

# New Zealand - Human Rights Scorecard<sup>1</sup>

New Zealand is an island country in the Southern Pacific Ocean east of Australia.<sup>2</sup> The country received independence from the British Empire in 1947, though it remains part of the British commonwealth. New Zealand is a highly developed democracy that ranks towards the top in education and quality of life. The indigenous Māori and other Polynesian ethnic groups continue to comprise a large portion of the population, and New Zealand has undergone a revivalist movement to restore rights and cultural empowerment to the colonized indigenous populations.

**Official language:** English, Māori, NZ Sign Language

**Ethnic groups:** 74.0% White European; 14.9% Māori; 11.8% Asian; 7.4% Pacific peoples; 2.9% Other

**Government:** Unitary parliamentary constitutional monarchy

- Monarch: Elizabeth II
- Prime Minister: Jacinda Ardern
- Governor-General: Dame Patsy Reddy

**Population:** 4.9 million

**Life expectancy:** 81 years

**Under-5 mortality:** 6 per 1000

**Adult literacy:** 99%

**Death penalty:** Abolished



## Section 1: Overall Development

The overall development of a country – considering education, health, income, and other factors – is a strong indicator of whether average citizens have a reasonable chance to enjoy social and economic well-being and mobility.

### Human Development (UNDP Human Development Index (HDI))<sup>3</sup>



#### 0.915 – Very High Human Development<sup>4</sup>

According to the UNDP, New Zealanders enjoyed a gross national income per capita of \$32,870, could expect to have on average 12.5 years of schooling. Compared to other countries with similar gross national income per capita, this is a very high HDI.

## Section 2: 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>5</sup>

There were no reports of government killings in New Zealand in 2017.

### Freedom from disappearance



#### Respected<sup>6</sup>

There are no reports of disappearances on behalf of the government in New Zealand.

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



#### Respected<sup>7</sup>

There were no reports of torture or cruel punishment tactics.

### Freedom from arbitrary arrest or detention


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

The law prohibits such arrests, and the government enforces these prohibitions.

### Freedom from denial of fair public trial


**Respected<sup>9</sup>**

The government generally respects judicial independence and impartiality.

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


**Respected<sup>10</sup>**

The law prohibits such actions, and there were no reports of government failures to respect these rights.

## Section 3: 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>11</sup>


**Score: 13.62, Rank: 8 / 180 – Largely free, diverse, and independent<sup>12</sup>**

Media freedom thrives in New Zealand.

### Freedom from academic censorship


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

There are no restrictions on academic freedom.

### Freedom of peaceful assembly and association


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

The right to peaceful assembly and association is generally respected in New Zealand.

### Freedom of religion


**Respected<sup>15</sup>**

Freedom of religion itself is mandated by the New Zealand government, and is enforced. However, there are reports of anti-Semitic and anti-Muslim discrimination and harassment.

### Freedom of movement


**Respected<sup>16</sup>**

Freedom of internal and international movement is respected in New Zealand.

### Protection of refugees and stateless persons


**Respected<sup>17</sup>**

New Zealand has largely cooperated with the UNHCR and has established a system for providing protection to refugees and asylum seekers. The government has consistently exceeded their annual goal for refugee intake.

### Overall protection of civil liberties (*FreedomHouse Civil Liberties Index*)<sup>18 19</sup>


**1 / 7 – Free<sup>20</sup>**

New Zealand is one of the highest-ranking countries in the world when it comes to the protection of civil liberties.

## Section 4: 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>21</sup>


**1 / 7 – Free<sup>22</sup>**

The law provides for open and fair political participation and representation, and voter turnout is generally high.

## Section 5: 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>23</sup>


**Score: 89%, Rank: 1 / 180 – Very limited corruption<sup>24</sup>**

New Zealand ranks the lowest levels of corruption in the world. There were no reports of government corruption in 2017.

## Section 6: 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>25</sup>**

New Zealand allows NGOs and human rights groups to operate freely within the country, and the government is generally responsive to their views. There is a government-funded Human Rights Commission which boasts high trust and popularity from the public.

