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180 COUNTRIES.
180 SCORES.

HOW DOES YOUR COUNTRY MEASURE UP?

The perceived levels of public sector corruption in 180 countries/territories around the world.
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The COVID-19 pandemic, the climate crisis and growing security threats across the globe are fuelling a new wave of uncertainty. In an already unstable world, countries failing to address their corruption problems worsen the effects. They also contribute to democratic decline and empower authoritarians.

This year’s Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) reveals that 124 countries have stagnant corruption levels, while the number of countries in decline is increasing. This has the most serious consequences, as global peace is deteriorating and corruption is both a key cause and result of this.

Corruption and conflict feed each other and threaten durable peace. On one hand, conflict creates a breeding ground for corruption. Political instability, increased pressure on resources and weakened oversight bodies create opportunities for crimes, such as bribery and embezzlement.

Unsurprisingly, most countries at the bottom of the CPI are currently experiencing armed conflict or have recently done so.

On the other hand, even in peaceful societies, corruption and impunity can spill over into violence by fuelling social grievances. And siphoning off resources needed by security agencies leaves states unable to protect the public and uphold the rule of law. Consequently, countries with higher levels of corruption are more likely to also exhibit higher levels of organised crime and increased security threats.

Corruption is also a threat to global security, and countries with high CPI scores play a role in this. For decades, they have welcomed dirty money from abroad, allowing kleptocrats to increase their wealth, power and geopolitical ambitions. The catastrophic consequences of the advanced economies’ complicity in transnational corruption became painfully clear following Russia’s full-scale invasion of Ukraine.

In this complex environment, fighting corruption, promoting transparency and strengthening institutions are critical to avoid further conflict and sustain peace.

The CPI scores 180 countries and territories by their perceived levels of public sector corruption, according to experts and business people.

The average score is 43/100

2/3 of countries score below 50/100

The CPI uses a scale from 0 to 100

100 is very clean and 0 is highly corrupt
Anti-corruption agencies and oversight institutions must have sufficient resources and independence to perform their duties. Governments should strengthen institutional controls to manage risk of corruption in defence and security.  

Policies and resources should be determined by fair and public processes. Measures such as establishing mandatory public registers of lobbyists, enabling public scrutiny of lobbying interactions and enforcing strong conflict of interest regulations are essential.  

Ensure the public receives accessible, timely and meaningful information, including on public spending and resource distribution. There must be rigorous and clear guidelines for withholding sensitive information, including in the defence sector.

Top-scoring countries need to clamp down on corporate secrecy, foreign bribery and complicit professional enablers, such as bankers and lawyers. They must also take advantage of new ways of working together to ensure that illicit assets can be effectively traced, investigated, confiscated and returned to the victims.

Recommendations
Dealing with the threats that corruption poses to peace and security must be a core business of political leaders. Prioritising transparency, oversight and the full, meaningful engagement of civil society, governments should:

1. REINFORCE CHECKS AND BALANCES, AND PROMOTE SEPARATION OF POWERS

Anti-corruption agencies and oversight institutions must have sufficient resources and independence to perform their duties. Governments should strengthen institutional controls to manage risk of corruption in defence and security.  

2. SHARE INFORMATION AND UPHOLD THE RIGHT TO ACCESS IT

Ensure the public receives accessible, timely and meaningful information, including on public spending and resource distribution. There must be rigorous and clear guidelines for withholding sensitive information, including in the defence sector.

3. LIMIT PRIVATE INFLUENCE BY REGULATING LOBBYING AND PROMOTING OPEN ACCESS TO DECISION-MAKING

Policies and resources should be determined by fair and public processes. Measures such as establishing mandatory public registers of lobbyists, enabling public scrutiny of lobbying interactions and enforcing strong conflict of interest regulations are essential.  

4. COMBAT TRANSNATIONAL FORMS OF CORRUPTION

Top-scoring countries need to clamp down on corporate secrecy, foreign bribery and complicit professional enablers, such as bankers and lawyers. They must also take advantage of new ways of working together to ensure that illicit assets can be effectively traced, investigated, confiscated and returned to the victims.

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.

