

FREEDOM IN THE WORLD 2022

# Thailand

**29**  
/100

NOT FREE

<u>Political Rights</u>	5/40
<u>Civil Liberties</u>	24/60

LAST YEAR'S SCORE & STATUS

30 /100 ● Not Free

Global freedom statuses are calculated on a weighted scale. [See the methodology.](#)



# Overview

Following five years of military dictatorship, Thailand transitioned to a military-dominated, semielected government in 2019. The combination of democratic deterioration and frustrations over the role of the monarchy in Thailand's governance has since triggered massive demonstrations. In response, the regime continues to employ authoritarian tactics, including arbitrary arrests, intimidation, lèse-majesté charges, and harassment of activists. Press freedom is constrained, due process is not guaranteed, and there is impunity for crimes committed against activists.

## Key Developments in 2021

- Regular antigovernment protests were held beginning in June, with participants motivated by the ongoing COVID-19 crisis, calls to reform the government and monarchy, and economic difficulties. While most demonstrators were peaceful, a group known as Taluh Gas (Shattering Tear-gas) regularly clashed with Bangkok police in August. A teenager who was shot during an August incident in Bangkok died of his injuries in October.
- In November, the Constitutional Court ruled that activists who called for reform of the monarchy had effectively called for its overthrow, ruling their behavior unconstitutional. The court ordered no penalty against the activists, though it did order protest groups to cease related activity.
- In January, legislators amended the penal code to decriminalize abortions performed within the first trimester. The updated code took effect in February.
- In January, former civil servant Anchan Preelert received an effective 43-and-a-half-year prison term for lèse-majesté, after recording audio clips deemed defamatory of the monarchy. The sentence was the longest ever issued for a crime of lèse-majesté.

## Political Rights

# A. Electoral Process

**A1** 0-4 pts

**Was the current head of government or other chief national authority elected through free and fair elections?**

**0** / 4

Thailand is a constitutional monarchy ruled by King Maha Vajiralongkorn, who serves as head of state. Although the monarchy has limited formal power, the king is highly influential in Thai politics, and has significant clout over the military.

The constitution, which was developed by a committee appointed by the military's National Council for Peace and Order (NCPO), was approved in a tightly controlled 2016 referendum. According to the charter, the prime minister is selected by a majority vote of the combined 500-seat elected House of Representatives and the 250-seat Senate, whose members are entirely appointed by the military.

The promilitary Palang Pracharat Party (PPP), which won only 115 lower-house seats in the 2019 elections, nominated incumbent prime minister Prayuth Chan-ocha to again serve in that position. In 2014, as army chief, Prayuth staged a coup against the democratically elected government and designated himself prime minister. Prayuth retained his post in 2019 through the support of a promilitary bloc in the lower house and votes from 249 appointed senators.

**A2** 0-4 pts

**Were the current national legislative representatives elected through free and fair elections?**

**1** / 4

Under the military-drafted constitution, the bicameral National Assembly consists of the 250-seat Senate, whose members are appointed to five-year terms by the military, and the 500-seat House of Representatives.

Under a constitutional amendment that received legislative approval in September 2021, 400 lower-house members will be directly elected to four-year terms in single-seat constituencies by simple majority vote in future elections. Another 100 members will be elected in one nationwide constituency via party-list proportional representation.

In 2019, after almost five years of postponements, a House of Representatives election was contested by 77 political parties, most of which fell into promilitary or antimilitary camps. The campaign period was marred by political repression, media censorship, unequal media access, and a lack of independent and impartial oversight from the Election Commission of Thailand (ECT).

The results were tainted by irregularities, with ballots “lost” and initial vote tallies changed. Additionally, the formula for distributing party seats was altered after the election to reduce seats won by opposition parties and redistribute them to military-aligned parties. This resulted in the redistribution of sufficient seats to grant promilitary parties a supermajority.

Only one international election monitoring body, the Asian Network for Free Elections (ANFREL), was permitted to observe the election. Two domestic organizations, P-Net and We Watch, were also granted permission, but all three experienced severely restricted access to the polls and voting procedures. We Watch determined that the process was not free and fair.

In December 2020, Thailand held its first provincial elections since the 2014 coup; candidates associated with locally dominant groups fared well, while those linked to the reform movement made few gains. Municipal elections were held in March 2021, while subdistrict contests were held in November. ANFREL called the subdistrict elections smooth but noted the occurrence of vote-buying.

