

# CORRUPTION PERCEPTIONS INDEX 2019

**Transparency International is a global movement with one vision: a world in which government, business, civil society and the daily lives of people are free of corruption. With more than 100 chapters worldwide and an international secretariat in Berlin, we are leading the fight against corruption to turn this vision into reality.**

**#cpi2019**

**[www.transparency.org/cpi](http://www.transparency.org/cpi)**

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# CORRUPTION PERCEPTIONS INDEX 2019

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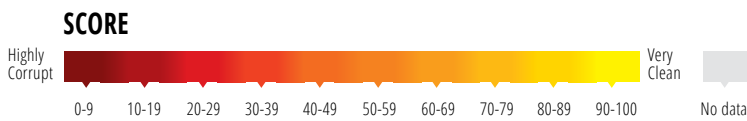
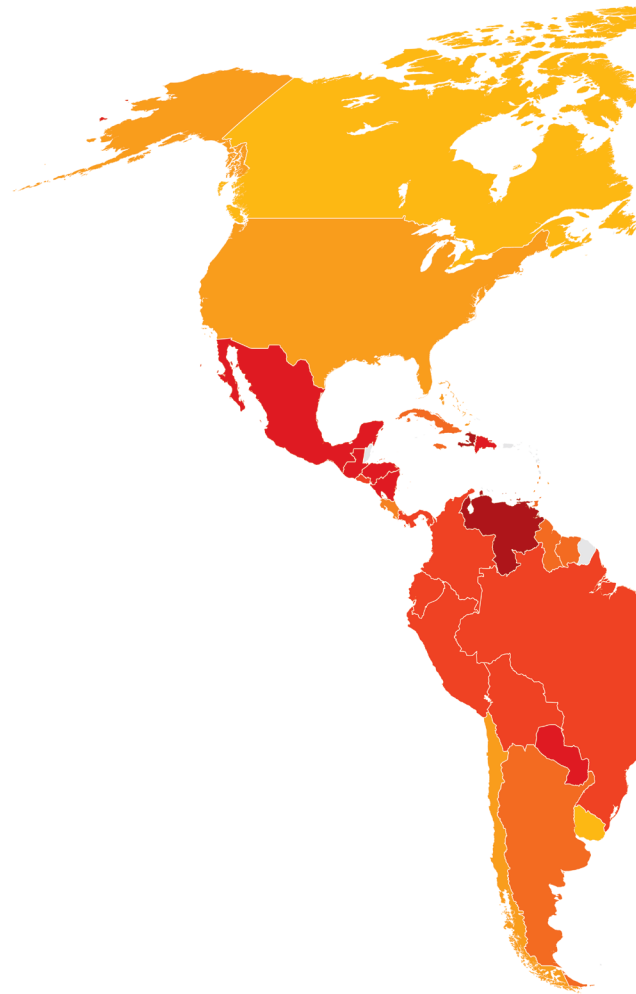
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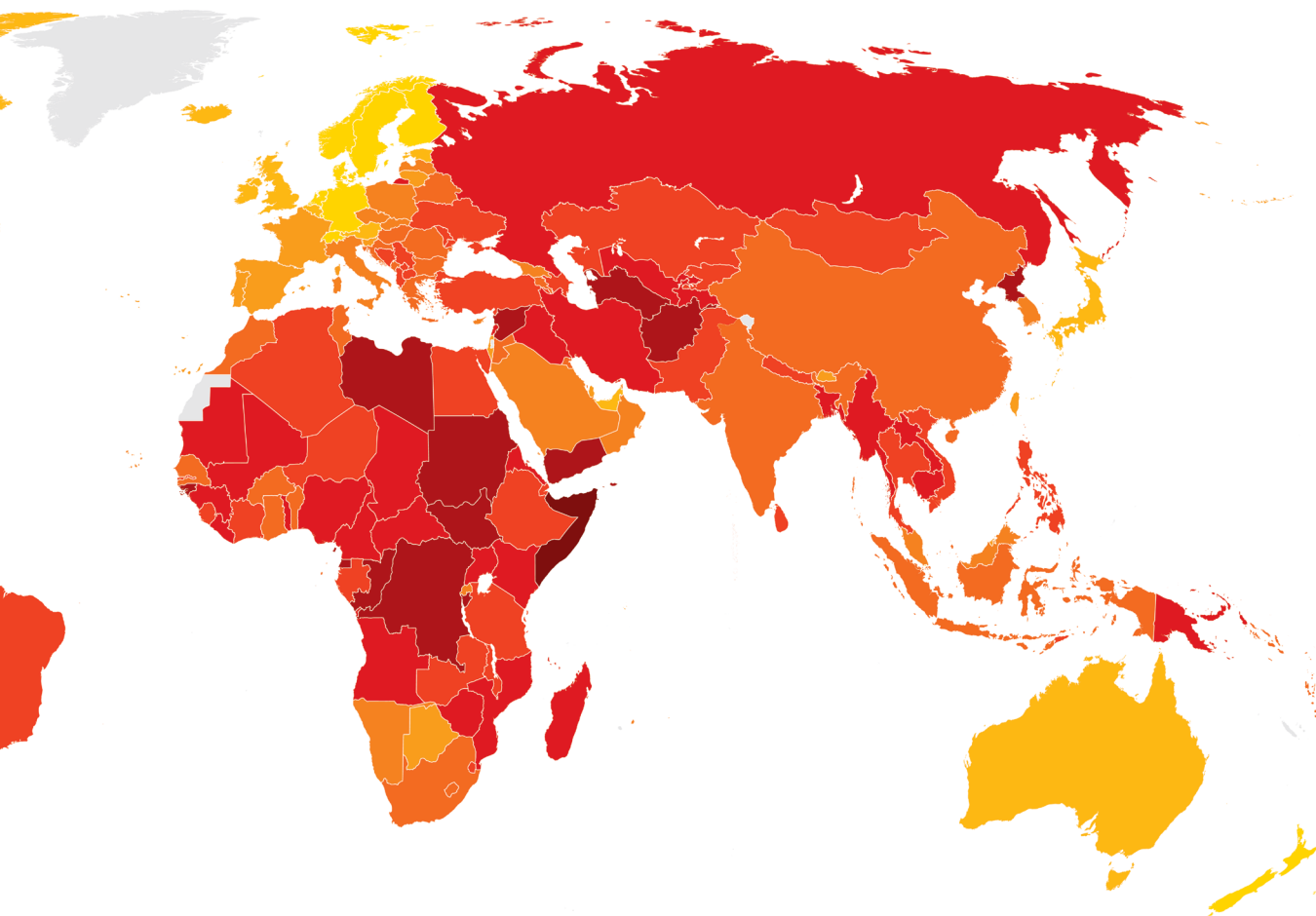
# 180 COUNTRIES. 180 SCORES.