Daniel Eriksson
Chief Executive Officer, Transparency International
GLOBAL HIGHLIGHTS

Despite concerted efforts and many hard-won gains, the CPI 2022 shows that the scale of corruption is enormous: the global average remains unchanged at a score of 43 out of 100 for the eleventh year running, and more than two-thirds of countries (68 per cent) score below 50.

The index ranks 180 countries and territories by their perceived levels of public-sector corruption according to experts and businesspeople. It relies on 13 independent data sources and uses a scale of zero to 100, where zero is highly corrupt and 100 is very clean.

Countries with strong institutions and well-functioning democracies often find themselves at the top of the Index. Denmark heads the ranking, with a score of 90. Finland and New Zealand follow closely with a score of 87. Norway, Singapore, Sweden, Switzerland, the Netherlands, Germany, Ireland and Luxembourg complete the top 10 this year.

On the flip side, countries experiencing conflict or where basic personal and political freedoms are highly restricted tend to earn the lowest marks. This year, Somalia, Syria, and South Sudan are at the bottom of the index. Venezuela, Yemen, Libya, North Korea, Haiti, Equatorial Guinea and Burundi are also in the bottom 10.

HIGHEST SCORING REGION
WESTERN EUROPE & EUROPEAN UNION
66/100

LOWEST SCORING REGION
SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA
32/100

AVERAGE REGIONAL SCORE
In the past five years, only eight countries have significantly improved their scores, and 10 countries have dropped significantly, including high-ranking countries such as Austria, Luxembourg and the United Kingdom. The rest (90 per cent of countries) have had stagnant corruption levels.

**CPI Score Changes, 2012-2022**

Number of countries that the underlying data sources largely agree improved or declined, over the period 2012 to 2021, for all 179 countries with data available.²

**Most Significant Movers**

Countries that the underlying data sources largely agree improved or declined over the period 2018 to 2022. A full list of all statistically significant changes is available in the CPI 2022 dataset.
Corruption is a fundamental threat to peace and security. It has been shown time and again that corruption is not only a consequence but also a cause of conflict, fuelling it in several ways. Corruption generates new grievances in society, or drives existing ones, by undermining defence and security institutions, and by eroding state legitimacy.

It can also enable a country’s elites to exert illegitimate influence, sow instability and undermine government institutions abroad as a way of securing favourable outcomes. The use of corruption as a foreign policy weapon has also become a way to undermine democracy abroad.

Diverting public resources away from the common good to benefit special interest groups can cause popular discontent. The resulting grievances are particularly likely to lead to conflict when they coincide with disparities in the distribution of political and economic power along ethnic or other group lines. Corruption, exclusion and outright discrimination increase the risk of outbreaks of violence and make them harder to control once they erupt.

Since 2017, 130 countries have seen significant social protests. In 55 of these (42 per cent), at least one protest was driven by the people’s discontent with the levels of corruption in government. Unsurprisingly, 80 per cent of the corruption related protests and 82 per cent of the documented violent responses against protesters occurred in countries with CPI scores below 50.

Corruption weakens the state’s capacity to protect its citizens. The misuse or theft of public funds can deprive institutions responsible for ensuring security of the resources they need.

Our analysis shows that weak law enforcement and defence institutions make it harder for a state to secure control of its territory and prevent violent threats, including terrorism.

Corruption has made our world a more dangerous place. As governments have collectively failed to make progress against it, they fuel the current rise in violence and conflict – and endanger people everywhere. The only way out is for states to do the hard work, rooting out corruption at all levels to ensure governments work for all people, not just an elite few.

Delia Ferreira Rubio
Chair, Transparency International
Countries with low CPI scores tend to experience more violent threats, and be worse at dealing with them and guaranteeing the safety and security of their populations.

Myanmar

With the military firmly entrenched in power after its 2021 coup, Myanmar dropped five points this year to 23. The governing powers are maintaining control by closely monitoring activists and dissenters after criminalising any actions seen as countering the government shortly after the coup. They also heavily censor information released to the public, allowing people access to just 1,200 government-approved websites.

