

Democracies in consolidation



Defective democracies



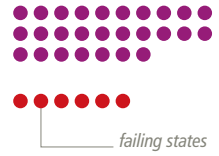
Highly defective democracies



Moderate autocracies



Hard-line autocracies



Political transformation

Trending toward the center

The BTI recorded six transitions to democracy between 2011 and the start of 2013. The fact that this includes only two North African countries – Egypt and Tunisia – shows once again how small the dividends of the Arab upheavals actually were, especially given the military coup against the democratically elected Morsi government in Egypt in June 2013. Despite remarkably free and fair elections in July 2012, Libya still counts among the autocracies because there is no guarantee of even the minimum protection of civil liberties that would be expected in a democracy. Algeria also continues to be governed by an authoritarian regime. Despite substantial liberalizing trends there, the lifting of the state of emergency and clear improvements in the quality of elections, elected politicians’ effective power to govern is not sufficiently ensured in the face of the military and intelligence services.

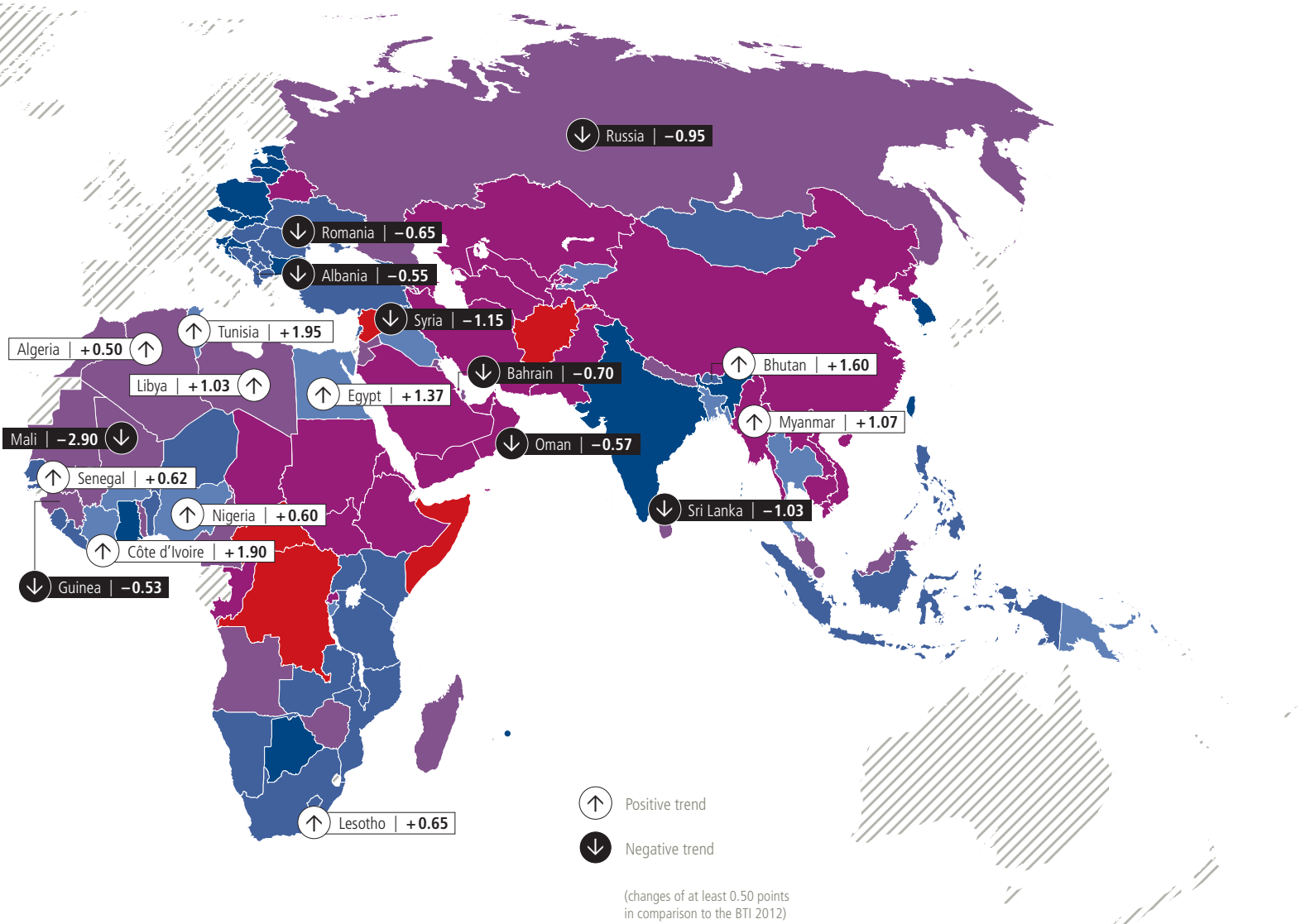
In Bhutan and Thailand, two rising Asian countries, the situation is different. As a result of the lack of actual decision-making authority vested in each of their respective gov-

ernments, both countries were classified as autocracies in the BTI 2012. In Bhutan, the highly respected monarchy has not given any cause in recent years to suppose that the king, with his power as a potential veto player, would use his formidable influence to revise or discredit the process of democratization that he himself initiated. In Thailand, on the other hand, the political leadership’s effective power to govern is far more restricted. The constitution accords the king, who is officially meant to stand above party lines, a strong position, and the Privy Council is active behind the scenes of official politics. The military is another veto player that in practice does not have to bow to the will of the civil commander in chief when it comes to selecting military leaders or controlling the borders. Nonetheless, the Thai government has in the past two years won back some limited room for maneuver, making it possible to categorize the country as a democracy.

