



Freedom in the World 2018

Cape Verde *Profile*

**FREEDOM
STATUS:
FREE**

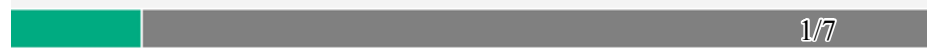


Freedom in the World

Scores

Quick Facts

Freedom Rating



Political Rights



Civil Liberties



(1=Most Free, 7=Least Free)



Aggregate Score: 90/100 (0=Least

Free, 100=Most Free)

Overview:

Cape Verde is a stable democracy with competitive elections and periodic transfers of power between rival parties. Civil liberties are generally protected, but access to justice is impaired by an overburdened court system, and crime has been a growing concern. Other outstanding problems include persistent inequities for women and migrant workers.

Key Developments in 2017:

- Prime Minister Ulisses Correia e Silva completed  his first year in office, having been appointed in April 2016 after his Movement for Democracy (MpD) won that year's parliamentary elections. 
- In March, Culture Minister Abraão Vicente was criticized by the journalists' union for his public remarks about hiring and programming at state-owned media, which are meant to be independently managed.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties:

POLITICAL RIGHTS:



37 / 40

A. ELECTORAL PROCESS: 12 / 12

A1. Was the current head of government or other chief national authority elected through free and fair elections?

4 / 4

The president is directly elected for up to two consecutive five-year terms. The prime minister, who holds most day-to-day executive authority, is formally appointed by the president based on legislative election results and is responsible to the National Assembly.

Incumbent president Jorge Carlos Fonseca of the MpD was   reelected in October 2016 with 74 percent of the vote. His main challenger was independent Albertino Graça, who took about 23 percent. The voting was generally considered free and fair. Correia e Silva, also of the MpD, had been appointed as prime minister in April, following the legislative elections in March.

A2. Were the current national legislative representatives elected through free and fair elections? 4 / 4

Members of the 72-seat National Assembly are directly elected in multimember constituencies to serve five-year terms. In the March 2016 elections, the MpD, then in opposition, won 40 seats. The governing African Party for the Independence of Cape Verde (PAICV) was reduced to 29 seats, and the Democratic and Independent Cape Verdean Union (UCID) took three. International observers found the elections to be largely free and fair.

A3. Are the electoral laws and framework fair, and are they implemented impartially by the relevant election management bodies? 4 / 4

The legal framework provides for fair and competitive elections. The National Elections Commission, whose members are elected by a two-thirds majority in the National Assembly, is generally considered impartial, despite some criticism of its performance.

B. POLITICAL PLURALISM AND PARTICIPATION: 15 / 16



B1. 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?

4 / 4

There are no significant impediments to the formation and competition of political parties. A number of different parties are active, though only the PAIGC and the MpD have held power at the national level.

B2. Is there a realistic opportunity for the opposition to increase its support or gain power through elections? 4 / 4

There have been three democratic transfers of power between the PAIGC and the MpD since independence in 1975. The most recent was in 2016, when Correia e Silva replaced José Maria Pereira Neves of the PAIGC as prime minister.

B3. Are the people's political choices free from domination by the military, foreign powers, religious hierarchies, economic oligarchies, or any other powerful group that is not democratically accountable? 4 / 4

The political choices of voters and candidates are free from undue external influence. However, there were some reports of vote buying and of voters being pressured near polling stations in 2016.

B4. Do various segments of the population (including ethnic, religious, gender, LGBT, and other relevant groups) have full political rights and electoral opportunities? 3 / 4



Women have full and equal political rights, but traditional social constraints have impaired their participation somewhat in practice. Women won 17 seats in the 2016 National Assembly elections.

C. FUNCTIONING OF GOVERNMENT: 10 / 12

C1. Do the freely elected head of government and national legislative representatives determine the policies of the government? 4 / 4

The prime minister and cabinet determine the policies of the government, under the supervision of the National Assembly and the president. The government is able to implement laws and policies without undue interference from unelected entities.

C2. Are safeguards against official corruption strong and effective? 3 / 4

Cape Verde has relatively low levels of corruption overall, but bribery and nepotism have been problems at the municipal level in particular. Allegations of graft have surrounded costly infrastructure projects and other spending measures in recent years.

C3. Does the government operate with openness and transparency? 3 / 4



The current government has taken a number of steps to improve transparency, including the publication of more information about state operations and finances online. The government generally adheres to legal guarantees of public access to information. However, many officeholders fail to comply with rules requiring them to declare their personal assets and income.

