

Chad | Freedom House



[Freedom in the World 2017](#)

Profile



Freedom in the World Scores

(1=Most Free, 7=Least Free)

Aggregate Score: 18/100 (0=Least Free, 100=Most Free)

Overview:

Chad has held regular presidential elections since 1996, but no election has ever produced a change in power. Legislative elections are routinely delayed, and opposition leaders risk arrest and severe mistreatment while in detention. The state typically represses antigovernment protests.

Key Developments:

- In February, a video of an opposition leader's teenage daughter being gang-raped by attackers that included the sons of Chadian officials sparked a public outcry among ordinary citizens frustrated with impunity and violence against women.
- Incumbent president Idriss Déby Itno won April's presidential election with just under 60 percent of the vote, and was sworn in to his fifth term. There were reports that several members of the military disappeared after the election, allegedly for voting against Déby.
- Opposition figures rejected the election's results and convened antigovernment demonstrations, which were repressed and saw their organizers arrested.
- In the fall, the government sought to address its increasingly poor fiscal situation by reducing public-sector salaries and eliminating scholarships for students, resulting in strikes and demonstrations throughout the country. In response, authorities repressed or banned some such actions and Déby threatened to dissolve public sector unions.

Executive Summary:

Incumbent president Déby won April's presidential election with just under 60 percent of the vote, defeating opposition leader Saleh Kebzabo, who took 13 percent. The opposition rejected the result, citing a variety of electoral irregularities and other incidents, including reports that members of the military who voted against Déby had subsequently disappeared. The Constitutional Court upheld the election's result in May, though the opposition continued to reject it. Antigovernment protests were repressed and demonstration leaders arrested on several occasions during the year. Separately, parliamentary elections set for 2015 had not been held by year's end.

Two months of social protest and turmoil preceded Déby's reelection. The protests, aimed at drawing attention to impunity for members of the ruling party and violence against women, were triggered by the emergence of a video on social media of an opposition leader's teenage daughter being gang-raped by assailants that included the sons of high-level Chadian officials; while officials during the year dispersed opposition-led protests, the demonstrations that came in response to the video were largely permitted. Seven accused rapists were later arrested, tried, and convicted by the courts, though two of the convicts escaped from prison.

Due to a fiscal crisis brought on by plummeting oil prices and, presumably, state corruption, the state in 2016 adopted severe austerity measures to address budgetary constraints; these included significant cuts to public-sector salaries and benefits, and the elimination of state-funded stipends for students. The actions increased the already tense sociopolitical situation and resulted in student and public-sector strikes and demonstrations, and opposition criticism over a lack of transparency in the government's budget. At times these activities were met with repression and violence by the regime, and on instances the government forbid union and other organizations from holding public protests.

The strikes placed additional burdens on the country's already struggling economy, and in December, Déby threatened to dissolve public sector unions completely. The budgetary crisis, accompanying austerity measures, and subsequent student strikes also severely disrupted the operations of schools and universities in Chad.

Political Rights

A. Electoral Process 2 / 12

- A1. Is the head of government or other chief national authority elected through free and fair elections?
- A2. Are the national legislative representatives elected through free and fair elections?
- A3. Are the electoral laws and framework fair?

B. Political Pluralism and Participation 1 / 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 open to the rise and fall of these competing parties or groupings?
- B2. Is there a significant opposition vote and a realistic opportunity for the opposition to increase its support or gain power through elections?

B3. Are the people's political choices free from domination by the military, foreign powers, totalitarian parties, religious hierarchies, economic oligarchies, or any other powerful group?

B4. Do cultural, ethnic, religious, or other minority groups have full political rights and electoral opportunities?

C. Functioning of Government 1 / 12

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

C2. Is the government free from pervasive corruption?

C3. Is the government accountable to the electorate between elections, and does it operate with openness and transparency?

Civil Liberties

Civil Liberties 14 / 60 (-2)

D. Freedom of Expression and Belief 6 / 16 (-1)

D1. Are there free and independent media and other forms of cultural expression?

D2. Are religious institutions and communities free to practice their faith and express themselves in public and private?

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

D4. Is there open and free private discussion?

E. Associational and Organizational Rights 4 / 12 (-1)

E1. Is there freedom of assembly, demonstration, and open public discussion?

E2. Is there freedom for nongovernmental organizations?

E3. Are there free trade unions and peasant organizations or equivalents, and is there effective collective bargaining? Are there free professional and other private organizations?

F. Rule of Law 1 / 16

F1. Is there an independent judiciary?

F2. Does the rule of law prevail in civil and criminal matters? Are police under direct civilian control?

F3. Is there protection from political terror, unjustified imprisonment, exile, or torture, whether by groups that support or oppose the system? Is there freedom from war and insurgencies?

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

G. Personal Autonomy and Individual Rights 3 / 16

G1. Do individuals enjoy freedom of travel or choice of residence, employment, or institution of higher education?

G2. Do individuals have the right to own property and establish private businesses? Is private business activity unduly influenced by government officials, the security forces, political parties/organizations, or organized crime?

G3. Are there personal social freedoms, including gender equality, choice of marriage partners, and size of family?

G4. Is there equality of opportunity and the absence of economic exploitation?

Scoring Key: X / Y (Z)

X = Score Received

Y = Best Possible Score

Z = Change from Previous Year

[Full Methodology](#)

Explanatory Note:

This country report has been abridged for *Freedom in the World 2017*. For background information on political rights and civil liberties in Chad, see *Freedom in the World 2016*.