In West Africa, two countries have also joined the group of democracies. In recent years, Nigeria had been classified as an au-

toocracy due to the 2007 elections, severely marred as they were by falsification, intimidation and violence. After the 2011 parliamentary, presidential and regional elections – the freest and fairest in the country’s history to date – the state managed a successful re-democratization, despite the ongoing potential for conflict between ethnic and religious groups. In Côte d’Ivoire, the violent conflicts sparked by the presidential elections at the start of 2011 were effectively put down, and the elected government of Alassane Ouattara was able to





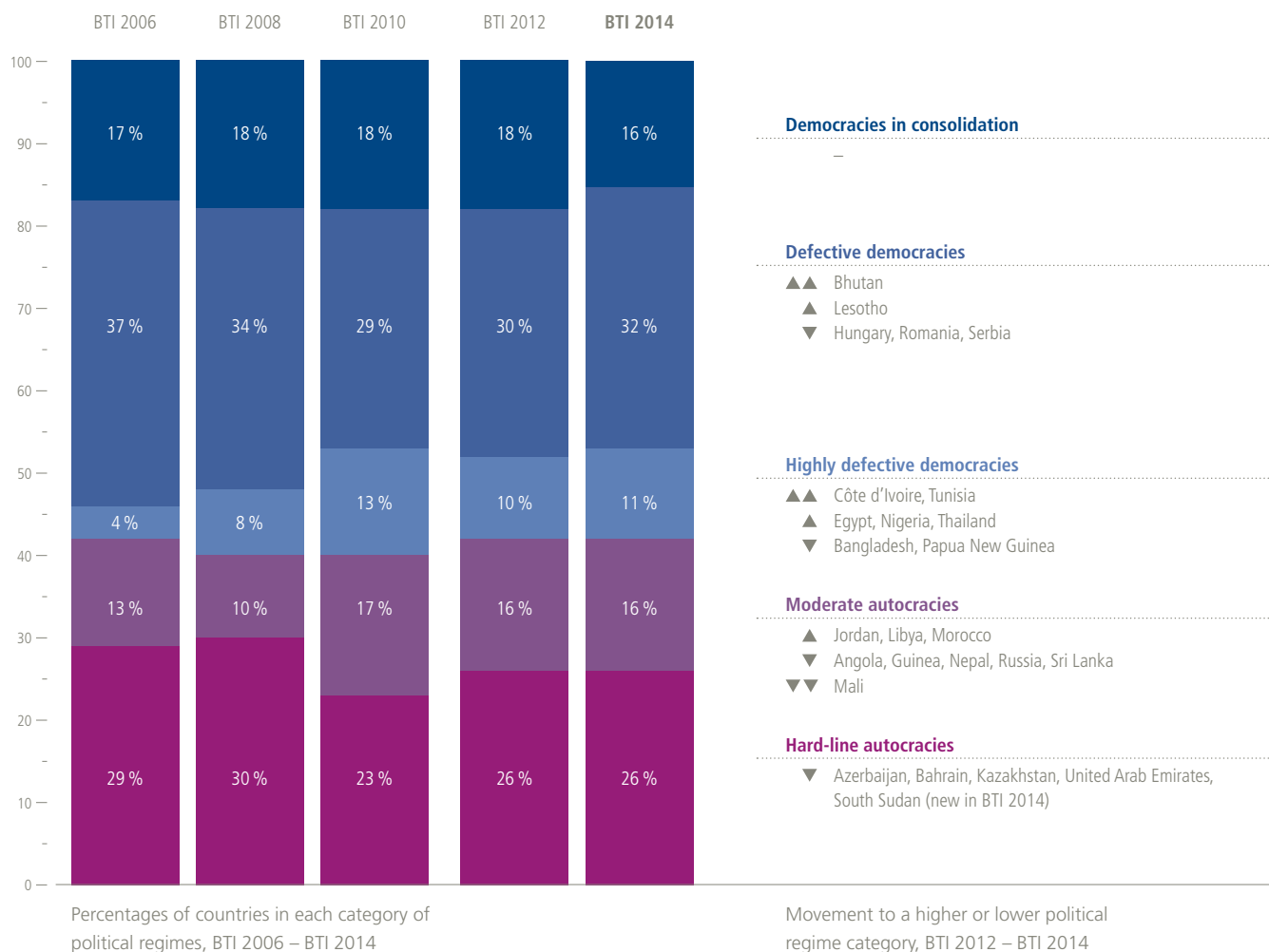
take office in June 2011. Like Nigeria, Côte d'Ivoire is also classified as a strongly defective democracy, and it faces the challenge of consolidating its unstable democratic institutions.

By contrast, there are six countries that now number among the autocracies in the BTI 2014. In each case, the decisive factor for the downgrade was that elections held in these countries were not considered sufficiently free and fair to justify their continued classification as democracies. And yet Angola, Guinea and Nepal had witnessed a

rapid push to democratization just a few years earlier. In 2008, Angola held relatively free, if not exactly fair elections, its first since 1992. In Guinea, the 2010 presidential elections ended the military government that had been established by a coup. The peace agreement at the end of 2006 in Nepal and the election of a constituent assembly in 2008 finally put an end to years of civil war between monarchists and Maoists. However, this progress toward transformation was qualified or reversed by events in the last two or more years: In Angola, besides

voting irregularities, a change was made to the constitution to preclude direct presidential elections and favor permanent rule by the MPLA; in Guinea, the parliamentary elections, planned since 2010, were once again postponed until October 2013 (after the review period) and yielded contested results; and in Nepal, the Constituent Assembly was dissolved in May 2012, leaving the country without a democratically legitimized government or a parliament. These three transformation cases are indicative of the difficulty of guaranteeing stability and estab-

Democracies and autocracies worldwide:
little changes over time, but trending toward the center



lishing functioning democratic institutions in the wake of rapid political liberalization.

By contrast, in Sri Lanka and Russia, the classification downgrade is the result of continuing trends toward autocracy. The BTI has been recording political regression in Russia since 2006, albeit with a slight thaw under President Medvedev. For Sri Lanka, the political rollback has been gaining traction, particularly since the military victory over the Tamil separatists in early 2009, in part due to a concentration of power in the executive and growing Sinhalese nationalist tendencies.

Unlike these five autocracies, which were all categorized as strongly defective democracies in the 2012 BTI, Mali, the other “new” member among the group of autocracies, was previously considered to have only slight democratic deficits. With a drop of 2.90 points in the state of democracy, the West African

country has fallen from 35th place – between Argentina and Mexico – to 90th – trailing even Russia and Venezuela – after the violent overthrow of its government, the military conflicts with the Islamists and Tuareg, and overall failings in conflict management.