**A3** 0-4 pts

**Are the electoral laws and framework fair, and are they implemented impartially by the relevant election management bodies?**

**0/4**

The 2017 constitution was designed to weaken political parties and elected officials while strengthening unelected institutions. Citizens cast only one ballot in the 2019 elections rather than separate constituency and party-list ballots, as in previous elections; by design, that system made it difficult for large parties to win a majority.

The constitutional amendment supported by legislators in September 2021 will restore a two-ballot system. Later that month, however, Thai Pakdee Party leader Warong Dechgitvigrom challenged it, saying the new system would impact smaller parties. Legislators were in the process of updating two existing pieces of legislation to align with the constitutional amendment at year's end.

All 250 senators were appointed by the military in 2019. The prime minister is selected through a combined vote of both houses, granting the unelected Senate a powerful role in the selection process.

The 2019 elections were overseen by the ECT, whose members were entirely appointed by the junta. Throughout the electoral process, the ECT was criticized by the public and civil society for its lack of independence and willingness to intervene on behalf of the military and promilitary parties. For instance, the ECT's postelection change of the seat distribution formula reassigned seats won by the opposition Future Forward Party (FFP) and Pheu Thai Party (PTP) to small military-aligned parties, all of which subsequently voted with the PPP and the Senate to retain Prayuth as prime minister.

## B. Political Pluralism and Participation

**B1** 0-4 pts

**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?**

**1/4**

From 2014 to 2018, Thailand’s military government effectively banned political parties from meeting and conducting activities. In late 2018, the NCPO lifted many restrictions on political parties, allowing them to hold meetings, recruit members, select candidates, and meet with the public. A slew of parties from across the political spectrum began organizing and campaigning in preparation for the 2019 elections, though those opposed to military rule experienced official harassment.

In 2019, after the FFP’s success in that year’s elections, party leader Thanathorn Juangroongruangkit was charged with crimes including sedition for allegedly “assisting” democracy activists after a 2015 protest. He was subsequently suspended by the Constitutional Court from taking his seat over a complaint that he had held shares in a media company while applying to serve in the legislature. In February 2020, the FFP was abolished following a Constitutional Court ruling that a loan it received from Thanathorn constituted an illegal donation.

Opposition parties aligned with exiled former prime minister Thaksin Shinawatra have also suffered government attack. The military-drafted constitution imposes rules designed to weaken existing large parties like the PTP, which led the pre-2014 government. To circumvent these limitations, PTP leaders established like-minded parties, including Thai Raksa Chart (TRC), to better compete in the 2019 elections. However, after TRC nominated Princess Ubolratana—the monarch’s older sister—as its prime ministerial candidate, the party was dissolved by the Constitutional Court and its candidates were disqualified. In October 2021, a PPP member accused Thaksin of maintaining illegal influence over the PTP and asked the EC to disband it.

**B2** 0-4 pts

**Is there a realistic opportunity for the opposition to increase its support or gain power through elections?**

**0/4**

The junta’s ban on activities of political parties, including those opposed to military rule, was lifted in 2018, and numerous parties competed in the 2019 elections. However, constitutional restraints greatly limited the ability of opposition parties to effectively campaign or gain significant political power through elections.

While parties opposed to military rule, most prominently the PTP and the FFP, won a combined 245 lower-house seats, they were unable to advance legislation due to the military's continued control over the chamber. The 2020 dissolution of the FFP, whose 80 seats made it the third-largest force in the House of Representatives, was accompanied by a 10-year ban on political participation for 16 party leaders, including Thanathorn and 10 other elected representatives. Following the ruling, the FFP's 55 remaining representatives joined a small political party and rebranded as the Move Forward Party.

In September 2021, the National Assembly passed an amendment reducing the number of lower-house party-list seats from 150 to 100, increasing the threshold needed to win them and making it more difficult for smaller opposition parties to win representation.

**B3** 0-4 pts

**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?**

**0** / 4

While Thai citizens were able to vote in 2019, the resulting government did not reflect election results due to a rigged outcome enabled by the military-drafted constitution. The cabinet is stacked with former members of the military, leaders of the 2014 coup, and ministerial holdovers from the junta, including Prime Minister Prayuth.

