



NEWS RELEASE

China ranks 126th out of 162 in new Human Freedom Index; Hong Kong ranks 3rd

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For Immediate Release

TORONTO—China continues to languish near the bottom of the latest *Human Freedom Index*, released today by the Fraser Institute and a network of international public policy think-tanks.

And Hong Kong, which was the world’s freest jurisdiction as recently as 2013, has fallen to 3rd this year behind New Zealand (1st) and Switzerland (2nd). Canada (4th) and Australia round out the top five.

China ranks 126th in this year’s index, which uses 76 indicators of personal, civil and economic freedoms to rank 162 countries and jurisdictions worldwide.

“As China tightens its grip on Hong Kong, freedom will continue to suffer. Unfortunately, Hong Kong’s fall from the top spot in the Human Freedom Index is a likely harbinger of things to come,” said Fred McMahon, Dr. Michael A. Walker Research Chair in Economic Freedom at the Fraser Institute and editor of the report.

This year’s Index is based on 2017 data, the most recent year of available comparable data, and does not take into account current events in China and Hong Kong that have likely further reduced freedom in both.

The study finds that over the past decade, freedom has declined around the world. In fact, of the 142 jurisdictions with data since 2008, 79 have declined in freedom while 61 have increased.

The United States ranks 15th. Other notable countries include Germany (8), United Kingdom (14), Japan (25), India (94), and Russia (114). Once again, Venezuela (161) and Syria are the least-free countries in the world.

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\$40,171 compared to US\$15,721 for the least-free quartile in 2017, the most recent of available comparable data.

“When people are free, they have 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. It is 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 2019 Human Freedom Index

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

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