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Democracy in Latin America and the Caribbean: A Compilation of Selected Indices

Updated July 11, 2022

Congressional Research Service
https://crsreports.congress.gov
R46016

CRS REPORT
Prepared for Members and
Committees of Congress

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SUMMARY

R46016

July 11, 2022

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Democracy in Latin America and the Caribbean: A Compilation of Selected Indices

This report provides a regional snapshot of the political climate in Latin America and the Caribbean, based on selected nongovernmental indices that measure democracy trends worldwide. Using tables and graphs to illustrate regional trends, this report provides a snapshot of democracy indicators from the following sources: (1) the U.S. Department of State's *2021 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices*; (2) Bertelsmann Stiftung's 2022 Bertelsmann Transformation Index (BTI); (3) the Economist Intelligence Unit's (EIU's) *Democracy Index 2021*; (4) Freedom House's *Freedom in the World 2022*; and (5) the Varieties of Democracy Institute's (V-DEM's) Liberal Democracy Index in its *Democracy Report 2022*. Additional resources appear at the end of the report.

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Introduction

For decades, U.S. policy has broadly reflected the view that the spread of democracy around the world is favorable to U.S. interests. The current trajectory of democracy around the world is an issue of interest for Congress, which has generally supported U.S. democracy promotion efforts. This report provides a regional snapshot of the political climate in Latin America and the Caribbean, based on the U.S. Department of State's description of each country's political system and selected nongovernmental (NGO) indices that measure democracy trends worldwide.

For additional information on democracy in the global context, see CRS Report R45344, *Global Trends in Democracy: Background, U.S. Policy, and Issues for Congress*, by Michael A. Weber.

For related information about democracy in Latin American and the Caribbean, see the following products:

- CRS Report R46781, *Latin America and the Caribbean: U.S. Policy and Key Issues in the 117th Congress*, coordinated by Mark P. Sullivan;
- CRS In Focus IF10460, *Latin America and the Caribbean: U.S. Policy Overview*, by Mark P. Sullivan;
- CRS Report R47028, *U.S. Foreign Assistance to Latin America and the Caribbean: FY2022 Appropriations*, by Peter J. Meyer
- CRS In Focus IF12031, *Anti-corruption Efforts in Latin America and the Caribbean*, by June S. Beittel and Rachel L. Martin
- CRS Report 98-684, *Latin America and the Caribbean: Fact Sheet on Leaders and Elections*, by Carla Y. Davis-Castro; and

CRS also publishes reports on specific Latin American and Caribbean countries.

Democracy Indices and Source Notes

This report compiles information from the U.S. State Department and data from four nongovernmental (NGO) indices, which are each discussed briefly below. CRS does not endorse the methodology or accuracy of any particular democracy index. (For a discussion about definitions of democracy and critiques of democracy indices, see CRS Report R45344, *Global Trends in Democracy: Background, U.S. Policy, and Issues for Congress*, by Michael A. Weber.)

The following indices are discussed below: (1) Bertelsmann Stiftung's 2022 Bertelsmann Transformation Index (BTI); (2) the Economist Intelligence Unit's (EIU's) *Democracy Index 2020*; (3) Freedom House's *Freedom in the World 2021*; and (4) the Varieties of Democracy Institute's (V-DEM's) Liberal Democracy Index in its *Democracy Report 2021*.

Bertelsmann Transformation Index (BTI)

Bertelsmann Stiftung, a private foundation based in Germany, has published the Bertelsmann Transformation Index (BTI) biannually since 2006. BTI 2022 includes global, regional and country reports as well as three thematic reports that evaluate democracy, economy, and governance in 137 developing and transition countries. For political transformation specifically, BTI ranks countries using five criteria: (1) stateness, (2) political participation, (3) rule of law, (4)

stability of democratic institutions, and (5) political and social integration.[1] The political transformation criteria also determine country classification: *democracy in consolidation, defective democracy, highly defective democracy, moderate autocracy*, or *hardline autocracy*.[2] BTI evaluates all Central and South American nations. Among Caribbean nations, BTI only evaluates Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Haiti, Trinidad and Tobago, and Jamaica. In its 2022 regional report, BTI finds that "the political turmoil observed in the majority of Latin American countries is also reflected in the continuing decline in the quality of democracy."[3] The same publication reports that "no further authoritarian regression was recorded for this edition... however, there have been no transitions (back) to democracy during the BTI 2022 assessment period."[4] In its global report, BTI highlights Brazil's "steady decline in its quality of democracy" over the past decade, Mexico's "organized drug crime and the exceedingly brutal fight against gang activities have undermined the quality of democracy," and Central America's "long-term autocratization trends."[5] On the other hand, the report also highlights that some democracies "have been consistently classified as consolidating and stable over the past 20 year in addition to being able to maintain their high level of democracy despite myriad transformation challenges." This group, according to the report, includes Chile, Costa Rica and Uruguay in Latin America, and Jamaica in the Caribbean.[6]

Figure 1 shows the global rank and classification of all Central and South American and Caribbean countries according to the Political Transformation Rank, a component of the 2022 Bertelsmann Stiftung Transformation Index (BTI).

[1] Bertelsmann Stiftung, "Methodology," accessed May 10, 2022, available at https://www.bti-project.org/en/methodology.html. Also see https://www.bti-project.org/en/index/political-transformation.html.

