

Greece - Human Rights Scorecard ¹

Greece, officially the Hellenic Republic, also known since ancient times as is a country located in southeastern Europe. According to the 2011 census, Greece's population is around 10.8 million. Athens is the nation's capital and largest city, followed by Thessaloniki, which is commonly referred to as the co-capital.²

Official language: Greek

Ethnic groups: 93% Greek; 7% Foreign citizens

Government: Unitary parliamentary constitutional republic

- President: Prokopis Pavlopoulos

- Prime Minister: Alexis Tsipras

- Speaker of the Parliament: Nikos Voutsis

Death penalty: Abolitionist for all crimes

Population: 10.8 million

Life expectancy: 80.43 years

Under-5 mortality: 11.09 per 1000

Adult literacy: 97.7 percent



Section 1: Respect for the Integrity of the Person

Respect for the integrity of the individual is the most fundamental of human rights groupings. It guarantees protection of the person to ensure the right to life, and freedom from torture. It also prevents arbitrary detention, and disappearances, and ensures the right to a free and fair trial when accused.

Freedom from arbitrary or unlawful deprivation of life



Respected³

There are no reports of the government committing arbitrary or extrajudicial killings.

Freedom from disappearance



Respected⁴

There are no reports of disappearances in Greece.

Freedom from torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment



Partially respected⁵

The constitution prohibits torture and other manner of inhuman punishment, although there are some reports of police and Cost Guard personnel mistreating and abusing undocumented immigrants and prison inmates.

Freedom from arbitrary arrest or detention



Partially respected⁶

The police at times abuse their arrest and detention authority, despite constitutional prohibitions. Most reported cases of police impunity included mistreatment of migrants, although the government has initiated a gradual release of detained undocumented migrants.

Freedom from denial of fair public trial



Partially respected⁷

The government generally respects judicial independence, although NGOs reported that the judiciary is sometimes subject to influence and corruption.

Freedom from arbitrary interference with privacy, family, home or correspondence



Respected⁸

The constitution prohibits arbitrary interference with privacy, and there are no reports of the government violating these laws.

Section 2: Respect for Civil Liberties

Civil liberties are a basic category of internationally recognized human rights. They include the freedoms of expression, assembly, association, education, and religion. These are inalienable rights which should not be breached by government, and should ensure the rights of all, including women and minority groups.

Freedom of speech and press (*Reporters Without Borders Press Freedom Index*)⁹



Score: 30.35, Rank: 80 / 180 – Highly controlled, limited or intimidated¹⁰

The press is independent of the government and operates without restrictions. However, most of the mainstream media it is owned by a handful of media barons who often leverage it to further their business interests. The new government has promised to curtail this power.

Freedom from academic censorship



Respected¹¹

There are no reports of academic censorship or content restrictions, although charges were pressed against a university professor who allegedly denied Nazi war crimes in a book.

Freedom of peaceful assembly and association



Partially respected¹²

The government generally respects the right to freedom of assembly, although there are certain legal restrictions on the names of associations of people who self-identify as ethnic Macedonians or associations that include the word “Turkish.”

Freedom of religion



Partially respected¹³

The constitution provides for freedom of religion with some restrictions. The Greek Orthodox Church is afforded some benefits that other faiths are not, and some government measures restrict the activities and practices of minority religious groups.

Protection of refugees and stateless persons



Partially respected¹⁴

The Greek government issues renewable, free-of-charge permits that allows Syrian and other Middle Eastern refugees to stay in the country for six months, and there is a system to protect refugees. However, refugees experience widespread societal discrimination and some maltreatment.

Overall protection of civil liberties (*FreedomHouse Civil Liberties Index*)^{15 16}



2 / 7 – Free¹⁷

An effective judiciary, independent press, and functioning democratic political system function together to promote and protect civil liberties.

Section 3: Respect for Political Rights

Political rights ensure all members of society are able to influence the political process. The assessment of political rights includes an examination of the electoral process and the selection of representatives, the political empowerment of the general public, the tolerance of dissent, the accountability of government, etc..