## HOW DOES YOUR COUNTRY MEASURE UP?

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



SCORE	COUNTRY/TERRITORY	RANK	SCORE	COUNTRY/TERRITORY	RANK	SCORE	COUNTRY/TERRITORY	RANK
87	Denmark	1	69	France	23	56	Czech Republic	44
87	New Zealand	1	69	United States of America	23	44	Montenegro	66
86	Finland	3	68	Bhutan	25	45	Senegal	66
85	Singapore	4	67	Chile	26	44	Hungary	70
85	Sweden	4	66	Seychelles	27	44	Romania	70
85	Switzerland	4	65	Taiwan	28	44	South Africa	70
84	Norway	7	64	Bahamas	29	44	Suriname	70
82	Netherlands	8	62	Barbados	30	43	Bulgaria	74
80	Germany	9	62	Portugal	30	43	Jamaica	74
80	Luxembourg	9	62	Qatar	30	43	Tunisia	74
78	Iceland	11	62	Spain	30	42	Armenia	77
77	Australia	12	62	Botswana	34	42	Bahrain	77
77	Austria	12	61	Brunei Darussalam	35	42	Solomon Islands	77
77	Canada	12	60	Israel	35	41	Benin	80
77	United Kingdom	12	60	Lithuania	35	41	China	80
76	Hong Kong	16	60	Slovenia	35	41	Ghana	80
75	Belgium	17	60	Korea, South	39	41	India	80
74	Estonia	18	59	Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	39	41	Morocco	80
74	Ireland	18	59	Cabo Verde	41	40	Burkina Faso	85
73	Japan	20	58	Cyprus	41	40	Guyana	85
71	United Arab Emirates	21	58	Poland	41	40	Indonesia	85
71	Uruguay	21	56	Costa Rica	44	40	Kuwait	85
						40	Lesotho	85
						40	Trinidad and Tobago	85



39	Serbia	91	34	Kazakhstan	113	28	Dominican Republic	137	24	Zimbabwe	158
39	Turkey	91	34	Nepal	113	28	Kenya	137	23	Eritrea	160
38	Ecuador	93	34	Philippines	113	28	Lebanon	137	22	Nicaragua	161
38	Sri Lanka	93	34	Eswatini	113	28	Liberia	137	20	Cambodia	162
38	Timor-Leste	93	34	Zambia	113	28	Mauritania	137	20	Chad	162
37	Colombia	96	33	Sierra Leone	119	28	Papua New Guinea	137	20	Iraq	162
37	Ethiopia	96	32	Moldova	120	28	Paraguay	137	19	Burundi	165
37	Gambia	96	32	Niger	120	28	Russia	137	19	Congo	165
37	Tanzania	96	32	Pakistan	120	28	Uganda	137	19	Turkmenistan	165
37	Vietnam	96	31	Bolivia	123	28	Angola	146	18	Democratic Republic of the Congo	168
36	Bosnia and Herzegovina	101	31	Gabon	123	26	Bangladesh	146	18	Guinea Bissau	168
36	Kosovo	101	31	Malawi	123	26	Guatemala	146	18	Haiti	168
36	Panama	101	30	Azerbaijan	126	26	Honduras	146	18	Libya	168
36	Peru	101	30	Djibouti	126	26	Iran	146	17	Korea, North	172
36	Thailand	101	30	Kyrgyzstan	126	26	Mozambique	146	16	Afghanistan	173
35	Albania	106	30	Ukraine	126	26	Nigeria	146	16	Equatorial Guinea	173
35	Algeria	106	29	Guinea	130	25	Cameroon	153	16	Sudan	173
35	Brazil	106	29	Laos	130	25	Central African Republic	153	16	Venezuela	173
35	Cote d'Ivoire	106	29	Maldives	130	25	Comoros	153	15	Yemen	177
35	Egypt	106	29	Mali	130	25	Tajikistan	153	13	Syria	178
35	North Macedonia	106	29	Mexico	130	25	Uzbekistan	153	12	South Sudan	179
35	Mongolia	106	29	Togo	130	24	Madagascar	158	9	Somalia	180
34	El Salvador	113									

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Corruption Perceptions Index 2019 reveals a staggering number of countries are showing little to no improvement in tackling corruption. Our analysis also suggests that reducing big money in politics and promoting inclusive political decision-making are essential to curb corruption.

In the last year, anti-corruption movements across the globe gained momentum as millions of people joined together to speak out against corruption in their governments.

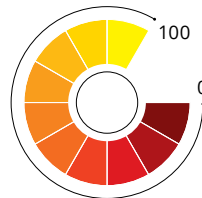
Protests from Latin America, North Africa and Eastern Europe to the Middle East and Central Asia made headlines as citizens marched in Santiago, Prague, Beirut, and a host of other cities to voice their frustrations in the streets.

From fraud that occurs at the highest levels of government to petty bribery that blocks access to basic public services like health care and education, citizens are fed up with corrupt leaders and institutions. This frustration fuels a growing lack of trust in government and further erodes public confidence in political leaders, elected officials and democracy.

The current state of corruption speaks to a need for greater

political integrity in many countries. To have any chance of curbing corruption, governments must strengthen checks and balances, limit the influence of big money in politics and ensure broad input in political decision-making. Public policies and resources should not be determined by economic power or political influence, but by fair consultation and impartial budget allocation.

**180** COUNTRIES SCORED



THE CPI USES A SCALE FROM 0 TO 100

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

100 is **very clean** and 0 is **highly corrupt**

**2/3** OF COUNTRIES SCORE BELOW

THE **AVERAGE** SCORE IS

**50**/100

**43**/100

## Recommendations

To end corruption and restore trust in politics, it is imperative to prevent opportunities for political corruption and to foster the integrity of political systems. Transparency International recommends:



### MANAGE CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

Governments should reduce the risk of undue influence in policy-making by tightening controls over financial and other interests of government officials. Governments should also address “revolving doors”, establish cooling-off periods for former officials and ensure rules are properly enforced and sanctioned.



### CONTROL POLITICAL FINANCING

In order to prevent excessive money and influence in politics, governments should improve and properly enforce campaign finance regulations. Political parties should also disclose their sources of income, assets and loans, and governments should empower oversight agencies with stronger mandates and appropriate resources.



### STRENGTHEN ELECTORAL INTEGRITY

For democracy to be effective against corruption, governments must ensure that elections are free and fair. Preventing and sanctioning vote-buying and misinformation campaigns are essential to rebuilding trust in government and ensuring that citizens can use their vote to punish corrupt politicians.