[2] Bertelsmann Stiftung, "Methodology," accessed May 10, 2022, at https://www.bti-project.org/en/methodology.html. BTI uses seven threshold values to mark minimum requirements for a democracy: (1) free and fair elections, (2) effective power to govern, (3) association/assembly rights, (4) freedom of expression, (5) separation of powers, (6) civil rights, and (7) monopoly on the use of force and basic administration. BTI classifies a country as an autocracy if any one of seven political transformation indicators falls short of the relevant threshold. BTI considers failing states autocracies.

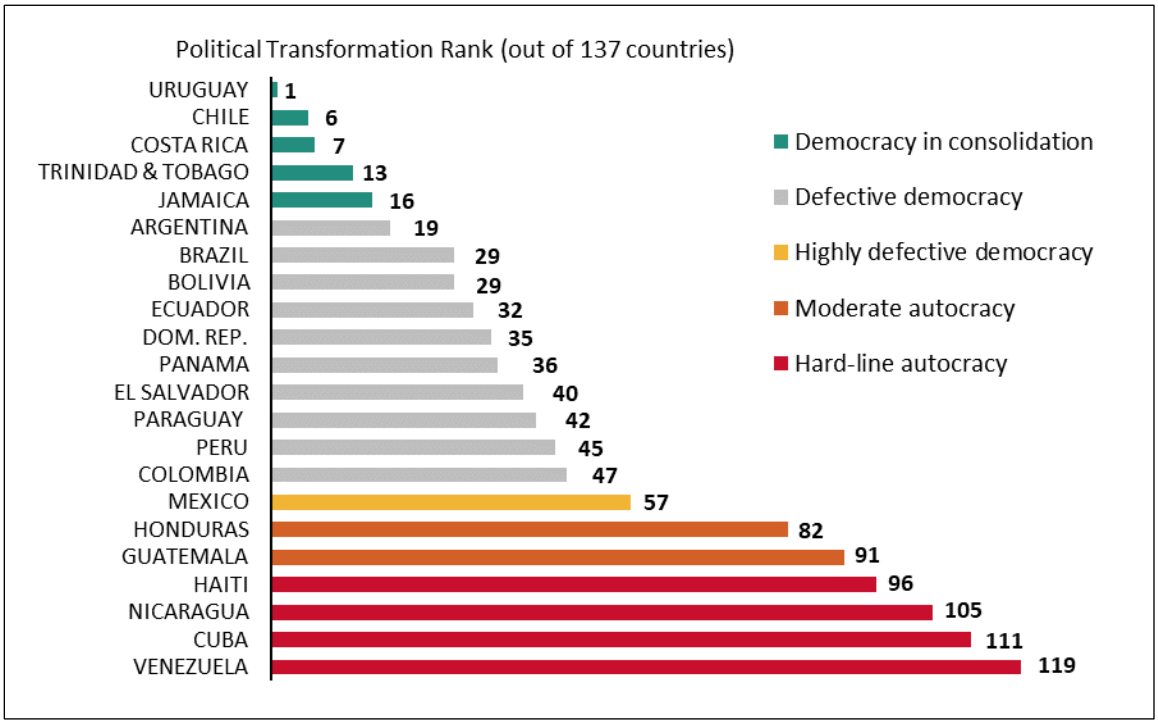
[3] Peter Thiery, *Paradigms Lost. New opportunities for transformation?—BTI Regional Report Latin America and the Caribbean*, Bertelsmann Stiftung 2022, p. 5.

[4] Ibid.

[5] Hauke Hartmann and Peter Thiery, *Global findings BTI 2022*, Bertelsmann Stiftung, pp. 5, 7-8.

[6] Ibid., p. 7.

Figure 1. BTI's 2022 Political Transformation Global Ranking of Latin American and Caribbean Countries



Source: Created by CRS using Bertelsmann Stiftung's 2022 Transformation Index.

Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU)'s *Democracy Index*

The Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU), based in London and New York, has produced a democracy index since 2006. The current report provides an annual snapshot of the state of democracy for 165 independent states and two territories.[7] The EIU classifies countries as *full democracies*, *flawed democracies*, *hybrid regimes*, or *authoritarian regimes* based on an aggregate score of 60 indicators in five categories: (1) electoral process and pluralism, (2) the functioning of government, (3) political participation, (4) political culture, and (5) civil liberties.[8] EIU evaluates all Central and South American nations. With respect to the Caribbean, EIU looks at Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, Suriname, and Trinidad and Tobago. According to the EIU's *Democracy Index 2021*, the Latin America and Caribbean region's overall