CIVIL LIBERTIES: 53 / 60

D. FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AND BELIEF: 15 / 16

D1. Are there free and independent media? 3 / 4

Freedom of the press is guaranteed by law and generally respected in practice, although Article 105 of the electoral code prohibits media organizations from disseminating opinions on or criticism of parties and candidates after a certain date in the campaign period. Both public and privately owned media are for the most part free and independent from government control, though public remarks by the culture minister about hiring and programming at state-owned media in March 2017 raised concerns about improper government meddling, drawing objections from the journalists' union. The

main constraints affecting the media are precarious finances—which undermine journalists’ job security and ability to engage in more in-depth reporting—and a degree of self-censorship among journalists.



D2. Are individuals free to practice and express their religious faith or nonbelief in public and private? 4 / 4

The constitution establishes the separation of church and state, though the Roman Catholic Church receives some special privileges. While all religious groups are required to register with the Justice Ministry to obtain tax and other benefits, the process is not restrictive, and there are no limitations on freedom of worship.

D3. Is there academic freedom, and is the educational system free from extensive political indoctrination? 4 / 4

Academic freedom is respected, and the educational system is not affected by political indoctrination.

D4. Are individuals free to express their personal views on political or other sensitive topics without fear of surveillance or retribution? 4 / 4

There are no significant constraints on individuals’ freedom of expression. The government is not known to engage in online surveillance or improper monitoring of personal communications.

E. ASSOCIATIONAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL RIGHTS: 11 / 12



E1. Is there freedom of assembly? 4 / 4

Freedom of assembly is legally guaranteed and observed in practice. There have been no recent reports of prosecutions related to participation in protests or demonstrations.

E2. Is there freedom for nongovernmental organizations, particularly those that are engaged in human rights and governance-related work? 4 / 4

Numerous nongovernmental organizations operate freely in the country, focusing on a variety of social, economic, environmental, and cultural issues. International human rights institutions, local organizations, and journalists are able to monitor prison conditions and other human rights indicators without government interference.

E3. Is there freedom for trade unions and similar professional or labor organizations? 3 / 4

The constitution protects the right to unionize, and workers may form and join unions in practice. The state generally does not interfere with union activity. However, labor unions have complained that the government restricts the right to strike in broadly defined essential industries, and formal collective bargaining is reportedly uncommon in the private sector.

F. RULE OF LAW: 14 / 16

F1. Is there an independent judiciary? 4 / 4

The judiciary is independent, though the courts are overburdened and understaffed.

F2. Does due process prevail in civil and criminal matters? 3 / 4

Police and prosecutors generally observe legal safeguards against arbitrary arrest and detention. Defense attorneys are provided to indigent defendants. However, due to the limited capacity of the court system, there are often delays in detainees' first hearing before a judge, and many cases are dropped because defendants in detention are denied a timely trial.

F3. Is there protection from the illegitimate use of physical force and freedom from war and insurgencies? 4 / 4

Law enforcement officials are sometimes accused of excessive force, but perpetrators are reportedly investigated and punished by oversight bodies. Although the country is generally free from major violence or unrest, street crime and smuggling have been growing problems in recent years. Prison conditions are poor, with some facilities subject to overcrowding.

F4. Do laws, policies, and practices guarantee equal treatment of various segments of the population? 3 / 4

Discrimination based on gender is prohibited by law, but wage discrimination and unequal access to education persist for

women. Immigrants also tend to face discriminatory treatment by employers. Same-sex sexual activity is not criminalized, and the law provides protections against job discrimination based on sexual orientation.



G. PERSONAL AUTONOMY AND INDIVIDUAL RIGHTS: 13 / 16

G1. Do individuals enjoy freedom of movement, including the ability to change their place of residence, employment, or education? 4 / 4

Individual freedom of movement is recognized by law, and there are no significant restrictions in practice.

G2. Are individuals able to exercise the right to own property and establish private businesses without undue interference from state or nonstate actors? 3 / 4

Property rights are generally respected. The legal framework and government policies are supportive of private business activity, though obstacles such as corruption and legal and bureaucratic inefficiency remain a concern.

G3. Do individuals enjoy personal social freedoms, including choice of marriage partner and size of family, protection from domestic violence, and control over appearance? 3 / 4

Personal social freedoms are generally protected, including in matters of marriage and family law. Authorities enforce laws against rape and domestic abuse, but such violence remains a

serious problem, and insufficient public resources are dedicated to supporting and protecting victims.



G4. Do individuals enjoy equality of opportunity and freedom from economic exploitation? 3 / 4

The law prohibits forced labor and other exploitative practices, and the government actively enforces such safeguards in the formal sector. However, migrant workers who lack employment contracts remain vulnerable to abuses, and children are reportedly exposed to sex trafficking and illegal work in agriculture or domestic service.

Scoring Key: X / Y (Z)

X = Score Received

Y = Best Possible Score

Z = Change from Previous Year

Full Methodology

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