

# Norway - Human Rights Scorecard <sup>1</sup>

Norway, officially the Kingdom of Norway, is a sovereign and unitary monarchy whose territory comprises the western portion of the Scandinavian Peninsula plus the island of Jan Mayen and the archipelago of Svalbard. Norway also lays claim to a section of Antarctica known as Queen Maud Land.<sup>2</sup>

**Official language:** Norwegian, Sami languages

**Ethnic groups:** 86% Norwegian, 14% Other (Sami, Forest Finns, Kvens, Romani, Jews, present-day immigrants)

**Government:** Unitary parliamentary constitutional monarchy

- King: Harald V
- Prime Minister: Erna Solberg
- President of the Storting: Olaf Michael Tømmessen
- Chief Justice: Toril Marie Øie

**Death penalty:** Abolitionist for all crimes

**Population:** 5.2 million

**Life expectancy:** 81.7 years

**Under-5 mortality:** 2.48 per 1000

**Adult literacy:** >99 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



**Respected**<sup>3</sup>

There have been no reports of arbitrary or unlawful killings by the government.

### Freedom from disappearance



**Respected**<sup>4</sup>

There are no reports of disappearances in Norway.

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



**Respected**<sup>5</sup>

There are no reports of the government using torture or any other method of cruel or inhuman punishment.

### Freedom from arbitrary arrest or detention



**Respected**<sup>6</sup>

The constitution forbids arbitrary arrest or detention, and the government generally follows these prohibitions.

### Freedom from denial of fair public trial



**Respected**<sup>7</sup>

The government generally upholds the law, which guarantees a fair public trial by an independent judiciary.

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



**Respected**<sup>8</sup>

There are no reports of unlawful surveillance or arbitrary interference with privacy.

## 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*)<sup>9</sup>



**Score: 8.75, Rank: 3 / 179 – Largely free, diverse and independent**<sup>10</sup>

Media freedom is guaranteed by the constitution, which bans any media group from monopolizing the industry and provides subsidies for various print media.

### Freedom from academic censorship



**Respected**<sup>11</sup>

There is no governmental interference or restriction on academic work.

### Freedom of peaceful assembly and association



**Respected**<sup>12</sup>

Freedom of peaceful assembly and association is unrestricted by the government.

### Freedom of religion



**Respected**<sup>13</sup>

The state promotes free exercise of religion and religious toleration, although recently there is some concern over rising antisemitism.

### Protection of refugees and stateless persons



**Respected**<sup>14</sup>

The government works with the UNHCR and several NGOs to provide protection and assistance for refugees and other stateless persons, and there are over 31,000 people currently claiming asylum in Norway.

### Overall protection of civil liberties (*FreedomHouse Civil Liberties Index*)<sup>15 16</sup>



**1 / 7 – Free**<sup>17</sup>

The Norwegian government protects all or almost all 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*)<sup>18</sup>



**1 / 7 – Free**<sup>19</sup>

Political rights are guaranteed in Norway, with free and fair elections, a variety of political parties, extremely low levels of corruption, and an independent Sami parliament which deals with indigenous issues.

## 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*)<sup>20</sup>



**Score: 87%, Rank: 5 / 168 – Very limited corruption**<sup>21</sup>

The Norwegian government is open to scrutiny and actively enforces anti-corruption legislation.

## 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



**Respected**<sup>22</sup>

Independent human rights organizations operate without governmental interference, and Norwegian officials are often responsive and cooperative.

## 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)<sup>23</sup>



**Score: 85%, Rank: 2 / 145 – Almost equal rights**<sup>24</sup>

Men and women are equal in nearly all regards, although women lag behind somewhat in terms of political empowerment.

### Rights of Children (KidsRights Index Overall Score)<sup>25</sup>



**Score: 94%, Rank: 1 / 165 – Protected**<sup>26</sup>

Norway actively pursues nearly every incident of alleged child abuse and strictly enforces child sexual and labor exploitation laws.

### Rights of persons with disabilities



**Respected**<sup>27</sup>

The law prohibits any kind of discrimination based on disability in terms of employment, transportation, education, and all other public goods. It mandates access to public buildings, information, and communications.

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



**Respected**<sup>28</sup>

The rights of minorities are generally observed, although the Romani population has been subject to forced relocation in the past. Immigrants and ethnic minorities are sometimes discriminated against, and there has been a recent rise in anti-Arab sentiment due to increased immigration.

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



**Respected**<sup>29 30</sup>

The law prohibits any kind of discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity, although there are few isolated incidents of hate crimes.

## 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



**Respected**<sup>31</sup>

Both the government and employers respect the rights to freedom of association and to collective bargaining.

### Freedom from forced or compulsory labour



**Respected**<sup>32</sup>

The Norwegian government effectively enforces laws prohibiting forced or compulsory labour, particularly targeting human traffickers that exploit migrants and children.

