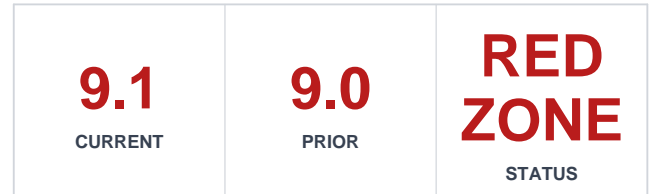


DEMOCRACY REDLINE

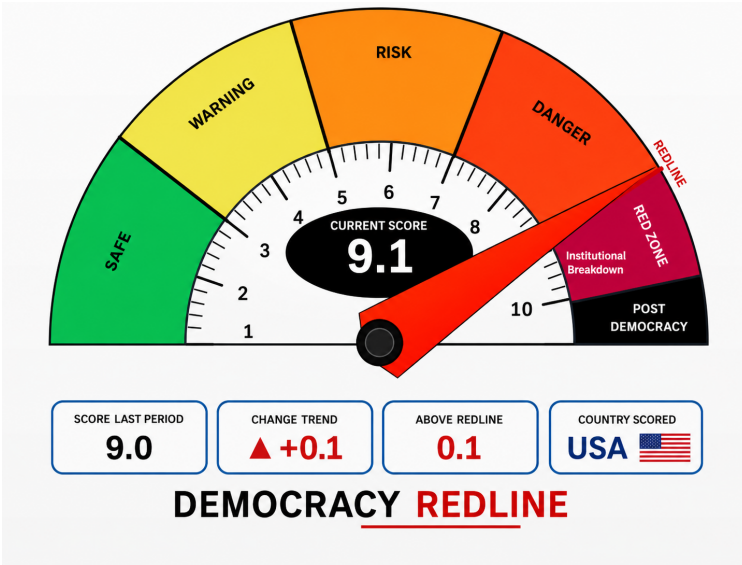
May 2026 Formal Report

Democracy Redline Index: 9.1 / 10

May confirmed the April Red Zone warning. The score moved from 9.0 to 9.1 because multiple safeguards deteriorated together after the Red Zone had already been reached.



Bottom line: May did not reverse April's warning. It deepened it. The strongest pressure came from election-structure erosion, court-order friction, due-process stress, weaponized-justice concerns, and war-powers accountability strain.



Report month May 2026	Direction Worsening	Core interpretation Convergence	Biggest move Military / Intelligence +0.5
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What changed this month

The danger became more cumulative.

The May score increased from **9.0 to 9.1**. The movement was modest numerically, but important structurally: election fairness, due process, institutional oversight, and war-powers accountability all worsened further while courts mostly slowed deterioration rather than restoring broader balance.

<p>The judiciary remained the main brake</p> <p>Courts continued to block or slow some aggressive moves involving voter data, no-bond detention, public-media funding, and Pentagon press restrictions.</p>	<p>The executive kept testing limits</p> <p>Election administration, detention authority, DOJ power, media access, and war powers all remained under pressure at once.</p>	<p>The warning compounded</p> <p>When several categories are already near the top of the scale, even incremental deterioration has outsized warning value.</p>
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<p>Why 9.1 matters now</p> <p>At this level, the danger is no longer only cumulative erosion. Institutional failures can emerge suddenly, cascade faster, and become harder to reverse.</p>	<p>What May changed</p> <p>May confirmed the April warning and pushed the score higher through combined pressure on election fairness, due process, oversight, and war powers.</p>
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Top score drivers

The clearest May shifts were elections, oversight, and war powers.

Driver	Score / Move	Interpretation
Election Integrity & Peaceful Transfer worsened	8.7 -> 9.0	Tennessee redistricting after the weakened Voting Rights Act environment made election-structure erosion concrete rather than theoretical.
Rule of Law & Court Compliance moved deeper into danger	9.4 -> 9.5	Accumulating court-order violations shifted the issue from isolated disputes toward broader compliance stress.
Military / Intelligence Neutrality deteriorated sharply	8.3 -> 8.8	Iran-related hostilities, blocked war-powers restraint, and narrowed definitions of war produced the largest May category move.
Weaponized Justice remained structurally dangerous	9.4 -> 9.5	High-profile prosecutions, accountability shielding, and politically loaded legal scrutiny reinforced selective-justice concerns.
Democratic checks still mattered, but mostly as brakes	Partial restraint	Courts blocked or slowed several aggressive moves. Those wins mattered, but they did not reverse the month's overall direction.

