

Freedom in the World 2025



header1 Overview

Libya has been racked by internal divisions and intermittent civil conflict since a popular armed uprising in 2011 deposed longtime dictator Mu'ammar al-Qadhafi. The country remains split between rival administrations, legislatures, and military factions, and international efforts to bring them together in a unity government have repeatedly failed, preventing long-overdue national elections. A proliferation of autonomous militias, the presence of foreign mercenaries and extremist groups, violations of an arms embargo, and interference by regional powers have all contributed to ongoing insecurity. More than a decade of violence has displaced hundreds of thousands of people, and human rights conditions have generally deteriorated.

header2 Key Developments in 2024

- In February, armed forces in Benghazi abducted Sheikh Muftah al-Amin al-Biju, a prominent Sufi Muslim cleric; he apparently remained in arbitrary detention at year’s end, in keeping with a pattern of such enforced disappearances in the eastern territory controlled by militia commander Khalifa Haftar and his Libyan Arab Armed Forces (LAAF) coalition. In May, Ibrahim al-Darsi, a member of the House of Representatives based in eastern Libya, was kidnapped in Benghazi. He remained missing at year’s end. In another case, political analyst Siraj Dughman of the Libya Center for Strategic and Future Studies died in custody in April; he had been one of several prominent academics and political figures arrested by security forces in Benghazi in October 2023 and accused of plotting against the LAAF.
- In July, the Derna Criminal Court convicted 12 current and former officials—including the city’s former mayor—for their role in negligence and mismanagement that led to the 2023 collapse of a major dam, which killed thousands of people and displaced tens of thousands of others. The defendants’ prison sentences ranged from nine to 27 years. However, the investigation and trial were criticized for their lack of transparency and failure to hold key political figures in the Tripoli-based Government of National Unity (GNU), eastern Libya’s Government of National Stability (GNS), and the LAAF accountable.
- In August, armed forces affiliated with the GNU in Tripoli put pressure on the country’s central bank in an alleged attempt to compel the resignation of the bank’s governor, Seddik al-Kabir. The LAAF-backed authorities in the east responded by shutting down oil fields and terminals. The crisis was resolved in late September with a United Nations–brokered agreement on the appointment of new central bank leadership.
- Among other cases of violence and militia activity in western Libya, security forces in Tripoli arrested journalist Ahmed al-Sanussi in July after he reported on alleged corruption within the GNU; he was released a few days later and subsequently left the country. In September, unidentified gunmen in Tripoli assassinated Abdulrahman Milad, a naval academy commander and coast guard officer who was also the alleged leader of a criminal human-trafficking operation.
- Despite ongoing disagreement about preparations for national-level elections, the High National Election Commission successfully administered a first set of municipal council elections in 58 towns and cities across the country in November. Candidates ran as independents or on nonpartisan lists. A second group of more than 60 municipalities were scheduled to hold elections in 2025. Meanwhile, a disputed August election for the presidency of the Tripoli-based High Council of State—a quasi-legislative advisory body affiliated with the GNU—led to a protracted rift over council’s leadership that remained unresolved at year’s end.

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For additional background information, see last year’s [full report](#).

PR Political Rights

A Electoral Process

A1 1.00-4.00 pts 0-4 pts

Was the current head of government or other chief national authority elected through free and fair elections?

A2 1.00-4.00 pts 0-4 pts

0.000
4.004

Were the current national legislative representatives elected through free and fair elections?	0.000 4.004
A3 1.00-4.00 pts0-4 pts	

Are the electoral laws and framework fair, and are they implemented impartially by the relevant election management bodies?	1.001 4.004
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Score Change: The score improved from 0 to 1 because the High National Election Commission demonstrated the technical capacity to organize and administer a first phase of local elections, overcoming significant structural and practical barriers to register voters and run the polls in 58 municipalities.

B Political Pluralism and Participation

B1 1.00-4.00 pts0-4 pts

Do the people have the right to organize in different political parties or other competitive political groupings of their choice, and is the system free of undue obstacles to the rise and fall of these competing parties or groupings?	1.001 4.004
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B2 1.00-4.00 pts0-4 pts

Is there a realistic opportunity for the opposition to increase its support or gain power through elections?	0.000 4.004
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B3 1.00-4.00 pts0-4 pts

Are the people's political choices free from domination by forces that are external to the political sphere, or by political forces that employ extrapolitical means?	0.000 4.004
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B4 1.00-4.00 pts0-4 pts

Do various segments of the population (including ethnic, racial, religious, gender, LGBT+, and other relevant groups) have full political rights and electoral opportunities?	0.000 4.004
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C Functioning of Government

C1 1.00-4.00 pts0-4 pts

Do the freely elected head of government and national legislative representatives determine the policies of the government?	0.000 4.004
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C2 1.00-4.00 pts0-4 pts

Are safeguards against official corruption strong and effective?	0.000 4.004
C3 1.00-4.00 pts0-4 pts	

Does the government operate with openness and transparency? | 0.000 4.004

CL Civil Liberties

D Freedom of Expression and Belief

D1 1.00-4.00 pts0-4 pts

Are there free and independent media? | 0.000 4.004

D2 1.00-4.00 pts0-4 pts

Are individuals free to practice and express their religious faith or nonbelief in public and private?

1.001
4.004

D3 1.00-4.00 pts0-4 pts

Is there academic freedom, and is the educational system free from extensive political indoctrination?

1.001
4.004

D4 1.00-4.00 pts0-4 pts

Are individuals free to express their personal views on political or other sensitive topics without fear of surveillance or retribution?

1.001
4.004

E Associational and Organizational Rights

E1 1.00-4.00 pts0-4 pts

Is there freedom of assembly? | 1.001 4.004

E2 1.00-4.00 pts0-4 pts

Is there freedom for nongovernmental organizations, particularly those that are engaged in human rights– and governance-related work?

1.001
4.004

E3 1.00-4.00 pts0-4 pts

Is there freedom for trade unions and similar professional or labor organizations? | 1.001 4.004

F Rule of Law

F1 1.00-4.00 pts0-4 pts

Is there an independent judiciary? | 0.000 4.004

F2 1.00-4.00 pts0-4 pts

Does due process prevail in civil and criminal matters?	0.000	4.004
F3 1.00-4.00 pts0-4 pts		
Is there protection from the illegitimate use of physical force and freedom from war and insurrections?	0.000	4.004
F4 1.00-4.00 pts0-4 pts		
Do laws, policies, and practices guarantee equal treatment of various segments of the population?	0.000	4.004

G Personal Autonomy and Individual Rights

G1 1.00-4.00 pts0-4 pts	0.000	4.004
Do individuals enjoy freedom of movement, including the ability to change their place of residence, employment, or education?	0.000	4.004
G2 1.00-4.00 pts0-4 pts		
Are individuals able to exercise the right to own property and establish private businesses without undue interference from state or nonstate actors?	1.001	4.004
G3 1.00-4.00 pts0-4 pts		
Do individuals enjoy personal social freedoms, including choice of marriage partner and size of family, protection from domestic violence, and control over appearance?	1.001	4.004
G4 1.00-4.00 pts0-4 pts		
Do individuals enjoy equality of opportunity and freedom from economic exploitation?	0.000	4.004