### REGULATE LOBBYING ACTIVITIES

Governments should promote open and meaningful access to decision-making and consult a wider range of groups, beyond well-resourced lobbyists and a few private interests. Lobbying activities should be public and easily accessible.



### TACKLE PREFERENTIAL TREATMENT

Governments should create mechanisms to ensure that service delivery and public resource allocation are not driven by personal connections or are biased towards special interest groups at the expense of the overall public good.



### EMPOWER CITIZENS

Governments should protect civil liberties and political rights, including freedom of speech, expression and association. Governments should engage civil society and protect citizens, activists, whistleblowers and journalists in monitoring and exposing corruption.

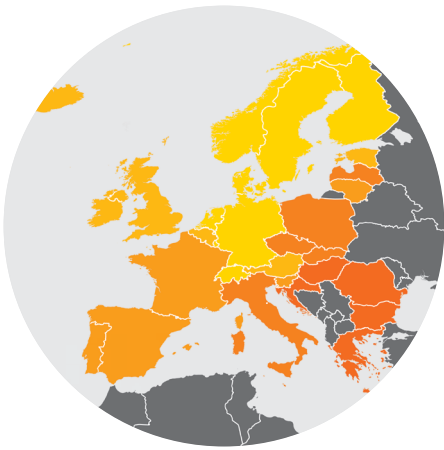


### REINFORCE CHECKS AND BALANCES

Governments must promote the separation of powers, strengthen judicial independence and preserve checks and balances.

# GLOBAL HIGHLIGHTS

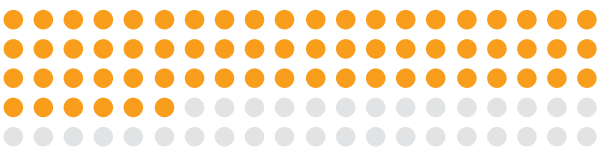
This year's Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) shows corruption is more pervasive in countries where big money can flow freely into electoral campaigns and where governments listen only to the voices of wealthy or well-connected individuals.



HIGHEST SCORING REGION

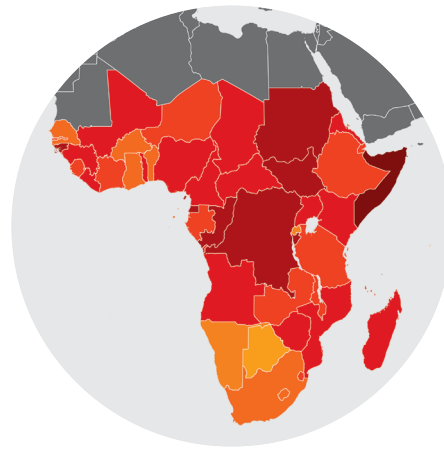
**WESTERN EUROPE & EUROPEAN UNION**

**66** /100



AVERAGE REGIONAL SCORE

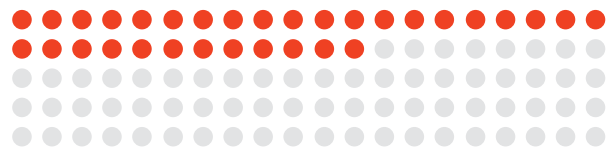
**⊞** SINCE 2018



LOWEST SCORING REGION

**SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA**

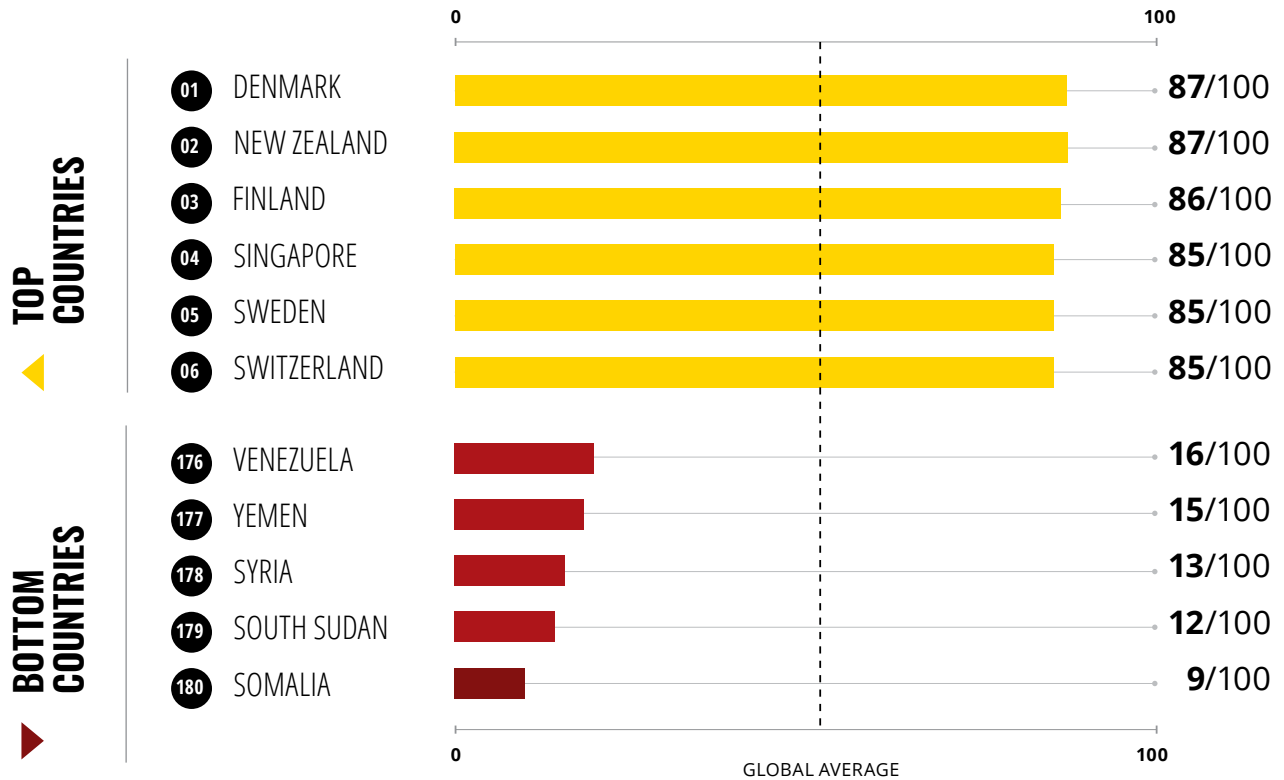
**32** /100



AVERAGE REGIONAL SCORE

**⊞** SINCE 2018





The index ranks 180 countries and territories by their perceived levels of public sector corruption, according to experts and business people. It uses a scale of zero to 100, where zero is highly corrupt and 100 is very clean.

