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2023 CPI: CORRUPTION DIVERTING RESOURCES FROM PUBLIC SERVICES IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

Most countries not making progress against corruption

Berlin, 30 January 2024 – The [2023 Corruption Perceptions Index \(CPI\)](#) released today by Transparency International indicates a region consistently marked by its poor performance, with most African nations showing stagnation or failing to make progress against corruption. Significant improvement has been noted in countries like **Seychelles** (71), **Angola** (33) and **Cote d'Ivoire** (40).

The findings underscore the persistent challenges faced by the region, rooted in decades of severe underfunding in public sectors. The detrimental impact of corruption and illicit financial flows further compounds these issues, siphoning crucial resources away from essential public services. Corruption within justice delivery mechanisms continues to disproportionately affect the least privileged, including those reliant on public services such as those living with disabilities, women, and children.

Samuel Kaninda, Africa Regional Advisor of Transparency International said:

"With the resurgence of coups and conflicts happening in a number of countries on the continent, democracy across Africa is under pressure. Addressing the underlying governance deficits becomes an urgent imperative. Strengthening the judiciary and having functioning accountability mechanisms are key to ending the continued backsliding of the region in its fight against corruption."

SUB-SAHARAN 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).

Most African countries showed stagnation, maintaining the region's consistently poor performance, with an unchanged regional average score of 33. **Ninety per cent of countries in Sub-Saharan Africa scored below 50.**

- **Seychelles** (71) tops the region, followed by **Cabo Verde** (64) and **Botswana** (59).
- **Equatorial Guinea** (17), **South Sudan** (13) and **Somalia** (11) perform the lowest with no sign of improvement.

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 Sub-Saharan Africa: Impunity for corrupt officials, restricted civic space and limited access to justice.](#)

CORRUPTION AND INJUSTICE

Widespread democratic backsliding and weakening justice systems are undermining the control of corruption in Sub-Saharan Africa. The judicial system is continuously used to target the opposition or settle personal scores, and cases of corruption where people in power siphon away resources from basic public services ultimately go unpunished. In turn, the poorest citizens suffer, perpetuating a cycle where development goals fail to be achieved.

- As a positive example, **Cote d'Ivoire** (40) has consistently improved on the CPI over the past decade. After armed conflicts in the early 2000s and a political standoff after the 2010 presidential elections, President Alassane Ouattara's administration successfully implemented a number of reforms. These included legislation to increase transparency, through mandating senior officials to declare their assets and strengthening accountability mechanisms by establishing an economic and financial crimes section in the court system and issuing a decree to combat money laundering.
- President Sall in **Senegal** (43) has been accused of using the judiciary to settle political scores. With the presidential election fast approaching in February, the judiciary needs to remain impartial and investigate rising claims of repression against the opposition, media, critics and other civil society.
- Despite being one of the most prosperous and stable countries in Central Africa, **Gabon** (28) is witnessing a decline on the CPI. The longstanding dominance of the Bongo family in the country's political landscape for over five decades has created limited space for transparency and accountability.

Impunity for corrupt acts, a weakened civic space, and the lack of public access to justice and information continue to be critical issues that threaten the rule of law in the region. Transparency International calls on governments of Sub-Saharan Africa 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 the Sub-Saharan Africa in English and French. See here: <https://www.transparency.org/en/cpi/2023/media-kit>. To obtain login details, please send an email to 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.

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](#).