

**EMBARGOED UNTIL 6:01 CET/00:01 EST TUESDAY, 25 JANUARY 2022**

## **2021 CORRUPTION PERCEPTIONS INDEX REVEALS A DECADE OF STAGNATING CORRUPTION LEVELS AMID HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES & DEMOCRATIC DECLINE IN THE AMERICAS**

*30 countries have made little to no progress or declined in the last 10 years*

Berlin, 25 January 2022 – The 2021 Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) released today by Transparency International shows that corruption levels remain at a standstill worldwide. In the Americas, only two countries have made significant progress in their CPI scores in the last 10 years, with the US dropping out of the top 25 for the first time since 2012.

Despite extensive legislation and a regional commitment to action, corruption in the Americas continues to undermine democracy and human rights. From **Guatemala** (25) to **Venezuela** (14), governments across the region have attacked civil society organizations and activists to silence dissent and maintain corrupt power schemes. Populist presidents such as Jair Bolsonaro in **Brazil** (38) and Nayib Bukele in **El Salvador** (34) have claimed to fight corruption while implementing regressive measures.

*Delia Ferreira Rubio, Chair of Transparency International said:*

*“The countries of the Americas are at a complete standstill in the fight against corruption. As corrupt leaders go after activists and consolidate power, the rights of the press, freedom of expression and freedom of association are under attack. Decisive action is needed to reverse this trend, protect civil society, and defend human rights and democracy.”*

### **AMERICAS HIGHLIGHTS**

The CPI ranks 180 countries and territories by their perceived levels of public sector corruption on a scale of zero (highly corrupt) to 100 (very clean).

The Americas average holds at 43, and nearly two-thirds of countries rank below 50.

- **Canada** (74), **Uruguay** (73), **Chile** (67) and the **United States** (67) lead the region, but Canada, Chile and the United States all show significant deterioration.
- **Nicaragua** (20), **Haiti** (20) and **Venezuela** (14) are the lowest in the region, and all three face humanitarian crises.
- **Canada** (74), **Dominica** (55), **Honduras** (23), **Nicaragua** (20) and **Venezuela** (14) are all at historic lows this year.

In the last decade, 30 countries in the region have either declined or made no significant progress.

- Since 2012, **Canada** (74), **Chile** (67), **United States of America** (67), **St Lucia** (56), **Guatemala** (25), **Honduras** (23), **Nicaragua** (20), **Venezuela** (14) have significantly declined on the CPI.
- Only two countries in the region have significantly improved their scores over that period: **Guyana** (39) and **Paraguay** (30).

## **CORRUPTION, HUMAN RIGHTS AND DEMOCRACY**

In 2021, the Americas faced heavy blows to the press, freedom of expression and freedom of association – civil and political rights fundamental to building healthy and corruption-free democracies.

- The fight against corruption in Central America is at its lowest point as authoritarianism takes control in **Nicaragua** (20) – and threatens **El Salvador** (34). In Nicaragua, the concentration of power at the top has allowed the government to violate human rights and the electoral system. In El Salvador, the government is undermining the independence of the judiciary and publicly attacking civil society organizations, activists and journalists.
- In **Venezuela**, the government of President Nicolás Maduro has repressed dissent from political opponents and journalists. Grand corruption has violated social rights from education to health. The country has significantly declined on the CPI over the last decade, earning its lowest score ever and one of the lowest around the world: 14.
- Even top-scoring democracies the **United States** (67) and **Canada** (74) are declining on the Index. The US dropped out of the top 25 ranked countries for the first time, as it faces continuous attacks on free and fair elections and an opaque campaign finance system. Canada hit a historic low and is seeing increased risks of bribery and corruption in business. The Pandora Papers revealed the country as a hub for illicit financial flows, fuelling transnational corruption across the region and the world.

Transparency International calls on governments to act on their anti-corruption and human rights commitments and for people across the globe to come together in demanding change.

*Daniel Eriksson, Chief Executive Officer of Transparency International said:*

*“In authoritarian contexts where control over government, business and the media rests with a few, social movements remain the last check on power. It is the power held by teachers, shopkeepers, students and ordinary people from all walks of life that will ultimately deliver accountability.”*

## **About the Corruption Perceptions Index**

Since its inception in 1995, the Corruption Perceptions Index has become the leading global indicator of public sector corruption. The Index scores 180 countries and territories around the world based on perceptions of public sector corruption, using data from 13 external sources, including the World Bank, World Economic Forum, private risk and consulting companies, think tanks and others. The scores reflect the views of experts and business people.

The process for calculating the CPI is regularly reviewed to make sure it is as robust and coherent as possible, most recently by the European Commission's Joint Research Centre in 2017. All the CPI scores since 2012 are comparable from one year to the next. For more information, see this article: [The ABCs of the CPI: How the Corruption Perceptions Index is calculated](#).

### **Notes to editors**

- The Americas regional analysis provided in the additional press products includes further detail.
- See also the 2021 CPI report, which contains recommendations from Transparency International.

### **Interview requests**

In case of country-specific queries, please contact [Transparency International's national chapters](#).

In case of queries around regional and global findings, please contact the Transparency International Secretariat: [press@transparency.org](mailto:press@transparency.org).