

World Public Opinion on Freedom of the Media

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WORLDPUBLICOPINION.ORG STAFF

STEVEN KULL

CLAY RAMSAY

STEPHEN WEBER

EVAN LEWIS

MELINDA BROUWER

MELANIE CIOLEK

ABE MEDOFF

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The Program on International Policy Attitudes (PIPA) was established in 1992 with the purpose of giving public opinion a greater voice in international relations. PIPA conducts in-depth studies of public opinion that include polls, focus groups and interviews. It integrates its findings together with those of other organizations. It actively seeks the participation of members of the policy community in developing its polls so as to make them immediately relevant to the needs of policymakers. PIPA is a joint program of the Center on Policy Attitudes (COPA) and the Center for International and Security Studies at Maryland (CISSM).

WORLDPUBLICOPINION.ORG

International Public Opinion Says Government Should Not Limit Internet Access

All Nations Polled Support Principle of Press Freedom, and Half Want More Freedom

But Many Muslims and Russians Accept Press Restrictions to Preserve Political Stability

A new poll of nations around the world finds worldwide support for the principle of media freedom and broad opposition to government having the right to limit access to the Internet. In many countries people want more media freedom than they have now, but in many Muslim countries and in Russia, there is substantial support for regulation of news or ideas that the government thinks could be politically destabilizing.

The poll is being published in advance of International Press Freedom Day (May 3). This year is also the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights which calls for freedom to “receive and impart information and ideas through any media.”

The poll of 18,122 respondents was conducted by WorldPublicOpinion.org, a collaborative research project involving research centers from around the world and managed by the Program on International Policy Attitudes (PIPA) at the University of Maryland. Polling was conducted between January 10 and March 20, 2008.

Interviews were conducted in 20 nations, though in three of them not all questions were asked. Those nations interviewed include most of the world’s largest nations --China, India, the United States, Indonesia, Nigeria, and Russia--as well as Argentina, Azerbaijan, Britain, Egypt, France, Iran, Jordan, Mexico, Peru, Poland, South Korea, Turkey, Ukraine, and the Palestinian Territories. These nations represent 59 percent of the world population.

Internet Censorship

The Internet is a significant new medium for news, information, and ideas. As some governments have sought to regulate access to the Internet it has also become a new arena for conflict about media freedom.

Presented the issue of Internet censorship, a majority in all but two of the countries that were asked this question say that “people should have the right to read whatever is on the Internet.” On average six in ten endorse full access while three in ten say that the government should have the right to “prevent people from having access to some things on the Internet.”

In China, a country whose Internet censorship policies have received a great deal of international attention, 71 percent of the public say that “people should have the right to read whatever is on the Internet.” only 21 percent of Chinese endorse their government’s right to limit access.

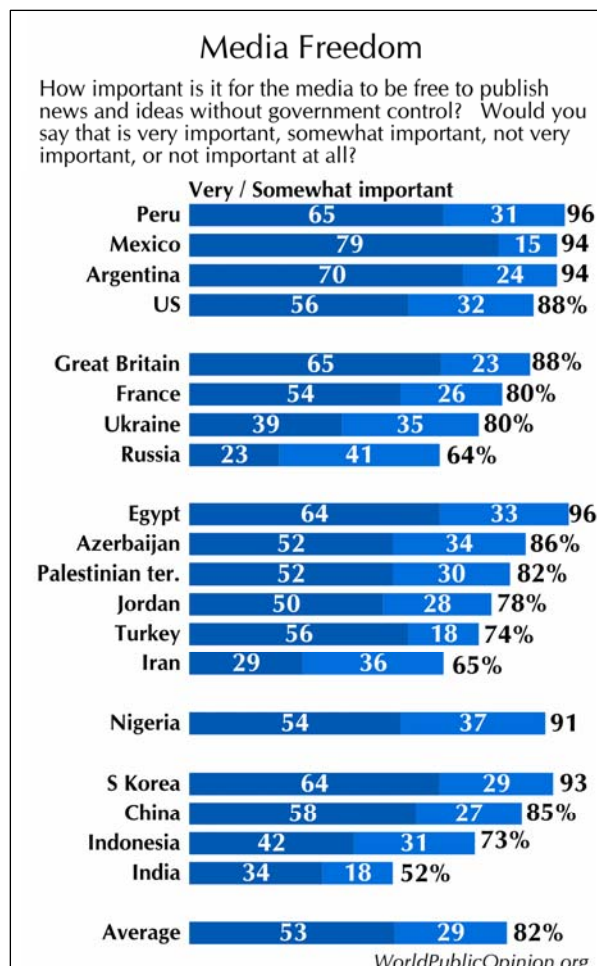
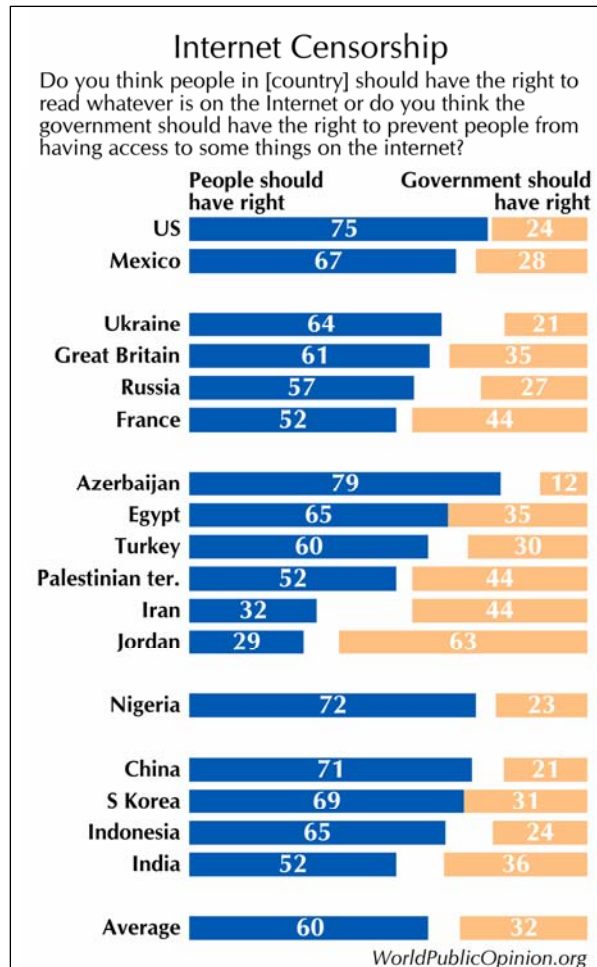
The only two publics to not endorse full access are Jordan and Iran. In Jordan 63 percent support government regulation of the Internet as do 44 percent in Iran (32% favor unlimited access).

