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Freedom

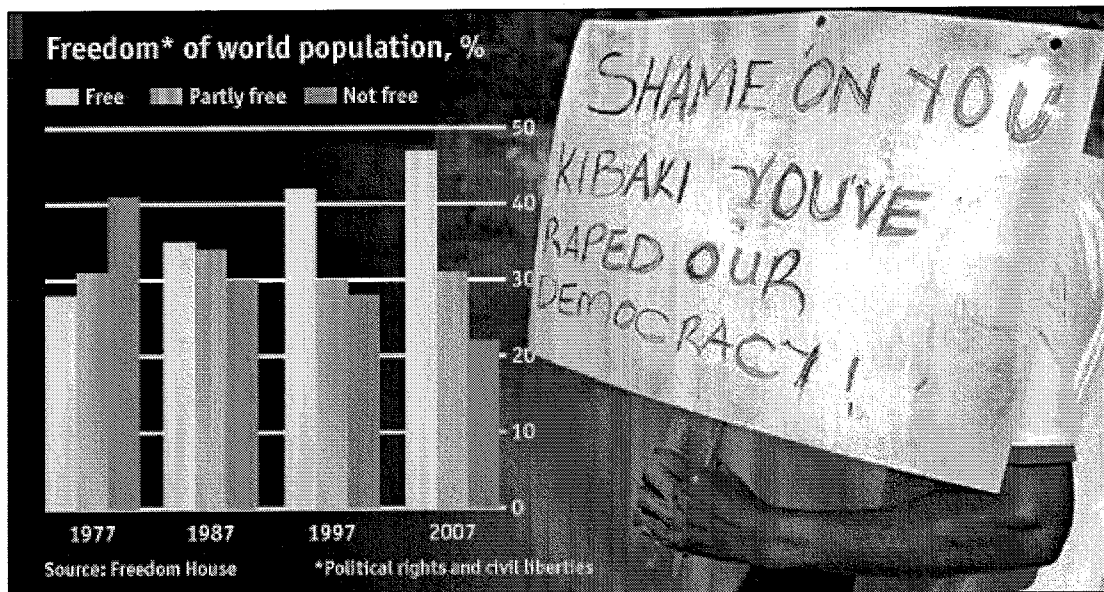
On the march?

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G100

THE violent aftermath of Kenya's recent elections damaged the country's image as a well-run corner of Africa. Look at Russia, Pakistan and others, and it may not be surprising to learn that a fifth of countries saw a decline in political rights and civil liberties in 2007, according to "Freedom in the World", an annual survey published on Wednesday January 16th by Freedom House, a think-tank. But not all is doom and gloom. In the past 30 years, if you trust the think-tank's estimates, the world has become steadily more free. Last year, nearly half of the people on the planet lived in free countries compared with just over a quarter in 1977. Around 22% live in countries that are not free, a big decline from 41% three decades ago.

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