More than two-thirds of countries score below 50 on this year's CPI, with an average score of just 43.

Similar to previous years, the data shows that despite some progress, a majority of countries are still failing to tackle public sector corruption effectively.

The top countries are New Zealand and Denmark, with scores of 87 each, followed by Finland (86), Singapore (85), Sweden (85) and Switzerland (85).

The bottom countries are Somalia, South Sudan and Syria with scores of 9, 12 and 13, respectively. These countries are closely followed by Yemen (15), Venezuela (16), Sudan (16), Equatorial Guinea (16) and Afghanistan (16).

“ Governments must urgently address the corrupting role of big money in political party financing and the undue influence it exerts on our political systems.

**Delia Ferreira Rubio**  
Chair  
*Transparency International*



In the last eight years, only 22 countries significantly improved their CPI scores, including Greece, Guyana and Estonia. In the same period, 21 countries significantly decreased their scores, including Canada, Australia and Nicaragua. In the remaining 137 countries, the levels of corruption show little to no change.

Since 2012:

22



**COUNTRIES IMPROVED\***

Including:

- Greece (+12)
- Guyana (+12)
- Estonia (+10)

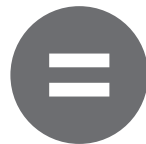
21



**COUNTRIES DECLINED\***

Including:

- Canada (-7)
- Nicaragua (-7)
- Australia (-8)

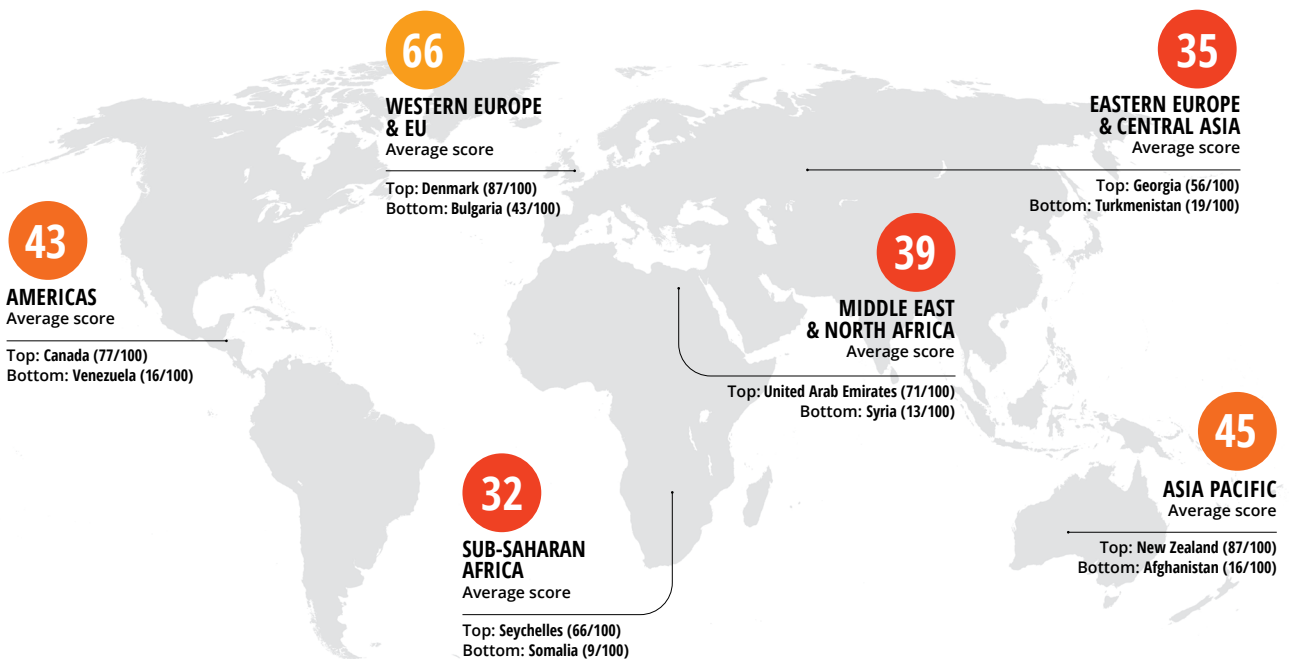


**THE REMAINING COUNTRIES MADE LITTLE OR NO PROGRESS IN THE FIGHT AGAINST CORRUPTION IN RECENT YEARS**

\* In these six examples, the country score changed significantly between 2012 and 2019.

## RESULTS BY REGION

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



# POLITICAL INTEGRITY

Keeping big money out of politics is essential to ensure political decision-making serves the public interest and curb opportunities for corrupt deals.

This year, our research highlights the relationship between politics, money and corruption. Unregulated flows of big money in politics also make public policy vulnerable to undue influence. Countries with stronger enforcement of campaign finance regulations have lower levels of corruption, as measured by the CPI.

Countries where campaign finance regulations are comprehensive and systematically enforced have an average score of 70 on the CPI, whereas countries where such regulations either don't exist or are poorly enforced score an average of just 34 and 35 respectively.

Sixty per cent of countries that significantly improved their CPI scores since 2012 also strengthened their enforcement of campaign finance regulations.

In addition, when policy-makers listen only to wealthy or politically connected individuals and groups, they often do so at the expense of the citizens they serve.

Countries with broader and more open consultation processes score an average of 61 on the CPI. By contrast, where there is little to no consultation, the average score is just 32.

A vast majority of countries that significantly declined their CPI

scores since 2012 do not engage the most relevant political, social and business actors in political decision-making.

Countries with lower CPI scores also have a higher concentration of political power among wealthy citizens.<sup>1</sup> Across the board, there is a concerning popular perception that rich people buy elections, both among some of the lowest-scoring countries on the CPI, as well as among certain higher-scoring countries, such as the United States.<sup>2</sup>

