



Summary of Freedom House's *Freedom of the Press 2012* Findings China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan

China:

	Freedom of the Press 2011	Freedom of the Press 2012
Status	Not Free	Not Free
Legal Environment	29	29
Political Environment	34	34
Economic Environment	22	22
Total Score	85	85

China's media environment remained one of the world's most restrictive in 2011. Authorities sharply curbed coverage of the popular uprisings in the Middle East, retained blocks on international social-media platforms like Twitter, and tightened controls on investigative reporting and entertainment programming in advance of a sensitive leadership change scheduled for 2012. Detailed party directives—which are relayed daily to editors—also restricted coverage related to public health, environmental accidents, deaths in police custody, and foreign policy. Several dozen writers, bloggers, and online activists were detained, forcibly disappeared, abused in custody, and in select cases sentenced to long prison terms after calls for a Tunisian-style Jasmine Revolution in China circulated on the internet in February. Despite these dangers, Chinese journalists and millions of netizens continued to test the limits of permissible expression by drawing attention to incipient scandals or launching campaigns via domestic microblogging platforms. Most notably in 2011, journalists defied censors' orders to avoid coverage of a fatal high-speed rail crash in July, while netizens circulated real-time updates of the incident and official attempts to cover up the extent of the damage and the collision's root cause.

Hong Kong:

	Freedom of the Press 2011	Freedom of the Press 2012
Status	Partly Free	Partly Free
Legal Environment	11	11
Political Environment	12	13
Economic Environment	9	9
Total Score	32	33

Although freedom of expression is protected by law and Hong Kong media remain lively in their criticism of the territory's government, political and economic pressures narrow the space for free expression. In 2011, several incidents raised concerns that the state broadcaster's editorial independence was under threat. For example, in November two popular hosts of radio call-in shows on current affairs were suddenly informed

that their contracts would not be renewed; they had been with the station for a combined 19 years. Hong Kong authorities also infringed on journalists' ability to cover certain events. In July, reporters were pepper-sprayed amid police efforts to break up demonstrations surrounding the anniversary of Hong Kong's handover from Britain to China, and two media workers were detained. The following month, during a visit to the territory by Chinese vice premier Li Keqiang, the authorities took unprecedented measures to limit reporters' access to key events Li was attending.

Taiwan:

	Freedom of the Press 2011	Freedom of the Press 2012
Status	Free	Free
Legal Environment	7	8
Political Environment	9	9
Economic Environment	9	8
Total Score	25	25

Taiwan's media environment is one of the freest in Asia, with a vigorous and diverse press that reports aggressively on government policies and alleged official wrongdoing. During 2011, media freedom watchdogs raised concerns about the use of criminal defamation laws against a journalist and blogger as well as a proposed merger that could reduce media diversity. In a positive development, responding to public pressure, the legislature passed legal amendments designed to curtail a practice in which government promotional material is disguised as news. However, there continued to be incidents of news content produced by Chinese state-run outlets appearing in Taiwanese papers under less than transparent conditions.