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



### Respected<sup>33</sup>

Children may engage in light work for 12 hours per week starting at age 13, then fewer than 40 hours per week starting at 15, as long as it does not affect schooling. Child labour laws are strictly enforced.

## Right to acceptable conditions of work



### Respected<sup>34</sup>

Minimum wages are set by collective bargaining agreements and are generally very high. Workers are allowed 25 days of paid leave per year and have a 28-hour mandatory rest period on weekends and holidays. Some foreign workers are underpaid and overworked by certain industries.

## Right to employment



### 3.5% - Reasonable unemployment<sup>35</sup>

Unemployment is exceedingly low in Norway and rates are projected to remain constant over the next few years.

<sup>1</sup> 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.

<sup>2</sup> 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. April 6, 2016. Accessed May 12, 2016.

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/act50/3487/2016/en/>.

<sup>3</sup> "Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2015 Norway." U.S Department of State. January 1, 2016. Accessed May 12, 2016.

<http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrrpt/humanrightsreport/index.htm?year=2015&dliid=252885#wrapper>.

<sup>4</sup> 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.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid. U.S Department of State.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid. U.S Department of State.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid. U.S Department of State.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid. U.S Department of State.

<sup>9</sup> 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.

<sup>10</sup> "World Press Freedom Index." Reporters Without Borders: For Freedom of Information. January 1, 2016. Accessed May 12, 2016. <https://rsf.org/en/norway>.

<sup>11</sup> "Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2015 Norway." U.S Department of State. January 1, 2016. Accessed May 12, 2016.

<http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrrpt/humanrightsreport/index.htm?year=2015&dliid=252885#wrapper>.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid. U.S Department of State.

<sup>13</sup> "Norway." International Religious Freedom Report for 2014. January 1, 2015. Accessed May 12, 2016.

<http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/irf/religiousfreedom/index.htm?year=2014&dliid=238418#wrapper>.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid. U.S Department of State.

<sup>15</sup> 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).

<sup>16</sup> 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 May 12, 2016 <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world-2015/methodology>.

<sup>17</sup> "Norway." Freedom in the World 2015: Norway. January 1, 2016. Accessed May 12, 2016. <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2015/norway>.

<sup>18</sup> 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 May 12, 2016. <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world-2015/methodology>.

<sup>19</sup> "Norway." Freedom in the World 2015: Norway. January 1, 2016. Accessed May 12, 2016. <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2015/norway>.

<sup>20</sup> 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

<sup>21</sup> "Norway." Corruption by Country. January 1, 2016. Accessed May 12, 2016. [https://www.transparency.org/country/#NOR\\_DataResearch](https://www.transparency.org/country/#NOR_DataResearch).

<sup>22</sup> "Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2015 Norway." U.S Department of State. January 1, 2016. Accessed May 12, 2016. <http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrrpt/humanrightsreport/index.htm?year=2015&dliid=252885#wrapper>.

<sup>23</sup> 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

<sup>24</sup> "Norway." World Economic Forum. January 1, 2016. Accessed May 12, 2016. <http://reports.weforum.org/global-gender-gap-report-2015/economies/#economy=NOR>.

<sup>25</sup> 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

<sup>26</sup> "The KidsRights Index: Overall Ranking." The KidsRights Index. Accessed May 12, 2016. <http://www.kidsrightsindex.org/>

<sup>27</sup> "Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2015 Norway." U.S Department of State. January 1, 2016. Accessed May 12, 2016.

<http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrrpt/humanrightsreport/index.htm?year=2015&dliid=252885#wrapper>.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid. U.S Department of State.

<sup>29</sup> "ILGA State-Sponsored Homophobia." International Lesbian Gay and Intersex Association. January 1, 2016. Accessed May 12, 2016.

[http://old.ilga.org/Statehomophobia/ILGA\\_State\\_Sponsored\\_Homophobia\\_2015.pdf](http://old.ilga.org/Statehomophobia/ILGA_State_Sponsored_Homophobia_2015.pdf). See also Ibid. U.S Department of State.

<sup>30</sup> 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.

<sup>31</sup> "Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2015 Norway." U.S Department of State. January 1, 2016. Accessed May 12, 2016.

<http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrrpt/humanrightsreport/index.htm?year=2015&dliid=252885#wrapper>.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid. U.S Department of State.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid. U.S Department of State.

<sup>34</sup> 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](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_minimum_wages_by_country)

<sup>35</sup> "Global Employment Trends." International Labour Organization. January 1, 2015. Accessed May 12, 2016. [http://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/multimedia/maps-and-charts/WCMS\\_233936/lang--en/index.htm](http://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/multimedia/maps-and-charts/WCMS_233936/lang--en/index.htm).