



FREEDOM IN THE WORLD 2020

Chad

NOT FREE

17

/100

<u>Political Rights</u>	3/40
<u>Civil Liberties</u>	14/60

LAST YEAR'S SCORE & STATUS

17/100 **Not Free**

Global freedom statuses are calculated on a weighted scale. See the methodology.



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 have not been held since 2011. Opposition activists risk arrest and severe mistreatment while in detention. The state faces multiple insurgencies led by rebel militants in the north, and Boko Haram in the Lake Chad Basin.

Key Developments in 2019

- Rebels launched an offensive in northern Chad beginning in February, prompting French Operation Barkhane forces to carry out air strikes in support of the Chadian government.
- In July, authorities lifted a blackout on social media outlets such as Facebook, Twitter, and WhatsApp.
- Intercommunal clashes in August left more than 50 people dead, and prompted the imposition of a state of emergency in three provinces.

Political Rights

A. Electoral Process

A1 0-4 pts

<p>Was the current head of government or other chief national authority elected through free and fair elections?</p>	<p>1/4</p>
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The president is directly elected to a five-year term. President Idriss Déby Itno took power in 1990 during a rebellion, and then overwhelmingly won elections in 1996, 2001, 2006, and 2011. In the 2016 poll, he received 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.

A constitution promulgated in 2018 eliminated the office of prime minister and gave the president exclusive and sweeping powers to appoint state officials. It also reinstated term limits: under its provisions, the president serves a six-year term that is renewable once. However, the term limit mandate was not retroactive and will not take effect until after the 2021 presidential election, thus permitting Déby the opportunity to run for sixth and seventh terms that could keep him in power until 2033.

A2 0-4 pts

<p>Were the current national legislative representatives elected through free and fair elections?</p>	<p>0 / 4</p>
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The unicameral National Assembly consists of 188 members elected to four-year terms. However, elections have not been organized since 2011, with the 2015 parliamentary elections having been repeatedly postponed. The ruling political party, Déby's Patriotic Salvation Movement (MPS), and allied parties control 117 seats.

A3 0-4 pts

<p>Are the electoral laws and framework fair, and are they implemented impartially by the relevant election management bodies?</p>	<p>0 / 4</p>
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An Independent National Electoral Commission (CENI) is established prior to elections. However, its leadership is appointed by the country's entrenched political class through the National Framework for Political Dialogue (CNDP), and civil society is excluded from the process. The mandate of CNDP members expired in July 2019, and disagreements among opposition parties delayed the appointment of replacement members, who were not seated at year's end.

In 2018, the MPS-controlled National Assembly—whose mandate had long since expired—adopted a new constitution that, among other changes, redrew legislative districts. The government rejected calls to put the new charter to a referendum before promulgation by Déby.

B. Political Pluralism and Participation

B1 0-4 pts

<p>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?</p>	<p>1/4</p>
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There are more than 130 registered political parties in Chad, though most of them are aligned with the ruling party. The MPS enjoys significant influence, and has held a majority in the National Assembly since 1997.

B2 0-4 pts

<p>Is there a realistic opportunity for the opposition to increase its support or gain power through elections?</p>	<p>0/4</p>
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The mandate of the current legislature expired in 2015 and new elections have been repeatedly postponed, leaving the opposition no avenue to increase support or gain power through elections. The political opposition is legally recognized, but opposition leaders who publicly criticize the government risk harassment and arrest. Opposition leaders have disappeared after entering state custody. In 2019, the state continued to forbid the organization of opposition rallies and marches.

B3 0-4 pts

<p>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?</p>	<p>0/4</p>
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The extensive kinship networks tied to the president and his family have resulted in a concentration of political and economic power. The government is not accountable to voters in practice, and voters have few effective means of influencing or participating in politics.

B4 0-4 pts

<p>Do various segments of the population (including ethnic, religious, gender, LGBT, and other relevant groups) have full political rights and electoral opportunities?</p>	<p>0 / 4</p>
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Members of the Beri ethnic group control Chad's political, economic, and military spheres, causing resentment among the country's 200 other ethnic groups. Christians in the south are largely excluded from political power; some Christians hold government positions, but their representation and voice are limited. The constitution requires cabinet members and some other officials to be sworn in on either a Bible or a Quran, and to invoke Allah, the Arabic-language name of God, although some officials have been permitted to invoke the name of God in French.

Women hold few senior positions in government and political parties and are largely excluded from local governance bodies in rural areas. LGBT+ people are severely marginalized, and this impacts their ability to engage in political processes and advocate for their interests.

