

## FREEDOM OF THE PRESS

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# Antigua and Barbuda

[Antigua and Barbuda](#) | [Freedom of the Press 2012](#) | 

The constitution provides for freedom of speech and of the press, and the government generally respects these rights. Defamation remains a criminal offense, and cases are occasionally brought against journalists. A main source of friction between the authorities and the media is the lack of clarity about what subjects can be discussed on radio talk shows.

The islands have one daily newspaper, one biweekly paper, and more than 10 radio stations; these include the state-owned Antigua and Barbuda Network (ABN); the ruling United Progressive Party's Crusader Radio; ZDK Liberty Radio of the opposition Antigua Labour Party (ALP); and the independent Observer Radio. The ALP has voiced criticism that the government-run media does not offer equal access to the opposition. ABN runs the islands' only freely available television service, and there is one cable television company. Most private media outlets are owned by firms affiliated with either the current government or its predecessor. In April 2011, Antigua and Barbuda, as well as a number of other Caribbean islands, began receiving broadcasts from a new pan-Caribbean radio network, the Caribbean SuperStation (CSS), based in Trinidad. The network aims to fill the gap that resulted from the March 2011 closure of the British Broadcasting Corporation's Caribbean Service.

The country's recent economic decline continued to negatively impact the media in 2011. In response to financial difficulties, ZDK Liberty Radio asked its employees to take a pay cut in May 2011, while the Observer Media Group, the country's largest private media company, offered its 75-strong staff the option of voluntary severance in June. Chairman Winston Derrick said the company needed to reduce its costs by 25 percent. Due to an increase in the price of paper, the *Observer* newspaper had increased its advertising rates in December 2010, but did not change the price of its newspaper. A number of businesses have since been unwilling to advertise with the *Observer*, and the company has suffered. In 2010, Antigua and Barbuda's other daily newspaper, *Antigua Sun*, was forced to close down because of financial constraints.

There are no government restrictions on the internet, which was accessed by 82 percent of the population in 2011.

## 2012 SCORES

### PRESS STATUS

# Partly Free

### PRESS FREEDOM SCORE

# 38

### LEGAL ENVIRONMENT

# 9

### POLITICAL ENVIRONMENT

# 16

### ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT

# 13

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