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2023 CORRUPTION PERCEPTIONS INDEX: WEAKENING JUSTICE SYSTEMS LEAVE CORRUPTION UNCHECKED

Governments around the world largely failing to stop corruption

Berlin, 30 January 2024 – The [2023 Corruption Perceptions Index \(CPI\)](#) released today by Transparency International shows that most countries have made little to no progress in tackling public sector corruption. The CPI global average remains unchanged at 43 for the twelfth year in a row, with more than two-thirds of countries scoring below 50. This indicates serious corruption problems.

According to the [Rule of Law Index](#), the world is experiencing a decline in the functioning of justice systems. Countries with the lowest scores in this index are also scoring very low on the CPI, highlighting a clear connection between access to justice and corruption. Both authoritarian regimes and democratic leaders undermining justice contribute to increasing impunity for corruption and, in some cases, even encourage it by removing consequences for wrongdoers. The impact of their actions is evident in countries everywhere, from **Venezuela** (13) to **Tajikistan** (20).

François Valérian, Chair of Transparency International, said:

"Corruption will continue to thrive until justice systems can punish wrongdoing and keep governments in check. When justice is bought or politically interfered with, it is the people who suffer. Leaders should fully invest in and guarantee the independence of institutions that uphold the law and tackle corruption. It is time to end impunity for corruption."

GLOBAL 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).

- **Denmark** (90) tops the index for the sixth consecutive year, with **Finland** and **New Zealand** following closely with scores of 87 and 85, respectively. Due to well-functioning justice systems, these countries are also among the top scorers in the [Rule of Law Index](#).
- **Somalia** (11), **Venezuela** (13), **Syria** (13), **South Sudan** (13) and **Yemen** (16) take the bottom spots in the index. They are all affected by protracted crises, mostly armed conflicts.
- 23 countries – among them some high-ranking democracies like **Iceland** (72), **the Netherlands** (79), **Sweden** (82) and the **United Kingdom** (71), as well as some authoritarian states like **Iran** (24), **Russia** (26), **Tajikistan** (20) and **Venezuela** (13) – are all at historic lows this year.
- Since 2018, 12 countries significantly declined on their CPI scores. The list includes low and middle-income countries such as **El Salvador** (31),

Honduras (23), **Liberia** (25), **Myanmar** (20), **Nicaragua** (17), **Sri Lanka** (34) and **Venezuela** (13), as well as upper-middle and high-income economies like **Argentina** (37), **Austria** (71), **Poland** (54), **Turkey** (34) and the **United Kingdom** (71).

- Eight countries improved on the CPI during that same period: **Ireland** (77), **South Korea** (63), **Armenia** (47), **Vietnam** (41), the **Maldives** (39), **Moldova** (42), **Angola** (33) and **Uzbekistan** (33).

For each country's individual score and changes over time, as well as an analysis of each region, see the [2023 CPI page](#).

CORRUPTION AND INJUSTICE

Independent, transparent and well-resourced judiciaries and law enforcement institutions are central 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.

- Russia's war against **Ukraine** (36) posed immense challenges to its governance and infrastructure, increasing corruption risks. However, Ukraine continued an 11-year rise on the CPI by focusing on justice system reforms, including restructuring judicial self-governance bodies, increasing judicial independence and strengthening the capacity of the anti-corruption prosecution body. Despite these improvements, the existence of a significant number of high-level corruption cases remains a major concern.
- **Guatemala's** (23) decline is the result of three consecutive governments allied with corrupt practices. The Public Prosecutor's Office and the judiciary have been used to grant elites impunity for their corrupt practices and to target those raising their voice against corruption. This has left the state without any institutional capacity to fight corruption.
- In Africa, instances of corruption and associated issues within justice systems vary, encompassing reports of bribery, extortion and political meddling in justice systems in countries such as **Nigeria** (25). There have been cases of magistrates being imprisoned in **Burundi** (20) and a lack of effective investigation into cases brought to the courts in the **Democratic Republic of the Congo** (20).

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, CEO 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.”

NOTE TO EDITORS

The media page includes the CPI 2023 report, as well as the full dataset and methodology and additional analyses of six regions that feature countries identified as important to watch, including **Lebanon** (24), **Guatemala** (23) and **Greece** (49). See here: <https://www.transparency.org/en/cpi/2023/media-kit>

INTERVIEW REQUESTS

In case of country-specific queries, please contact [Transparency International's national chapters](#). In case of queries about regional and global findings, please contact the Transparency International Secretariat at 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. The CPI scores from 2012 onwards can be reliably compared year by year. For more information, see this article: [The ABCs of the CPI: How the Corruption Perceptions Index is calculated](#).