yes.  
0.5: Yes, but serious flaws exist.  
0: No.
24. Popular perceptions of the extent to which citizens have free choice and control over their lives.  
1: High.  
0.5: Moderate.  
0: Low.  
If available, from World Values Survey

% of people who think that they have a great deal of choice/control.

1 if more than 70%.

0.5 if 50-70%.

0 if less than 50%.

25. Public confidence in government.

1: High.

0.5: Moderate.

0: Low.

If available, from World Values Survey, Gallup polls, Eurobarometer, Latinobarometer

% of people who have a "great deal" or "quite a lot" of confidence in government.

1 if more than 40%.

0.5 if 25-40%.

0 if less than 25%.

26. Public confidence in political parties.

1: High.

0.5: Moderate.

0: Low.

If available, from World Values Survey

% of people who have a "great deal" or "quite a lot" of confidence.

1 if more than 40%.

0.5 if 25-40%.

0 if less than 25%.

### III Political participation

27. Voter participation/turn-out for national elections.

(Average turnout in parliamentary elections since 2000. Turnout as proportion of population of voting age.)

1 if above 70%.

0.5 if 50%-70%.

0 if below 50%.

If voting is obligatory, score 0. Score 0 if scores for questions 1 or 2 is 0.

28. Do ethnic, religious and other minorities have a reasonable degree of autonomy and voice in the political process?

1: Yes.

0.5: Yes, but serious flaws exist.

0: No.

29. Women in parliament.

% of members of parliament who are women.

1 if more than 20% of seats.

0.5 if 10-20%.

0 if less than 10%.



30. Extent of political participation. Membership of political parties and political non-governmental organisations.  
Score 1 if over 7% of population for either.  
Score 0.5 if 4-7%.  
Score 0 if under 4%.  
If participation is forced, score 0.
31. Citizens' engagement with politics.  
1: High.  
0.5: Moderate.  
0: Low.  
If available, from World Values Survey  
% of people who are very or somewhat interested in politics.  
1 if over 60%.  
0.5 if 40-60%.  
0 if less than 40%.
32. The preparedness of population to take part in lawful demonstrations.  
1: High.  
0.5: Moderate.  
0: Low.  
If available, from World Values Survey  
% of people who have taken part in or would consider attending lawful demonstrations.  
1 if over 40%.  
0.5 if 30-40%.  
0 if less than 30%.
33. Adult literacy.  
1 if over 90%.  
0.5 if 70-90%.  
0 if less than 70%.
34. Extent to which adult population shows an interest in and follows politics in the news.  
1: High.  
0.5: Moderate.  
0: Low.  
If available, from World Values Survey  
% of population that follows politics in the news media (print, TV or radio) every day.  
1 if over 50%.  
0.5 if 30-50%.  
0 if less than 30%.

35. The authorities make a serious effort to promote political participation.

1: Yes.

0.5: Some attempts.

0: No.

Consider the role of the education system, and other promotional efforts. Consider measures to facilitate voting by members of the diaspora.

If participation is forced, score 0.

#### IV Democratic political culture

36. Is there a sufficient degree of societal consensus and cohesion to underpin a stable, functioning democracy?

1: Yes.

0.5: Yes, but some serious doubts and risks.

0: No.

37. Perceptions of leadership; proportion of the population that desires a strong leader who bypasses parliament and elections.

1: Low.

0.5: Moderate.

0: High.

If available, from World Values Survey

% of people who think it would be good or fairly good to have a strong leader who does not bother with parliament and elections.

1 if less than 30%.

0.5 if 30-50%.

0 if more than 50%.

38. Perceptions of military rule; proportion of the population that would prefer military rule.

1: Low.

0.5: Moderate.

0: High.

If available, from World Values Survey

% of people who think it would be very or fairly good to have military rule.

1 if less than 10%.

0.5 if 10-30%.

0 if more than 30%.

39. Perceptions of rule by experts or technocratic government; proportion of the population that would prefer rule by experts or technocrats.

1: Low.

0.5: Moderate.

0: High.

If available, from World Values Survey

% of people who think it would be very or fairly good to have experts, not government, make decisions for the country.

1 if less than 50%.

0.5 if 50-70%.

0 if more than 70%.