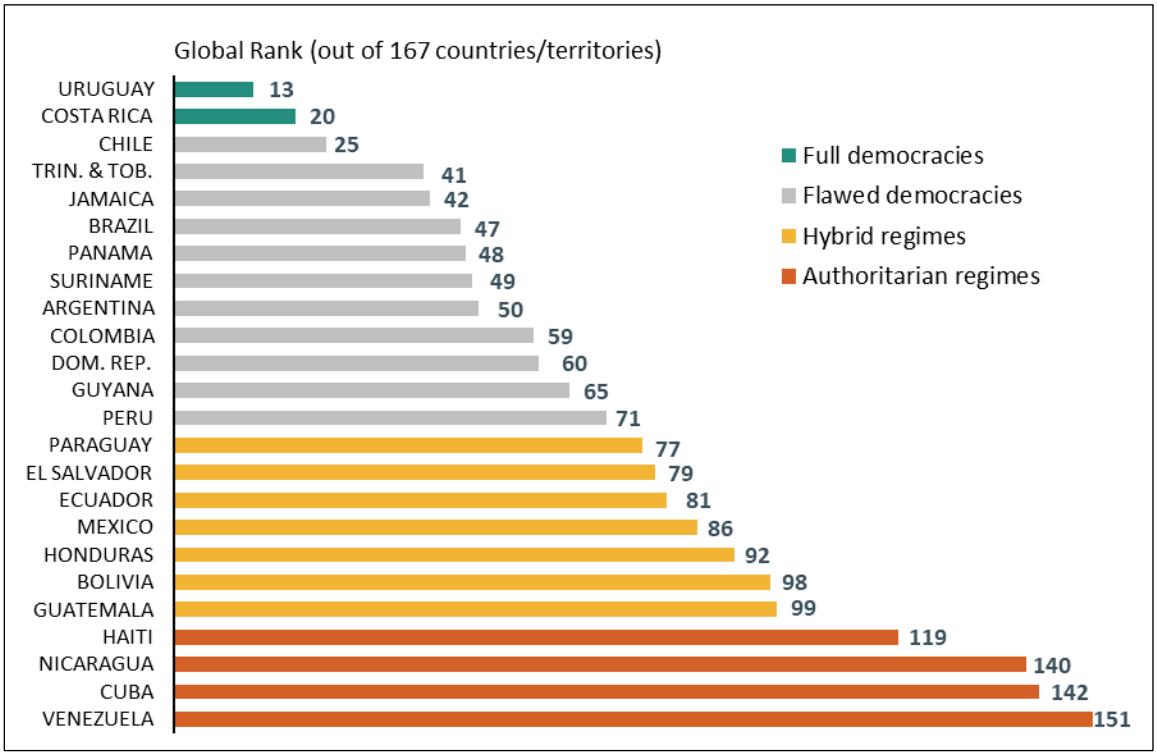
[7] The Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) did not produce a democracy index report covering 2007 or 2009.

[8] EIU, *Democracy Index 2021: The China Challenge*, 2022, at https://www.economistgroup.com/group-news/economist-intelligence/democracy-index-2021-less-than-half-the-world-lives-in-a-democracy, pp. 67-68. EIU defines terms as: *full democracies* are countries where the "functioning of government is satisfactory. Media are independent and diverse.... effective checks and balances ... judiciary is independent and judicial decisions are enforced ... only limited problems." *Flawed democracies* have "free and fair elections ... basic civil liberties are respected. However, there are significant weaknesses in other aspects of democracy, including problems in governance, an underdeveloped political culture and low levels of political participation." *Hybrid regimes* have "substantial election irregularities ... government pressure on opposition parties and candidates ... corruption tends to be widespread and the rule of law is weak. Civil society is weak ... and the judiciary is not independent." In *authoritarian regimes*, "state political pluralism is absent or heavily circumscribed ... some formal institutions of democracy may exist, but these have little substance ... elections ... are not free and fair.... disregard for abuses and infringements of civil liberties ... repression of criticism of the government and pervasive censorship. There is no independent judiciary."

score declined from 6.09 in 2020 to 5.83 in 2021(on a 0 to 10 scale), a downturn EIU described as "the biggest year-on-year decline experienced by any region since the start of the Democracy Index in 2006."[9] The report notes five downgrades: Chile now a "flawed democracy," Ecuador, Mexico and Paraguay now "hybrid regimes," and Haiti now an "authoritarian regime."[10] The two countries in the region classified in 2021 as full democracies are Costa Rica and Uruguay, while four countries in the region were identified as authoritarian regimes: Cuba, Haiti, Nicaragua, and Venezuela.[11]

Figure 2 shows the global rank and classification of Central and South American and Caribbean countries according to the EIU's *Democracy Index 2021.*

Figure 2. EIU *Democracy Index 2021* Global Ranking for Latin American and Caribbean Countries



Source: Created by CRS using EIU's *Democracy Index 2021*.

Freedom House's *Freedom in the World*

Freedom House is a U.S.-based NGO that conducts research on democracy, political freedom, and human rights worldwide. It has published a global report on political rights and civil liberties, now called *Freedom in the World,* annually since 1972.[12] The 2021 report covers 195 countries and 15 territories. Freedom House assigns each country 0 to 4 points on 25 different indicators—

[9] EIU, *Democracy Index 2021: The China Challenge*, 2021, at https://www.economistgroup.com/group-news/economist-intelligence/democracy-index-2021-less-than-half-the-world-lives-in-a-democracy, p. 47 and 9.

[10] Ibid., p. 48.

[11] Ibid.

[12] Until 1978, the annual report was titled *The Comparative Study of Freedom.*

10 indicators for political rights and 15 indicators for civil liberties—for a total of up to 100 points. The calculation equally weights a country's aggregate political rights and civil liberties scores then determines whether it has an overall status of *free, partly free*, or *not free.*[13] Freedom House evaluates all Central and South American and Caribbean nations. Freedom House's report covering 2021 found that the top countries with one-year democratic declines included El Salvador, Haiti, and Nicaragua and the top countries with largest democratic declines over the last decade included El Salvador, Haiti, Nicaragua, and Venezuela.[14] Honduras was among the top countries with a one-year democratic gain and both Ecuador and Peru earned a status change from "partly free" to "free."[15] Meanwhile, Haiti's status was downgraded from "partly free" to "not free."[16] The report's analysis is based on data that are detailed in full on the Freedom House's report web page.[17] Freedom House's webpage "Countries," lists the current freedom scores of all countries with a detailed profile for each.[18]

Figure 3 shows the aggregate scores of all Central and South American and Caribbean countries according to the relevant Freedom House country web pages for *Freedom in the World 2022.*

[13] The methodology is derived from the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. "The political rights questions are grouped into three subcategories: Electoral Process (3 questions), Political Pluralism and Participation (4), and Functioning of Government (3). The civil liberties questions are grouped into four subcategories: Freedom of Expression and Belief (4 questions), Associational and Organizational Rights (3), Rule of Law (4), and Personal Autonomy and Individual Rights (4)." The methodology questions and table for calculating country status are listed online at Freedom House, "Freedom in the World Research Methodology," accessed May 12, 2022, at https://freedomhouse.org/reports/freedom-world/freedom-world-research-methodology.