Category scorecard

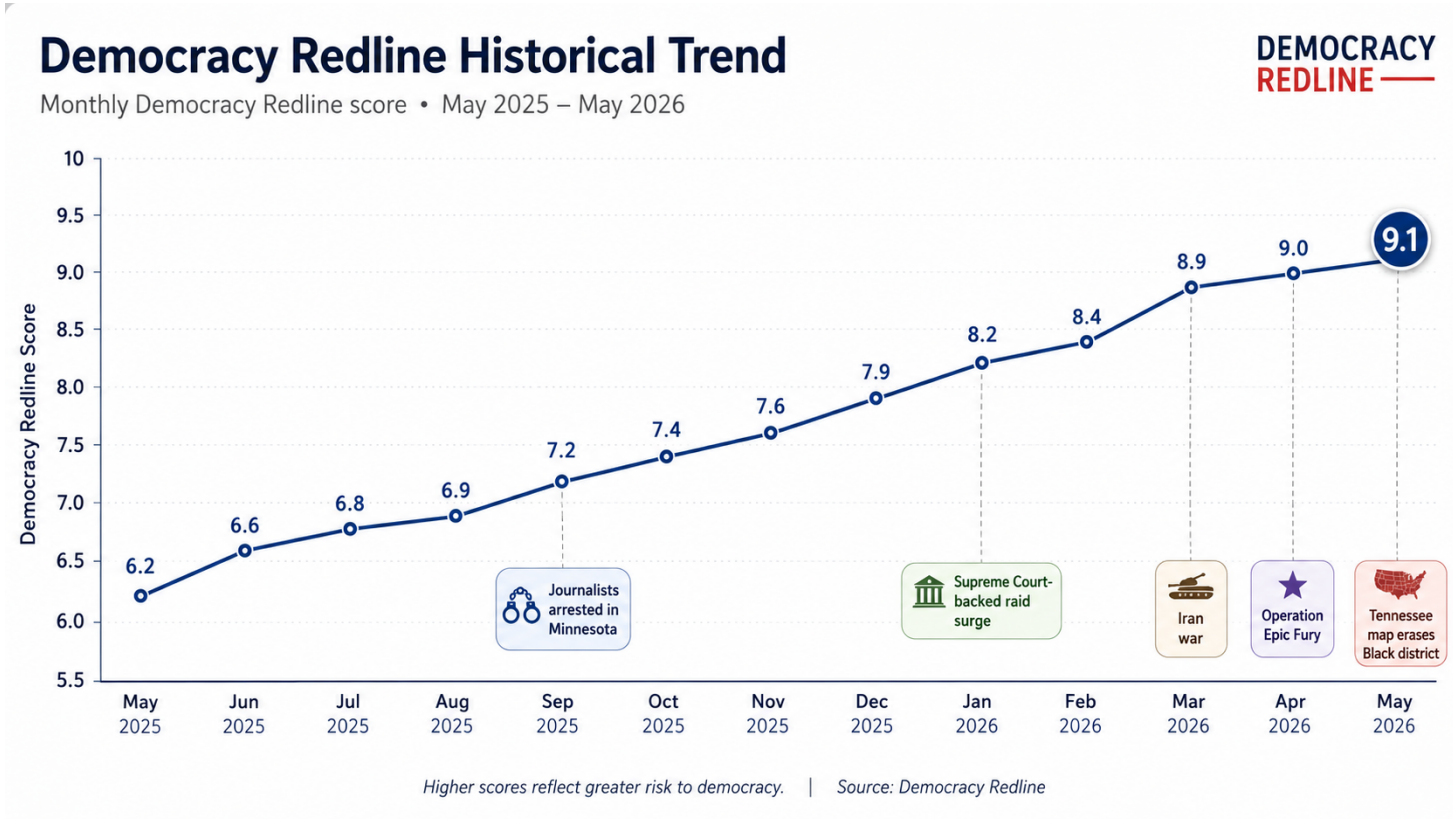
Category	Prior	May	Movement	Interpretation
Rule of Law & Court Compliance	9.4	9.5	+0.1	Court-order friction and compliance stress remained central.
Habeas Corpus & Due Process	9.3	9.3	0.0	Detention and review concerns stayed acute.
Coercive State Power & Policing Norms	8.9	8.9	0.0	Still near Red Zone, but not the largest May mover.
Political Targeting / Weaponization of Justice	9.4	9.5	+0.1	Selective enforcement concerns deepened.
Election Integrity & Peaceful Transfer	8.7	9.0	+0.3	The clearest threshold crossing in May.
Press Freedom & Information Control	9.2	9.2	0.0	Press and information-system pressure remained severe.
Civil Society & Associational Freedom	8.5	8.5	0.0	Elevated stress persisted.
Institutional Checks & Anti-Corruption	9.1	9.3	+0.2	Oversight strain increased.
Military / Intelligence Neutrality	8.3	8.8	+0.5	Largest May increase; war-powers accountability strain was central.

How to read page 2

The scorecard is not a vote count of events. It is a weighted interpretation of how documented developments affected democratic function across nine categories. Category moves matter most when several high-risk areas deteriorate at the same time.

Historical trajectory context

May confirmed the Red Zone condition.



How to read the trajectory

April marked the threshold crossing. May mattered because the score did not retreat; it increased inside the Red Zone, turning the warning from a single threshold event into a more durable condition.

April threshold	May confirmation	Cumulative warning
April entered the public Red Zone at 9.0.	May moved to 9.1, showing the condition persisted.	At this level, small upward moves can carry large structural meaning.

Chart note: Higher scores reflect greater risk to democratic norms and institutional safeguards. The trend shows direction and accumulation over time, not a single predicted endpoint.