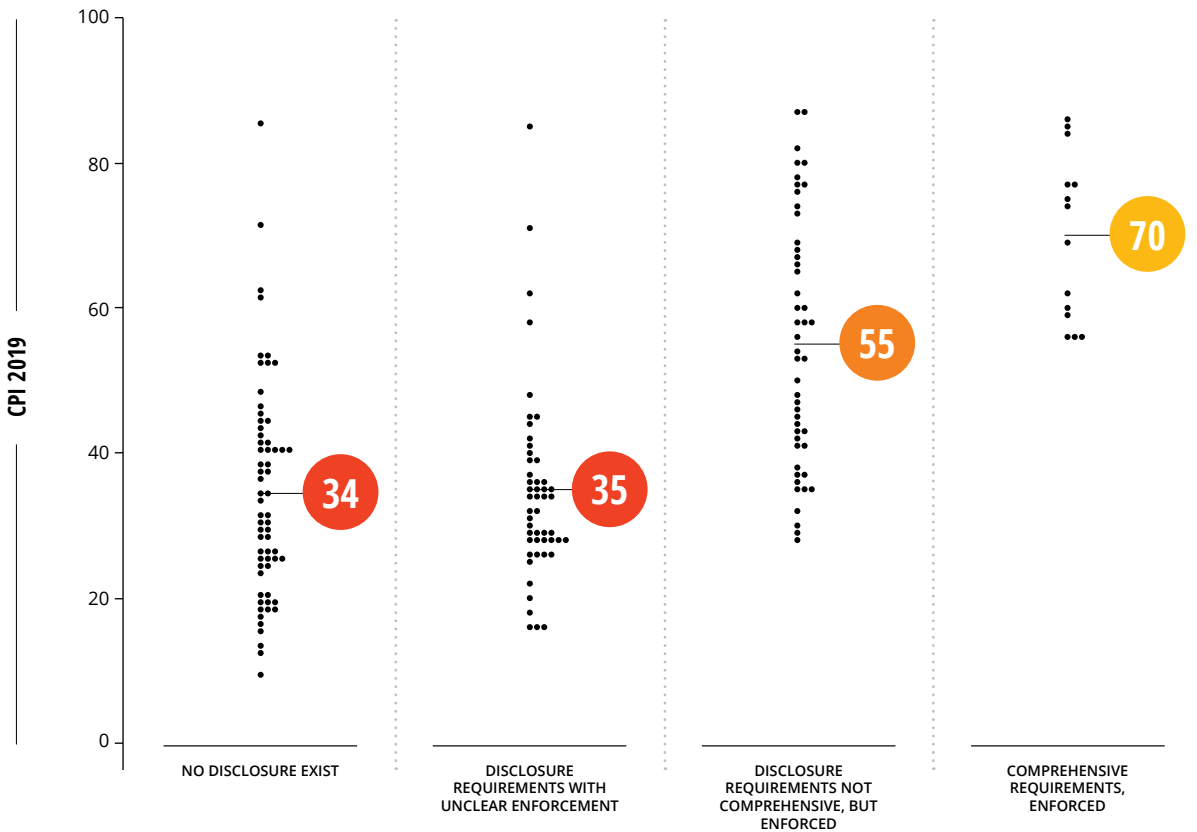


“ To have any chance of ending corruption and improving peoples’ lives, we must tackle the relationship between politics and big money. All citizens must be represented in decision-making.

**Patricia Moreira**  
*Managing Director*  
*Transparency International*

# TRANSPARENCY IN CAMPAIGN FINANCE

Greater transparency of campaign donations is associated with lower levels of corruption. Each dot represents a country's CPI 2019 score and the circles represent the average CPI score as compared to the strength of enforcement.<sup>3</sup>



VARIETIES OF DEMOCRACY (V-DEM) 2019 "DISCLOSURE OF CAMPAIGN DONATIONS"

## BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

36 ▼

With a score of 36, Bosnia and Herzegovina significantly declined by six points on the CPI since 2012. The country also suffers from weak enforcement of campaign finance regulations. During the 2018 elections, political parties and civil society organisations raised concerns over voting irregularities, threats against voters, the misuse of public resources and unequal access to the media.<sup>4</sup>

## SOUTH KOREA

59 ▲

With a score of 59, South Korea significantly improved by six points on the CPI since 2016. While a large share of funding comes from private donations, campaign contributions are well regulated and the rules enforced.<sup>5</sup> Many elected officials and parliamentarians have lost their offices or seats due to violations of these regulations.

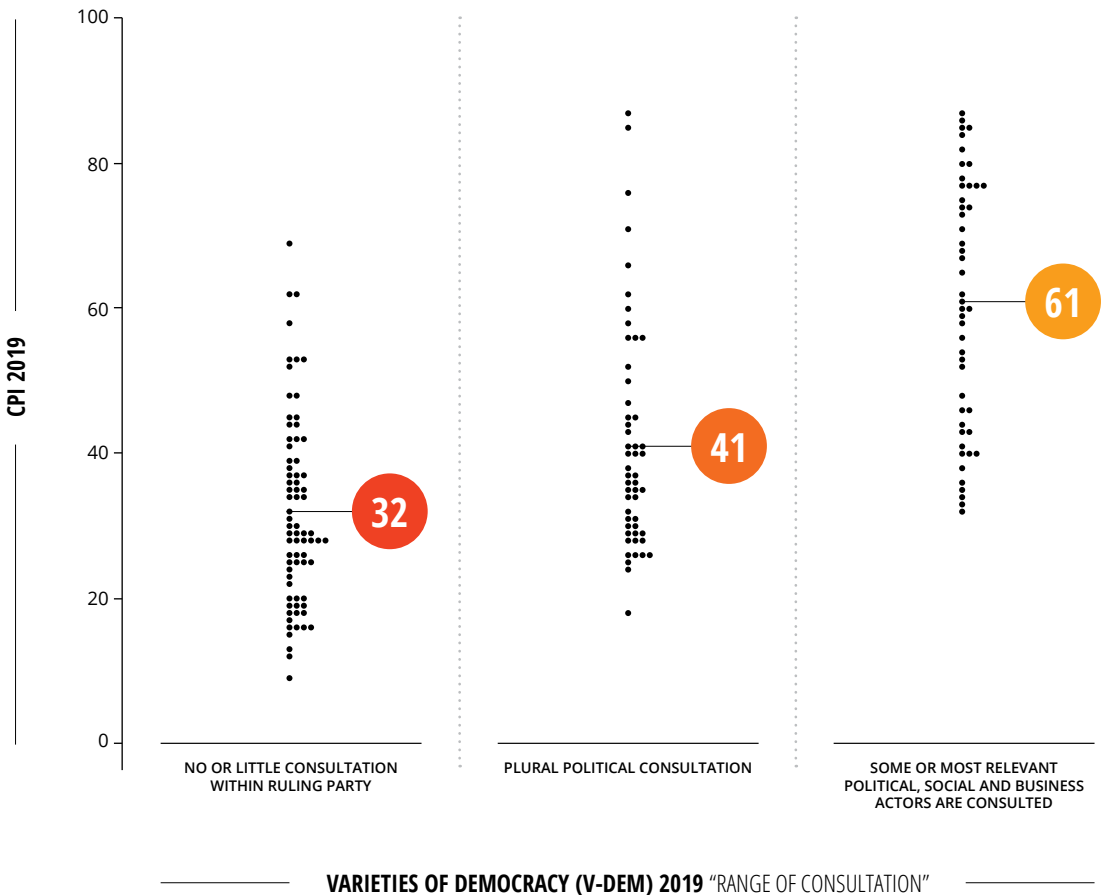
## CÔTE D'IVOIRE

35 ▲

This year, Côte d'Ivoire scores 35 on the CPI, a significant increase of six points since 2012. Campaign finance regulations are partially enforced in the country. Since 2010, there have been few complaints about irregularities in elections. International observers have deemed elections inclusive and transparent, from the candidate registration process to vote counting.<sup>6</sup>