However majorities in other Middle East nations favor the right to full Internet access including Egypt (65%), the Palestinian Territories (52%) and Turkey (60%). Two other majority-Muslim countries polled also endorse this right: Indonesia (65%) and Azerbaijan (79%).

Though majorities in all countries but Jordan and Iran favor the right, there is also significant minority support for some government control of access to information on the Internet in France (44%), the Palestinian Territories (44%), India (36%), and Great Britain (35%).

Worldwide Support for Principle of Media Freedom

The broader principle of media freedom gets very robust support. Majorities in all nations asked say that it is important “for the media to be free to publish news and ideas without government control.”



On average 82 percent say it is “important,” with 53 percent saying it is “very important.” In no country do more than 29 percent say that media freedom is “not very important” or “not important at all.”

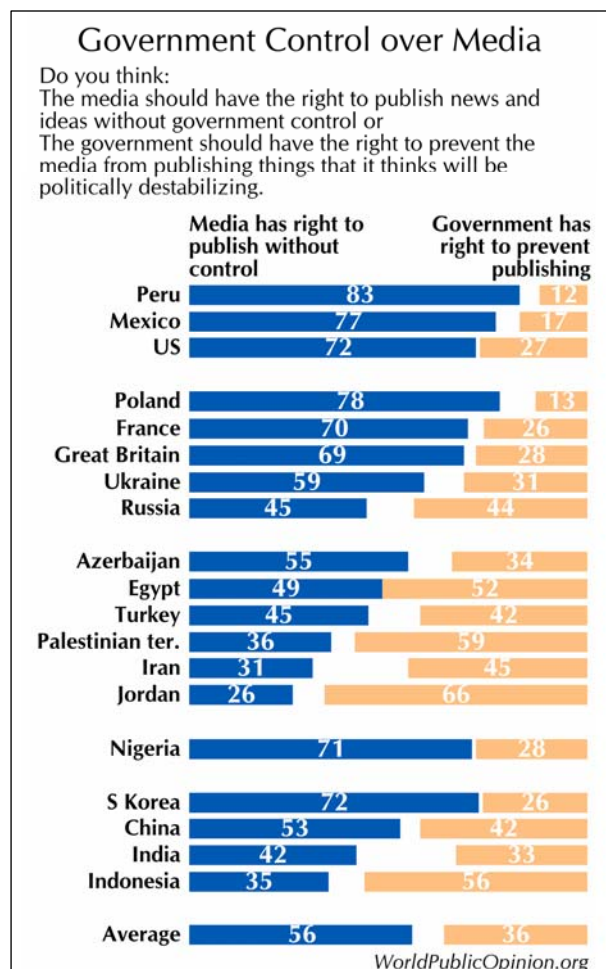
Respondents were also asked whether people in their country should “have the right to read publications from all other countries including those that might be considered enemies.” Once again majorities in all countries affirm this right; on average eight in ten.

The only country with less than seven in ten agreeing is India, where 56 percent agree. India also has the highest percentage (33%) saying that access to such publications should be limited.

Controlling Potentially Destabilizing Information

Presented with a choice between an argument in favor of media freedom without government control and the argument that “government should have the right to prevent the media from publishing things it thinks will be politically destabilizing,” majorities or pluralities in 12 publics polled feel that that the risk of political instability does not justify government control.

However in six predominantly Muslim countries and in Russia this scenario prompts considerable support for government control. Majorities in Jordan (66%), Palestine (59%), and Indonesia (56%) support government control of the media when the government thinks that publishing some things might be politically destabilizing. In Iran a plurality (45%) supports government control under such circumstances (31% feel the media should be able to publish freely). Views are divided in Russia (45% to 44%), Egypt (49% to 52%), and Turkey (45% to 42%).



This does not, however, mean that any of these publics favor greater government regulation in general. Rather, in four of these cases majorities favor greater media freedom—Egypt (64%), the Palestinian Territories (62%), Jordan (56%), and Indonesia

(53%). Only small minorities favor less freedom in Iran (9%), Turkey (30%), and Russia (17%).

Those countries with strong majorities continuing to favor media freedom even when it may be destabilizing include Peru (83%), Poland (78%), Mexico (77%), the US (72%), South Korea (72%), Nigeria (71%), France (70%), and Great Britain (69%). Smaller majorities or pluralities in three other countries also prefer media freedom over government control: Ukraine (59%), Azerbaijan (55%), China (53%) and India (42%).

Widespread Desire for More Freedom

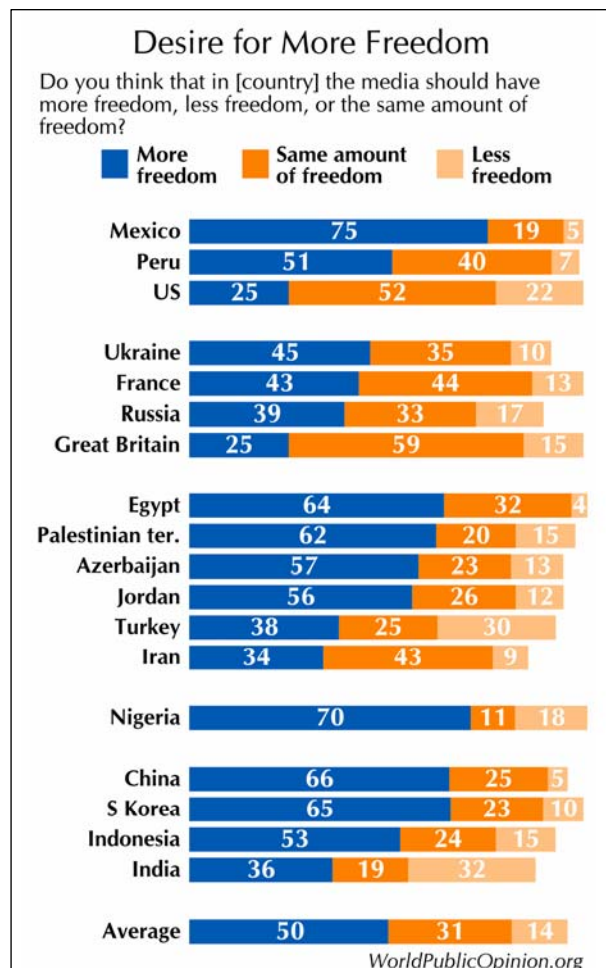
In ten countries a majority favors more media freedom and in another five their publics lean in that direction. Just three countries are largely content and in no country does more than one in three favor less freedom.