With South Sudan added as an autocracy to the BTI’s sample of countries, the balance between democracies and autocracies has once again shifted slightly toward the autocratic end of the scale. There are now 54 (previously 53) autocracies compared to 75 democratically governed countries. The ratio of 58 percent democracies to 42 percent autocracies is almost identical to that of the BTI 2006, when the sample of countries consisted of 50 autocracies and 69 democracies.

Almost two-thirds of all autocracies are classified as “hard-line” regimes, while more than a third are considered “moderate,” generally with significantly better protection

of civil liberties, such as freedom of assembly and expression, as well as better representation of parties and interest groups, albeit within an authoritarian framework. This latter group includes 10 countries with stronger stateness (e.g., Armenia and Malaysia), states with relatively few restrictions on participation rights (e.g., Libya and Nepal), and countries with higher standards for the rule of law (e.g., Kuwait and Singapore). Among the autocracies, the group of “moderates” has grown in recent years, from a low of 26 percent in the BTI 2008 to 39 percent in the BTI 2014.

By contrast, the trend in the democratic camp, which has continued to number 75 countries since the BTI 2008, has been negative. Here, the proportion of democracies in the process of consolidation has fallen from 23 to 20 countries after democratic deficits increased in Hungary, Romania and

Serbia. In the case of Serbia, a slight decrease of 0.10 points in the democratic balance tipped the scales, and the country was downgraded to the group of 41 defective democracies. Whereas Serbia remained more or less level, with improvements in the prosecution of abuse of office balanced out by setbacks in freedom of expression and commitment to democratic institutions, in the case of Romania, there was a clear drop in the quality of democracy (-0.65) and, in Hungary, the erosion of democratic standards observed in the BTI 2012 (-0.90) was confirmed again (-0.40). In Romania, the government disempowered both the parliament and the Constitutional Court in order to depose President Traian Băsescu. In Hungary, the conservative-dominated parliament adopted so-called “cardinal laws” in 50 policy areas that can only be changed by a two-thirds majority and that represent an attempt to cement political preferences beyond the legislative period. In both cases, governments disregarded the principles of the rule of law and abused their parliamentary majorities to circumvent constitutional procedures and checks.

Overall, there is a clear trend in the field of political transformation: The unambiguously positive cases of continuously consolidating democracies are becoming as infrequent as the unambiguously negative cases of failing states or hard autocracies with no or failed attempts at transformation. With more moderate trends in the authoritarian states and more political defects in the democratic countries, the trend is toward the center.

Ambiguity in stateness

In the BTI 2014, there are fewer cases of “failed” political transformation. This appears to correspond superficially to the current assessment of stateness. Despite recent slight losses of stateness in all areas (from the state’s monopoly on the use of force, through state identity and the influence of religious dogmas, to the underlying administrative structures), the number of countries with fragile stateness has fallen to 24, making up

just under a fifth of all the states examined in the BTI, compared to more than a quarter eight years ago. Furthermore, the recent losses of stateness can mainly be assigned to one region, the Middle East and Northern Africa, where five of the seven largest falls were recorded in Bahrain, Egypt, Libya, Syria and Yemen. And, finally, the current decline in the global average scores for stateness should be seen from the perspective of long-term trends in the last eight years, with the state’s monopoly on the use of force and the underlying administrative structures, in particular, continuing to improve.

But this would paint an overly optimistic picture of the latest developments. Besides the positive outlier Côte d’Ivoire, which posted clear stateness gains of 2.3 points after the end of its civil war, no fewer than 28 other countries improved in the last two years: 22 of these somewhat marginally (+0.3), and six considerably (+0.5). However, these are offset by 47 countries that suffered losses of stateness in the same timespan: 30 with marginal deterioration, 10 with clear deficits and seven with dramatic losses of an entire point or more – the five Arab countries mentioned above plus Mali (-2.8) and the Central African Republic (-1.3). The BTI lists six countries that are considered failing states due to an insufficient monopoly on the use of force and underdeveloped administrative structures: The countries on the list in the BTI 2012 – Afghanistan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Haiti, Somalia and the Central African Republic – are now joined by Syria, wracked by civil war.

The smallest losses in stateness worldwide for this edition of the BTI can be seen in the area of administrative structures. Libya and Syria experienced the greatest setbacks here, due to the destruction of infrastructure and a lack of central coordination. As in the overall assessment of stateness, the greatest changes in the areas of administrative structures and basic services can be seen in the Arab and African regions. West and Central African countries make up five of the 12 top gainers, improving from a low level; while, inversely, 11 East African and Arab states are represented among the 15 countries registering the largest losses. The state’s monopoly

on the use of force has worsened more markedly than the administrative structures, and most of the countries affected are once again Arab and African (17 out of 21).