Overall protection of political rights (*FreedomHouse Political Rights Index*)¹⁸



2 / 7 – Free¹⁹

Citizens periodically vote in free and fair elections based on universal suffrage

Section 4: Corruption and Lack of Transparency in Government

The civil, political, economic and social rights exercised within a country are often modulated by the degree of transparency and freedom from corruption. Various international metrics assess transparency and corruption, including the OECD anti-bribery convention, the Bribe Payers Index, and the Open Budget Index.

Transparency and freedom from corruption (*Transparency International Corruption Perceptions Index*)²⁰



Score: 56%, Rank: 58 / 168 – Some corruption²¹

The law provides for criminal penalties for corrupt officials, but this is not always enforced effectively. Some officials act with impunity, and departments in place to fight corruption are understaffed and underfinanced.

Section 5: Governmental Response to Criticism

This section deals specifically with the response heads of state have to civil society or international human rights reports.

Governmental attitudes vis-à-vis independent investigations of alleged human rights violations



Respected²²

A variety of human rights organizations operate independently from the government and officials are generally responsive to criticism and cooperative. An autonomous agency, the National Council for Human Rights, advises the government on human rights and is considered effective.

Section 6: Discrimination and Societal Abuses

Legal and social discriminatory practices related to sex, race, creed or sexual orientation, are violations of human rights. Countries with strong civil liberty traditions should have a fair legal system that ensures the rule of law, allows free economic activity, and ensures equality of opportunity for all.

Rights of women (World Economic Forum Gender Gap Index)²³



Score: 68.5%, Rank: 87 / 145 – Very unequal rights²⁴

The constitution provides for equality between men and women, but women face widespread societal discrimination in Greece. They represent a disproportionately small percent of government officials and the gender wage gap is around 45%.

Rights of Children (KidsRights Index Overall Score)²⁵



Score: 79%, Rank: 60 / 165 – Protected²⁶

Children are well protected under Greek law, although some Romani children and children of undocumented migrants face the risk of child abuse and educational discrimination.

Rights of persons with disabilities



Partially respected²⁷

The law prohibits the discrimination of persons with various types of disabilities, but NGOs report that the enforcement of these provisions is uneven. Disabled persons have poor access to buildings, transportation, and public areas, and there have been cuts in health care for disabilities.

Rights of national/racial/ethnic minorities (e.g. discrimination, Islamophobia, anti-Semitism etc.)



Largely disrespected²⁸

Roma and members of other minorities experience widespread discrimination and harassment. Anti-Semitic rhetoric remains a problem in Greece, particularly in extremist press and social networking sites.

Freedom from abuse and discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity



Largely disrespected^{29 30}

Antidiscrimination laws do not always specify sexual orientation or gender identity, and societal discrimination, harassment, and violence against LGBTI individuals remains a problem.

Section 7: Workers' Rights

Workers' rights are a group of legal rights relating to labour relations between workers and their employers. At their core are things like the ability to negotiate pay, benefits, terms of employment, and safe working conditions. These rights often devolve from the right to unionize and access to collective bargaining.

Rights to freedom of association and to collective bargaining



Partially respected³¹

The law provides for the rights of workers to freedom of association and collectively and generally enforces them, although there are several legal restrictions on strikes, and penalties on violations are not sufficient to deter violations in many cases.

Freedom from forced or compulsory labour



Partially respected³²

All forms of forced or compulsory labour are prohibited under the law, with additional protection for children, but there are reports of forced labour in the agriculture sector and forced begging.

Freedom from forced labour for children, and a minimum age of employment



Partially respected³³

The minimum age of employment is 15, with higher limits on some industries. Employers generally observe child labour laws in the formal economy, but it remains a problem in the informal economy.

Right to acceptable conditions of work



Respected³⁴

There is a set minimum wage private sector, and the government determines public sector salaries. The maximum legal workweek is 40 hours. The government sets minimum health and safety laws, although enforcement is not always adequate.

Right to employment



27.6% - Extreme unemployment³⁵

Given the Greek government debt crisis, the unemployment rate is extremely high and is projected to remain at critical levels for years to come.