The ten countries with a majority calling for more freedom include Mexico (75%), Nigeria (70%), China (66%), South Korea (65%), Egypt (64%), the Palestinian Territories (62%), Azerbaijan (57%), Jordan (56%), Ukraine (45%), and France (43%).

An additional five countries have substantial numbers favoring greater freedom. These include Ukraine (45%), France (43%), Russia (39%), Turkey (38%), and India (36%). It should be noted, though, that in Turkey and India there is an unusually large number calling for less freedom (30 and 32%, respectively).

Three countries express relative contentment. Majorities in Britain

(59%) and the United States (52%) say that they have the right amount of freedom, as do 43 percent in Iran. In the United States an unusually large 22 percent call for less freedom—approximately the same as those calling for more (25%). This is in contrast to Britain and Iran where those calling for more freedom are significantly more than those calling for less (Britain: 25 to 15 %; Iran: 34 to 9 %).



On average, across all nations polled, 50 percent say that they would like their media to have more freedom, 14 percent favor less freedom, and 31 percent favor the same amount of freedom.

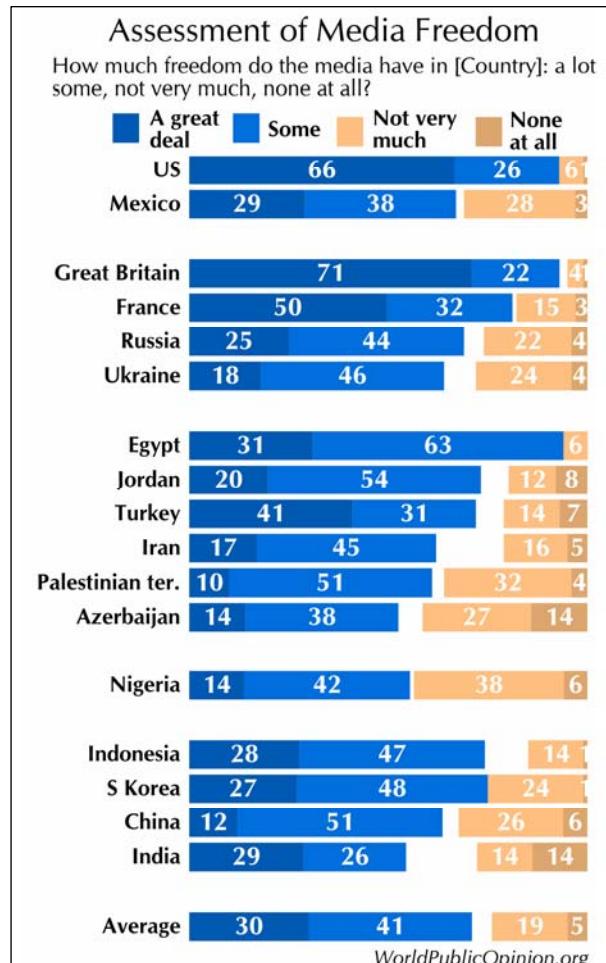
Status of Media Freedom in One’s Country

This poll also assessed public views of how free the media are in their own country. In all nations polled, a majority says that media in their country have either “a lot” (30% across countries) of freedom or “some” (41%) freedom. In no country polled did a majority say “not very much” or “none at all.”

This may not be surprising. Even when governments, or other forces, do exercise control over the media, they usually create an environment where control is not complete, where “some freedom” is present.

In only three countries polled do 50 percent or more say that the media in their country have a “lot of” freedom: Great Britain (71%), the US (66%), and France (50%).

The largest percentages saying the media have either not very much or no freedom are found in Nigeria (44%), Azerbaijan (41%), the Palestinian Territories (36%), and China (32%).



There is a clear correspondence between how people perceive media freedom in their country and outside evaluations. For example, the organization *Reporters Sans Frontieres* (RSF, or Reporters without Borders) ranks 169 countries in terms of their media freedom (see www.rsf.org for details of their measures). There is a correlation of .67 between the 2007 RSF rankings of countries in terms of media freedom and the proportion of the public in those countries saying in the poll that there is a lot of freedom.

In the poll, the three countries rated by at least half of their citizens as having “a lot” of media freedom also had three of the four highest ranks in the RSF 2007 Index: Great Britain (24th), France (31st), and the US (48th). South Korea had a ranking of 39 among the 169 RSF-ranked countries, but only 27 percent of Koreans say there is a lot of media freedom in their country.

Those countries where very few citizens polled say that there is “a lot” of media freedom also get low rankings among the 169 countries in the RSF index: Palestine 158th, China 163rd, Azerbaijan 139th, Nigeria 131st, Iran 166th, and Ukraine 92nd.

There also appears to be a relationship between the actual level of freedom—perceived by respondents or outside evaluators—and expressed dissatisfaction. In the three countries where half or more of the public says that there is “a lot” of media freedom, and who score relatively high on the RSF Index, the public tends to indicate that they want the media to have the “same amount of freedom.” This is the case in Britain (59%), the US (52%), and France (44%), though in France another 43 percent say they want more freedom.

In the 14 countries where the public characterize their country as having “some” rather than “a lot” of media freedom, majorities in 9 said that there should be *more* media freedom: Mexico (75%), Nigeria (70%), China (66%), South Korea (65%), Egypt (64%), Palestine (62%), Azerbaijan (57 %), Jordan (56%), and Indonesia (53%).