[14] Sarah Repucci and Amy Slipowitz, *Freedom in the World 2022: The Global Expansion of Authoritarian Rule*, Freedom House, 2022, at https://freedomhouse.org/sites/default/files/2022-02/FIW_2022_PDF_Booklet_Digital_Final_Web.pdf, pp. 15-16.

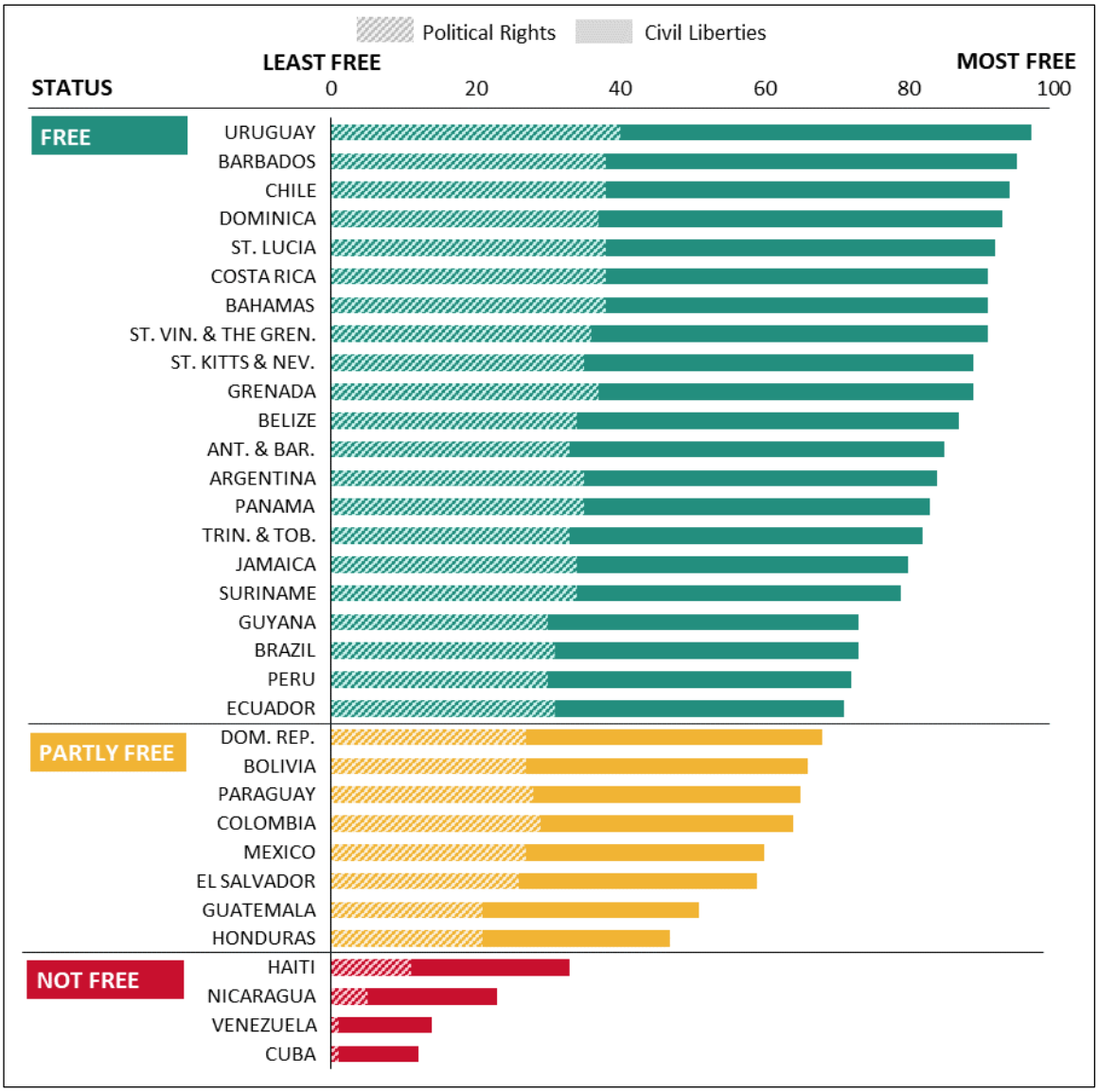
[15] Ibid., p. 15 and 26.

[16] Ibid., p. 26.

[17] Freedom House, "Freedom in the World: About the report," accessed May 12, 2022, at https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world.

[18] Freedom House, "Countries and Territories," accessed May 12, 2022, at https://freedomhouse.org/countries/freedom-world/scores.

Figure 3. Freedom House, *Freedom in the World 2022* Aggregate Scores for Latin American and Caribbean Countries



Source: Created by CRS using Freedom House's *Freedom in the World 2022*.