The 2019 polls were also subject to repeated interventions by the monarchy, which exerts tremendous influence over Thai politics. For instance, the Constitutional Court's dissolution order targeting TRC came soon after King Maha Vajiralongkorn made a televised announcement condemning his sister Princess Ubolratana's prime ministerial bid as "extremely inappropriate." On the eve of the 2019 election, King Vajiralongkorn released an unprecedented statement urging citizens to vote for "good people" to prevent "chaos," a message widely understood as a royal endorsement of promilitary parties.

**B4** 0-4 pts

**Do various segments of the population (including ethnic, racial, religious, gender, LGBT+, and other relevant groups) have full political rights and electoral opportunities?**

**1/4**

In 2019, some political rights denied to the population during military rule were restored with the election of a semicivilian government. Nevertheless, members of minority groups, particularly ethnic minorities and stateless residents, are generally unable to choose their representatives or organize independently to assert their interests in the political sphere. Malay Muslims in southern Thailand remain politically marginalized.

Migrant workers, mostly from neighboring Myanmar, Cambodia, and Laos, were believed to number 4.9 million as of 2019, though many left Thailand amid the COVID-19-related economic slowdown. Migrant workers lack political rights and a path to citizenship.

Women are underrepresented in government at all levels, composing only 15.8 percent of the House of Representatives and 10.5 percent of the Senate. Few women hold leadership roles in political parties. Women's interests are generally not prioritized in political life, although recent antigovernment protests included demands for greater attention to such issues.

The interests of LGBT+ people are increasingly represented in national politics. The cabinet approved draft legislation that would give same-sex unions many of the benefits given in heterosexual marriages in 2020. In November 2021, a Foreign Ministry official reported that legislative efforts were still ongoing while giving remarks to a Universal Periodic Review working group.

## **C. Functioning of Government**

**C1** 0-4 pts

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

**0/4**



Since 2019, the policies of the Thai government have been determined by the prime minister and the National Assembly. Despite opposition parties garnering a significant share of lower-house seats in that year's elections, the government remains largely authoritarian due to the unelected Senate, which votes with the lower house to determine the government's long-term strategy and select the prime minister. Consequently, government policies and legislation are decided and implemented by a clique of former military leaders and their allies.

In recent years, the king has consolidated and expanded the monarchy's political and military powers. In 2019, King Vajiralongkorn ordered the transfer of two elite army units to the palace's direct command, citing Article 172 of the constitution, which allows a royal decree to be issued when an emergency threatens national security and the monarchy.

**C2** 0-4 pts

**Are safeguards against official corruption strong and effective?**

**1/4**

Thailand's anticorruption legislation is inadequately enforced, and bribes and gifts are common practice in business, law enforcement, and the legal system. The National Anti-Corruption Commission (NACC) receives numerous complaints each year, and the NCPO passed vague anticorruption laws while in power. However, the junta engaged in wide-scale corruption, cronyism, and nepotism, and these issues have gone unaddressed since the transition to semicivilian rule.

The government faced corruption suspicions over COVID-19 vaccine procurement efforts in 2021. In August, a PTP legislator claimed the government overpaid for doses of the Sinovac COVID-19 vaccine, prompting Prayuth to deny suggestions of embezzlement.

**C3** 0-4 pts

**Does the government operate with openness and transparency?**

**1/4**

Parliamentary oversight of the government that took power in 2019 has resulted in an increase in overall government openness and transparency. However, due to the military's continued sway over government operations and its legislative majority, high-level decisions continue to be made, and legislation passed, opaquely.

Procurement decisions are also opaque. In 2020, Siam Bioscience, which the monarch effectively owns via the Crown Property Bureau, won a contract to produce the University of Oxford–AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine for distribution in Southeast Asia under terms that were not made public.

## Civil Liberties

### D. Freedom of Expression and Belief

**D1** 0-4 pts

**Are there free and independent media?**

**1/4**

Under military rule, the government systematically used censorship, intimidation, and legal action to suppress independent media, and international and domestic news outlets were frequently censored during the 2019 campaign period. That July, several NCPO orders limiting free speech and independent media were lifted, including those banning reports considered to threaten national security and the NCPO's credibility. However, the new government has retained several laws introduced by the junta that restrict free and independent media, including criminal defamation laws.

In 2020, an emergency decree made it illegal to publish COVID-19 information deemed "false or capable of causing fear in the public," with violators subject to prison terms of up to five years. The decree also empowered authorities to demand

that journalists and outlets “correct” reports deemed false or face charges under the Computer Crime Act (CCA).