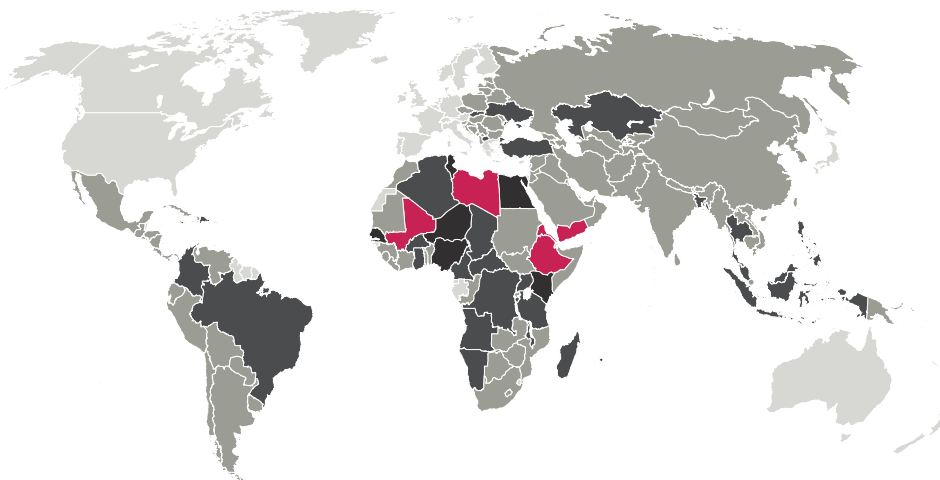
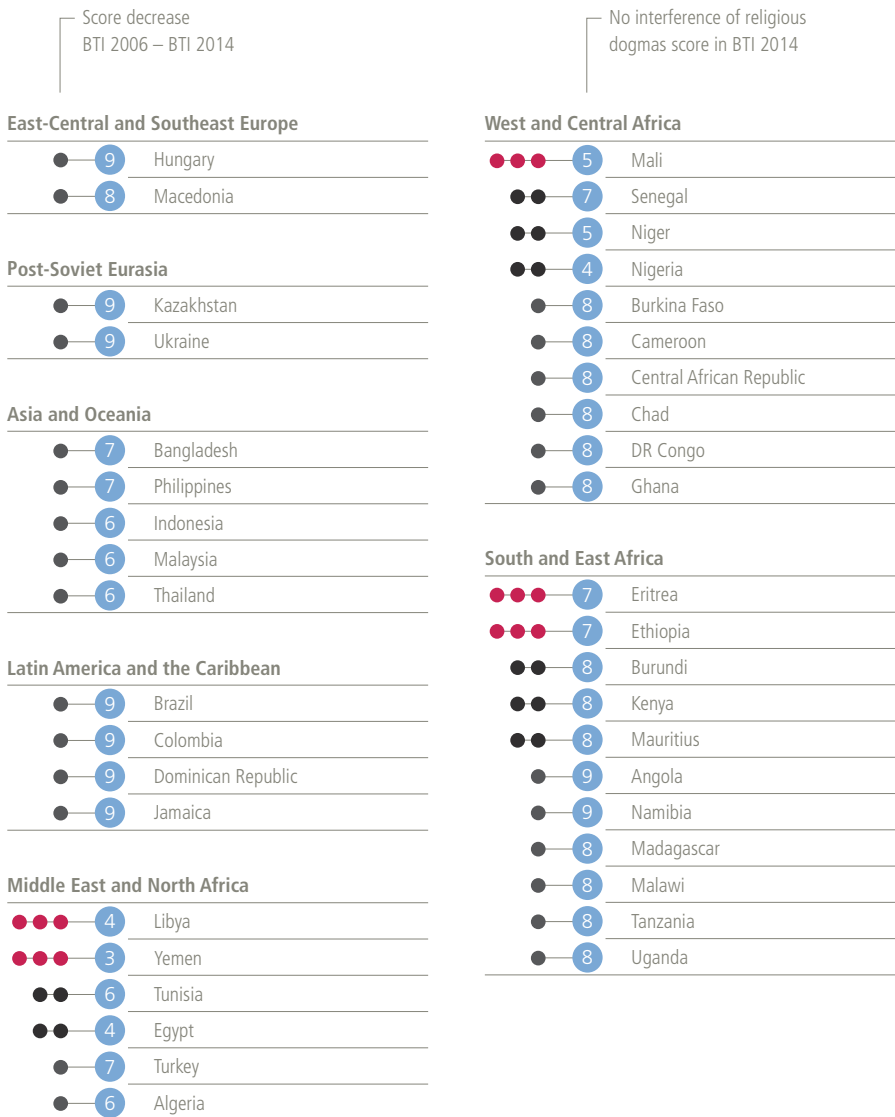
In the long-term trend, however, basic functions that are central to the state, such as security and administration, have improved in far more countries than they have worsened. The substantial improvements to stability in post-Soviet Eurasia and Asia are worthy of particular mention, with more than half of governments (17 out of 33) able to consolidate their monopoly on the use of force. This consolidation can either represent an improvement in the framework conditions for democratization, as in the case of Moldova, or, as in Sri Lanka, it can bring about a shift toward autocracy.

Disturbances to core issues of stateness, such as the ability of the central government to provide basic services and administrative structures, are almost always tied to a decline in identification with the fabric of the state. Substantial sections of the population then tend to challenge the legitimacy of a state that is not able to protect and provide; or, inversely, when people fail to identify with the state, they may question its monopoly on the use of force. This applies to Yemen (state identity indicator -2 compared to BTI 2012), where tribal, regional and religious identities compete against identification with the central state, and to Mali (-4), where the Arab population, Moors and Tuareg have not been sufficiently integrated, and to the Central African Republic (-2), where the complete failure of the state to maintain law and order has left citizens with no other choice than to organize themselves.

The rising influence of religious dogmas

The clearest change, from both a short- and a long-term perspective, is the rising influence of religious dogmas on the inner structuring of political systems. This BTI indicator is not concerned with questioning the involvement of churches and religious institutions as interest groups in political decision-making processes per se. Instead, it is

Influence of religious dogmas on legal order and political institutions on the rise



All countries with a score decrease of at least 1 point in comparison to the BTI 2012

concerned with the restrictions on individual beliefs and choices when the legal system and political institutions are subject to the direct influence of religious dogmas. In a predictable fashion, the influence of Islamism has increased in a total of eight Arab countries over the past two years, especially in Egypt and Libya. However, a stronger religious tone has also emerged in politics in sub-Saharan regions, including in West African states that have traditionally been organized along secular lines, such as Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Nigeria and, of course, Mali. This is more clearly evident in long-term trends: In the past eight years, the influence of religious dogmas has increased in 25 of the 40 African states examined in the BTI 2006 – in four of the six North African States, in 10 of the 16 countries of West and Central Africa, and in 11 of the 18 South and East African states. Marked regional focuses can be identified here, such as the greater East African area covering Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda, where Christian churches (in most cases) are gaining stronger influence over politics although the state continues to feature a largely secular composition, or the Muslim-influenced West African belt from Senegal, through Mali and Niger to Nigeria, where increasing militancy can be observed in Islamist groups and where religious and secular forces are in conflict to a greater (Mali) or lesser (Senegal) degree over the general orientation of the legal system and public institutions. Outside Africa, by contrast, only Yemen shows a clear increase in the influence of religious dogmas.