Varieties of Democracy Institute (V-Dem)'s Liberal Democracy Index

The Varieties of Democracy Institute (V-Dem), headquartered at the University of Gothenburg in Sweden, collects democracy data through its research team in collaboration with country experts. In 2017, V-Dem published its first global report measuring the status of democracy. V-Dem's *Democracy Report 2022's* Liberal Democracy Index is based on 71 indicators that capture liberal and electoral aspects of democracy.[19] V-Dem evaluates all Central and South American nations.

[19] Vanessa A. Boese, Nazifa Alizada, Martin Lundstedt, Kelly Morrison, Natalia Natsika, Yuko Sato, Hugo Tai, and

V-Dem evaluates a subset of Caribbean nations, namely Barbados, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, Suriname, and Trinidad and Tobago. The V-Dem 2021 report grouped 179 countries into four categories: *liberal democracy*, *electoral democracy*, *electoral autocracy*, and *closed autocracy*.[20] The report notes that in Latin America and the Caribbean, "democratizing countries made the greatest strides in improving judicial constraints. In Dominican Republic and Ecuador, for instance, there was significant and substantial improvement in government compliance with the high court over the last ten years."[21] However, with respect to democratization, "major regressions have struck twice as many countries: Brazil, El Salvador, Nicaragua, and Venezuela."[22] In the Western Hemisphere, Bolivia was upgraded to an "electoral democracy" while Trinidad and Tobago was downgraded to an "electoral democracy" and El Salvador to an "electoral autocracy."[23]

Figure 4 shows the liberal democracy index rank and classification of all Central and South American and Caribbean countries according to the *Varieties of Democracy Institute's Democracy Report 2022*.

Staffan I. Lindberg, *Autocratization Changing Nature? Democracy Report 2022*, March 2022, Varieties of Democracy Institute, p. 50. Hereinafter, V-Dem, *Democracy Report 2022*.

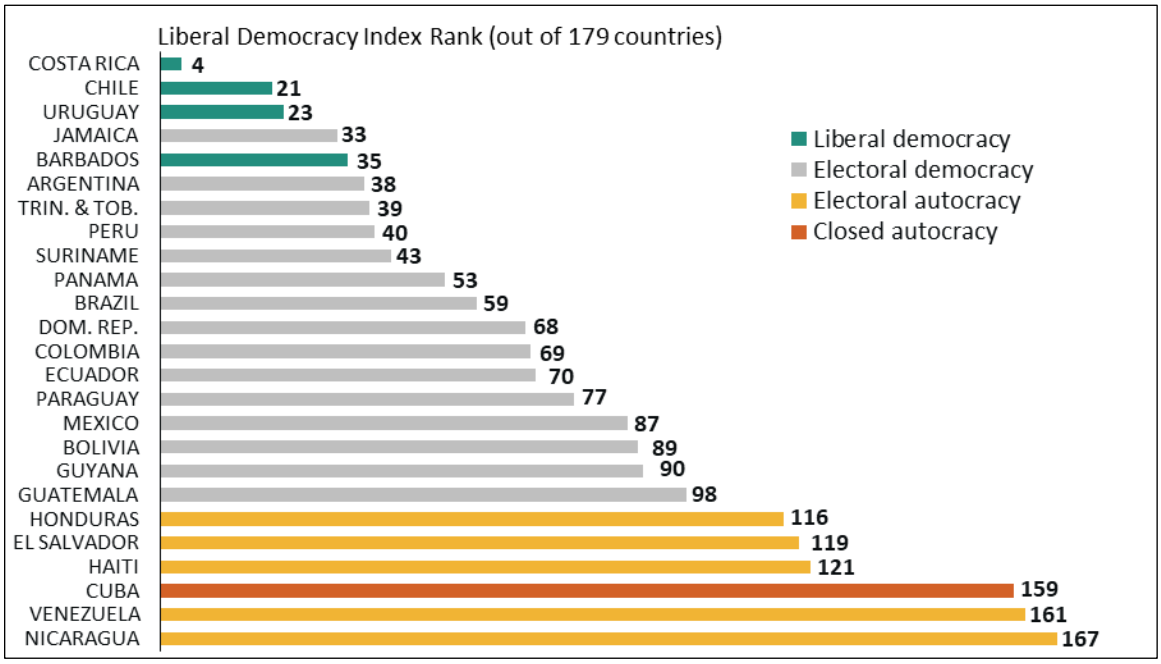
[20] Using its data, V-Dem sorts countries into regime types based on Anna Lührmann, Marcus Tannenberg, and Staffan I. Lindberg, "Regimes of the World (RoW): Opening New Avenues for the Comparative Study of Political Regimes," *Politics & Governance*, vol. 6, no. 1 (2018), pp. 60-77. This article states "that Dahl's theory of polyarchy (1971, 1998) provides the most comprehensive and most widely accepted theory of what distinguishes a democracy based on six … institutional guarantees (elected officials, free and fair elections, freedom of expression, alternative sources of information, associational autonomy, and inclusive citizenship)." The article defines democracies as having "*de-facto* multiparty, free and fair elections, and Dahl's institutional prerequisites minimally fulfilled." An electoral democracy is one in which "the rule of law or liberal principles [are] not satisfied" and a liberal democracy is one in which "the rule of law and liberal principles [are] satisfied." Autocracies have "no *de facto* multiparty, or free and fair elections, or Dahl's institutional prerequisites not minimally fulfilled." An electoral autocracy has "*de jure* multiparty elections for the chief executive and the legislature" and a closed autocracy has "no multiparty elections for the chief executive or the legislature."

[21] V-Dem, *Democracy Report 2022*, p. 20.

[22] V-Dem, *Democracy Report 2022*, p. 19.

