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Russia 'Acquiring Features of Dictatorship' After Ukraine Invasion – Study

By AFP

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Sergei Vedyashkin / Moskva News Agency

Democratic standards worldwide improved slightly in 2022 after the lifting of Covid-19 restrictions, but plummeted further in Russia following its invasion of Ukraine, the Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) said on Thursday.

Overall, less than half — 45.3% — of the world's population is living in a democracy, the London-based analysis group said.

"More than a third of the world's population — 36.9% — live under authoritarian rule, a large share of which are in China and Russia," the EIU said, as it published its annual Democracy Index.

A little under 8% live in a "full democracy" in a group of more than 20 countries such as

Canada, Sweden and Uruguay.

"Following its invasion of Ukraine, Russia's score showed the most dramatic drop of any country in the world," the analysis group said.

Russian authorities have been waging an unprecedented media and opposition crackdown since President Vladimir Putin sent troops to Ukraine in February 2022.

"Russia has been on a trajectory away from democracy for a long time and is now acquiring many of the features of a dictatorship," the EIU said.

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Burkina Faso, which witnessed two military coups last year and has been losing ground to a jihadist insurgency, also fell in the ranking.

Haiti, which has been gripped by a worsening political and economic crisis since the July 2021 assassination of president Jovenel Moise, was another country to drop in the index.

In positive trends, Chile, France and Spain were upgraded from the "flawed democracy" to "full democracy" category, mainly because of a reversal of pandemic measures that had infringed citizens' freedoms in 2020-21, the EIU said.

But "from a global perspective the year 2022 was a disappointing one for democracy," it added.

The global average score scarcely improved from 5.28 in 2021 to 5.29.

Despite expectations that there might be a rebound as coronavirus-related prohibitions were lifted, these advances were canceled out by other negative developments globally, it said.

Norway, New Zealand and Iceland held the top three places for 2022, while the bottom three were North Korea, Myanmar and Afghanistan.

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