Civil and political rights more strongly restricted worldwide

The BTI 2014 confirms a problematic trend that first became apparent two years ago and has since intensified in numerous countries: Civil rights and opportunities for political participation are becoming increasingly restricted in many democracies. In the Latin American and East-Central and Southeast European democracies primarily, the trend towards a declining quality of elec-

tions continues unabated. In the Dominican Republic, Ecuador and Panama, as well as in Albania, Bulgaria and Romania, reductions in the quality of the electoral process went hand in hand with an erosion of the separation of powers. Now, of the 35 democracies in these two regions, only a minority of 16 have managed to at least maintain their standard of voting procedures in the past eight years or, in the case of Chile, Estonia and Latvia, to even improve the fairness of elections. In the other 19 democracies, deficits grew to varying degrees. In Argentina, Croatia and Lithuania, there were minor complaints regarding the conduct of elections that were, overall, free and fair. In Bulgaria, Panama and Romania, attempts to exert influence over new electoral laws and manipulate electoral lists in order to promote incumbents drew criticism. In Ecuador, Guatemala and Mexico, by contrast, there have been massive deficits in the quality of elections for several years. Most of the steps taken backward here were witnessed during the period under review for the BTI 2014 (in nine cases) or the two previous years (in seven cases).

The average quality of elections in all the democratically governed countries has fallen continuously, from 8.51 in the BTI 2006 to 7.92 in the BTI 2014. Over this period, numerous democratically elected governments also placed severe restrictions on freedom of association and assembly, curtailed freedom of expression and the press, and infringed more strongly on personal liberties.

Arbitrary exertion of state power due to insufficient protection of physical integrity and a lack of equality before the law has increased since the BTI 2006 by an average of 0.36 points. This can be traced back either to regression from a comparatively high level (such as more frequent delays to lawsuits or increasing discrimination against Roma in some countries of East-Central and Southeast Europe) or to repressive measures against members of the opposition or minorities in unconsolidated, highly defective democracies, such as Burundi, Papua New Guinea and Thailand. These latter phenomena are often linked to restrictions in the freedom of assembly and association, as for example in

Bangladesh, where trade unionists are intimidated and abducted, or in Zambia, where the government relies on police power and a controversial Public Order Act to prevent unwanted demonstrations.

Nevertheless, the considerable losses in the field of civil rights (averaging -0.23 across all the countries investigated since the BTI 2006) are not only to be found in the democracies. Of the 39 countries that have worsened in the past eight years, 21 were governed autocratically. At present, further setbacks are coming to the fore in fragile or failing states, such as Libya, Mali, Syria and Yemen, in particular, where the governments would not be in a position to protect civil liberties even if there were the political will to do so. Generally, it is striking that, of the 15 countries that have worsened considerably in this regard in recent years (by two or more points), none is to be found in the top 50 places of the Status Index.

This also applies to states in which freedom of association and assembly have been subject to heavy restrictions in the past eight years: Again, of the 19 countries recording the largest losses, two-thirds were ranked no higher than 90th in the Status Index. Although this includes countries, such as Madagascar and Mali, that underwent a change of political system and experienced falls from a relatively high level, in most cases, such as Cambodia, Eritrea, Ethiopia and Iran, states that already had a poor rating were downgraded even further. Another phenomenon that appears to fit in with this pattern is the fact that those democracies scoring below their BTI 2012 scores also feature an overall lower level of political development – and this applies across all regions, from Albania and Bangladesh to Guatemala, Iraq and Zambia.

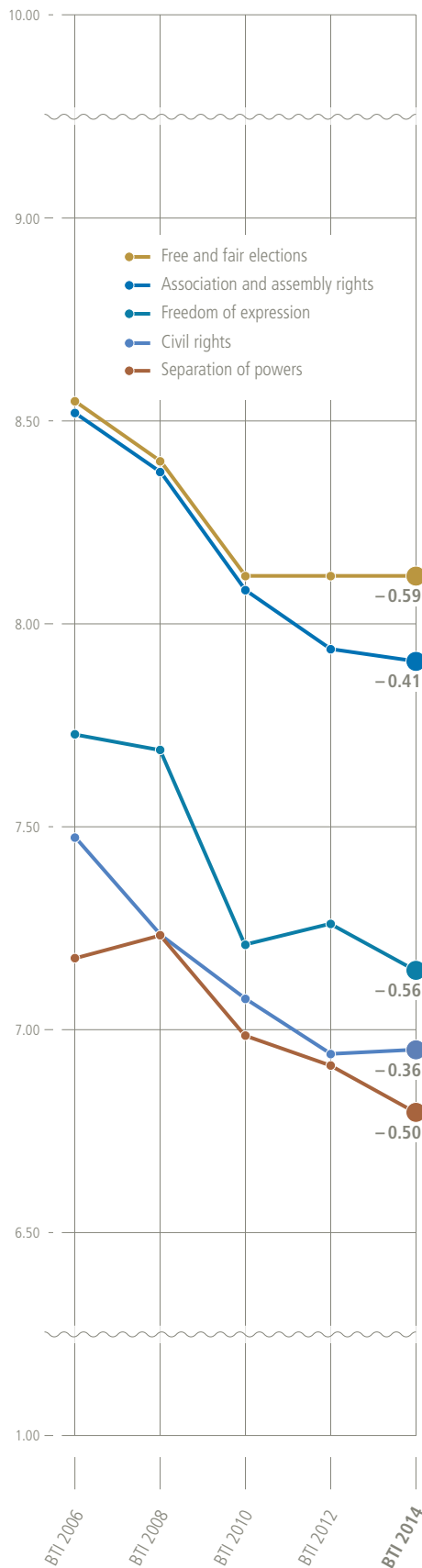
Although the BTI has been recording a continuous increase in restrictions on freedom of expression worldwide since 2008, the score remained stable compared to the BTI 2012 (not including South Sudan). The check on this downward trend is primarily due to countries with pronounced advances in transformation, such as Libya (+6 for the freedom of expression indicator), Myanmar (+4) and Tunisia (+3), as well as Egypt, Côte d'Ivoire

and Lesotho (+2 each). In established democracies, by contrast, the trend continues to be negative. Once again, this is especially true for East-Central and Southeast Europe, where the media continue to face increasing pressure from governments and economic interests and the regional average for freedom of expression fell dramatically, from 9.27 (BTI 2006) to 7.82 (BTI 2012) to the current 7.59. The overall decrease of 1.68 in East-Central and Southeast Europe represents the greatest setback ever recorded in the BTI in the area of political transformation for any indicator value as a regional average.