In five other countries the view is more mixed: Russia, Ukraine, Turkey, India, and Iran. In none of the five does a majority say there is a lot of media freedom, and each of the five countries receives low RSF Index rankings on media freedom. But majorities in none of the five say that there should be more media freedom.

In four of the countries support for more media freedom is the most common response, but not a majority: Russia (39%), Ukraine (45%), Turkey (38 %), and India (36%). Here the publics seem to recognize that media freedom is at least somewhat limited; they also say that media freedom is important, but a majority of the people is not demanding more. Among Iranians, only 17 percent of the public say there is a lot of media freedom, but only 34 percent say there should be more freedom in their country, and the most common response (43 %) is that there should be the same amount of freedom as there is currently.

COUNTRY-BY-COUNTRY RESULTS:

AMERICAS:

MEXICO

[Reforma](#)

Mexicans have the largest majorities saying freedom of the media is “very important” and that the media in their country should have greater freedom. Mexico has one of the largest majorities in support of media being free to publish news and ideas as opposed to allowing the government to impose restrictions to maintain stability.

- 94% of Mexicans say it is important for the media to be free to publish news and ideas without government control, including the largest majority (79%) that says it is very important.
- Two-thirds (67%) agree that people should have the right to read whatever they want on the Internet, rather than believing the government should have the right to prevent access to some things (28%).
- Presented two arguments, very few (17%) agree that the government should have the right to prevent media from publishing things it thinks will be destabilizing, while a majority (77%) feels that the media should have the right to publish news and ideas without government control, the third-largest majority out of all nations asked.
- An overwhelming 95% feel that they should have the right to read publications from other countries, even those considered enemies, the largest majority out of any nation asked.
- Only 29% in Mexico say that the media have a lot of freedom, while 38 percent says it has some freedom. Three in four (75%) in Mexico think that the media should have more freedom, the most out of any nation asked.

UNITED STATES

[Program on International Policy Attitudes / Knowledge Networks](#)

Americans have the second-largest majority in support of having the right to read whatever they want on the Internet and one of the largest majorities in favor of the right to read publications from all other countries. Americans are one of only three publics where the most common view is that the media already have a lot of freedom as opposed to just some. Americans also show some of the most widespread support for the media having the freedom to publish news and ideas without government control.

- Nearly nine in 10 (88%) Americans say it is very important for the media to be free to publish news and ideas without government control, including 56% that say it is very important. Three-quarters (75%) believe they should have the right to read whatever they want on the Internet without government restrictions.

- Very few (27%) favor the argument that the government should have the right to restrict this freedom in order to preserve stability, as opposed to 72% who say that the media should have the right to publish news and ideas without government control.
- A very large majority (92%) feels that they should be free to read publications from other countries, even those considered enemies.
- Two-thirds (66%) in the US feel that the media have “a lot” of freedom, while a majority (52%) says it should have the same amount of freedom it does and significantly fewer say it should have either more (25%) or less (22%).

ARGENTINA

[Graciela Romer y Asociados](#)

- An overwhelming majority of Argentines (94%) consider freedom of the media to be important, with 70% saying it is “very important” for the media to be free to publish news and ideas without government control.

PERU

[Grupo de Opinión Publica, Universidad de Lima](#)

Peruvians are among the largest majorities that say freedom of the press is important and are the largest majority that rejects the argument for government restrictions on the press in order to preserve political stability. A slight majority favors more freedom for the media.

- An overwhelming majority (96%) says that it important for the media to have the right to publish news and articles without government control, including 65% that say it is “very important.”
- Presented two arguments, only 12% say that the government should have the right to prevent the media from publishing things that could be politically destabilizing, while a very large majority (83%) favors the position that the media should have the right to publish news and ideas without government control.
- A slight majority (51%) says that media in Peru should have more freedom, while 40% feel it should have the same amount and 7% say it should have less.

EUROPE:

FRANCE

[Efficiency 3](#)

The French are among the three nations where the most common view is that the media have a lot of freedom in their country, although a significant number says it should also have more freedom. However, they are among the smallest majorities that favor people having the right to read whatever is on the Internet, rather than allowing the government to restrict access to some things.

- 80% in France feel it is very important for the media to have the right to publish news and ideas without government control and a smaller majority (52%) feels that people should have the unrestricted right to read whatever is on the Internet.
- Seven in 10 (70%) favor the argument that the media should have the right to publish news and ideas without government control, over the position that the government should have the right to prevent the publication of things it feels could be politically destabilizing (26%).
- A very large majority (82%) feels that they should have the right to read publications from all other countries.
- Half (50%) of the French says that the media already have “a lot” of freedom. The French are largely divided between 43% who believe the media should have more and 44% feel that it should have the amount it does now.

GREAT BRITAIN

[Chatham House \(Royal Institute of International Affairs\)](#) / [GlobeScan](#)

Britain has the largest majority saying the media have a lot of freedom in their country. Correspondingly, it has the largest majority expressing satisfaction with the amount of freedom it currently has. Britons are also among the largest majorities that say they should be free to read publications from all countries.

- Nearly nine in 10 (88%) in Britain say it is important for the media to have freedom, including 65% that say it is “very important.” A majority (61%) feels that they should have the right to read whatever is on the Internet.
- 69% of Britons say that the media should have the right to publish news and ideas without government control, as opposed to just 28% that feel the government should have the right to prevent the media from publishing things it thinks could be politically destabilizing.
- A very large majority says that Britons should have the right to read publications from all countries, even those considered enemies (89%).
- A large majority (71%) says that the media have a lot of freedom in Britain, the largest majority out of all nations asked. Fifty-nine percent feel the media should have the same amount of freedom it has now, as opposed to smaller numbers that say it should have more (25%) or less freedom (15%).

RUSSIA

[Levada Center](#)

Although a substantial majority of Russians agree it is important for the media to be free to publish news and ideas without government control, it is the second smallest majority. More significantly, Russians are one of the few publics (and the only non-Muslim one) divided on whether the government should have the right to control the media in the effort to preserve stability. They are among the publics with the lowest levels of support for the media gaining more freedom than it already has.

