

International indexes show lack of progress on democracy and human rights

Since becoming a member of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in 1997, Laos has consistently ranked near the bottom of many international indexes and rankings compiled by independent organizations that measure respect for democratic principles and key civil and political rights.

Laos has been categorized as an “authoritarian regime” (the lowest possible category) in every *Democracy Index* published by the Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) since it first began in 2006.

Since 1997, Freedom House has rated Laos as ‘Not Free’ with regard to the situation of civil liberties and political rights, as well as its press freedom. In its *Press Freedom Index*, Reporters Without Borders (RSF) has consistently ranked Laos among the bottom 15 countries surveyed since the creation of the index in 2002.

Key indexes surveying the global situation regarding human trafficking, religious freedom, corruption, and economic freedom showed that Laos has made little to no progress in these areas.

In 2016, the US Department of State placed Laos on the ‘Tier 2 Watch List’ (the second-lowest ranking) in its *Trafficking in Persons (TIP) Report* for the third consecutive year. The United States Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) has, since 2009, listed Laos as ‘Tier 2’ – used for countries that require close monitoring due to the nature and extent of violations engaged in or tolerated by governments. In 2005, when Transparency International first included Laos in its *Corruption Perceptions Index*, Laos ranked in the top half of the 159 countries surveyed. Since then, it has fallen to the 27th lowest ranking in 2015. The Heritage Foundation has rated Laos’ economic freedom either “mostly unfree” or “repressed” in its annual *Index of Economic Freedom* since 1997.

International indexes on Laos

	Freedom House ¹		Reporters Without Borders (RSF)	Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU)	US Department of State	United States Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF)	Transparency International	Heritage Foundation
	Freedom in the World (political rights and civil liberties) [Score: 0=worst, 100=best]	Freedom of the Press [Score: 0=best, 100=worst]	Press Freedom Index [Score: 0=best, 100=worst]	Democracy Index [Score: 0=worst, 10=best]	Trafficking in Persons (TIP) Report	Annual Report	Corruption Perceptions Index [Score: 0=highly corrupt, 100=very clean; ² 0=highly corrupt, 10=very clean ³]	Index of Economic Freedom [Score: % free]
2016	Status: Not Free Score: 12	Rank: 181/199 Status: Not Free Score: 84	Rank: 173/180 Score: 71.58		Tier 2 Watch List	Tier 2		Rank: 155/178 Score: 49.8% (Repressed)
2015	Status: Not Free	Rank: 183/199 Status: Not Free Score: 84	Rank: 171/180 Score: 71.25	Rank: 155/167 Score: 2.21 Category: Authoritarian	Tier 2 Watch List	Tier 2	Rank: 139/168 Score: 25	Rank: 150/178 Score: 51.4% (Mostly Unfree)

¹ No available data for Laos for Freedom House’s *Freedom on the Net*.

² After 2011.

³ 2011 and prior.

2014	Status: Free	Not	Rank: 183/197 Status: Not Free Score: 84	Rank: 171/180 Score: 71.22	Rank: 157/167 Score: 2.21 Category: Authoritarian	Tier 2 Watch List	Tier 2	Rank: 145/175 Score: 25	Rank: 144/178 Score: 51.2% (Mostly Unfree)
2013	Status: Free	Not	Rank: 182/196 Status: Not Free Score: 84	Rank: 168/179 Score: 67.99	Rank: 156/167 Score: 2.21 Category: Authoritarian	Tier 2	Tier 2	Rank: 140/177 Score: 26	Rank: 144/177 Score: 50.1% (Mostly Unfree)
2012	Status: Free	Not	Rank: 182/197 Status: Not Free Score: 84	Rank: 165/179 Score: 89.00	Rank: 156/167 Score: 2.32 Category: Authoritarian	Tier 2	Tier 2	Rank: 160/176 Score: 21	Rank: 150/179 Score: 50.0% (Mostly Unfree)
2011	Status: Free	Not	Rank: 184/196 Status: Not Free Score: 85		Rank: 156/167 Score: 2.10 Category: Authoritarian	Tier 2	Tier 2	Rank: 154/183 Score: 2.2	Rank: 141/179 Score: 51.3% (Mostly Unfree)
2010	Status: Free	Not	Rank: 181/196 Status: Not Free Score: 84	Rank: 168/178 Score: 80.50	Rank: 156/167 Score: 2.10 Category: Authoritarian	Tier 2 Watch List	Tier 2	Rank: 154/178 Score: 2.1	Rank: 138/179 Score: 51.1% (Mostly Unfree)
2009	Status: Free	Not	Rank: 184/195 Status: Not Free Score: 86	Rank: 169/175 Score: 92.00		Tier 2	Tier 2	Rank: 158/180 Score: 2.0	Rank: 150/179 Score: 50.4% (Mostly Unfree)
2008	Status: Free	Not	Rank: 179/195 Status: Not Free Score: 83	Rank: 164/173 Score: 70.00	Rank: 157/167 Score: 2.10 Category: Authoritarian	Tier 2	Not designated	Rank: 151/180 Score: 2.0	Rank: 137/157 Score: 49.2% (Repressed)
2007	Status: Free	Not	Rank: 176/195 Status: Not Free Score: 81	Rank: 161/169 Score: 75.00		Tier 2	Not designated	Rank: 168/179 Score: 1.9	Rank: 140/157 Score: 49.1% (Repressed)
2006	Status: Free	Not	Rank: 174/194 Status: Not Free Score: 81	Rank: 156/168 Score: 67.50	Rank: 155/167 Score: 2.10 Category: Authoritarian	Tier 3	Not designated	Rank: 111/163 Score: 2.6	Rank: 149/157 Score: 47.5% (Repressed)
2005	Status: Free	Not	Rank: 179/194 Status: Not Free Score: 83	Rank: 155/167 Score: 66.50		Tier 2	Not designated	Rank: 77/159 Score: 3.3	Rank: 150/155 Score: 44.4% (Repressed)
2004	Status: Free	Not	Rank: 179/193 Status: Not Free Score: 82	Rank: 153/167 Score: 64.33		Tier 2 Watch List	Tier 2	N/A	Rank: 151/155 Score: 42.0% (Repressed)
2003	Status: Free	Not	Rank: 173/193 Status: Not Free Score: 80	Rank: 163/166 Score: 94.83		Tier 2	Recommended designation as a "Country of Particular Concern" (CPC)	N/A	Rank: 153/156 Score: 41.0% (Repressed)
2002	Status: Free	Not	Rank: 171/186 Status: Not Free Score: 82	Rank: 133/139 Score: 89.00		Tier 2	Recommended designation as a "Country of Particular Concern" (CPC)	N/A	Rank: Unknown Score: 36.8% (Repressed)
2001	Status: Free	Not	Status: Not Free Score: 69			Tier 2	Recommended designation as a "Country of Particular Concern" (CPC)	N/A	Rank: 150/155 Score: 33.5% (Repressed)
2000	Status: Free	Not	Status: Not Free Score: 66				[No ranking system]	N/A	Rank: 155/161 Score: 36.8% (Repressed)
1999	Status: Free	Not	Status: Not Free Score: 66					N/A	Rank: 158/161 Score: 35.2% (Repressed)
1998	Status: Free	Not	Status: Not Free Score: 66					N/A	Rank: 155/156 Score: 35.2% (Repressed)
1997	Status: Free	Not	Status: Not Free Score: 62					N/A	Rank: 154/156 (equal 154th with Cuba and North Korea) Score: 35.1% (Repressed)