C. Functioning of Government

C1 0-4 pts

<p>Do the freely elected head of government and national legislative representatives determine the policies of the government?</p>	<p>1 / 4</p>
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Déby enjoys unlimited discretionary power over the composition of the government and routinely reshuffles the cabinet, doing so once again in 2019. The elimination of the prime minister's office in 2018 further concentrated power in the presidency. The

significant influence of the presidential office impedes the National Assembly from steering national policies.

C2 0-4 pts

Are safeguards against official corruption strong and effective?	0 /4
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Corruption, bribery, and nepotism are endemic in Chad. Journalists, labor leaders, and religious figures have faced harsh reprisals for speaking out about corruption, including arrest, prosecution, and expulsion from the country. Corruption charges against high-level officials that do go forward are widely viewed as selective prosecutions meant to discredit those who pose a threat to Déby or his allies.

C3 0-4 pts

Does the government operate with openness and transparency?	0 /4
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Chad has no law establishing the right to access official information. Déby, his family, and his associates dominate government and have little incentive to share basic information about government operations with the public.

Civil Liberties

D. Freedom of Expression and Belief

D1 0-4 pts

Are there free and independent media?	1 /4
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The constitution provides for freedom of the press, but press freedom is restricted in practice. Although criticism of the government is generally permitted within certain boundaries, reporters and editors self-censor to avoid reprisals. In September 2019, a journalist was sentenced to three years in prison for “criminal conspiracy” after reporting on accusations of sexual assault against a former government minister. In October, the suspension of the national television director was linked to reporting by the station on a press conference organized by opposition politicians.

The internet and social media are heavily regulated. However, a blackout on social media outlets, which affected platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and WhatsApp, and was originally instituted in March 2018, was lifted in July 2019 at Déby’s instruction.

D2 0-4 pts

Are individuals free to practice and express their religious faith or nonbelief in public and private?	1/4
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The state imposes a number of religious restrictions, primarily against certain Muslim sects. Several sects deemed to promote violence are banned, despite limited evidence of such activity. Imams are subject to governance by the semi-state run High Council for Islamic Affairs (HCIA), which is led by a group of imams belonging to the Tijanyya Sufi order. Wearing burqas is banned by ministerial decree, and the government detains individuals who wear them in public.

D3 0-4 pts

Is there academic freedom, and is the educational system free from extensive political indoctrination?	2/4
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The government does not restrict academic freedom, but funds meant for the education system, as well as government-funded stipends, are regularly in arrears.

D4 0-4 pts

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Are individuals free to express their personal views on political or other sensitive topics without fear of surveillance or retribution?	2/4
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Space for open and free private discussion exists, but tends to be heavily self-censored due to fears of reprisal from the state's repressive apparatus.

E. Associational and Organizational Rights

E1 0-4 pts

Is there freedom of assembly?	1/4
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Constitutional guarantees of free assembly are not upheld by authorities, who routinely ban gatherings and persecute organizers. A number of demonstrations were banned in 2019. In April, security forces used tear gas to disperse people who marched to protest gas shortages, in defiance of a government ban, and arrested a number of participants.

E2 0-4 pts

Is there freedom for nongovernmental organizations, particularly those that are engaged in human rights– and governance–related work?	1/4
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Nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) must receive government approval to operate legally, and few such applications are approved. A vague 2018 law bans “regionalist or community associations.” Government regulations stipulate that 1 percent of foreign NGOs’ project budgets must be paid to a body consisting of government authorities and other NGO representatives, which assesses the organizations’ in-country activities. In 2019, some international NGOs halted disbursements to offices in Chad, under heightened pressure to comply with these regulations.

In November, the secretary general of the Chadian Convention for the Defense of Human Rights (CTDDH) was arrested and charged with defamation, and later murder and attempted murder. The development came after the CTDDH had published a press release implicating a relative of President Déby in the abduction and torture of three young men.

E3 0-4 pts

Is there freedom for trade unions and similar professional or labor organizations?	2/4
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The constitution guarantees the rights to strike and unionize, but a 2007 law imposed limits on public sector workers' right to strike. In response to public sector strikes in 2018, the Chadian government and trade unions reached an agreement on public service reforms. However, unions charge that the government has not met its commitments under this agreement, and strikes continued in 2019.

While the 2018–19 school year marked the first time in at least five years where classes were not disrupted by strikes, teachers' unions issued a declaration in October 2019 demanding the government honor agreements with unions, and threatening to strike.

F. Rule of Law

F1 0-4 pts

Is there an independent judiciary?	0/4
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The rule of law and judicial system remain weak because the political leadership, especially the executive, heavily influences the courts.

F2 0-4 pts

Does due process prevail in civil and criminal matters?	
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1/4

Security forces routinely ignore constitutional protections regarding search, seizure, and detention. Detained persons may be denied access to lawyers, notably those detained in connection with their involvement in antigovernment protests or activities. Many people suspected of committing crimes are held for lengthy periods without charge.