- 64% of Russians feel it is either somewhat (41%) or very important (23%) for the media to be free to publish news and ideas without government control, while 57% believe they should have the right to read whatever is on the Internet.
- Given two positions, Russians are one of the few publics divided on whether the media should have the right to publish news and ideas without government control (45%) or whether the government should have the right to prevent the media from publishing things in order to preserve stability (44%).
- 71% in Russia believe that they should have the right to read publications from all other countries, even those considered enemies.
- Asked how much freedom the media currently have in Russia, the most common view is it has “some” (44%), followed by “a lot” (25%). Only 39% believe the media should have more freedom, while 33% believe it should have the same amount and 17% believe it should have less.

UKRAINE

[Kiev International Institute of Sociology](#)

Ukrainians agree with most other publics that it is important for the media to have freedom. Approximately half believe the media in their country should be more free than it is now.

- 74% of Ukrainians agree it is important for the media to have the freedom to publish news and ideas without government control and a majority (64%) believes people should have the right to read whatever is on the Internet rather than having the government impose restrictions.
- Ukrainians tend to reject the argument that the government should have the right to restrict the media’s freedom in order to preserve stability (31%), while nearly three in five (59%) agree more that the media should be free to publish news and ideas without control.
- A large majority of Ukrainians (82%) believes people should have the right to read publications from any country, even those that could be considered enemies.
- 46% in the Ukraine say the media only have “some” freedom, while just 18% feel it has “a lot.” 45% believe it should have more freedom than it does now, 35% feel it should have about the same, and 10% say it should have less.

POLAND

[CBOS](#)

- A very large majority of Poles (78%) believes that the media should have the right to publish news and ideas without government control, while very few (13%) believe government should have the right to restrict this freedom.
- An overwhelming majority (84%) agree that people in Poland should have the right to read publications from all other countries, even those that might be considered enemies.

MIDDLE EAST/EURASIA:

AZERBAIJAN

International Center for Social Research

Azerbaijanis have the largest majority supporting the right to have unrestricted access to material on the Internet. While most say the media in Azerbaijan have at least some freedom, they are among the smallest numbers saying the media have a lot of freedom and a majority believes the media should have even greater freedom.

- A very large majority of Azerbaijanis (86%) say that it is important for the media to have the freedom to publish news and ideas without government control and 79% say that people should have the right to read whatever they want on the Internet, the largest majority out of all nations asked.
- Few Azerbaijanis (34%) find the argument convincing that the government should have the right to prevent the media from publishing news and ideas that could be politically destabilizing, while 55% favor the media having the right to publish news and ideas without government control.
- Nearly three in four (73%) say that people should have the right to read publications from all other countries, including those that could be considered enemies.
- Azerbaijanis most commonly say that the media have “some” freedom (38%), while very few say it has “a lot” of freedom. Fifty-seven percent feel that the media should have more freedom than it does now, significantly more than those who say it should have the same amount (23%) or less freedom (13%).

EGYPT

Attitude Market Research

Egyptians are among the publics most supportive of the principle of media freedom—they have the highest number saying media freedom is important. However they are also one of three divided on whether the government should have the right to restrict freedom to prevent political instability. Egyptians are also one of the five largest majorities calling for more freedom.

- An overwhelming majority (97%) of Egyptians say it is important for the media to be free (64% very important) and 65% believe that people should have the right to read whatever is on the Internet.
- Presented two arguments, Egyptians are among the few publics divided on whether the government should have the right to prevent the media from publishing things it thinks will be destabilizing (52%) and whether the media should have the right to publish news and ideas without government control (49%).
- Nearly three in four (74%) say that people in Egypt should have the right to read publications from all other countries, even those that might be considered enemies.

- A majority in Egypt (63%) says that the media have “some” freedom, although 31% also say it has “a lot” of freedom. A large majority (64%) also feels it should have more freedom, while just one-third (32%) says it should have the same amount and 4% say it should have less freedom.

IRAN

WorldPublicOpinion.org

While two thirds of Iranians favor press freedom, overall their support is among the weakest. Iranians are one of two publics asked that lean in favor of the government having the right to restrict access to information on the Internet and among the few nations that feel the government should have the right to prevent the press from publishing news and ideas that could be destabilizing. However, a large majority believes Iranians should have the right to read publications from all other countries.

- A majority of Iranians (65%) agrees that it is important for the press to have the freedom to publish news and ideas without government control.
- 44% support the government having the right to prevent people from having access to some things on the Internet, while 32% believe people should have the right to read whatever is on the Internet.
- A plurality (45%) favors the argument that the government should have the right to restrict the press’ freedom to publish things it thinks could be destabilizing, while 31% prefer the argument that the press should have the right to publish news and ideas without government control.
- A very large majority (79%) believes people in Iran should have the right to read publications from all other countries.
- Iranians most commonly say that the press has “some” freedom in their country (45%), while just very few (17%) say that it has “a lot” of freedom. Most say that the press should have the same amount of freedom as it does now (43%), while fewer say it should have more (34%) or less freedom (9%).

JORDAN

[Center for Strategic Studies, University of Jordan](http://CenterforStrategicStudies,UniversityofJordan)

Despite a robust eight in 10 supporting media freedom in principle, among the nations asked, Jordanians are the only case in which a majority favors the government restricting access to things on the Internet. Jordanians also favor the argument that the government should have the right to prevent the media from publishing things in order to maintain stability.

- Nearly four in five (78%) Jordanians agree on the importance of the media having freedom to publish news and ideas.
- A majority (63%) says that the government should have the right to prevent people from having access to some things on the Internet (one of two nations where this is the most common view), while just 29% say people should be able to read whatever is on the Internet.

- A majority of Jordanians (66%) favors the argument that the government should have the right to restrict the media from publishing things that could be destabilizing, while just 26% feel that the media should be free to publish news and ideas without government control.
- 54% in Jordan say the media have at least “some” freedom, while 24% feel it has “a lot” of freedom. A majority (56%) also believes the media should have more freedom, while only 26% say it should have the same amount and 12% feel it should have less.

PALESTINIAN TERRITORIES

[Palestinian Center for Public Opinion](#)

Palestinians are among the publics more willing to tolerate government restrictions on media freedom in order to maintain stability. However Palestinians have the smallest number agreeing that the media have “a lot” of freedom now, and has one of the largest majorities feeling that it should have greater freedom.