Mali

Mali’s (28) CPI score has declined seven points since 2015. While corruption is not necessarily an active driver of the conflict, the divisions behind the violence have been reinforced over years of mismanagement and indifference to the plight of certain groups in Malian society. The grievances that jihadists have proved adept at exploiting stem largely from corruption, which has also prevented the state from providing security in all parts of its territory.

Iran

Iran’s score on the CPI has been stagnant at its historical minimum of 25 for the past three years. Tensions in the country had been building as a result of the economic crisis, the impact of international sanctions and grievances over corruption. The death of Mahsa Amini in September 2022 ignited the largest protests that the country has seen in years. The government’s violent response has resulted in over 450 civilian casualties.

Source: Transparency International’s Corruption Perceptions Index 2022 and the Fund for Peace Fragile States Index.
Corruption fuels impunity and undermines state legitimacy. By affecting the operation of law enforcement agencies, the courts and the prison system, corruption weakens the rule of law and the basic principle of equality before the law. Criminals are often aided by the complicity of corrupt public officials, police officers, prosecutors and judges, which allows them to operate with impunity. Where corruption levels are high, money and influence may decide which cases are prioritised or dismissed, who gets punished and who gets to walk free. This is a major enabling factor of organised crime \(^\text{14}\) and terrorism. \(^\text{15}\) It also causes loss of trust in the state, which means people report crime and violence less – making it difficult to address these problems. It also threatens governments’ ability to mediate conflict or negotiate lasting peace.

**CORRUPTION AND RESILIENCE TO ORGANISED CRIME**

Countries with high CPI scores are more resilient to the threats posed by organised criminal groups.

**Democratic Republic of the Congo**

With a score of 20, the Democratic Republic of the Congo is one of the 15 most corrupt countries in the world. The unstable political context and deeply embedded corruption facilitate the activities of illegal armed groups. Poorly governed defence and security forces struggle to contend with such challenges and the corruption that robs them of resources undermines the state’s response.

**Serbia**

Serbia reached its all-time lowest score on the CPI this year (36). It has been slow in addressing organised crime, and responsible institutions are still lacking adequate resourcing and independence. Serbia’s judiciary is heavily influenced by political players, \(^\text{16}\) severely undermining progress in organised crime cases, including those pointing to high-level officials’ involvement. \(^\text{17}\)
This year’s scores reveal a continued standstill around the world when it comes to governments fighting public sector corruption.

The continued impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, a changing security landscape and weakening democracy are affecting countries across different regions in various ways.

Countries in the top scoring region, Western Europe and the European Union, have been stagnant for over a decade or have steadily declined over the past five years. Undue influence over decision-making, poor enforcement of integrity safeguards and threats to the rule of law continue to undermine governments’ effectiveness.

Countries with low scores are still unable to make significant progress. In many parts of the Americas, Eastern Europe and Central Asia, and Sub-Saharan Africa, restrictions and attacks on civic space and basic freedoms continue amidst multiple crises threatening security and stability, democracy and human rights. Similarly, in parts of Asia Pacific, increasing authoritarianism curtails dissenting voices and undermines civil society’s function as a watchdog.

In the Middle East and North Africa where unequal political and economic power is deeply intertwined with conflict, corruption is undermining democratic processes, causing pervasive civil unrest and threatening regional security and stability.

**RESULTS BY REGION**

Average regional scores, with top and bottom performers in each region.

**WESTERN EUROPE & EU**

Average score

Top: Denmark (90/100)
Bottom: Hungary (42/100)

**EASTERN EUROPE & CENTRAL ASIA**

Average score

Top: Georgia (56/100)
Bottom: Turkmenistan (19/100)

**AMERICAS**

Average score

Top: Canada, Uruguay (74/100)
Bottom: Venezuela (54/100)

**MIDDLE EAST & NORTH AFRICA**

Average score

Top: United Arab Emirates (67/100)
Bottom: Syria (13/100)

**SUB-SAHARIAN AFRICA**

Average score

Top: Seychelles (76/100)
Bottom: Somalia (12/100)

**ASIA PACIFIC**

Average score

Top: New Zealand (87/100)
Bottom: North Korea (17/100)
AMERICAS

For the fourth consecutive year, the Americas scores an average of 43 out of 100. A lack of bold, decisive action to fight corruption and strengthen public institutions is fuelling organised criminal activities and other sources of violence. It is also undermining democracy, human rights and development.

