

# Taiwan

The independence and sovereign limits of Taiwan are disputed. The People's Republic of China insists that there is one unified China, including Taiwan, however Taiwan claims independence as a separate state. This tension means that Taiwan is only considered a separate state by 25 countries internationally. Owing to the refusal of the mainland to recognise the island nation's dissent and independence from the People's Republic of China, Taiwan is diplomatically isolated, but has nevertheless fashioned a nation with secular equality enshrined in law, regarded as relatively prosperous and free.

Constitution and government	Education and children's rights	Family, community, society, religious courts and tribunals	Freedom of expression advocacy of humanist values
<u>The state is secular, with separation of religious and political authorities, not discriminating against any religion or belief</u>	<u>No formal discrimination in education</u>	<u>No religious tribunals of concern, secular groups operate freely, individuals are not persecuted by the state</u>	<u>No fundamental restrictions on freedom of expression or advocacy of humanist values</u>

Legend

## Constitution and government

Formally a secular state, Taiwan's constitution and other laws and policies protect freedom of thought, conscience and religion, as well as freedom of expression, assembly and association. In particular, Article 7 highlights equality between all citizens irrespective of religion, race, sex and other parts of one's identity. Article 13 refers to the freedom of religious belief. Article 11 states that citizens have freedom of speech, writing and publications. These rights are generally respected in practice.

## Education and children's rights

Compulsory religious instruction is not permitted in any Ministry of Education (MOE)-accredited public or private elementary, middle, or high school. High schools accredited by the MOE are not allowed to require religious instruction, but may provide elective courses in religious studies, provided such courses do not promote certain religious beliefs over others. Religious organizations are permitted to operate private schools.

## Family, community and society

In addition to Buddhism and a range of other religions, secular moral Confucianism commonly pervades the culture. Recent polls reveal that 35.1% of the population are of Buddhist faith, 33% adhere to Taoism and 18.7% identify as atheist or agnostic. The remaining population are stratified between other religious groups such as Yiguandao, Protestant Christianity and Tiandism amongst others.

## **Freedom of expression, advocacy of humanist values**

There appear to be relatively few concerns of any kind about freedom of the press and of political opposition in Taiwan. The media is generally considered amongst the most free in Asia, journalists report through a diversity of views and often showcase strong affiliation to government parties in their coverage. The political tension between Taiwan and the People's Republic of China caused some media owners vulnerable to self-censorship in order to protect their potential business relationships with Chinese stakeholders. More recently, Taiwanese regulators have refrained partnerships with such companies. Legally, censorship laws are in place but do not appear to be widely enforced. Taiwan is rated "Free" by Freedom House. The 2018 elections saw a surge of disinformation in the media, critics suggested revisiting the National Security Act as a response to this, however fears of silencing important media voices were cited against imposing new restrictions.

Three journalists covering student protests were arrested in Taipei in July 2015. They refused to pay bail, but were released the next day anyway. In a statement, the Mayor of Taipei, Ko Wen-je, apologized for "the violation of press freedom" and said that as mayor, he had "an obligation to protect press freedom."

<[cpj.org/2015/07/in-taiwan-three-journalists-arrested-at-student-pr.php](http://cpj.org/2015/07/in-taiwan-three-journalists-arrested-at-student-pr.php)>