F3 0-4 pts

Is there protection from the illegitimate use of physical force and freedom from war and insurgencies?

0/4

Civilian leaders do not maintain control of the security forces, who stand accused of killing and torturing with impunity.

The militant group Boko Haram operates near Lake Chad, and carried out increasingly deadly attacks in 2019. In February, Libyan-based rebels launched an offensive to overthrow the government. At President Déby's request, French forces carried out airstrikes to halt the rebel advance.

In northern Chad, the military continued blockading the town of Miski, which was controlled by self-defense militias; following a local uprising, the army blockaded entrances to the city, cutting off the flow of trade commodities and health services. In November, self-defense groups and the government signed a preliminary peace agreement to withdraw the army and end the blockade, however issues regarding the distribution of local mining revenues remain unresolved.

Cleavages between ethnoregional groups have at times escalated into violent conflict. In August, intercommunal violence left more than 50 dead. These events in eastern Chad along with others in the northwest prompted authorities to declare a state of emergency in three provinces, and deploy soldiers with a broad mandate to use force to restore calm. Opposition politicians and civil society groups criticized this decision

and denounced human rights violations committed by the military under the auspices of these security measures.

Prison conditions often do not conform to international standards, and complaints over inmate treatment prompted a riot at Abéché Prison in October. The military mobilized to suppress the riot, which resulted in the death of at least two inmates.

F4 0-4 pts

Do laws, policies, and practices guarantee equal treatment of various segments of the population?	0 / 4
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Due to cultural stigmatization, LGBT+ citizens are forced to conceal their sexual orientation and gender identity. The current penal code criminalizes same-sex sexual activity. Women face pervasive discrimination. Girls have limited access to education.

While discrimination against persons with disabilities is legally prohibited, civil society organizations (CSOs) charge that these provisions are not enforced, and there is no legal guarantee to provide for access to public buildings for persons with disabilities.

There are ethnic disparities in the justice system. Media outlets and NGOs allege that officials do not consistently enforce domestic court orders against people of the same ethnic group as themselves.

The government struggles to provide services to roughly 176,000 internally displaced persons and the more than 440,000 refugees in Chad at the end of 2019 who fled conflicts in neighboring countries.

G. Personal Autonomy and Individual Rights

G1 0-4 pts

Do individuals enjoy freedom of movement, including the ability to change	1 / 4
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their place of residence, employment, or education?	
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Although constitutional guarantees for the freedom of movement exist, in practice militant activity and consequent security responses limit movement. In August 2019, the Chadian government enacted states of emergency in Sila, Ouaddaï, and Tibesti Provinces in response to ongoing violence, which restricted civilian travel in the provinces. At year's end, Chad's borders with Libya, Sudan, and the Central African Republic were closed, limiting trade.

Structural constraints on the availability of public resources restrict citizens' ability to pursue employment or educational opportunities outside of their local areas. Citing a lack of resources, the government in August 2019 suspended the deliverance of Chadian passports, citing a lack of resources; this has inhibited the ability of Chadian citizens to travel or pursue educational opportunities abroad.

G2 0-4 pts

Are individuals able to exercise the right to own property and establish private businesses without undue interference from state or nonstate actors?	1/4
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Laws establishing land and property rights are nominally in force, but are functionally irrelevant to the majority of the country's population owing to the state's minimal presence in rural areas; customary law governs land ownership and use rights in practice. Laws protecting the right of women to inherit land are not enforced.

While Chad has enacted reforms to ease starting a business and registering property, establishing and operating a business in Chad remains extremely difficult, due in part to corruption.

G3 0-4 pts

Do individuals enjoy personal social freedoms, including choice of marriage partner and size of family, protection from domestic violence, and control over appearance?	0/4
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Violence against women is common. Female genital mutilation is illegal but widely practiced.

The penal code bans child marriage, setting the legal age of marriage at 18, but the courts rarely hold those who practice it accountable.

G4 0-4 pts

Do individuals enjoy equality of opportunity and freedom from economic exploitation?	1/4
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Chad has adopted minimum wage and occupational health and safety laws, but they are not well enforced and many workers are unaware of or lack access to formal channels through which they may seek redress for mistreatment; corruption also impedes workers from obtaining redress. Unpaid wages are a problem in many sectors.

Chad is a source, transit, and destination country for child trafficking. Chad has made efforts to counter human trafficking, such as initiating judicial proceedings against suspected traffickers, however criminal proceedings that return verdicts are rare.



On Chad

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Country Facts

Global Freedom Score

17/100 Not Free

Other Years

2019

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