

**EMBARGOED UNTIL 6:01 CET/00:01 EST TUESDAY, 31 JANUARY 2023**

## **2022 CORRUPTION PERCEPTIONS INDEX REVEALS NEGLECT OF ANTI-CORRUPTION EFFORTS IN ASIA PACIFIC**

*Nearly 90 per cent of countries have made no significant progress since 2017*

Berlin, 31 January 2023 – The 2022 Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) released today by Transparency International shows that leaders have ignored anti-corruption efforts, with levels of corruption stagnating across the region for a fourth straight year.

The region was home to a number of important diplomatic summits this year, including the G20, but leaders emphasised economic recovery at the expense of corruption and other priorities. To make matters worse, governments maintained and in some cases expanded restrictions on civic space and basic freedoms imposed during the pandemic, escalating a worrisome trend toward authoritarianism.

**Ilham Mohamed, Asia Regional Advisor of Transparency International said:**

“In some of the world’s most populous countries, corruption is worsening and governments are restricting basic rights and freedoms that allow the people to hold those in power accountable. Leaders across Asia Pacific must acknowledge that inclusive growth must come with efforts to curb corruption. With elections coming up across the region in 2023, it’s time for public voices to be heard and governments to recommit to stopping the rot of corruption everywhere.”

### **ASIA PACIFIC 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 Asia Pacific average holds at 45 for the fourth consecutive year, and over 70 per cent of countries rank below 50.

- **New Zealand** (87), **Singapore** (83), **Hong Kong** (76) and **Australia** (75) lead the region.
- **Afghanistan** (24), **Cambodia** (24), **Myanmar** (23) and **North Korea** (17) are the lowest in the region.
- **Singapore** (83) and **Mongolia** (33) are at historic lows this year.

While many countries have stagnated, countries in Asia Pacific made up nearly half of the world's significant improvers on the CPI since 2017.

- The significant improvers are: **South Korea** (63), **Vietnam** (42) and the **Maldives** (40).
- Three countries declined over this time: **Malaysia** (47), **Mongolia** (33) and **Pakistan** (27).

## CORRUPTION PERVASIVE IN ASIA PACIFIC

Across Asia Pacific, governments have claimed they would tackle corruption, but few have taken concrete action. Pervasive corruption and crackdowns on civic space leave the situation dire.

- **Malaysia** (47) has been declining for years as it struggles with grand corruption in the wake of the monumental 1MDB and other scandals implicating multiple prime ministers and high-level officials. The current prime minister has promised to clean up but still appointed a deputy prime minister with serious corruption allegations as part of efforts to stabilise his unity government.
- In **India** (40), considered the largest democracy in the world, the government continues to consolidate power and limit the public's ability to demand accountability. They detain more and more human rights defenders and journalists under the Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (UAPA).
- Massive protests erupted in **Sri Lanka** (36) as the government's financial mismanagement resulted in an economic meltdown in the country. Noting the link between pervasive corruption among the country's leadership and the crisis, Sri Lankans demanded anti-corruption reforms and refused to leave the streets despite brutal police crackdowns.
- After years of decline, **Australia** (75) is showing positive signs this year. Most notably, the government elected last year fulfilled its promise to pass historic legislation for a new National Anti-Corruption Commission. Yet there is still more work that needs to be done, including more comprehensive whistleblower protection laws, and caps and real time disclosure on political donations. Greater transparency and longer cooling off periods to reduce the 'revolving doors' of lobbying must also be prioritised.
- In parts of the Pacific, governments have interfered in elections, denying the public the opportunity to have their voices heard. Even with its history of electoral strife, **Papua New Guinea's** (30) August election was called its worst ever amid numerous irregularities, stolen ballot boxes and even bouts of violence. In the **Solomon Islands** (42), frustration with reported collusion between politicians and foreign companies boiled over into violent civil unrest late last year. Now, the government has delayed elections scheduled for until 2024 raising further concerns over the abuse of executive power.

Transparency International calls on governments to prioritise anti-corruption commitments, reinforcing checks and balances, upholding rights to information and limiting private influence to finally rid the world of corruption – and the instability it brings.

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

“Governments must open up space to include the public in decision-making – from activists and business owners to marginalised communities and young people. In democratic societies, the people can raise their voices to help root out corruption and demand a safer world for us all.”

## **NOTES TO EDITORS**

The media page includes the CPI 2022 report, as well as the full dataset and methodology, international press release and additional analysis for Asia Pacific. See here: <https://www.transparency.org/en/cpi/2022/media-kit>.

## **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).

## **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 article: [The ABCs of the CPI: How the Corruption Perceptions Index is calculated](#).