[23] Ibid., pp. 14-15.

Figure 4. V-Dem *Democracy Report 2022*'s Liberal Democracy Index Rank for Latin American and Caribbean Countries



Source: Created by CRS using the Varieties of Democracy Institute's *Democracy Report 2022*.

Compilation of Democracy Indicators

In the tables below, the country name is followed by parentheses with the nature of the country's political system, as described in the U.S. State Department's *2021 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices*.[24] This U.S. government information is included here for comparison with findings from the democracy indicators published by NGOs.

Table 1 looks at Caribbean countries' global democracy rankings according to Bertelsmann Stiftung's 2022 Transformation Index, EIU's *Democracy Index 2021*, Freedom House's *Freedom in the World 2022*, and V-Dem's *Democracy Report 2022.* **Table 2** compares the same reports for Mexico and Central America, as does **Table 3** for South America.

Each index is based on a unique methodology and the rankings are not necessarily comparable. For more details on the methodologies, see "Democracy Indices and Source Notes" above. For term definitions of each index, see footnote 2 for BTI, footnote 8 for EIU, footnote 13 for Freedom House, and footnote 20 for V-Dem or consult the full reports. Each report evaluates a different number of countries, so there are missing rankings for some countries. Countries are listed alphabetically in each table.

[24] U.S. Department of State, *2021 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices*, April 12, 2022, at https://www.state.gov/reports/2021-country-reports-on-human-rights-practices/.

Table 1. Caribbean: 2021 Democracy Rankings

Country (U.S. State Dept. political system description)	Bertelsmann Stiftung Transformation Index 2022		EIU *Democracy Index 2021*		Freedom House *Freedom in the World 2022*				V-Dem *Democracy Report 2022*	
	Political Transformation Global Rank (of 137)	Status	Global Rank[a] (of 167)	Regime Type	Aggregate Score	Political Rights Score	Civil Liberties Score	Freedom Status	Liberal Democracy Index Global Rank (of 179)	Regime Type[b]
Antigua & Barbuda (multiparty parliamentary democracy)	—	—	—	—	85	33	52	Free	—	—
Bahamas (constitutional parliamentary democracy)	—	—	—	—	91	38	53	Free	—	—
Barbados (multiparty parliamentary democracy)	—	—	—	—	95	38	57	Free	35	(-) Liberal democracy
Belize (constitutional parliamentary democracy)	—	—	—	—	87	34	53	Free	—	—
Cuba (authoritarian state)	111	Hard-line autocracy	142	Authoritarian	12	1	11	Not free	159	Closed autocracy
Dominica (multiparty parliamentary democracy)	—	—	—	—	93	37	56	Free	—	—

Country (U.S. State Dept. political system description)	Bertelsmann Stiftung Transformation Index 2022		EIU *Democracy Index 2021*		Freedom House *Freedom in the World 2022*				V-Dem *Democracy Report 2022*	
	Political Transformation Global Rank (of 137)	**Status**	**Global Rank[a] (of 167)**	**Regime Type**	**Aggregate Score**	**Political Rights Score**	**Civil Liberties Score**	**Freedom Status**	**Liberal Democracy Index Global Rank (of 179)**	**Regime Type[b]**
Dominican Republic (representative constitutional democracy)	35	Defective democracy	60	Flawed democracy	68	27	41	Partly free	68	Electoral democracy
Grenada (parliamentary democracy)	—	—	—	—	89	37	52	Free	—	—
Guyana (multiparty democracy)	—	—	65	Flawed democracy	73	30	43	Free	90	(-) Electoral democracy
Haiti (multiparty constitutional republic)	96	Hard-line autocracy	119=	Authoritarian	33	11	22	Not free	121	Electoral autocracy
Jamaica (constitutional parliamentary democracy)	16	Democracy in consolidation	42	Flawed democracy	80	34	46	Free	33	Electoral democracy
St. Kitts and Nevis (multiparty parliamentary democracy and federation)	—	—	—	—	89	35	54	Free	—	—

Country (U.S. State Dept. political system description)	Bertelsmann Stiftung Transformation Index 2022		EIU *Democracy Index 2021*		Freedom House *Freedom in the World 2022*				V-Dem *Democracy Report 2022*	
	Political Transformation Global Rank (of 137)	**Status**	**Global Rank[a] (of 167)**	**Regime Type**	**Aggregate Score**	**Political Rights Score**	**Civil Liberties Score**	**Freedom Status**	**Liberal Democracy Index Global Rank (of 179)**	**Regime Type[b]**
St. Lucia (multiparty parliamentary democracy)	—	—	—	—	92	38	54	Free	—	—
St. Vincent and the Grenadines (multiparty parliamentary democracy)	—	—	—	—	91	36	55	Free	—	—
Suriname (constitutional democracy)	—	—	49	Flawed democracy	79	34	45	Free	43	Electoral democracy
Trinidad & Tobago (parliamentary democracy)	13	Democracy in consolidation	41	Flawed democracy	82	33	49	Free	39	(+) Electoral democracy

Source: Compiled by CRS using the U.S. State Department's *2021 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices,* Bertelsmann Stiftung's 2022 Transformation Index, EIU's *Democracy Index 2021,* Freedom House's *Freedom in the World 2022,* and the Varieties of Democracy Institute's *Democracy Report 2022.*

Notes: Although Belize is located in Central America and Guyana and Suriname are located in South America, all three are members of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM).

a. EIU's symbol "=" indicates a tying score or equal rank with another country.

b. V-Dem's symbol (-) indicates that, taking uncertainty into account, the country could belong to the lower category while (+) signifies that the country could belong to the higher category.

