

Brunei 2010



Total: 16.59

Political Freedom

Free and Fair Elections : 1.07

There have been no elections in Brunei for almost 50 years. The last polls in 1962 were won by the leftist Brunei People's Party that sought to abolish the monarchy. The Sultan nullified the elections and declared a state of emergency that has not been lifted ever since. Legislative elections are not expected to happen anytime soon. Brunei remains under the absolute rule of the Sultan and his family, as well as some appointees. Despite this, demands for political reform are low: The country's rich oil and gas reserves mean that the government can sustain a high employment-rate and grant an array of benefits (such as the absence of an income-tax), therefore keeping the population content.

Absence of Unconstitutional Veto Players : 2.5

There are no veto players of any kind in the political system of Brunei as the Sultan is the only and absolute ruler. The space for political pluralism and participation is limited at best. In 2007 and 2008 two of the country's three political parties were disbanded. The sole remaining party is the National Development Party which swore loyalty to the Sultan. Beside these restricted opportunities there are no means of political participation which is why the score achieved in this section is only low.

Freedom of Press : 2.5

Press freedom is subject to considerable restrictions. A law, introduced in 2001, allows officials to shut down newspapers and to fine journalists whose publications are considered to be "false and malicious". Moreover, it is forbidden to criticise the Sultan and the national ideology. The only national TV station is run by the state. Brunei residents can receive Malaysian broadcasts though. Access to the internet is relatively unrestricted but content perceived to be subversive may not be published online.

Rule of Law

Independence of the Judiciary :

No data available.

Corruption : 5.5

The Sultan of Brunei claims to be tough on any kind of corruption. There is also an anti-corruption bureau which has recently made efforts to cooperate with the ministry of education as well as with several regional partners. The current ranking of Transparency International places Brunei number 39 out of 180 which is a respectable result considering that Brunei is not a democracy.

Protection of Human Rights : 5.02

The protection of human rights in Brunei is largely respected. There are no reported cases of forced labor, arbitrary arrest, or discrimination against people due to their race, religion or belief. But the situation is problematic for stateless people, as Brunei does not grant them the full rights and liberties of citizens. Migrant workers are not protected by the labor laws and there are sometimes differences in the treatment of men and women – particularly when it comes to areas of life that are dominated by Islam. The death penalty still exists in Brunei, but it is rarely imposed and has not been executed for a long time. These aspects explain why the score Brunei achieves in this section is average: The situation of human rights in Brunei is far better than in many other countries of this region yet there are still major flaws such as the existence of the death penalty.

Economic Freedom

Security of Property Rights :

No data available.

Size of Government: Expenditures, Taxes, and Enterprises :

No data available.

Regulation of Credit, Labour, and Business :

No data available.

Freedom to Trade Internationally :

No data available.