

NEWS RELEASE

Canada falls out of top 10 freest countries, U.S. up seven spots to 17th

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For Immediate Release

TORONTO—Canada is no longer one of the 10 freest countries in the world, having dropped from fourth to 11th in the new [Human Freedom Index](#), released today by the Fraser Institute and a network of international public policy think-tanks.

The United States, which ranked 24th last year, climbed to 17th in the most recent report, which uses 79 indicators of personal, civil and economic freedoms to rank 159 countries and territories around the world.

“The Human Freedom Index measures the degree to which people are free to enjoy civil liberties—freedom of speech, religion, women’s rights, association and assembly and economic freedoms,” said Fred McMahon, the Dr. Michael A. Walker Research Chair in Economic Freedom at the Fraser Institute and editor of the report.

“While Canada’s ranking on personal freedoms improved one spot to 14th this year, economic freedom declined markedly in Canada from fifth to eleventh on the index. Higher taxes, growing regulation and increased government intervention have made Canadians materially less economically free,” McMahon added.

Switzerland is now the world’s freest country, having overtaken Hong Kong (2nd) atop the rankings. Other notable countries include: Germany (16), Japan (27), France (33), Mexico (73), India (102), Russia (126) and China (130).

Crucially, people in freer countries earn more money than those who live in less-free countries. For example, the average per capita income for the top-quartile countries on the index was US\$38,871 compared to just US\$10,346 for the least-free quartile in 2015, the most recent year of available comparable data in the freedom index.

“The evidence is clear—when people are free, they have much greater opportunity to prosper,” McMahon said.

The complete index, a joint project of the Fraser Institute, Germany’s Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom and the Cato Institute in the U.S., is available as a free PDF download at www.fraserinstitute.org. It was prepared by Ian Vasquez of the Cato Institute and Tanja Porčnik of the Visio Institute in Slovenia.

The 10 freest and the least-free countries in the index

The 10 freest jurisdictions (from top)	The 10 least-free countries
1. Switzerland	150. Burundi
2. Hong Kong	151. Central African Republic
3. New Zealand	152. Democratic Republic of Congo
4. Ireland	153. Algeria
5. Australia	154. Iran
6. Finland	155. Egypt
7. Norway	156. Yemen
8. Denmark	157. Libya
9. Netherlands	158. Venezuela
9. United Kingdom (tied)	159. Syria

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