¹ A hybrid human rights and freedoms model, leveraging both legal principles and intuitive classifications, has been used for this human rights assessment. The CJPME Foundation has sought to integrate as many independent sources and metrics into its summary analysis as possible. In many cases, for qualitative material pertaining to the respect for a particular right in a country, the CJPME Foundation has drawn on material from Human Rights Watch and the US State Department country reports. Human Rights Watch (HRW) publishes a World Report which assesses the respect for human rights in each country. HRW uses a methodology of local reporting and interviewing, combined with research and analysis to assess the level of respect of human rights. The U.S State Department keeps an updated publication on the state of human rights internationally. Their system of research and accountability draws from the research of official US State Department officials, as well as local civil-society and international human rights organizations.

² Commonly-known information on the country is drawn from various Internet sources, including Google country pages, and Amnesty International. For death penalty see: "Death sentences and executions in 2015." Amnesty International. March 24, 2016. Accessed June 27, 2016.

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/act50/001/2016/en/>.

³ "Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2015 Greece." U.S Department of State. January 1, 2015. Accessed June 27, 2016.

<http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrrpt/humanrightsreport/index.htm?year=2015&dliid=252853>.

⁴ Ibid. U.S Department of State. For purposes of the present analysis, a "disappearance" is different than simple arbitrary detention because a "disappearance" is considered permanent.

⁵ Ibid. U.S Department of State.

⁶ Ibid. U.S Department of State.

⁷ Ibid. U.S Department of State.

⁸ Ibid. U.S Department of State.

⁹ The Press Freedom Index published by Reporters Without Borders ranks the level of freedom of information in 180 countries. This is determined through the polling of local NGOs and freedom of expression civil society organizations across the globe. This index is also determined by local correspondents and follow-up work done on reports of infringement to press freedom where ever it takes place. Their methodology looks at six different indicators: 1) Media pluralism, 2) Media independence, 3) Media atmosphere and self-censorship, 4) the Law around media, 5) Media transparency, and 6) Media infrastructure. The score from these six indicators is combined with a rating for the violence against journalists in the country to create an overall score. The CJPME Foundation classifies the Press Freedom Index as follows: 0 – 14.99 (16 countries), Largely free, diverse and independent; 15 – 24.99 (37 countries), Mostly free, diverse and independent; 25 – 29.99 (31 countries), Partially free, diverse and independent; 30 – 39.99 (39 countries), Partially controlled, limited or intimidated; 40 & higher (57 countries), Highly controlled, limited or intimidated.

¹⁰ "World Press Freedom Index." Reporters Without Borders: For Freedom of Information. January 1, 2016. Accessed June 27, 2016. <http://rsf.org/index2016/en-index2016.php>.

¹¹ "Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2015 Greece." U.S Department of State. January 1, 2016. Accessed June 27, 2016.

<http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrrpt/humanrightsreport/index.htm?year=2015&dliid=252853>.

¹² "Greece." World Report 2016: Greece. January 1, 2016. Accessed June 27, 2016. <http://www.hrw.org/world-report/2016/country-chapters/Greece>.

¹³ "Greece." International Religious Freedom Report for 2014. January 1, 2015. Accessed June 27, 2016.

<http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/irf/religiousfreedom/index.htm?year=2014&dliid=238386>.

¹⁴ "Greece." World Report 2016: Greece. January 1, 2016. Accessed June 27, 2016. <http://www.hrw.org/world-report/2016/country-chapters/Greece>.

¹⁵ Freedom House is an internationally recognized NGO based in the U.S which documents and rates the quality of democratic practice in a given country. Freedom House splits its grading system between the two areas of civil and political rights in a country. On each scale, the Freedom House rating is 1-2.5 (free), 3-5.5 (partly free) and 6-7 (not free).

¹⁶ Freedom House's Civil Liberties index measures things such as a) freedom of expression and belief, b) associational and organizational rights, c) the rule of law, and d) personal autonomy and individual rights. Freedom House rates countries as 1-2.5 (free), 3-5.5 (partly free) and 6-7 (not free). Accessed June 27, 2016

https://www.freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world-2016/methodology#_VldwWzHF98F

¹⁷ "Greece." Freedom in the World 2016: Greece. January 1, 2016. Accessed June 27, 2016. <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2016/Greece-0#.VIIHLzGG9e8>.