## Section 7: 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.

### Endangered Minorities (*Peoples Under Threat – Minority Rights Group International*)<sup>26</sup>


**No threat listed – Limited dangers to minorities<sup>27</sup>**

According to Minorities Rights Group International, New Zealand does not have any minorities which face an immediate threat of violence.

### Rights of women (*World Economic Forum Gender Gap Index*)<sup>28</sup>


**Score: 77.7%, Rank: 13 / 142 – Somewhat unequal rights<sup>29</sup>**

Although New Zealand ranks high in women's rights, there is still work to do before equality will be truly achieved. For example, one in three New Zealand women face sexual violence in their lifetime. The government has implemented programs to combat sexual harassment.

### Rights of Children (*KidsRights Index Overall Score*)<sup>30</sup>


**Score: 39.1%, Rank: 172 / 182 – Highly vulnerable<sup>31</sup>**

There remains an unusually high rate of child abuse in New Zealand, particularly against Māori children. Commercial sexual exploitation of children also remains a serious concern.

### Rights of persons with disabilities


**Partially respected<sup>32</sup>**

Although there are protections for persons with disabilities under New Zealand law, there remains obstacles for persons with disabilities, particularly in the electoral process.

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



### Largely disrespected<sup>33</sup>

Societal discrimination, higher imprisonment rates, and higher unemployment rates remain an issue for ethnic minorities.

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



### Respected<sup>34 35</sup>

LGBTQ+ persons and same-sex couples have many rights in New Zealand, with only a very small percentage of discrimination reports related to gender identity and sexual orientation.

## 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>36</sup>

Rights for union organization are strong in New Zealand, and the government generally respects these rights.

### Freedom from forced or compulsory labour



### Partially respected<sup>37</sup>

The government's efforts to enforce the prohibition of forced labour were not always effective. Foreign migrant workers, particularly in the agricultural and domestic worker sectors, are vulnerable to forced labour.

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



### Partially respected<sup>38</sup>

While the government is usually able to guarantee the protection of children from forced labour, children between 16 and 18 were sometimes employed in hazardous industries. Concerns persist about the commercial sexual exploitation of children.

### Right to acceptable conditions of work



### Respected<sup>39</sup>

The New Zealand government tightly monitors working conditions in the country.

### Right to employment



### 6.4% - Reasonable unemployment<sup>40</sup>

New Zealand has experienced a spike in unemployment, though this figure is expected to drop. Unemployment rates remain disproportionately higher for Māori and Pacific Island Peoples populations.

<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 2013." Amnesty International. March 24, 2014. Accessed May 15, 2015.

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/act50/001/2014/en/>

<sup>3</sup> The UN Development Program HDI was created to emphasize that people and their capabilities should be the ultimate criteria for assessing the development of a country, not economic growth alone. The HDI can also be used to question national policy choices, asking how two countries with the same level of GNI per capita can end up with different human development outcomes. These contrasts can stimulate debate about government policy priorities. The Human Development Index (HDI) is a summary measure of average achievement in key dimensions of human development: a long and healthy life, being knowledgeable and have a decent standard of living. Accessed Jan. 8, 2017 <http://hdr.undp.org/en/composite/HDI>

<sup>4</sup> "Table 1: Human Development Index and its components, New Zealand" UNDP, based on 2014 or the most recent year available. Accessed Jan. 8, 2017. <http://hdr.undp.org/en/composite/HDI>.

<sup>5</sup> "Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2013 New Zealand." U.S Department of State. January 1, 2013. Accessed November 23, 2014. <http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrppt/humanrightsreport/#wrapper>.

<sup>6</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>7</sup> Ibid. U.S Department of State.

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

<sup>9</sup> Ibid. U.S Department of State.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid. U.S Department of State.

<sup>11</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>12</sup> "World Press Freedom Index." Reporters Without Borders: For Freedom of Information. January 1, 2014. Accessed November 23, 2014. <http://rsf.org/index2014/en-index2014.php>.

<sup>13</sup> "Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2013 New Zealand." U.S Department of State. January 1, 2013. Accessed November 23, 2014. <http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrppt/humanrightsreport/#wrapper>.

