

**EMBARGOED UNTIL 7:01 CET/01:01 EST TUESDAY, 30 JANUARY 2024**

## **2023 CORRUPTION PERCEPTIONS INDEX FOR THE AMERICAS REVEALS JUDICIARY'S STRUGGLE FOR INDEPENDENCE**

*Lack of independence of judiciary fosters impunity for the corrupt and powerful*

Berlin, 30 January 2024 – The [2023 Corruption Perceptions Index \(CPI\)](#) released today by Transparency International reveals that the judiciary in the Americas is failing to fulfil their crucial role as a check on other branches of government.

The lack of judicial independence undermines the rule of law, promotes corruption and leads to impunity for the corrupt and powerful. With the region's average score holding at 43 and two-thirds of countries ranking below 50, addressing this issue is imperative for the effective fight against corruption.

### **Luciana Torchiario, Americas Regional Advisor of Transparency International:**

"Countries across the region should work towards having strong independent judiciaries to bring about accountability and justice. Not doing so erodes the very foundation of democracy and the rule of law. The continued weakening of checks and balances will only foster impunity for both the influential and corrupt, to the detriment of the general public and the collective welfare."

### **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).

- **Canada** (76) and **Uruguay** (73) are at the top of the regional ranking with more robust checks and balances.
- **Venezuela** (13), **Haiti** (17) and **Nicaragua** (17) have the lowest scores in the region, with widespread impunity and lack of independence of the judiciary.
- Only two countries, **Guyana** (40) and **Dominican Republic** (35), have improved their CPI scores over the past decade, while the others have either stagnated or significantly declined.

For each country's individual score and changes over time, see the global [2023 CPI page](#).

For in-depth analysis on trends and countries, see the region's feature article: [CPI 2023 for the Americas: Lack of independent judiciary hinders the fight against corruption](#).

## CORRUPTION AND INJUSTICE

The widespread sense of impunity and the inability of prosecutors and judges to act impartially, ensuring fair trials and equality before the law, significantly erodes public trust in the judiciary throughout the Americas. This perception often discourages reporting, as the institution are seen as corrupt, unreliable and unsafe.

- **Guatemala** (23) has experienced a decline of 10 points since 2012, attributed to three successive administrations aligned with corrupt practices. The upcoming task for the incoming Guatemalan government, headed by President-elect Bernardo Arévalo, will be to dismantle the corruption networks that have infiltrated the state and restore its core functions.
- **Chile** (66) continues to stand out on CPI do to its robust democratic institutions and high transparency levels. Nevertheless, the nation has experienced a substantial decrease of its score since 2014. This year, the country stands at a pivotal juncture with the potential to combat corruption and curb organised crime by adopting the beneficial ownership law and putting into effect the recommendations provided by the Advisory Probity and Transparency Commission.

Transparency International calls on governments to give justice systems the independence, resources and transparency needed to effectively punish all corruption offences and provide checks and balances on power. Where necessary, they must also introduce better procedures and laws to help justice institutions shield themselves from and target corrupt acts.

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

“Corruption worsens social injustice and disproportionately affects the most vulnerable. In many countries, obstacles to justice for victims of corruption persist. It is time to break the barriers and ensure people can access justice effectively. Everyone deserves fair and inclusive legal systems where victims’ voices are heard at every stage. Anything else is an affront to justice.”

## NOTES TO EDITORS

The media page includes the CPI 2023 report, the full dataset and methodology, international press release, and additional analysis for the Americas in English and Spanish. See here: <https://www.transparency.org/en/cpi/2023/media-kit>. To obtain login details, please send an email to [press@transparency.org](mailto:press@transparency.org), ensuring that the email explicitly acknowledges the embargo.

## 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, not the public.

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](#).