## POLITICAL DECISION-MAKING

Broad consultation in political decision-making is associated with lower levels of corruption. Each dot represents a country's CPI 2019 score and the circles represent the average CPI score as compared to the extent of consultation.<sup>7</sup>



### NICARAGUA

22 ▼

With a score of 22, Nicaragua significantly declined by seven points on the CPI since 2012. There is little to no consultation on political decisions with political, social and business groups in the country. Civil society and opposition parties are systematically excluded from the policy process, while groups critical of the government operate in an increasingly restrictive environment.<sup>8</sup>

### ECUADOR

38 ▲

Since 2016, Ecuador significantly improved six points to earn a score of 38 on the CPI this year. Over the past two years, the government rolled back some restrictions on civil society. Despite these positive developments, the government retains excessive regulatory power over NGOs and it remains to be seen how it responds to recent protests in the country.<sup>9</sup>

### TURKEY

35 ▼

This year, Turkey scores 35 on the CPI, a significant decrease of 10 points since 2012. There is little space for consultative decision-making in the country. The government recently cracked down on NGOs, closing at least 1,500 foundations and associations and seizing their assets, while continuing to harass, arrest and prosecute civil society leaders.<sup>10</sup>

# AMERICAS

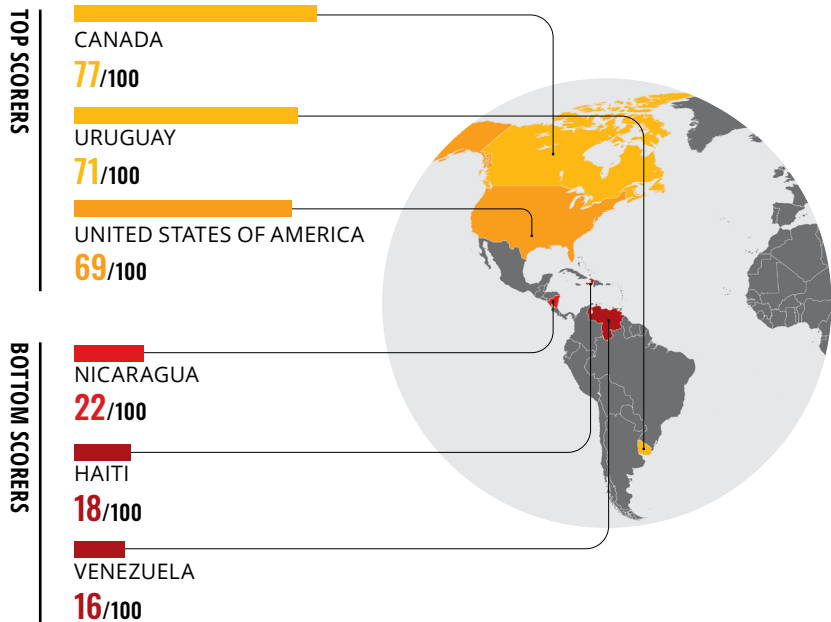
With an average score of 43 for the fourth consecutive year, the Americas region fails to make significant progress in the fight against corruption.

32

COUNTRIES ASSESSED

43/100

AVERAGE REGIONAL SCORE



While Canada is consistently a top performer, with a score of 77 out of 100, the country dropped four points since last year and seven points since 2012. At the bottom of the index, Venezuela scores 16, which is also one of the bottom five scores globally.

The region faces significant challenges from political leaders acting in their own self-interest at the expense of the citizens they serve. Specifically, political party financing and electoral integrity are big challenges.

For example, the Lava Jato investigation,<sup>11</sup> or “Operation Car Wash”, which exposed corruption spanning at least 10 countries in

Latin America, points to a surge in illegal political contributions or donations as part of one of the biggest corruption scandals in history.<sup>12</sup>

Odebrecht, the Brazilian construction giant at the heart of the case, was convicted for paying US\$1 billion in bribes over the past 15 years, including to political leaders in Brazil, Peru and Argentina during elections.

With scores of 22 and 29 respectively, Nicaragua and Mexico are significant decliners on the CPI since 2012. Although the recent *Global Corruption Barometer – Latin America and the Caribbean*<sup>13</sup> highlights vote-buying

and other corruption issues in Mexico, a recent anti-corruption reform, along with a new, legally autonomous attorney general's office are positive changes.<sup>14</sup> In Nicaragua, social unrest and human rights violations are on the rise.<sup>15</sup> Public services and consultative decision-making are sorely lacking in the country.

With a score of 40, Guyana is a significant improver on the CPI since 2012.<sup>16</sup> While there is still much work to do, the government is demonstrating political will to hold former politicians accountable for the misuse of state resources.

## COUNTRIES TO WATCH

### United States (US)

With a score of 69, the United States drops two points since last year to earn its lowest score on the CPI in eight years. This comes at a time when Americans' trust in government is at an historic low of 17 per cent,<sup>17</sup> according to the Pew Research Center.

The US faces a wide range of challenges, from threats to its system of checks and balances,<sup>18</sup>

and the ever-increasing influence of special interests in government,<sup>19</sup> to the use of anonymous shell companies by criminals, corrupt individuals and even terrorists, to hide illicit activities.<sup>20</sup>

While President Trump campaigned on a promise of "draining the swamp" and making government work for more than just Washington insiders and political elites, a series

of scandals, resignations and allegations of unethical behaviour suggest that the "pay-to-play" culture has only become more entrenched.<sup>21</sup> In December 2019, the US House of Representatives formally impeached President Trump for abuse of power and obstruction of Congress.<sup>22</sup>

*A whistleblower complaint sparked the impeachment process, providing a powerful reminder of the need to protect, and expand, the legal and everyday environment for whistleblowers and to avoid the shame and blame that often ensues if their identities are revealed.<sup>23</sup>*

Photo: Michael Fleshman <https://flic.kr/p/eJrGgh> CC BY-NC 2.0



### Brazil

Corruption remains one of the biggest impediments to economic and social development in Brazil. With a score of 35, Brazil remains stagnated, with its lowest CPI score since 2012.