From self-censorship to persecution:
the media and the mighty

In Bulgaria and Romania, quality journalism is declining in the face of payola journalism, as the political connections and ambitions of media owners compel their journalists to exercise self-censorship. This trend is aggravated by the depletion of the media sector that has come about as a result of the economic crisis. In Hungary, although the parliamentary majority amended its controversial media law in the face of massive international protests and an objection from the Constitutional Court, the newly created media supervisory body dominated by supporters of the Fidesz party continues to have far-reaching powers at its disposal to intervene and sanction. Media and information diversity in Hungary also continues to shrink: The state broadcasting service has been obliged to use the state-owned news agency as its sole source of news, and the media supervisory body refuses to assign a frequency to the last remaining opposition radio station despite multiple court orders in the station's favor. In Serbia and, to a greater extent, in Macedonia, direct governmental influence of the media is on the rise. In both countries, the economic position of media outlets that are favorable to the government is improved by means of selective placing of state advertising. While in Macedonia, three opposition newspapers were closed due to alleged tax offenses, and a television station that was critical of the gov-

Civil and political rights increasingly restricted in democracies



Average criteria scores of all democratically ruled countries according to the BTI 2014

ernment was bought up by a group of buyers with links to the government. The incessant attempts by state and economic actors to exert influence, which in Southeastern European countries has often led to attempted intimidation and physical assaults on critical journalists, illustrate the prominent role played by the media in polarized and volatile contexts where the political discourse's susceptibility to populism is further intensified by superficial or biased reporting by pliable or corrupt journalists.

A common denominator of this kind is not evident in Asia, where the spectrum is too wide, ranging from an established democracy such as India, where journalists tend to practice self-censorship on matters of foreign policy, through to a strongly defective democracy such as Thailand, which exercises strict controls and censorship of television and radio programs and relentlessly sanctions negative comments on the royal dynasty. However, it is remarkable that, apart from those countries marking considerable gains in political transformation, such as Bhutan and the Philippines, six other democracies registered backward steps in terms of freedom of expression. Some did so from a high level, such as Taiwan and Papua New Guinea, where a concentration of media has had a negative impact on the diversity of opinion. Some did so from a lower level, such as Bangladesh and Indonesia, where assaults, abductions and intimidation of independent journalists are becoming more frequent. The same applies to the "traditional" democracies of the Middle East – Iraq, Lebanon and Turkey – where content that is "offensive" (Lebanon), "insulting to the Turkish nation" or "harmful to the nation's prestige" (Iraq) is censored or punished. Iraq, in particular, is considered to be a "high-risk, hostile environment for journalists."

Deficits in the rule of law weaken political participation

The simultaneous combination of an assault on civil and political rights and a weakening of the separation of powers due to the con-

centration of power in the executive is no longer as clearly evident as it was in the BTI 2012, particularly for East-Central and Southeast Europe and Latin America. Nevertheless, on the issue of the rule of law, there has been no reversal of this trend in the two regions: The separation of powers and the independence of the judiciary remained at or below 2012's low levels (only Colombia and Peru provide exceptions here). In addition, in some cases, further erosion of the checks and balances was identified, particularly in East-Central and Southeast Europe. In addition to a relative strengthening of the executive in Latvia and a dispute over the independence of the judiciary in Bulgaria, the effective separation of powers suffered new setbacks in Hungary due to the concentration of powers in an executive supported by a strong parliamentary majority, with even more drastic setbacks in Albania and Romania. In Romania, the parliamentary majority repeatedly ignored rulings issued by the National Integrity Agency and the Supreme Court and, in Albania, the country report talks of a "state capture by the ruling elite."

A longer timeline comparison highlights this problematic trend: While the separation of powers in all East-Central and Southeast European countries apart from Albania was still considered fully realized or only minimally restricted (8 to 10 points) in the BTI 2008, this can no longer be said of six of the 18 countries (Albania, Hungary, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro and Romania). These setbacks are being accelerated by populist forces that question in an increasingly aggressive manner the functional effectiveness and economic performance of the current system, with its established elites and democratic institutions. They point to the continuing wealth gap between their own countries and those of Western Europe and the harsh social impact of budget consolidation. Glaring cases of abuse of office and corruption exacerbate the loss of trust in democratic institutions. In interplay with the weak social grounding of existing parties, this facilitates the rapid rise of populist movements and parties.

Aspirations to power, combined with a disrespect for democratic processes among

populist heads of government, further erode standards for the rule of law already weakened by informal deals, clientelist politics and corruption. This, in turn, undermines political participation rights. In total, 59 of the 75 democracies worldwide saw setbacks in the quality of their democracy in the past eight years – with some of these declines being minor, but many serious. In the frequently observed case of a strong executive eroding the separation of powers, governments are far more likely and able to curtail the independence of election commissions, to manipulate the regulation and holding of ballots in their own favor, to restrict rights of association and assembly, or to exert influence on public and private media – as evidenced by the worldwide reduction in participation opportunities.

The fact that, once again, it is mainly the most advanced regions, such as East-Central and Southeast Europe, Latin America and parts of Africa, that are seeing political and civil rights restricted more severely dampens hopes for lasting democratization and a consolidation of the gains in freedom. These countries in Africa, Europe and Latin America represent 58 out of the 75 democracies,

making up the greater part of the countries in which free elections are held and essential basic rights are guaranteed. In four-fifths of these 58 countries, however, the protection of fundamental personal and participation rights has declined in the past eight years, and in 28 countries, this trend has intensified in the past two. In parallel, the scores for the performance and acceptance of democratic institutions and the scores for approval of democracy also fell in these regions. Of the 16 countries in which commitment to democratic standards and processes fell in the past two years, eight were in East-Central and Southeast Europe, four in Central America and four in the neighboring Southeast African countries of Botswana, Malawi, Tanzania and Zambia.