- 82% of Palestinians agree that it is important for the media to have the freedom to publish news and ideas without government control.
- A slight majority (52%) favors people having the right to read whatever is on the Internet, although 44% take the opposite view that the government should have the right to prevent people from having access to some things on the Internet.
- A majority of Palestinians (59%) subscribes to the argument that the government should have the right to restrict media freedom to prevent instability, while 36% find the argument that the media should have the right to publish news and ideas without government control more convincing.
- 72% believe that Palestinians should have the right to read publications from all countries, even those that could be considered enemies.
- Palestinians most commonly say that the media have “some” freedom (51%), and very few (10%) feel it has “a lot” of freedom. A large majority (62%) believes the media should have more freedom than it does now, while 20% feel it should have the same amount, and 15% say it should have less.

TURKEY

[ARI Foundation](#) / [Infakto Research Workshop](#)

Among Muslim publics, Turks have the largest number saying the media already have a great deal of freedom. Though supporting freedom of the media in principle, Turks are one of the few publics divided on whether the government should have the right to restrict media freedom in order to maintain political stability.

- Nearly three in four (74%) Turks say that freedom of the media is important, and 60% believe that people should have the right to read whatever they want on the Internet.
- Presented two arguments, Turks are among the few publics that are divided between the media having the right to publish news and ideas without government

- control (45%) and the government having the right to prevent the media from publishing things that it thinks will be politically destabilizing (42%).
- 74% say that the people in Turkey should be able to read publications from other countries, even those considered enemies.
 - Many Turks believe the media have “a lot” (41%) of freedom, the largest number among the Muslim publics asked, while an additional 31% say it has “some” freedom. Thirty-eight percent say it should have more freedom than it does now, while 30% feel it should have less and 25% feel it should have about the same amount.

AFRICA:

NIGERIA

Market Trends Research International

Nigerians have the largest number saying the media lacks freedom in their country and have the second-most widespread support for greater media freedom among all nations asked. Nigerians are also among the largest majorities favoring the right to read publications from all countries and rejecting the argument that government should restrict media freedom to preserve stability.

- An overwhelming 91% say it is important to have freedom of the media and 72% say they should have the right to read whatever is on the Internet.
- Nigerians have one of the largest majorities rejecting the argument that the government should have the right to restrict media freedom to ensure stability (28%) in favor of the media having the right to publish news and ideas without government control (71%).
- A large majority (91%) says Nigerians should have the right to read publications from other countries, even those that could be considered enemies, one of the largest majorities among all nations asked.
- Nigerians have the largest number saying the media have “not very much freedom” (38%) or “none at all” (6%), though 42% say it has “some” freedom. 70% feel that Nigeria should have more freedom for the media, while just 18% say they should have less and 11% say it should remain about the same.

ASIA/PACIFIC:

CHINA

WorldPublicOpinion.org

The Chinese public expresses robust support for freedom of the media in principle and has the most widespread support among Asian publics asked for the right to read publications from other countries and for unrestricted access to the Internet. China also has the third-largest majority calling for greater freedom.

- 85% say it is important to have freedom of the media and 71% agree that people should have the right to read whatever is on the Internet.
- While a significant number of the Chinese (42%) favor the argument that the government should have the right to prevent the media from publishing news and ideas that it thinks will be politically destabilizing, a majority (53%) says the media should have the right to publish news and ideas without government control.
- A large majority (78%) says that people in China should have the right to read publications from other countries, even those that could be considered enemies.
- A slight majority (51%) in China says the media have a least “some” freedom, though very few (12%) say it has “a lot.” Two-thirds (66%) feel that the media should have more freedom in China, while 25% are satisfied with the freedom they have.

INDIA

[Team CVoter](#)

Indians have the most modest majorities expressing support for the importance of media freedom and for the right to read publications from unfriendly countries. They have the largest percentage calling for less freedom.

- Modest majorities of Indians (52%) say it is important to have freedom of the media and that people should have the right to read whatever is on the Internet (52%).
- Given two arguments, a plurality (42%) maintains that the media should be free to publish news and ideas without government control, while just one-third (33%) prefer that the government should have the right to prevent the media from publishing things that could be politically destabilizing.
- 56% say that people in India should have the right to read publications from other countries, including those that could be considered enemies, though one-third (33%) say people should not have this right, the most of any public asked.
- Only 29% believe the media have “a lot” of freedom in India, while 26% say it has “some.” Indians are somewhat divided on whether they favor greater freedom for the media (36%), less freedom (32%) or whether it should remain about the same (19%).

INDONESIA

[Synovate](#)

Though a large majority of Indonesians think it is important to have freedom of the media, Indonesia is one of a handful of nations to have a majority saying that restricting the media is appropriate so as to preserve political stability. At the same time a majority favors greater freedom.

- 73% say it is important to have freedom of the media and 65% feel people should have the right to read whatever is on the Internet.

- Presented two positions, Indonesians are one of the few majorities that endorse the government having the right to restrict media freedom in order to ensure political stability, while 35% say that the media should be free to publish news and ideas without government control.
- A very large majority (84%) agrees that Indonesians should have the right to read publications from other countries, even those considered enemies.
- A significant number in Indonesia believes the media have at least “some” (47%) or “a lot” (28%) of freedom. A majority (53%) feels that the media should have greater freedom, while just 24% believe it should be about the same and 15% say it should have less.

SOUTH KOREA

[East Asia Institute](#)

Among Asian countries, South Korea has the highest support for freedom of the media in principle. South Koreans are also among the largest majorities favoring greater freedom for the media in their country, and the least supportive among Asian publics for the argument that government should be able to restrict the freedom of the media in order to preserve stability.

- An overwhelming majority (93%) say it is important to have freedom of the media and nearly seven in 10 (69%) say that people should have the right to read whatever is on the Internet.
- Presented two arguments, very few South Koreans (26%) favor the government having the right to prevent the media from publishing things it could consider politically destabilizing and are among the publics that most widely support the media having the right to publish news and ideas without government control (72%).
- 73% say that people in South Korea should have the right to read publications from other countries, including those that may be considered enemies.
- South Koreans most commonly say the media have at least “some” freedom in their country (48%), although an additional 27% say it has “a lot” of freedom. A large majority (65%) feels that the media should have greater freedom, while 23% are satisfied with the freedom they already have.

