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2022 CORRUPTION PERCEPTIONS INDEX REVEALS HOW CORRUPTION FUELS ONGOING CONFLICT IN THE MIDDLE EAST & NORTH AFRICA

No country has made significant progress against corruption since 2017

Berlin, 31 January 2023 – The 2022 Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) released today by Transparency International shows the pervasiveness of corruption around the world – and the Middle East and North Africa is no exception. Even the three Arab states which score above 50 on the index – the **United Arab Emirates** (67), **Qatar** (58) and **Saudi Arabia** (51) – show signs of decline on this year’s CPI.

Over a decade ago, the Arab Spring began when Mohamed Bouazizi grew so frustrated with the inequality and corruption in the Tunisian government that he lit himself on fire. Tragically, the Arab Spring movement failed to dismantle the power structures that allow those at the top to retain control. The rampant political corruption, in turn, causes ongoing civil unrest and violence in a region that is home to many of the world’s deadliest conflicts. Even in more stable countries, governments dedicate significant defence budgets with little public oversight that fund conflicts elsewhere – notably as the Gulf countries spending in **Yemen** (16). Such instability and consolidation of power opens up ample opportunities for corruption to take hold, fuelling authoritarianism and violence.

Kinda Hattar, Middle East and North Africa Regional Advisor of Transparency International said:

“Political corruption has become endemic across the Arab region. Governments are consolidating control, restricting basic rights and freedoms, agitating civic unrest and directing resources away from critical anti-corruption mechanisms and political integrity frameworks. Until leaders step up to protect the rights and voices of people across the region, the deadly spiral of corruption and violence will continue to escalate.”

MIDDLE EAST & NORTH AFRICA 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 Middle East and North Africa average dropped to 38 this year, and nearly 80 per cent of countries rank below 50.

- The **United Arab Emirates** (67) and **Qatar** (58) lead the Arab states, but both have started to decline, as many Gulf states turn to hyper-nationalism and further repressions of civic space.
- War-torn **Libya** (17), **Yemen** (16) and **Syria** (13) score the worst.
- **Qatar** (58) and **Egypt** (30) have hit their lowest scores since the CPI has been comparable in 2012.

CORRUPTION, CONFLICT AND SECURITY

As the [least peaceful region](#) in the world, the Middle East and North Africa exemplifies how corruption and violence are profoundly intertwined.

- In **Libya** (17), decades of inequality, poverty and corruption inflamed tensions around the Arab Spring, sparking a fragile security situation and ongoing unrest. Now the state is incapacitated, allowing inequality to fester and corruption to maintain its hold. Ongoing instability has prevented the country from holding elections, leaving no clear path forward.
- The executive in **Tunisia** (40) has been concentrating power, taking control of the judiciary, shutting anti-corruption institutions and arresting protestors. Just 11.2 per cent of voters turned out in the most recent parliamentary election, expressing the population's distrust in the government as tensions and civil unrest continue to increase.
- Complaints of corruption helped spark civil war in **Yemen** (16) eight years ago. Now, the state has collapsed, leaving two-thirds of the population without sufficient food – one of the worst humanitarian crises in the world.

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.”

NOTE 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 the Middle East and North Africa in English and Arabic. 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 this article: [The ABCs of the CPI: How the Corruption Perceptions Index is calculated](#).