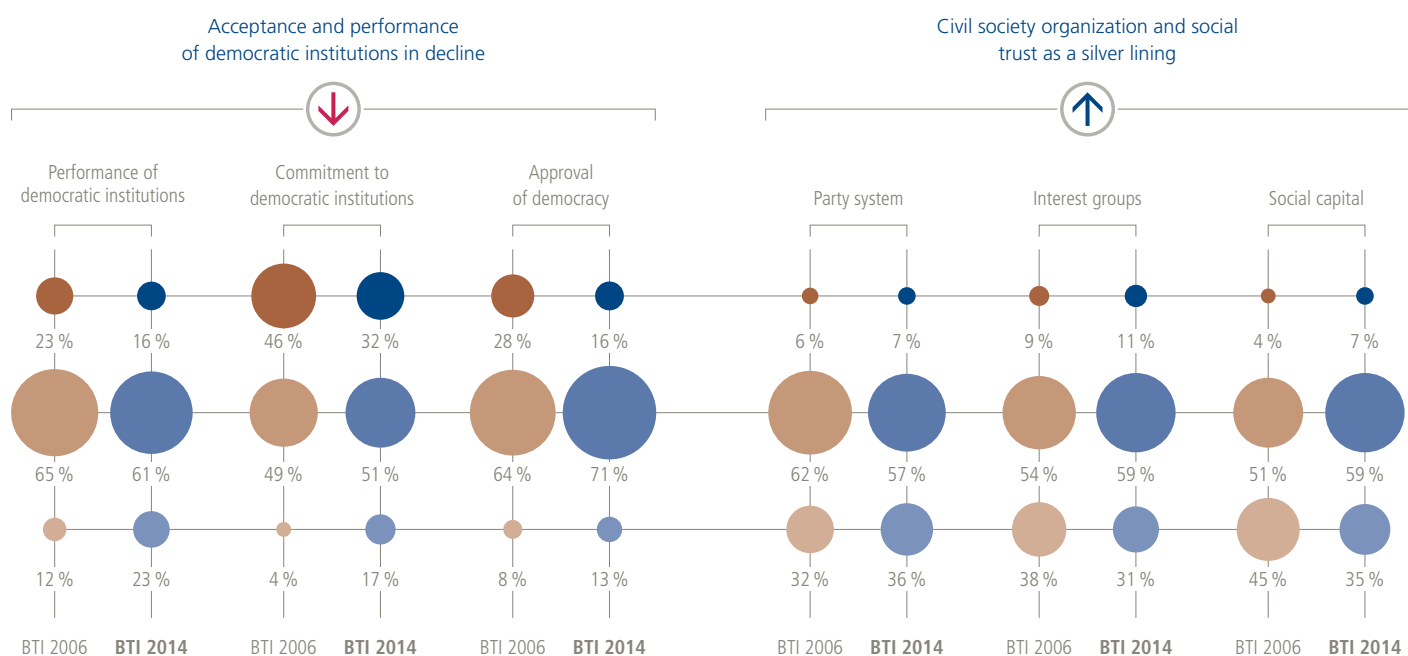
Civil society and self-organization as the silver lining

The criterion of political and social integration is relevant in this context. Under this rubric, the BTI investigates the extent to which each country’s political culture pro-

motes democratic processes as measured by approval of democratic standards and values and the building of social capital – in other words, the degree of solidarity and trust within the population and civil society’s ability to organize itself. In addition, the BTI records the extent to which the population’s concerns are represented politically by parties and interest groups. An overview of these factors over the past eight years shows a moderately positive trend, most clearly evident in a long-term view of West and Central Africa (+0.20) and, in the past two years, in the Middle East and Northern Africa (+0.16) and in Asia (+0.25). Compared to the BTI 2006, five countries stand out for their distinct strengthening of political and social integration, although all five admittedly started from a very low level: Angola (+2.33 points), Burundi (+2.08), Myanmar (+2.00) and two countries that were already highlighted in the BTI 2012, Liberia (+2.33) and Togo (+2.67).

Some progress can be seen in the stability and social anchoring of party systems as well as the representative and mediation capacities of interest groups. In the past

Ambiguous trends in consolidating democracies



Percentage of all democracies in political and social integration indicators, BTI 2006 – BTI 2014

● Very good (9 – 10 points) ● Moderate (6 – 8 points) ● Weak (1 – 5 points)

eight years, the quality of party systems increased in a solid one-third of Asian countries (+0.28). The same is true for East-Central and Southeast Europe (+0.25), despite the recent setbacks observed. In the past two years, the quality of party systems improved noticeably – albeit from a low level – in the Middle East and Northern Africa (+0.32), above all in Libya and Tunisia, thanks to the liberalizing impulse of the Arab Spring.

The ability of interest groups to mediate between civil society and the political system in a balanced and cooperative manner saw the greatest improvement of all the integration indicators, with a global increase of 0.30. The quality of mediation between civil society and political decision-makers improved in almost every region over the past eight years. The only exceptions to this were identified in South and East Africa, despite recent positive trends to the contrary in Kenya, Madagascar, Namibia and Uganda, which merely offset previous losses. Asia saw the most positive developments, both from a long-term perspective (+0.57) and in comparison with the BTI 2012 (+0.38). In countries such as Afghanistan, Myanmar and Vietnam, a slow process of self-organization and a greater acceptance by the state can be observed, while in Malaysia and Singapore, NGOs have greater political leeway. In Nepal, the numerous active NGOs have become more organized; in the Philippines, cooperation between civil society and the government has improved; and in India, the number of NGOs grew to more than three million, with new social movements fulfilling important watchdog functions.