The government also placed pressure on the media during the antigovernment protests that began in 2020. Several journalists were arrested while covering protests in 2020, while at least four outlets received shutdown orders. In November 2021, the National Broadcasting and Telecommunications Commission warned outlets to refrain from interviewing protest leaders, discussing their demands, or broadcasting long live reports on protests.

**D2** 0-4 pts

**Are individuals free to practice and express their religious faith or nonbelief in public and private?**

**3/4**

There is no state religion, and religious freedom is respected in the majority of the country. However, some restrictions exist. Speech considered insulting to Buddhism is prohibited by law. A long-running civil conflict in the south, which pits ethnic Malay Muslims against ethnic Thai Buddhists, continues to undermine citizens’ ability to practice their religions. The vast majority of Thais are Buddhist and the king is considered the protector of Buddhism in Thailand, which carries spoken and unspoken authority.

**D3** 0-4 pts

**Is there academic freedom, and is the educational system free from extensive political indoctrination?**

**1/4**

Academic freedom is constrained in Thailand. University discussions and seminars on topics regarded as politically sensitive are subject to monitoring or outright cancellation by government authorities. Activist activities on university campuses remain constrained by the government, including through prosecutions for sedition and violations of draconian lèse-majesté laws.

Academics working on sensitive topics face oppressive tactics including summonses for questioning, home visits by security officials, surveillance of their activities, and arbitrary detention for the purpose of questioning. Several Thai academics fled into exile after the 2014 coup.

Thailand's public education system is rife with propaganda aimed at instilling obedience to the country's monarchy and military. The education system became a target of student protesters. New youth-led organizations such as Bad Students demanded the government halt harassment of student activists, while collaborating with students on reforms including the abrogation of abusive school regulations.

**D4** 0-4 pts

**Are individuals free to express their personal views on political or other sensitive topics without fear of surveillance or retribution?**

**1/4**

Despite the 2019 transition to semicivilian control, perceived critics of the government, military, or the monarchy remain at high risk of surveillance, arrest, imprisonment, harassment, and physical attack. Thailand's postjunta government retained 140 NCPO laws, including laws that restrict freedom of expression. It also retained the CCA, which gives authorities broad powers to restrict online expression, impose censorship, and enforce surveillance, and extends enforcement of lèse-majesté provisions online.

In July 2021, the government promulgated Regulation 29, which prohibited speech that would "instigate fear." Regulation 29 also required internet service providers to surrender the internet protocol addresses of users engaging in such speech to the authorities. A civil court blocked the regulation's use in August, responding to a petition from activists and media outlets.

Enforcement of lèse-majesté laws under Section 112 of the criminal code decreased in the final years of direct military rule, but it returned as a tool of repression in 2020. Between November 2020 and the end of 2021, least 151 people were charged with violating Section 112. Thanathorn Juangroongruangkit was accused of violating Section 112 for comments regarding Siam Bioscience in January 2021. That same

month, a former civil servant, Anchan Preelert, was sentenced to 87 years' imprisonment for recording audio clips deemed defamatory of the monarchy. The sentence, which was reduced to 43-and-a-half years after her confession, is the longest such sentence in Thai history.

## E. Associational and Organizational Rights

**E1** 0-4 pts

Is there freedom of assembly?

1/4

In March 2020, Prime Minister Prayuth used COVID-19 as a pretext to employ broad powers granted by a 2005 emergency decree to protect the “safety of the people,” including the power to restrict public gatherings. Restrictions have largely remained in effect through the end of 2021.

Authorities used considerable force, tolerated violence from progovernment sympathizers, and employed *lèse-majesté* laws in response to youth-led antigovernment demonstrations in 2020. While the authorities had some success in curtailing them, a new round of nationwide protests took place beginning in June 2021. Participants were motivated by the ongoing COVID-19 crisis, calls to reform the government and monarchy, and economic difficulties. While many protest groups were peaceful, one group, Taluh Gas, regularly clashed with officers in Bangkok in August. Bangkok police used water cannon, rubber bullets, and live ammunition during the clashes. At least one protest-related death was recorded in 2021; a teenager shot during an August incident in Bangkok died of his injuries in October.

**E2** 0-4 pts

Is there freedom for nongovernmental organizations, particularly those that are engaged in human rights– and governance-related work?