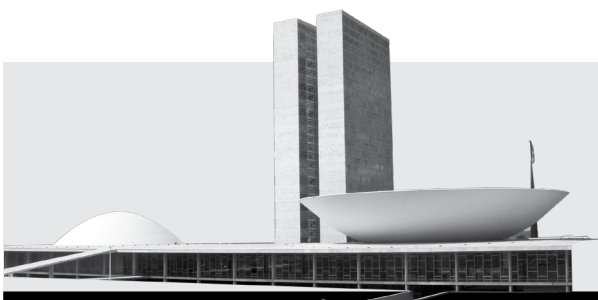
After the 2018 national elections, which were strongly influenced by

an anti-corruption agenda, Brazil experienced a series of setbacks to its legal and institutional anti-corruption frameworks.<sup>24</sup> The country also faced difficulties in advancing wide-ranging reforms to its political system.

Setbacks included a Supreme Court injunction that virtually paralysed Brazil's anti-money

laundering system<sup>25</sup> and an illegal inquiry that secretly targeted law enforcement agents.<sup>26</sup>

Ongoing challenges include growing political interference with anti-corruption institutions by President Bolsonaro, and congressional approval of legislation that threatens the independence of law enforcement agents and the accountability of political parties.



*Progress in Brazil's anti-corruption agenda is at risk and mounting impunity threatens to weaken democracy and destabilise the country.*

Photo: Mario Roberto Duran Ortiz/Wikimedia Commons

# ASIA PACIFIC

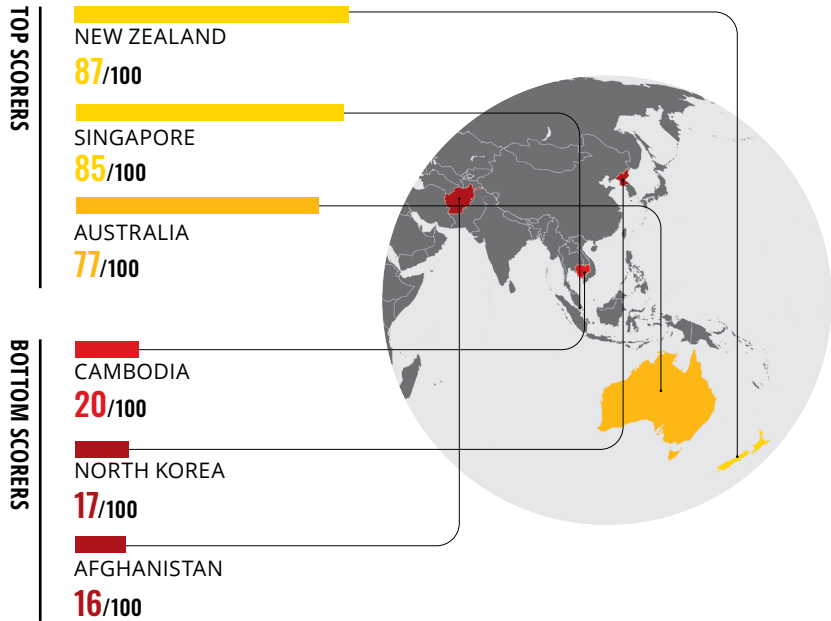
A regional average of 45, after many consecutive years of an average score of 44, illustrates general stagnation across the Asia Pacific.

31

COUNTRIES ASSESSED

45/100

AVERAGE REGIONAL SCORE



Despite the presence of high performers like New Zealand (87), Singapore (85), Australia (77), Hong Kong (76) and Japan (73), the region hasn't witnessed substantial progress in anti-corruption efforts or results. In addition, low performers like Afghanistan (16), North Korea (17) and Cambodia (20) continue to highlight serious challenges in the region.

While often seen as an engine of the global economy, in terms of political integrity and governance, the region performs only marginally better than the global average. Many countries

see economic openness as a way forward, however, governments across the region, from China to Cambodia to Vietnam, continue to restrict participation in public affairs, silence dissenting voices and keep decision-making out of public scrutiny.<sup>27</sup>

Given these issues, it comes as no surprise that vibrant economic powers like China (41), Indonesia (40), Vietnam (37), the Philippines (34) and others continue to struggle to tackle corruption.

Even in democracies, such as Australia<sup>28</sup> and India<sup>29</sup>, unfair and opaque political financing

and undue influence in decision-making and lobbying by powerful corporate interest groups, result in stagnation or decline in control of corruption.



## COUNTRIES TO WATCH

### Indonesia

With a score of 40, Indonesia improves by two points on the CPI. A promising emerging economy is coupled with repression of civil society and weak oversight institutions. The independence and effectiveness of Indonesia's anti-corruption

commission, the KPK, is currently being thwarted by the government.<sup>30</sup>

The Komisi Pemberantasan Korupsi (KPK), is seen as a symbol of progress and modernisation, but is undergoing a loss of autonomy and power. Paradoxically, this contradicts

the government's aspirations and President Widodo's own agenda, which prioritises foreign investment and a booming economy.<sup>31</sup> With corruption issues in the limelight, Indonesia risks scaring off investors and slowing economic progress.



*The re-election of President Joko Widodo was a setback to political integrity that surprised many, undercutting the impressive democratic and anti-corruption resurgence the country experienced in the last few years.<sup>32</sup>*

Photo: Adek Berry/AFP

### Papua New Guinea

With a score of 28, Papua New Guinea remains stagnant on the CPI. However, despite low performance on the CPI for years, recent anti-corruption developments are encouraging.

Following the removal of former Prime Minister O'Neill, currently being investigated for alleged

corruption, the government instituted structural changes and introduced new legislation to establish an Independent Commission against Corruption (ICAC). Together, these small improvements give citizens a reason for optimism.

Under the current leadership of Prime Minister Marape, the government should uphold its

previous commitments, as well as its 20-year anti-corruption strategy established in 2012, and work to investigate and punish bribery, fraud, conflicts of interest, nepotism and other corrupt acts.

