



# NEWS RELEASE

## China ranks 135<sup>th</sup> out of 162 in new Human Freedom Index; Canada ranks 5<sup>th</sup>

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For Immediate Release

**TORONTO**—China continues to languish near the bottom of the annual [Human Freedom Index](#) released today by the Fraser Institute and a network of international public policy think-tanks.

New Zealand is the freest country in the world, followed by Switzerland (2<sup>nd</sup>).

China ranks 135<sup>th</sup> in this year’s index, which uses 79 indicators of personal, civil and economic freedoms to rank 162 countries and jurisdictions worldwide. Hong Kong, once the world’s freest jurisdiction several years running, continues its downward slide and this year ranks 3<sup>rd</sup>. Australia (4<sup>th</sup>) and Canada round out the top five.

“China is by far the least-free nation in East Asia, creating concerns for neighbouring jurisdictions as it promotes its model of undemocratic governance internationally,” said Fred McMahon, Dr. Michael A. Walker Research Chair in Economic Freedom at the Fraser Institute and editor of the report.

Meanwhile, Taiwan—which remains under constant military threat from China—nonetheless continues to increase freedom and democracy for its citizens, this year entering the top 10 freest jurisdictions globally, tied with Norway and Finland. Since 2008, Taiwan has moved up from 43<sup>rd</sup>.

Unfortunately, freedom has declined around the world over the past decade. In fact, of the 142 jurisdictions with data since 2008, 81 have declined in freedom, 58 have increased and three were unchanged.

The United States ranks 17<sup>th</sup>. Other notable countries include the United Kingdom (8), Germany (13), Japan (31), India (110), Russia (119) and Syria, the least-free country on the index.

Crucially, people in freer countries are more prosperous than those in less-free countries. For example, the average per capita income for the top-quartile countries on the index was US\$39,249 compared to US\$12,026 for the least-free quartile in 2016, the most recent of available comparable data.

“The evidence is clear—when people are free, they have much greater opportunity to prosper and they lead happier healthier lives,” McMahon said.

The complete index, a joint project of the Fraser Institute, Germany’s Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom and the Cato Institute in the U.S., is available as a free PDF download at [www.fraserinstitute.org](http://www.fraserinstitute.org). It’s prepared by Ian Vasquez of the Cato Institute and Tanja Porčnik of the Visio Institute in Slovenia.

### The 10 freest and the least-free countries in the index

The 10 freest jurisdictions (from top)	The 10 least-free countries
1. New Zealand	153. Iran
2. Switzerland	154. Burundi
3. Hong Kong	155. Algeria
4. Australia	156. Egypt
5. Canada	157. Sudan
6. Netherlands	158. Libya
7. Denmark	159. Iraq
8. Ireland	160. Yemen
9. United Kingdom	161. Venezuela
10. Finland	162. Syria
10. Norway	
10. Taiwan	

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