How this score is grounded

The May score separates evidence from interpretation.

The 9.1 score is a weighted judgment based on observable public developments already cited in the May analysis. The report distinguishes the underlying fact pattern, the democratic-risk interpretation, and the score impact assigned to each major driver.

Fact	Interpretation	Score impact
Public reporting, court activity, official actions, and institutional decisions provide the evidence base.	The analysis asks whether those developments weaken elections, courts, due process, oversight, press freedom, or other safeguards.	May's score movement came from category-level changes, especially election integrity, institutional checks, and military or intelligence neutrality.

Evidence and source credibility

Evidence anchors are grouped by institutional function.

<p>Court and legal records</p> <p>Used to evaluate court compliance, due process, detention review, and whether legal restraints are functioning in practice.</p>	<p>Official actions and government materials</p> <p>Used to identify executive actions, agency behavior, enforcement posture, and oversight conflicts.</p>
<p>Major journalism and corroboration</p> <p>Used when reporting is specific, corroborated, and tied to concrete institutional developments rather than rhetoric alone.</p>	<p>Countervailing signals</p> <p>Judicial resistance and other democratic brakes are included so the score does not treat all activity as one-directional.</p>

Methodology note

What the index is, and is not.

The Democracy Redline Index is a directional civic-risk assessment. A 9.1 score does not mean every institution has failed. It means the observed public record places the system inside an extreme-risk band where multiple safeguards are under abnormal simultaneous pressure.

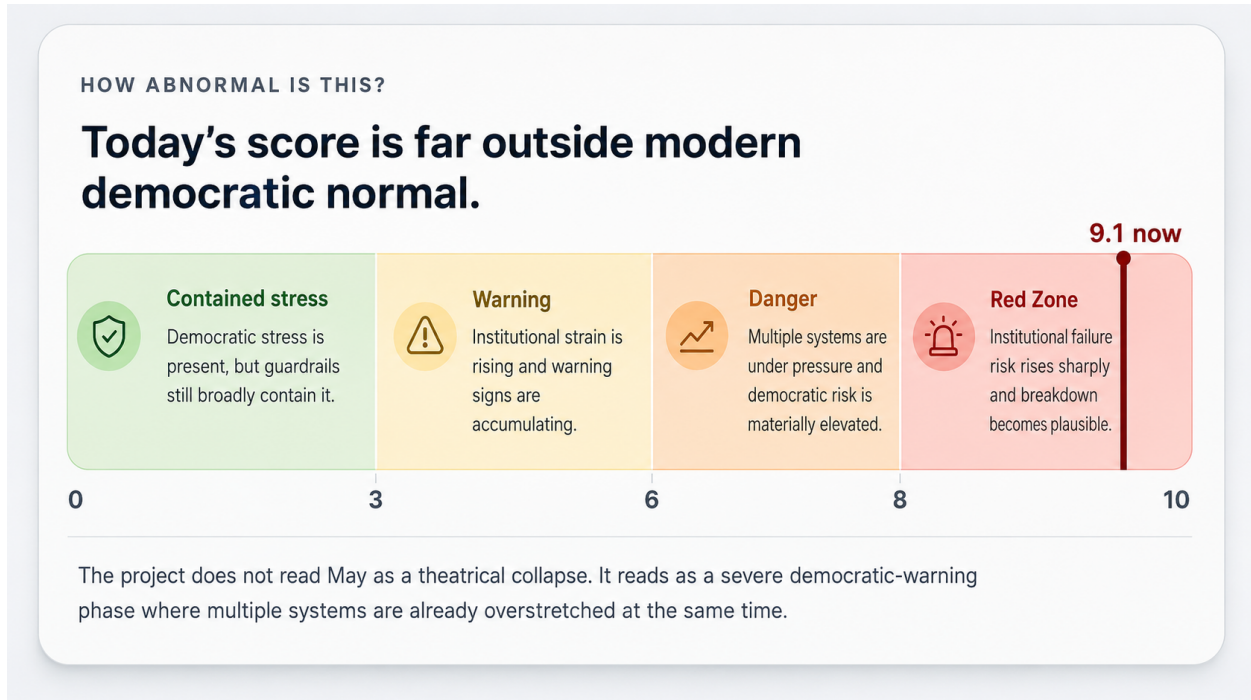
What the score is	What the score is not	Best use
A structured index of democratic stress signals across nine categories.	It is not a claim that every institution has failed, nor a prediction of one discrete future event.	Use the PDF as a durable monthly report and the website as the live public record.

What to watch next

The next question is whether pressure compounds or reverses.

<p>Court compliance</p> <p>Whether court orders are followed in practice, not only issued on paper.</p>	<p>Election administration</p> <p>Whether election rules and administration remain neutral and durable.</p>	<p>War-powers restraint</p> <p>Whether military and intelligence authority remains bounded by civilian oversight and law.</p>
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Companion visual



This public-facing graphic is a companion explainer for why high institutional-stress scores are abnormal and should not be treated as ordinary political volatility.