

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

## **2023 CORRUPTION PERCEPTIONS INDEX REVEALS URGENT NEED FOR TANGIBLE CHANGE IN ASIA PACIFIC**

*Another year of little to no meaningful progress towards curbing corruption*

Berlin, 30 January 2024 – The [2023 Corruption Perceptions Index \(CPI\)](#) released today by Transparency International shows the lack of delivery on anti-corruption agendas in the Asia Pacific region, with levels of corruption stagnating for a fifth straight year.

As the region gears up for 2024 elections in India, Indonesia, Pakistan, Solomon Islands and South Korea, the CPI paints a stark picture. Few countries show real progress, and some historical leaders are slowly sliding. The upcoming elections could be an opportunity to address and reverse the ongoing struggle against corruption and emphasise the urgent need for tangible change.

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

"Crackdowns on civil society and attacks on fundamental freedoms of press, assembly, and association, remain significant challenges ahead of this year's elections across the region. Extensive corruption during elections undermines the ability to form trustworthy governments that can effectively manage and reduce corruption, perpetuating a damaging cycle."

### **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).

Sixty-eight per cent of the countries across Asia and the Pacific have a CPI score below 50.

- For five years in a row, the average CPI score for the region stagnates at 45.
- **New Zealand** (CPI score: 85) and **Singapore** (83) maintain positions at the top of the index globally, followed closely by **Australia** (75), **Hong Kong** (75), **Japan** (73), **Bhutan** (68), **Taiwan** (67) and **South Korea** (63).
- The bottom of the index includes **North Korea** (17), **Myanmar** (20) and **Afghanistan** (20).

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 Asia Pacific: Regional stagnation marked by inadequate delivery of anti-corruption commitments](#).

## **CORRUPTION AND INJUSTICE**

The lack of delivery on anti-corruption agendas and weak justice systems undermine corruption efforts in Asia Pacific. Strong judicial oversight and well-resourced law enforcement institutions are key to keeping corruption in check. In turn, preventing the abuse of political power, bribery and other forms of corruption from influencing justice systems is key to ensuring their effectiveness.

- The end of 2023 marked the culmination of a civil society campaign to hold the officials accountable in **Sri Lanka** (34) for the large-scale debt default and the resulting economic crisis. Civil society organisations filed a public interest petition, alleging that government officials, through opaque decision-making, breached public trust. In landmark judgement, the Supreme Court ruled that former President Gotabaya Rajapaksa, former Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa, two former central bank governors and others breached the public trust and violated the constitution in their administration of the economy, ultimately causing the economic crisis.
- A new government assumed power in **Fiji** (52), concluding the nearly 16-year rule of Fiji First Party, whose rule was characterised by institutional erosion, weakened democratic standards, and a troubling disregard for the rule of law. With the new administration, uncertainties linger about its potential to foster a more democratic state and actively combat corruption. Nevertheless, the government's ambitious 100-day commitment has sparked some positive reform initiatives. Notably, repressive media laws have been repealed, and investigations into the conduct of past elections and allegations of abuse of office by former leaders are already underway.

Building on systems that are deeply corrupt will not bring about change. Transparency International calls on governments of Asia Pacific to give justice systems the independence, resources and transparency needed to effectively punish all corruption offences and keep power in check. 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 Asia Pacific. 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](#).