One key factor for social cohesion is the degree of interpersonal trust and solidarity combined with the willingness and ability of the population to organize in civil society associations. In the Arab countries riven by civil war – Bahrain, Syria and Yemen – this score dropped as dramatically (–2 points) as it did in the strongly polarized societies of Oman and Turkey. And yet, conversely, trust and civil society’s ability to organize improved in seven countries in the Middle East and Northern Africa, not least in Libya and Tunisia after their recent upheavals. However, it was once again Asia that saw the

greatest gains (+0.24) compared to the BTI 2012. Trust scores and cooperation abilities improved in six Asian countries, either from a high level as in Taiwan or, more often, from a low level (China, Malaysia, Singapore) or a rudimentary one (Laos, Myanmar).

All in all, the current Transformation Index does not feature much in the way of encouraging political trends, and the Arab upheavals have not had any significant positive impact on the status of democracy worldwide. More often than not, gains in participation were followed by losses of stability, and political liberalization frequently went hand in hand with an increase in the influence of religious dogmas. One particularly worrisome development is the continuing erosion of the rule of law in the regions with the most advanced democracies, which has weighed heavily upon participation rights. Above all, the ongoing decline in the quality of elections in East-Central and Southeast Europe and in Latin America, as well as the dramatic increase in restrictions on freedom of the press and diversity of opinions in many Asian and Southeast European democracies, in particular, give cause for concern.

Even if consent to established democratic institutions and processes is falling in the face of a concentration of power and ineffective separation of powers or abuse of office and corruption, there is still some hope in the fact that this does not result in civil society turning its back on political participation, no matter how reduced the scope for action may be in some cases. On the contrary, the BTI 2014 documents an increase in the ability of parties and interest groups to articulate the concerns of citizens. However, this cannot be taken as a global trend. In the final analysis, there are 23 countries in which the party systems have become somewhat more stable and more rooted in society, and 23 countries in which interest groups convey social and political concerns better and act slightly more cooperatively. Nevertheless, in almost a sixth of the countries in the BTI sample, mediation between civil society, parliaments and governments now functions more effectively. In total, advances in political and social integration can be seen in 48 countries. This is not enough

to declare a political awakening “from below,” especially in view of the fact that, in 33 countries (two-thirds of which are democracies), integration capability worsened over the same period. But given the glaring curtailment of civil and political rights “from above,” the ability of civil society to continue to make its case heard through parties and interest groups represents a democratic light at the end of the tunnel.

Political transformation, BTI 2014

Democracies in consolidation

Score 10 to 8

20

Uruguay	9.95
Estonia	9.70
Taiwan	9.65
Czech Republic	9.60
Poland	9.35
Costa Rica	9.30
Slovenia	9.30
Lithuania	9.25
Chile	9.10
Slovakia	9.05
Latvia	8.75
South Korea	8.60
Mauritius	8.55
Croatia	8.45
Botswana	8.35
Bulgaria	8.35
Ghana	8.30
Jamaica	8.30
Brazil	8.15
India	8.10

Defective democracies

Score < 8 to 6

41

Hungary ▼	7.95
Serbia ▼	7.95
Montenegro	7.90
Romania ▼	7.90
Namibia	7.75
Argentina	7.55
Benin	7.55
Turkey	7.55
El Salvador	7.50
South Africa	7.50
Panama	7.35
Dominican Republic	7.20
Macedonia	7.20
Moldova	7.15
Mongolia	7.15
Senegal	7.12
Bolivia	7.10
Indonesia	7.05
Uganda	6.90
Mexico	6.80
Philippines	6.80
Peru	6.75
Albania	6.70
Honduras	6.65
Malawi	6.65
Kosovo	6.60
Niger	6.60
Sierra Leone	6.57
Colombia	6.55
Kenya	6.55
Paraguay	6.55
Georgia	6.50
Liberia	6.45
Bhutan ▲▲	6.40
Zambia	6.40
Bosnia a. Herzegovina	6.35
Lesotho ▲	6.25
Mozambique	6.10
Ukraine	6.10
Tanzania	6.05
Lebanon	6.00

Highly defective democracies

Score < 6

14

Bangladesh ▼	5.95
Papua New Guinea ▼	5.95
Burkina Faso	5.80
Kyrgyzstan	5.80
Tunisia ▲▲	5.80
Ecuador	5.70
Nicaragua	5.60
Egypt ▲	5.45
Nigeria ▲	5.40
Burundi	5.25
Guatemala	5.20
Thailand ▲	5.05
Côte d'Ivoire ▲▲	4.88
Iraq	4.10

Moderate autocracies

Score > 4

21

Singapore	5.55
Armenia	5.35
Malaysia	5.23
Guinea ▼	5.10
Togo	4.85
Algeria	4.80
Kuwait	4.70
Nepal ▼	4.63
Sri Lanka ▼	4.57
Angola ▼	4.55
Venezuela	4.52
Mauritania	4.40
Russia ▼	4.40
Zimbabwe	4.38
Madagascar	4.37
Mali ▼▼	4.25
Libya ▲	4.13
Jordan ▲	4.10
Cameroon	4.08
Morocco ▲	4.00
Qatar	4.00

Hard-line autocracies

Score < 4

33

Rwanda	3.95
United Arab Emirates ▼	3.95
Belarus	3.93
Azerbaijan ▼	3.92
Haiti ●	3.92
Kazakhstan ▼	3.85
Cambodia	3.77
South Sudan	3.73
Rep. Congo	3.67
Bahrain ▼	3.65
Cuba	3.62
Tajikistan	3.60
Vietnam	3.57
Pakistan	3.53
Chad	3.45
Ethiopia	3.37
China	3.33
Centr. African Rep. ●	3.32
Oman	3.32
Yemen	3.27
DR Congo ●	3.25
Iran	3.13
Myanmar	3.00
Afghanistan ●	2.97
Laos	2.95
Uzbekistan	2.85
Turkmenistan	2.78
Saudi Arabia	2.73
North Korea	2.60
Sudan	2.45
Eritrea	2.08
Syria ●	2.03
Somalia ●	1.42

- ▲ Movement to a higher category (each arrow denotes a single category)
- ▼ Movement to a lower category (each arrow denotes a single category)
- *failing states*