Table 2. Mexico and Central America: 2021 Democracy Rankings

Country (U.S. State Dept. political system description)	Bertelsmann Stiftung Transformation Index 2022		EIU *Democracy Index 2021*		Freedom House *Freedom in the World 2022*				V-Dem *Democracy Report 2022*	
	Political Transformation Global Rank (of 137)	**Status**	**Global Rank[a] (of 167)**	**Regime Type**	**Aggregate Score**	**Political Rights Score**	**Civil Liberties Score**	**Freedom Status**	**Liberal Democracy Index Global Rank (of 179)**	**Regime Type**
Costa Rica (constitutional republic)	7	Democracy in consolidation	20=	Full democracy	91	38	53	Free	4	Liberal democracy
El Salvador (multiparty constitutional republic)	40	Defective democracy	79=	Hybrid regime	59	26	33	Partly Free	119	(+) Electoral autocracy
Guatemala (multiparty constitutional republic)	91	Moderate autocracy	99	Hybrid regime	51	21	30	Partly free	98	(-) Electoral democracy
Honduras (multiparty constitutional republic)	82	Moderate autocracy	92=	Hybrid regime	47	21	26	Partly free	116	Electoral autocracy
Mexico (multiparty federal republic)	57	Highly defective democracy	86=	Hybrid regime	60	27	33	Partly free	87	Electoral democracy
Nicaragua[b] (authoritarian political system)	105	Hard-line autocracy	140	Authoritarian	23	5	18	Not free	167	(-) Electoral autocracy

Country (U.S. State Dept. political system description)	Bertelsmann Stiftung Transformation Index 2022		EIU *Democracy Index 2021*		Freedom House *Freedom in the World 2022*				V-Dem *Democracy Report 2022*	
	Political Transfor-mation Global Rank (of 137)	**Status**	**Global Rank[a] (of 167)**	**Regime Type**	**Aggregate Score**	**Political Rights Score**	**Civil Liberties Score**	**Freedom Status**	**Liberal Democracy Index Global Rank (of 179)**	**Regime Type**
Panama (multiparty constitutional democracy)	36	Defective democracy	48	Flawed democracy	83	35	48	Free	53	Electoral democracy

Sources: Compiled by CRS using the U.S. State Department's *2021 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices,* Bertelsmann Stiftung's 2022 Transformation Index, EIU's *Democracy Index 2021,* Freedom House's *Freedom in the World 2022,* and the Varieties of Democracy Institute's (V-Dem) *Democracy Report 2022.*

Notes: Although Belize is located in Central America, it is a member of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) and is listed in **Table 1**.

a. EIU's symbol "=" indicates a tying score or equal rank with another country.

b. "Constitutional multiparty republic" is the political system description from the U.S. State Department's *2017 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Nicaragua,* while the *2021 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Nicaragua* states: "Nicaragua has a highly centralized, authoritarian political system dominated by President Daniel Ortega Saavedra and his wife, Vice President Rosario Murillo Zambrana. Ortega's Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) party exercises total control over the executive, legislative, judicial, and electoral functions."

Table 3. South America: 2021 Democracy Rankings

Country (U.S. State Dept. political system description)	Bertelsmann Stiftung Transformation Index 2022		EIU *Democracy Index 2021*		Freedom House *Freedom in the World 2022*				V-Dem *Democracy Report 2022*	
	Political Transfor-mation Global Rank (of 137)	**Status Index**	**Global Rank (of 167)**	**Regime Type**	**Aggregate Score**	**Political Rights Score**	**Civil Liberties Score**	**Freedom Status**	**Liberal Democracy Index Global Rank (of 179)**	**Regime Type[a]**
Argentina (federal constitutional republic)	19	Democracy in consolidation	50	Flawed democracy	84	35	49	Free	38	Electoral democracy

Country (U.S. State Dept. political system description)	Bertelsmann Stiftung Transformation Index 2022		EIU *Democracy Index 2021*		Freedom House *Freedom in the World 2022*				V-Dem *Democracy Report 2022*	
	Political Transfor-mation Global Rank (of 137)	**Status Index**	**Global Rank (of 167)**	**Regime Type**	**Aggregate Score**	**Political Rights Score**	**Civil Liberties Score**	**Freedom Status**	**Liberal Democracy Index Global Rank (of 179)**	**Regime Type[a]**
Bolivia (multiparty constitutional republic)	29	Defective democracy	98	Hybrid regime	66	27	39	Partly free	89	(-) Electoral democracy
Brazil (multiparty constitutional republic)	29	Defective democracy	47	Flawed democracy	73	31	42	Free	59	Electoral democracy
Chile (multiparty constitutional democracy)	6	Democracy in consolidation	25	Flawed democracy	94	38	56	Free	21	(-) Liberal democracy
Colombia (multiparty constitutional republic)	47	Defective democracy	59	Flawed democracy	64	29	35	Partly free	69	Electoral democracy
Ecuador (multiparty constitutional republic)	32	Defective democracy	81=	Hybrid regime	71	31	40	Free	70	Electoral democracy
Paraguay (multiparty constitutional republic)	42	Defective democracy	77	Hybrid regime	65	28	37	Partly free	77	(-) Electoral democracy
Peru (multiparty constitutional republic)	45	Defective democracy	71	Flawed democracy	72	30	42	Free	40	Electoral democracy