¹⁸ See footnote about the Freedom House organization above. The Freedom House Political Rights assessment looks at a) the electoral process, b) political pluralism and participation, and c) the functioning of government. Accessed June 27, 2016 https://www.freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world-2016/methodology#_VldwWzHF98F

¹⁹ "Greece." Freedom in the World 2016: Greece. January 1, 2016. Accessed June 27, 2016. <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2016/Greece-0#.VIIHLzGG9e8>.

²⁰ Transparency International (TI) publishes a "Corruption Perceptions Index" annually, which is based on independent research and polling. The main categories of corruption are broken down within the index to provide particulars on issues including things such as perceptions of corruption, control of corruption, and financial secrecy. A country receives a score on 100; the higher the score, the less corrupt the society. The CJPME foundation has classified them into categories as follows: 80-100 (11 countries): Very limited corruption; 60-79 (27 countries): Limited corruption; 40-59 (41 countries): Some corruption; 20-39 (80 countries): Highly corrupt; 0-19 (15 countries): Extremely corrupt

²¹ "Greece." Corruption by Country. January 1, 2016. Accessed June 27, 2016. <http://www.transparency.org/country#BHR>.

²² "Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2015 Greece." U.S Department of State. January 1, 2015. Accessed June 27, 2016.

<http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrrpt/humanrightsreport/index.htm?year=2015&dliid=252853>.

²³ This metric is based on the World Economic Forum's Gender Gap Index. 0.00 denotes inequality between the sexes, and 1.00 denotes fully equality between the sexes. This index looks at four subdomains: economic participation and opportunity; educational attainment; health and survival; and political empowerment. Each country is given a percentage score; the higher the percentage, the better the protections. The CJPME Foundation classed the percentages as follows: 80-100% (5 countries): Almost equal rights; 70-79% (60 countries): Somewhat unequal rights; 0-69% (77 countries): Very unequal rights

²⁴ "Greece." World Economic Forum. January 1, 2016. Accessed June 27, 2016. <http://reports.weforum.org/global-gender-gap-report-2016/economies/#economy=BHR>.

²⁵ This metric is based on the KidsRights Index Overall Score. This index has five subdomains: life expectancy and maternal mortality; health; education; protection; and child rights environment. Each country is given a percentage score; the higher the percentage, the better the protections. KidsRights classes the countries according to these percentages, and the CJPME Foundation has given each class a term as follows: 70-100% (77 countries): Protected; 60-70% (29 countries): Somewhat protected; 45-50% (33 countries): Slightly vulnerable; 30-45% (12 countries): Highly vulnerable; Lower than 30% (11 countries): Extremely vulnerable

²⁶ "The KidsRights Index: Overall Ranking." The KidsRights Index. Accessed June 27, 2016. <http://www.kidsrightsindex.org/>

²⁷ "Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2015 Greece." U.S Department of State. January 1, 2015. Accessed June 27, 2016.

<http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrrpt/humanrightsreport/index.htm?year=2015&dliid=252853>.

²⁸ Ibid. U.S Department of State.

²⁹ "ILGA World Map." International Lesbian Gay and Intersex Association. January 1, 2016. Accessed June 27, 2016. <http://ilga.org/>. See also Ibid. U.S Department of State.

³⁰ ILGA, the International, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association, was founded in 1978 on the principle of highlighting state sponsored homophobia where it exists around the world. ILGA annually publishes a map with an accompanying report on sexual and gender based harassment, which focuses on both the legal and non-legal acts of state sponsored discrimination.

³¹ "Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2015 Greece." U.S Department of State. January 1, 2015. Accessed June 27, 2016.

<http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrrpt/humanrightsreport/index.htm?year=2015&dliid=252853>.

³² Ibid. U.S Department of State.

³³ Ibid. U.S Department of State.

³⁴ Ibid. U.S Department of State. See also a well-done Wikipedia comparison of wage, income and work week metrics across countries at

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_minimum_wages_by_country

³⁵ "Global Employment Trends." International Labour Organization. January 1, 2015. Accessed June 27, 2016. http://www.ilo.org/global/research/global-reports/global-employment-trends/2016/WCMS_233936/lang--en/index.htm.