1/4

Thailand has a vibrant civil society, but groups focused on defending human rights and freedom of expression, and promoting democracy, continue to face restrictions, criminalization, and prosecution, including under sedition and lèse-majesté laws. Human rights nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) also faced government pressure after antigovernment protests began in 2020. Civil society groups holding republican views, such as the Organization for Thai Federation, remain forbidden.

Land and environmental activists risk serious and even deadly violence; environmental rights NGO Global Witness has described Thailand as among the most dangerous countries in Asia for such activists. Perpetrators of attacks generally enjoy impunity. In May 2021, land rights activist Somsak Onchuenjit was killed by an unidentified assailant in Trang Province.

In February 2021, the cabinet gave its initial approval for a bill that would require NGOs to register with the government, criminalize unregistered organizations, and allow the government to surveil the communications of NGO staff. The bill remained under consideration at year's end.

**E3** 0-4 pts

**Is there freedom for trade unions and similar professional or labor organizations?**

**1/4**

Thai trade unions are nominally independent and have the right to collectively bargain. However, most formal-sector workers are not unionized, with the International Labour Organization (ILO) reporting a 3.5 percent density rate in 2016. Employers engage in antiunion activity, employing lockouts and launching defamation cases against union members and organizers. Non-Thai nationals are prohibited from establishing unions. Migrant workers are also legally prohibiting from establishing unions or leading officially recognized unions.

Unions and union leaders are also criminally targeted. In 2019, the NACC launched an investigation against 22 State Railway Union of Thailand (SRUT) members over a 2009 safety campaign it launched after a 2009 train derailment. The State Railway of Thailand later accused the SRUT of launching an illegal strike and won 24 million baht

(\$724,000) in damages against 7 union leaders. In October 2020, 13 SRUT leaders were convicted of neglecting their official duties and received 3-year prison terms, though they received bail and launched an appeal.

*Score Change: The score declined from 2 to 1 because union organizers and members continue to face antiunion actions from employers and the authorities, including lockouts and criminal prosecutions.*

## F. Rule of Law

**F1** 0-4 pts

**Is there an independent judiciary?**

**1/4**

While judicial independence is constitutionally guaranteed, courts are politicized and corrupt. The Constitutional Court, which has been accused of favoring the military, has sweeping powers, including the ability to dissolve political parties, overthrow elected officials, and veto legislation. In 2018, the government enacted a law making criticism of the Constitutional Court with “rude, sarcastic, or threatening words” a criminal offense, further shielding the body from accountability. In 2020, the Constitutional Court abolished the FFP after what observers characterized as a highly politicized trial. In November 2021, the Constitutional Court ruled that three activists had intended to overthrow the monarchy after issuing calls for reform and ruled their acts unconstitutional. The court issued no explicit penalty against them but ordered protest groups to cease related activity.

In 2019, Kanakorn Pianchana, a Yala Province judge, shot himself in court immediately after acquitting five Muslim defendants on murder charges. Before shooting himself, Kanakorn stated that superiors placed intense pressure on him to convict the defendants, despite a lack of evidence.

**F2** 0-4 pts

**Does due process prevail in civil and criminal matters?**

**1/4**

Restrictions implemented by the NCPO and retained by the semicivilian government severely undermine due process rights. Orders issued in 2015 permitted the detention of individuals without charge for up to seven days and expanded the military's authority in law enforcement, permitting them to arrest, detain, and investigate crimes related to the monarchy and national security, including drug-related crimes. In 2019, much of this authority was transferred to a newly empowered Internal Security Operations Command, which can also summon and detain individuals without a warrant. With the transfer of power to a semicivilian government, all court cases involving offenses against junta orders were transferred from military to civilian courts.

Antigovernment protesters who participated in 2020 and 2021 rallies were kept in pretrial detention for prolonged periods, were denied bail, were offered bail under strict conditions, and faced criminal prosecution. Over 1,300 people faced charges including sedition and lèse-majesté over protest-related activity between July 2020 and late September 2021 according to Thai Lawyers for Human Rights.

**F3** 0-4 pts

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

**1/4**

The police and military often operate with impunity, which is exacerbated by the absence of any law that explicitly prohibits torture. In August 2021, a video showing police officers in Nakhon Sawan Province killing a suspected drug dealer was released. Five officers were arrested over the incident, while another two voluntarily surrendered. In September, legislators began debating a draft bill outlawing torture and forced disappearance, which passed its first reading later that month.