<sup>14</sup> "New Zealand." World Report 2014: New Zealand. January 1, 2014. Accessed November 25, 2014. [http://www.hrw.org/world-report/2014/country-chapters/New\\_Zealand](http://www.hrw.org/world-report/2014/country-chapters/New_Zealand).

<sup>15</sup> "New Zealand." International Religious Freedom Report for 2013. January 1, 2013. Accessed November 25, 2014. <http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/irf/religiousfreedom/index.htm#wrapper>.

<sup>16</sup> "New Zealand." World Report 2014: New Zealand. January 1, 2014. Accessed November 25, 2014. [http://www.hrw.org/world-report/2014/country-chapters/New\\_Zealand](http://www.hrw.org/world-report/2014/country-chapters/New_Zealand).

<sup>17</sup> "New Zealand." World Report 2014: New Zealand. January 1, 2014. Accessed November 25, 2014. [http://www.hrw.org/world-report/2014/country-chapters/New\\_Zealand](http://www.hrw.org/world-report/2014/country-chapters/New_Zealand).

<sup>18</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>19</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 Dec. 9, 2014 <https://www.freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world-2014/methodology#.VldwWzHF98F>

<sup>20</sup> "New Zealand." Freedom in the World 2014: New Zealand. January 1, 2014. Accessed November 25, 2014. [https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2014/New\\_Zealand-0#.VIIHLzGG9e8](https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2014/New_Zealand-0#.VIIHLzGG9e8).

<sup>21</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 Dec. 9, 2014 <https://www.freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world-2014/methodology#.VldwWzHF98F>

<sup>22</sup> "New Zealand." Freedom in the World 2014: New Zealand. January 1, 2014. Accessed November 25, 2014. [https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2014/New\\_Zealand-0#.VIIHLzGG9e8](https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2014/New_Zealand-0#.VIIHLzGG9e8).

<sup>23</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>24</sup> "New Zealand." Corruption by Country. January 1, 2014. Accessed November 25, 2014. <http://www.transparency.org/country#BHR>.

<sup>25</sup> "Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2013 New Zealand." U.S Department of State. January 1, 2013. Accessed November 23, 2014. <http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrppt/humanrightsreport/#wrapper>.

<sup>26</sup> The Peoples under Threat assessment by Minority Rights Group International highlights countries most at risk of genocide and mass killing. The ranking is created by compiling data on the known antecedents to genocide or mass political killing. Accessed Jan. 8, 2017 <http://peoplesunderthreat.org/>.

<sup>27</sup> "New Zealand." Peoples under Threat, Minority Rights Group International. 2015, or most recent data. Accessed Jan. 8, 2017. <http://peoplesunderthreat.org/>.

<sup>28</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>29</sup> "New Zealand." World Economic Forum. January 1, 2014. Accessed November 25, 2014. <http://reports.weforum.org/global-gender-gap-report-2014/economics/#economy=BHR>.

<sup>30</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>31</sup> "The KidsRights Index: Overall Ranking." The KidsRights Index. Accessed November 25, 2014. <http://www.kidsrightindex.org/>

<sup>32</sup> "Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2013 New Zealand." U.S Department of State. January 1, 2013. Accessed November 23, 2014. <http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrppt/humanrightsreport/#wrapper>.

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

<sup>34</sup> "ILGA World Map." International Lesbian Gay and Intersex Association. January 1, 2014. Accessed November 25, 2014. <http://ilga.org/>. See also Ibid. U.S Department of State.

<sup>35</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>36</sup> "Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2013 New Zealand." U.S Department of State. January 1, 2013. Accessed November 23, 2014.

<http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrprt/humanrightsreport/#wrapper>.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid. U.S Department of State.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid. U.S Department of State.

<sup>39</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>40</sup> "Global Employment Trends." International Labour Organization. January 1, 2013. Accessed December 7, 2014. [http://www.ilo.org/global/research/global-reports/global-employment-trends/2014/WCMS\\_233936/lang--en/index.htm](http://www.ilo.org/global/research/global-reports/global-employment-trends/2014/WCMS_233936/lang--en/index.htm).