40. Perception of democracy and public order; proportion of the population that believes that democracies are not good at maintaining public order.

1: Low.

0.5: Moderate.

0: High.

If available, from World Values Survey

% of people who disagree with the view that democracies are not good at maintaining order.

1 if more than 70%.

0.5 if 50-70%.

0 if less than 50%.

Alternatively, % of people who think that punishing criminals is an essential characteristic of democracy.

1 if more than 80%.

0.5 if 60-80%.

0 if less than 60%.

41. Perception of democracy and the economic system; proportion of the population that believes that democracy benefits economic performance.

If available, from World Values Survey

% of people who disagree with the view that the economic system is badly run in democracies.

1 if more than 80%.

0.5 if 60-80%.

0 if less than 60%.

42. Degree of popular support for democracy.

1: High.

0.5: Moderate.

0: Low.

If available, from World Values Survey

% of people who agree or strongly agree that democracy is better than any other form of government.

1 if more than 90%.

0.5 if 75-90%.

0 if less than 75%.

43. There is a strong tradition of the separation of Church and State.  
1: Yes.  
0.5: Some residual influence of Church on State.  
0: No.

**V Civil liberties**

44. Is there a free electronic media?  
1: Yes.  
0.5: Pluralistic, but state-controlled media are heavily favoured. One or two private owners dominate the media.  
0: No.
45. Is there a free print media?  
1: Yes.  
0.5: Pluralistic, but state-controlled media are heavily favoured. There is high degree of concentration of private ownership of national newspapers.  
0: No.
46. Is there freedom of expression and protest (bar only generally accepted restrictions, such as banning advocacy of violence)?  
1: Yes.  
0.5: Holders of minority viewpoints are subject to some official harassment. Libel laws heavily restrict scope for free expression.  
0: No.
47. Is media coverage robust? Is there open and free discussion of public issues, with a reasonable diversity of opinions?  
1: Yes.  
0.5: There is formal freedom, but a high degree of conformity of opinion, including through self-censorship or discouragement of minority or marginal views.  
0: No.
48. Are there political restrictions on access to the Internet?  
1: No.  
0.5: Some moderate restrictions.  
0: Yes.
49. Are citizens free to form professional organisations and trade unions?  
1: Yes.  
0.5: Officially free, but subject to some restrictions.  
0: No.
50. Do institutions provide citizens with the opportunity to petition government to redress grievances?  
1: Yes.  
0.5: Some opportunities.  
0: No.

51. The use of torture by the state.  
1: Torture is not used.  
0: Torture is used.
52. The degree to which the judiciary is independent of government influence.  
Consider the views of international legal and judicial watchdogs. Have the courts ever issued an important judgement against the government, or a senior government official?  
1: High.  
0.5: Moderate.  
0: Low.
53. The degree of religious tolerance and freedom of religious expression.  
Are all religions permitted to operate freely, or are some restricted? Is the right to worship permitted both publicly and privately? Do some religious groups feel intimidated by others, even if the law requires equality and protection?  
1: High.  
0.5: Moderate.  
0: Low.
54. The degree to which citizens are treated equally under the law.  
Consider whether favoured groups or individuals are spared prosecution under the law.  
1: High.  
0.5: Moderate.  
0: Low.
55. Do citizens enjoy basic security?  
1: Yes.  
0.5: Crime is so pervasive as to endanger security for large segments.  
0: No.
56. Extent to which private property rights are protected and private business is free from undue government influence  
1: High.  
0.5: Moderate.  
0: Low.
57. Extent to which citizens enjoy personal freedoms.  
Consider gender equality, right to travel, choice of work and study.  
1: High.  
0.5: Moderate.  
0: Low.
58. Popular perceptions on protection of human rights; proportion of the population that think that basic human rights are well-protected.  
1: High.  
0.5: Moderate.  
0: Low.

If available, from World Values Survey:

% of people who think that human rights are respected in their country.

1 if more than 70%.

0.5 if 50-70%.

0 if less than 50%.

59. There is no significant discrimination on the basis of people's race, colour or religious beliefs.

1: Yes.

0.5: Yes, but some significant exceptions.

0: No.

60. Extent to which the government invokes new risks and threats as an excuse for curbing civil liberties.

1: Low.

0.5: Moderate.

0: High.

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