



Freedom index shows PH has become 'less free' than the past years

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The Philippines' ranking has dropped five notches in the Human Freedom Index (HFI), indicating that it has become "less free" compared to the past years.

The index showed that out of 162 countries, the Philippines ranked 76th with a 6.88 score in 2017, lower than its rankings in 2016 (71st at 6.978) and 2015 (66th at 7.11), on the basis of personal and economic freedom.

On a scale of 0 to 10, where 10 represents more freedom, the average human freedom rating for all countries was 6.89.

Various factors have affected the Philippines' human freedom ranking. Under identity and relationships, the country got a zero for divorce, its lowest freedom ranking since the survey was first conducted in 2008.

Under security and safety, the Philippines garnered a 5.9 score—lower than last year's 7.6—under the instances of disappearance, conflict and terrorism.

A lower level of women's freedom has contributed to a lower score of 7.5 in terms of movement, compared to last year's 8.3 score.

Meanwhile, the country retained its scores in the observation of procedural, civil, and criminal justice; freedom of associations assembly, and civil society; and expression and information.

The HFI which presents 76 distinct indicators of personal and economic freedom, was released last Wednesday by think tanks Cato Institute, Frater Institute, Liberales Institut.

"The findings in the HFI suggest that freedom plays an important role in human well-being, and they offer opportunities for further research into the complex ways in which freedom influences, and can be influenced by, political regimes, economic development, and the whole range of indicators of human well-being," the executive summary read.

The top 10 countries which were considered the most free were New Zealand, Switzerland, Hong Kong, Canada, Australia, Denmark and Luxembourg (tied for the 6th spot), Finland and Germany (tied for 8th), and Ireland.