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2022 CORRUPTION PERCEPTIONS INDEX IN EASTERN EUROPE AND CENTRAL ASIA REFLECTS HOW CORRUPTION FUELS VIOLENT CONFLICT

Second worst region in the world shows signs of further decline

Berlin, 31 January 2023 – The 2022 Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) released today by Transparency International reveals that corruption remains rampant in Eastern Europe and Central Asia as many countries reach historic lows.

As Russia's invasion of Ukraine rocked the world in 2022, peace decreased in the Eurasian region more than any other according to the [Global Peace Index](#). Across the region, high-level corruption provokes political instability, weakens institutions, strengthens organised crime and even incites such violent conflict.

Altnai Myrzabekova, Eastern Europe and Central Asia Regional Advisor of Transparency International said:

“This year the international community saw the most violent result of unchecked corruption and kleptocracy. It's time for a wake-up call for Eastern European and Central Asian leaders to finally commit to addressing pervasive corruption and support democracy, stability and basic freedoms for all people across the region.”

EASTERN EUROPE & CENTRAL ASIA 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 Eastern Europe and Central Asia average showed decline this year, dropping one point to 35.

- **Georgia** (56), **Armenia** (46) and **Montenegro** (45) lead and are the only three countries from the region that score above the global average of 43.
- **Turkmenistan** (19), **Azerbaijan** (23) and **Tajikistan** (24) are the lowest in the region.
- **Serbia** (36), **Turkey** (36), **Bosnia and Herzegovina** (34) and **Azerbaijan** (23) are all at historic lows this year.

- Since 2017, **Armenia** (46), **Moldova** (39) and **Uzbekistan** (31) have all significantly improved their CPI scores.

CORRUPTION, CONFLICT AND SECURITY

Years of inaction against corruption have allowed kleptocrats to take control, undermined democratic processes, restricted civic space and weakened public institutions – fuelling violence, conflict and instability in Eastern Europe and Central Asia.

- The Russian invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 was a stark reminder of the threat that corruption and the absence of government accountability pose for global peace and security: kleptocrats in **Russia** (28) have amassed great fortunes by pledging loyalty to President Vladimir Putin in exchange for profitable government contracts and protection of their economic interests. The absence of any checks on Putin's power allowed him to pursue his geopolitical ambitions with impunity. This attack destabilised the European continent, threatening democracy and has killed tens of thousands.
- In **Kazakhstan** (36) long-simmering discontent over inequality and corruption – especially the former Kazakh ruling family's allegedly ill-gotten wealth – boiled over in January 2022. A spike in fuel prices sent people onto the streets for protests and ultimately violent riots. More than 200 people died, and security forces are accused of torturing injured protestors they detained.
- The Western Balkan states continue to struggle to control organised crime, as under-resourced institutions lack capacity or independence to tackle the problem – in part due to corruption. Both **Serbia** (36) and **Bosnia and Herzegovina** (34) have hit historic lows this year amidst their struggles with the rule of law and captured judiciaries. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, a series of corruption scandals, resignations and a highly-flawed procedure to appoint a new chief prosecutor have tarnished the integrity of the leading prosecutorial office. In Serbia, political players have significant influence over the judiciary, which has impaired a number of important organised crime cases – including those with alleged involvement from high-level officials.
- Before the invasion, **Ukraine** (33) remained at a low score but was undertaking important reforms and steadily improving. Even after the outbreak of fighting, the country has continued to prioritise anti-corruption reforms and adopted a new National Anti-Corruption Strategy last June. However, wars disrupt normal processes and exacerbate risks, allowing corrupt actors to pocket funds meant for recovery, as was seen in mid-January when investigations exposed war profiteering by the defence and communities and territories development ministries. This scandal underscores the need for reforms to prevent such violations in the future, but it is valuable that the country's anti-corruption mechanisms are thus far holding public officials accountable.

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 violence it brings.

Daniel Eriksson, Chief Executive Officer of Transparency International said:

“The good news is that leaders can fight corruption and promote peace all at once. 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, and the international press release and additional analysis for Eastern Europe and Central Asia in English and Russian. 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.

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](#).