43

AVERAGE SCORE

ASIA PACIFIC

As authoritarianism grows and restrictions on civic space and basic freedoms imposed during the pandemic remain in place, Asia Pacific continues to stagnate for the fourth year in a row with an average score of 45 points. While some governments have made headway against petty corruption, grand corruption remains common. Pacific leaders have renewed focus on anti-corruption efforts, but in Asia, they have focused on economic recovery at the expense of other priorities.

45

AVERAGE SCORE
EASTERN EUROPE AND CENTRAL ASIA

Across Eastern Europe and Central Asia, high-level corruption is closely linked to political instability, weakened institutions and – in the most extreme cases – violent conflict. In the region with the second lowest average score (35), there is a vicious cycle of corruption and authoritarianism, as many governments undermine democratic processes, crack down on civic space and restrict media freedoms.

35

AVERAGE SCORE

MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA

As corruption, authoritarianism and insecurity fuel each other across the region, the Middle East and North Africa average score has declined to a new low of 38. The leadership changes sparked by the Arab Spring have failed to dismantle existing structures of power, causing widespread civil unrest and violent conflict as people fight for their rights and for their voices to be heard.

38

AVERAGE SCORE
SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

The COVID-19 pandemic severely affected livelihoods, deepening inequalities and increasing corruption risks across Sub-Saharan Africa. The region remains the lowest performer on the CPI, with an average score of 32. Forty-four of the 49 countries assessed still score below 50, and significant declines in many countries outweigh the gains made in a few.

32
AVERAGE SCORE

WESTERN EUROPE AND EUROPEAN UNION

With an average score of 66, Western Europe and the EU is once again the top-scoring region in the CPI. However, progress has stagnated in most countries for more than a decade, as undue influence and fragmented anti-corruption measures have taken their toll. The changing security landscape since Russia’s invasion of Ukraine and a looming recession both demand robust responses from governments.

66
AVERAGE SCORE
The Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) aggregates data from a number of different sources that provide perceptions of businesspeople and country experts of the level of corruption in the public sector. We take the following steps to calculate the CPI:

1. Select data sources. Each data source used to construct the CPI must fulfil the following criteria to qualify as a valid source:

   + Quantifies risks or perceptions of corruption in the public sector
   + Is based on a reliable and valid methodology
   + Comes from a reputable organisation
   + Allows for sufficient variation of scores to distinguish between countries
   + Ranks a substantial number of countries
   + Considers only the assessments of country experts or businesspeople
   + Is regularly updated.

   The CPI 2022 is calculated using 13 different data sources from 12 different institutions that have captured perceptions of corruption within the past two years.

2. Standardise data sources to a scale of 0-100. This standardisation is achieved by subtracting the mean of each source in the baseline year from each country score, then dividing by the standard deviation of that source in the baseline year. This subtraction and division using the baseline year parameters ensures that the CPI scores are comparable year on year since 2012. After this procedure, the standardised scores are transformed to the CPI scale by multiplying them with the value of the CPI standard deviation in 2012 (20) and adding the mean of the CPI in 2012 (45), so that the dataset fits the CPI’s 0-100 scale.

3. Calculate the average. For a country or territory to be included in the CPI, a minimum of three sources must assess that country. A country’s CPI score is then calculated as the average of all standardised scores available for that country. Scores are rounded to whole numbers.

4. Report the measure of uncertainty. The CPI score is accompanied by a standard error and confidence interval. This captures the variation across the data sources available for a country or territory.
ENDNOTES

1 According to the Global Peace Index.


4 Corruption risks within defence and security institutions in almost 90 countries are identified in Transparency International’s *Government Defence Integrity Index* (GDI).

5 “Significant” progress refers to an improvement backed by a majority of the CPI’s underlying data sources. Some countries have shown a score at least three points higher or lower than that which they received in 2012, but there is a substantial variation among the CPI’s underlying sources.


17 Available at: https://balkaninsight.com/2022/10/17/serbian-alleged-gang-leader-tells-trial-we-served-states-needs/. Last accessed on 23.01.23.
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