WORLDPUBLICOPINION.ORG

World Public Opinion on Freedom of the Media

May 1, 2008

Q1: How important is it for the media to be free to publish news and ideas without government control?

	Very important	Somewhat important	Not very important	Not important at all	Depends (vol)	DK / NS
Argentina	70	24	4	1	0	0
Mexico	79	15	4	0	1	1
Peru	65	31	3	0	0	1
US	56	32	10	1	0	1
France	54	26	11	5	3	1
Great Britain	65	23	7	4	1	1
Russia	23	41	21	5	5	6
Ukraine	39	35	13	5	3	6
Azerbaijan	52	34	5	5	3	1
Egypt	64	33	2	0	0	0
Iran ¹	29	36	9	8	3	16
Jordan	50	28	12	7	0	4
Palestinian ter.	52	30	12	5	0	1
Turkey	56	18	9	9	3	5
Nigeria	54	37	6	1	1	1
China	58	27	10	1	2	2
India	34	18	8	6	33	2
Indonesia	42	31	13	3	2	8
S Korea	64	29	6	1	0	0
Average	52	29	9	4	3	3

Q2: Which view is closer to yours? Do you think:

	The media should have the right to publish news and ideas without government control.	The government should have the right to prevent the media from publishing things that it thinks will be politically destabilizing.	DK / NS
Mexico	77	17	6
Peru	83	12	5

¹ In all questions asked in Iran, the word “press” was substituted for “media.”

US	72	27	1
France	70	26	4
Great Britain	69	28	3
Poland²	78	13	9
Russia	45	44	12
Ukraine	59	31	10
Azerbaijan	55	34	11
Egypt	49	52	0
Iran³	31	45	24
Jordan	26	66	8
Palestinian ter.	36	59	6
Turkey	45	42	13
Nigeria	71	28	1
China	53	42	5
India	42	33	25
Indonesia	35	56	9
S Korea	72	26	1
Average	55	37	8

Q3: How much freedom does the media have in [country]: a lot, some, not very much, none at all?

	A lot	Some	Not very much	None at all	DK / NS
Mexico	29	38	28	3	2
US	66	26	6	1	0
France	50	32	15	3	1
Great Britain	71	22	4	1	2
Russia	25	44	22	4	5
Ukraine	18	46	24	4	8
Azerbaijan	14	38	27	14	6
Egypt	31	63	6	0	0
Iran	17	45	16	5	17
Jordan	20	54	12	8	7
Palestinian ter.	10	51	32	4	3
Turkey	41	31	14	7	7
Nigeria	14	42	38	6	1
China	12	51	26	6	4

² In Poland, the question was presented as “Do you think the media should have the right to publish news and opinions without government control or should they not have this right since this would be harmful and could be destabilizing?”

³ The second option presented to Iranians was “The government should have the right to prevent the media from publishing things that it thinks will be destabilizing.” with the word “politically” removed.

India	29	26	14	14	18
Indonesia	28	47	14	1	11
S Korea	27	48	24	1	0
Average	30	41	19	5	5

Q4: Do you think that in [country] the media should have more freedom, less freedom, or the same amount of freedom?

	More freedom	Less freedom	The same amount of freedom	DK / NS
Mexico	75	5	19	1
Peru	51	7	40	2
US	25	22	52	1
France	43	13	44	1
Great Britain	25	15	59	1
Russia	39	17	33	11
Ukraine	45	10	35	9
Azerbaijan	57	13	23	6
Egypt	64	4	32	0
Iran	34	9	43	15
Jordan	56	12	26	6
Palestinian ter.	62	15	20	3
Turkey	38	30	25	8
Nigeria	70	18	11	0
China	66	5	25	5
India	36	32	19	13
Indonesia	53	15	24	8
S Korea	65	10	23	1
Average	50	14	30	5

Q5: Do you think people in [country] should or should not have the right to read publications from all other countries, including those that might be considered enemies?

	Should	Should not	DK / NS
Mexico	95	3	2
US	92	7	1
France	82	15	4
Great Britain	89	7	4
Poland	84	7	9
Russia	71	15	14
Ukraine	82	8	10

Azerbaijan	73	14	13
Egypt	74	26	0
Iran⁴	79	6	16
Palestinian ter.	72	23	5
Turkey	74	18	9
Nigeria	91	8	1
China	78	17	5
India	56	33	11
Indonesia	84	7	9
S Korea	73	26	1
Average	79	14	7

Q6: Do you think people in [country] should have the right to read whatever is on the Internet or do you think the government should have the right to prevent people from having access to some things on the internet?

	People should have the right to read whatever is on the internet	Government should have the right to prevent people from having access to some things on the Internet	DK / NS
Mexico	67	28	5
US	75	24	1
France	52	44	4
Great Britain	61	35	5
Russia	57	27	17
Ukraine	64	21	16
Azerbaijan	79	12	10
Egypt	65	35	0
Iran	32	44	24
Jordan	29	63	9
Palestinian ter.	52	44	4
Turkey	60	30	10
Nigeria	72	23	5
China	71	21	8
India	52	36	12
Indonesia	65	24	12
S Korea	69	31	0
Average	60	32	8

⁴ Iranian respondents were asked “Do you think people in your country should or should not have the right to read publications from all other countries?”

