

Brunei 2011



Total: 16.37

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, which 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 various benefits, (such as the absence of an income-tax), and, therefore, keep 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, the National Development Party, is loyal to the Sultan. Besides these very restricted opportunities, there are no means of political participation, which is why the score achieved in this section is low.

Freedom of Press : 2.5

Freedom of the press is restricted. A law introduced in 2001 allows officials to shut down newspapers and 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, although Brunei residents can receive Malaysian broadcasts. Access to the internet is relatively free, but content perceived to be subversive may not be published online. In its most recent ranking, Reporters Without Borders positions Brunei at number 142 out of 178.

Rule of Law

Independence of the Judiciary :

No data available.

Corruption : 5.5

The protection of human rights in Brunei is largely respected. There are no reported cases of forced labour, arbitrary arrest, or discrimination against people due to their race, religion or belief. However, migrant workers are not protected by any labour law, and there are some instances of the different treatment of men and women, particularly when it comes to areas of life that are dominated by Islam. Although the death penalty still exists in Brunei, 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 actual situation of human rights in Brunei is far better than in many other countries of this region, even though there are still major flaws, such as the existence of the death penalty.

Protection of Human Rights : 4.8

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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.