Country (U.S. State Dept. political system description)	Bertelsmann Stiftung Transformation Index 2022		EIU *Democracy Index 2021*		Freedom House *Freedom in the World 2022*				V-Dem *Democracy Report 2022*	
	Political Transfor-mation Global Rank (of 137)	**Status Index**	**Global Rank (of 167)**	**Regime Type**	**Aggregate Score**	**Political Rights Score**	**Civil Liberties Score**	**Freedom Status**	**Liberal Democracy Index Global Rank (of 179)**	**Regime Type[a]**
Uruguay (constitutional republic)	1	Democracy in consolidation	13	Full democracy	97	40	57	Free	23	(-) Liberal democracy
Venezuela[b] (multiparty constitutional republic)	119	Hard-line autocracy	151	Authoritarian	14	1	13	Not free	161	Electoral autocracy

Source: Compiled by CRS using the U.S. State Department's *2021 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices,* Bertelsmann Stiftung's 2022 Transformation Index, EIU's *Democracy Index 2021,* Freedom House's *Freedom in the World 2022,* and the Varieties of Democracy Institute's *Democracy Report 2022.*

Notes: Although Guyana and Suriname are located in South America, both are members of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) and are listed in **Table 1**.

a. V-Dem's symbol (-) indicates that, taking uncertainty into account, the country could belong to the lower category while (+) signifies that the country could belong to the higher category.

b. From U.S. State Department's *2021 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Venezuela*: "While Venezuela is legally a multiparty, constitutional republic, the illegitimate authoritarian regime led by Nicolas Maduro usurped control over all branches of government: executive, judicial, legislative, the offices of the prosecutor general and ombudsman, and the electoral institutions. In December 2020 the Maduro regime organized parliamentary elections that were rigged in favor of the regime, and approximately 60 countries and international bodies publicly declared the elections were neither free nor fair."

Table 4 provides resources for further information about democracy indicators in Central and South America and the Caribbean, although many cover other geographic areas as well. The sources are organized alphabetically by title. This is not an exhaustive list.

Table 4. Selected Resources for Democracy Indicators

Title (year published)	Organization	Resource Type	URL
Bertelsmann Stiftung's 2022 Transformation Index	Bertelsmann Stiftung	Political Transformation Index ranks 137 countries	https://www.bti-project.org/en/index/political-transformation.html
	Bertelsmann Stiftung	Governance Index ranks 137 countries	https://www.bti-project.org/en/index/governance.html
	Bertelsmann Stiftung	Regional report on 22 Latin American and the Caribbean countries	https://www.bti-project.org/content/en/reports/regional-reports/regional_report_LAC_2020_EN.pdf
	Bertelsmann Stiftung	Global report covers 137 countries	https://www.bti-project.org/content/en/reports/global-report-d/global_findings_democracy_2020_EN.pdf
Country Reports on Human Rights Practices 2021	U.S. State Department	Global report covers all countries receiving U.S. assistance and all United Nations member states	https://www.state.gov/reports/2021-country-reports-on-human-rights-practices/
Democracy Index 2020	Economist Intelligence Unit	Global report covers 167 countries and territories	https://www.eiu.com/n/campaigns/democracy-index-2020/
Democracy Report 2022	Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem)	Global report covers 179 countries	
Electoral Integrity Worldwide 2019	Electoral Integrity Project, an independent academic project based at Harvard University and the University of Sydney	Report and data from cumulative study covering national presidential and parliamentary elections from July 1, 2012 to December 31, 2018	https://www.electoralintegrityproject.com/the-year-in-elections-2019
Freedom in the World 2021	Freedom House	Global report covers 210 countries and territories	https://freedomhouse.org/sites/default/files/2021-02/FIW2021_World_02252021_FINAL-web-upload.pdf
	Freedom House	Map	https://freedomhouse.org/explore-the-map?type=fiw&year=2021
	Freedom House	Country ranking list	https://freedomhouse.org/countries/freedom-world/scores

Title (year published)	Organization	Resource Type	URL
Global State of Democracy Indices 2019 website	International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance's (International IDEA) Global State of Democracy Initiative	Interactive map looks at 116 indicators for 165 countries from 1975-2020	
Global State of Democracy 2021 report	International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance	Global report looks at trends in democracy from 1975-2020 across 165 countries	
The State of Democracy in the Americas 2021 report	International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance	Regional report that includes all Latin American countries and some Caribbean countries	
Rule of Law Index 2021 report	World Justice Project	Report measures how the rule of law is experienced and perceived in 139 countries and jurisdictions	
Rule of Law Index 2021 interactive website	World Justice Project	Interactive map and data tables cover 139 countries and jurisdictions	
The Rule of Law in Belize (2022)	World Justice Project	Country report based on key findings from the General Population Poll 2021	
The Rule of Law in El Salvador (2022)	World Justice Project	Country report based on key findings from the General Population Poll 2021	
The Rule of Law in Guatemala (2022)	World Justice Project	Country report based on key findings from the General Population Poll 2021	
The Rule of Law in Honduras (2022)	World Justice Project	Country report based on key findings from the General Population Poll 2021	
Mexico States Rule of Law Index 2020-2021	World Justice Project	Country report on the adherence to the rule of law in Mexico's 32 states (also available in Spanish)	
The Rule of Law in Panama (2022)	World Justice Project	Country report based on key findings from the General Population Poll 2021	
Worldwide Governance Indicators	World Bank	Data on 6 aggregate indicators of governance for 214 countries from 1996-2020; in particular, see Voice and Accountability indicator	

Source: Compiled by CRS.

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