RESEARCH PARTNERS

Country	Research Center	Contact
Argentina	Graciela Romer y Asociados	Ms. Graciela C. Römer graciela@romer.com.ar (+54-11) 4345-2864/5
Azerbaijan	International Center for Social Research	Dr. Tair Faradov tfaradov@yahoo.com (+99 412) 492 27 34/672 22 49
China	WorldPublicOpinion.org	Dr. Stephen Weber sweber@pipa.org +1 202 232 7500
Egypt	Attitude Market Research	Mr. Mohamed Al Gendy mgendy@attitude-eg.com +202 22711262
France	Efficiencie 3	Ms. Laetitia Larreguy laetitia.l@efficiencie3.com +33 3 26 79 75 82
Great Britain	Chatham House (Royal Institute of International Affairs) / GlobeScan	Dr. Robin Niblett rniblett@chathamhouse.org.uk +44 (0)20 7314 3667 Mr. Lloyd Hetherington lloyd.hetherington@globescan.com +1 416 962 0707
India	Team CVoter	Mr. Yashwant Deshmukh yashwant@teamcvoter.com 91 120 4247135
Indonesia	Synovate	Ms. Eva Yusuf Eva.Yusuf@synovate.com (+62-21) 2525 608
Iran	WorldPublicOpinion.org	Dr. Stephen Weber sweber@pipa.org +1 202 232 7500
Jordan	Center for Strategic Studies, University of Jordan	Dr. Fares Braizat f.braizat@gmail.com (+962 6) 5300100
Mexico	Reforma	Dr. Alejandro Moreno alejandro.moreno@reforma.com +52 56 28 72 35
Nigeria	Market Trends Research International	Mr. Michael Umogun m.umogun@research-intng.com + 234-1 791 79 87

Palestinian territories	Palestinian Center for Public Opinion	Dr. Nabil Kukali kukali@p-ol.com (+972-2) 2774846
Poland	CBOS	Dr. Michal Wenzel m.wenzel@cbos.pl (+0-22) 693 47 25 / 693 46 93
Peru	Grupo de Opinión Publica, Universidad de Lima	Dr. Luis Benavente lbenaven@correo.ulima.edu.pe (+511) 437-6767
Russia	Levada Center	Ms. Ludmila Khakhulina lkhahul@levada.ru (+7 095) 229-55-44
South Korea	East Asia Institute	Dr. Han Wool Jeong hwjeong@eai.or.kr +82 02-2277-1683
Turkey	ARI Foundation / Infakto Research Workshop	Mr. Yurter Ozcan Yurter@arifoundation.org +1 (804) 868 0123 Dr. Emre Erdogan emre.erdogan@infakto.com.tr +90 212 231 07 08
Ukraine	Kiev International Institute of Sociology	Dr. Vladimir Illich Paniotto paniotto@kmis.kiev.ua (+38) 044 537-3376 / (+38) 044 501-7403
United States	Program on International Policy Attitudes / Knowledge Networks	Dr. Stephen Weber sweber@pipa.org +1-202-232-7500 Dr. Michael Dennis mdennis@knowledgenetworks.com +1-650-289-2160

METHODOLOGY

Country	Sample Size (unweighted)	MoE (%)	Field dates	Survey methodology	Type of sample
Argentina	800	3.5	March 14-20, 2008	Face-to-face	Urban ¹
Azerbaijan	602	4.1	Jan 13 – Feb 5, 2008	Face-to-face	National
China	1000	3.2	Jan 10-25, 2008	Telephone	Urban ²
Egypt	600	4.1	Jan 17-27, 2008	Face-to-face	Urban ³
France	600	4.1	Feb 5-11, 2008	Telephone	National
Great Britain	800	3.5	Jan 29 – Feb 19, 2008	Telephone	National
India	1023	3.2	February 25-29, 2008	Face-to-face	National ⁴
Indonesia	811	3.5	Jan 19-29, 2008	Face-to-face	National ⁵
Iran	710	3.8	Jan 13 – Feb 9, 2008	Face-to-face	National
Jordan	959	3.2	March 4-10, 2008	Face-to-face	National
Mexico	850	3.4	Jan 25-27, 2008	Telephone	National ⁶
Nigeria	1000	3.2	February 7-18, 2008	Face-to-face	National ⁷
Palestinian territories	626	4.0	February 10-23, 2008	Face-to-face	National ⁸
Peru	597	4.1	March 2008	Face-to-face	Urban ⁹
Poland	870	3.4	Nov 29 – Dec 4, 2007	Face-to-face	National
Russia	1600	3.5	Jan 18-22, 2008	Face-to-Face	National ¹⁰
South Korea	600	4.1	Feb 11-12, 2008	Telephone	National
Turkey	719	3.7	Jan 12-24, 2008	Face-to-face	National

Ukraine	2046	3.1	Feb 8-18, 2008	Face-to-face	National ¹¹
United States	1309	3.3	Jan 18-27, 2008	Internet	National ¹²

¹ In Argentina, the survey was executed in the urban areas of Capital Federal, Gran Buenos Aires, Cordoba, Mendoza, and Rosario, representing 39 percent of Argentina's population.

² In China, the survey was a national probability sample of urban telephone households across China. A stratified PPS sample design was developed to sample 20 cities; urban households represent approximately 45 percent of the Chinese population.

³ In Egypt, the survey was executed in the urban areas of Cairo, Alexandria, Giza, and Subra. These four urbanized areas represent 75 percent of Egypt's urban population, which is 42 percent of the national population.

⁴ In India, a face-to-face survey was conducted in urban and rural areas in 14 of the largest Indian states; these states comprise 77 percent of India's population. The sample is 60 percent urban, India's population is approximately 30 percent urban.

⁵ In Indonesia, a national probability sample was conducted in both urban and rural areas and covering approximately 87 percent of Indonesia's population.

⁶ In Mexico, a random telephone sample of adults who had landline telephones was conducted in all 31 states and the Federal District. Telephone penetration in Mexico is 55 percent.

⁷ In Nigeria, the sample was developed by selecting six states, one per geographic region, based upon their size and representativeness. Within each state, sampling points were selected by means of a multi-stage random sample which disproportionately sampled urban areas. The final sample is 75 percent urban; Nigeria is approximately 50 percent urban.

⁸ In the Palestinian Territories, a face-to-face national probability survey was conducted among the population of the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip.

⁹ In Peru, the survey was executed in the metropolitan areas of Lima and Callao, representing 31 percent of the population.

¹⁰ In Russia, all items were half sampled; each item was answered by 800 respondents.

¹¹ In the Ukraine, all items were half-sampled; each item was answered by at least 1,020 respondents.

¹² In the United States, the poll was an online survey drawn from a nationally representative sample of the Knowledge Networks online panel. This panel is probabilistically-based, selected from the population of US telephone households and subsequently provided with an Internet connection if needed. Items in the US survey were split sampled so that each item was answered by at least 940 respondents.