While most of Thailand is free from terrorism or insurgency, a combination of martial law and emergency rule has been in effect for over a decade in the four



southernmost provinces, where Malay Muslims form a majority and a separatist insurgency has been ongoing since the 1940s. Civilians are regularly targeted in shootings, bombings, and arson attacks, and insurgents have focused on schools and teachers as symbols of the Thai state. Thousands of suspected militants and sympathizers have been indiscriminately detained in counterinsurgency operations. Long-standing and credible reports of human rights violations, including extrajudicial killings, by government forces and insurgents also exist. The dominant militant group, the National Revolutionary Front, unilaterally declared a cease-fire in April 2020, citing the COVID-19 pandemic, but fighting resumed that month.

Following the 2019 elections, physical attacks on democracy activists by masked assailants widely assumed to have government ties increased, with the authorities conducting no credible investigations. Authorities also used considerable force to disperse antigovernment protesters in 2021, at times using live ammunition.

Extraterritorial executions and disappearances of Thai dissidents-in-exile have also increased in recent years. In June 2020, Wanchalerm Satsaksit, an exiled Thai activist living in Cambodia, was disappeared from Phnom Penh, presumably by agents connected to the Thai state, and remains missing.

**F4** 0-4 pts

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

**2/4**

In Thailand's north, so-called hill tribes are not fully integrated into society. Many individuals lack formal citizenship, which renders them ineligible to vote, own land, attend state schools, or receive protection under labor laws. Thailand is known for its tolerance of LGBT+ people, though societal acceptance is higher for tourists and expatriates than for nationals, and unequal treatment and stigmatization remain challenges. Women face discrimination in employment, a problem that was highlighted the Royal Police Cadet Academy's 2018 decision to ban female cadets.

Thailand has not ratified the UN convention on refugees, who risk detention as unauthorized migrants and often lack access to asylum procedures. In November

2021, Thai authorities deported three Cambodian refugees who were members of the banned Cambodia National Rescue Party. In December, a Cambodian monk was arrested and charged with illegal entry.

## G. Personal Autonomy and Individual Rights

**G1** 0-4 pts

**Do individuals enjoy freedom of movement, including the ability to change their place of residence, employment, or education?**

**3/4**

Thai citizens generally have freedom of travel and choice of residence. However, travel may be restricted in areas affected by civil conflict. Freedom of movement was greatly curtailed by COVID-19-related emergency decrees during 2021.

**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?**

**2/4**

The rights to property and to establish businesses are protected by law, though in practice business activity is affected by bureaucratic delays, and at times by the influence of security forces and organized crime. Court cases related to land and natural resources, particularly those deemed by the junta to be vital to the country's economic development, are susceptible to political interference.

**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?**

**3/4**

While women have the same legal rights as men, they are vulnerable to domestic abuse and rape. Victims rarely report attacks to authorities, who frequently discourage women from pursuing criminal charges against perpetrators.

In late January 2021, the National Assembly amended three sections of the penal code to decriminalize first-trimester abortions, which were gazetted in February. The articles had been ruled unconstitutional by the Constitutional Court in early 2020.

In November 2021, the Constitutional Court ruled that the existing civil code did not extend marriage rights to same sex-couples.

**G4** 0-4 pts

**Do individuals enjoy equality of opportunity and freedom from economic exploitation?**

**2/4**

Exploitation and trafficking of Thailand's large migrant worker underclass and refugees from Myanmar, Cambodia, and Laos are serious and ongoing problems, as are child and sweatshop labor. Migrant workers risk deportation; in November 2021, the Defence Ministry reported that over 30,000 people classified as illegal migrants were deported during the first 10 months of the year.

Sex trafficking remains a problem in which some state officials are complicit. However, the government has made some efforts to prosecute and seize the assets of those suspected of involvement in human trafficking, including police officers and local officials.

Thai companies facing criticism for human rights violations, labor rights abuses, and migrant rights violations continue to file libel lawsuits against activists and human rights defenders. Between 2016 and December 2021, poultry producer Thammakaset filed criminal and civil complaints against 23 individuals and entities, including migrant workers, human rights defenders, and media outlets.





### On Thailand

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### Country Facts

Global Freedom Score

**36/100** ● Partly Free

Internet Freedom Score

**39/100** ● Not Free

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