*More progress is needed to make real change in Papua New Guinea and civil society organisations must remain vigilant in holding the government accountable.*

Photo: David Gray/Reuters



# EASTERN EUROPE & CENTRAL ASIA

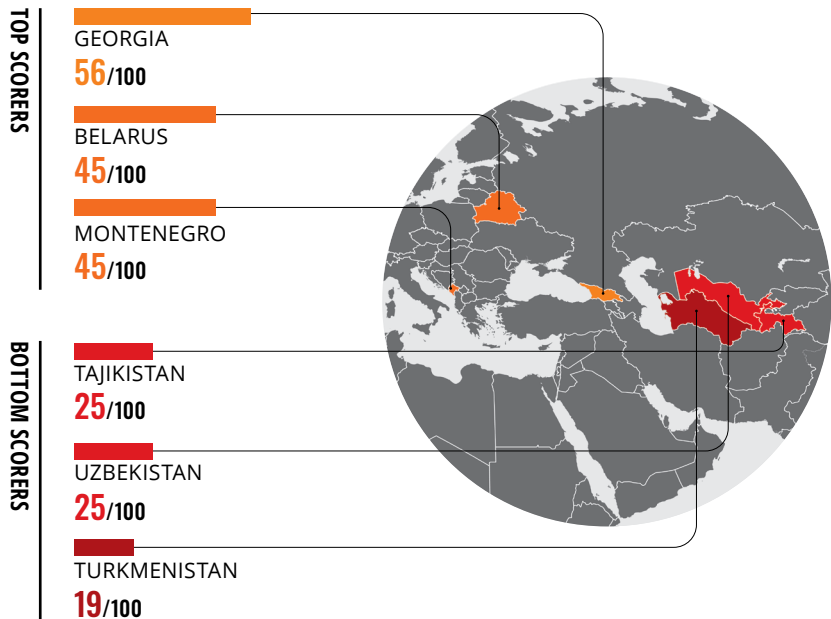
Eastern Europe and Central Asia is the second-lowest performing region on the CPI, with an average score of 35.

19

COUNTRIES ASSESSED

35/100

AVERAGE REGIONAL SCORE



Across the region, countries experience limited separation of powers, abuse of state resources for electoral purposes, opaque political party financing and conflicts of interest.<sup>33 34</sup>

Only three countries score above the global average: Georgia (56), Belarus (45) and Montenegro (45). At the bottom of the region are Turkmenistan (19), Uzbekistan (25) and Tajikistan (25).

Strong political influence over oversight institutions, insufficient judicial independence and limited press freedoms serve to create an over-concentration of power in many countries across the region.

Despite aspirations to join the European Union, the scores in six Western Balkan countries and Turkey have not improved.

Turkey (39) declined significantly by 10 points since 2012, while Bosnia and Herzegovina (36) declined by six points in the same period. A lack of political will and a decline in implementation of laws and regulations are real challenges.

Since 2012, Belarus (45), Kyrgyzstan (30) and Uzbekistan (25) have significantly improved on the CPI. However, these three post-Soviet states continue to experience state capture and a

failure to preserve checks and balances.

While Uzbekistan has loosened some media restrictions, it still remains one of the most authoritarian regimes worldwide.<sup>35</sup>

State capture and the concentration of power in private hands remain a major stumbling block in the region. Corruption can only be addressed effectively if political leaders prioritise public interests and set an example for transparency.

## COUNTRIES TO WATCH

### Armenia

With a score of 42, Armenia improves by seven points since last year. Following the revolution in 2018 and the formation of a new parliament, the country has demonstrated promising developments in advancing anti-corruption policy reforms.<sup>36</sup>

Despite these improvements, conflicts of interests and non-transparent and unaccountable public operations remain impediments to ending corruption in the country.<sup>37</sup>

While improving political integrity will take time and resources, increasing public trust in law

enforcement and the judiciary are critical first steps in ensuring appropriate checks and balances and improving anti-corruption efforts.<sup>38</sup>

*In Armenia, political will and implementation of anti-corruption policies are important, while fundamental and urgent change of political culture and governance is crucial.*

Photo: Amnat Phuthamrong/shutterstock.com



### Kosovo

With a score of 36, Kosovo, is experiencing a shift in parliamentary power that could offer an opportunity for change. After years of criticising the government and international community in Kosovo for their failure to address corruption,<sup>39</sup>

the Self-Determination (*Vetevendosje*) party, which recently won a majority of parliamentary seats, has a chance to demonstrate its commitment to combating corruption.<sup>40</sup>

During the election campaign, the party was one of a few that responded to requests to disclose campaign costs.

However, it remains to be seen if a new government will live up to a higher standard of political integrity. It can do so by abandoning the usual practice of political appointments in state-owned enterprises and by establishing a strong legal obligation for financial disclosure by political parties.



*In Kosovo, the new parliament has an opportunity to reverse the shortcomings of the previous administration and prioritise anti-corruption efforts.*

Photo: Albinfo/Wikimedia Commons

# MIDDLE EAST & NORTH AFRICA

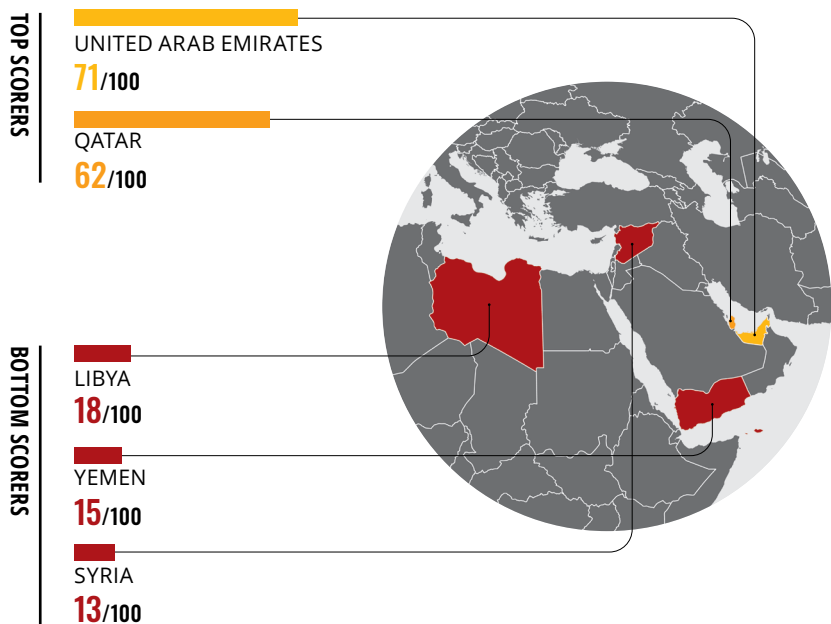
With the same average score of 39 as last year, there is little progress in improving control of corruption in the Middle East and North Africa region.

18

COUNTRIES ASSESSED

39/100

AVERAGE REGIONAL SCORE



With a score of 71, the United Arab Emirates is the best regional performer, followed by Qatar (62). At the bottom of the region, Syria scores 13, followed by Yemen with a score of 15. Both countries are significant decliners on the CPI, with Yemen dropping eight points since 2012 and Syria dropping 13 points during the same period.

The region faces significant corruption challenges that highlight a lack of political integrity. According to our recent report, *Global Corruption*

*Barometer — Middle East and North Africa*, nearly one in two people in Lebanon is offered bribes in exchange for their votes, while more than one in four receives threats if they don't vote a certain way.<sup>41</sup>

In a region where fair and democratic elections are the exception, state capture is commonplace. Powerful individuals routinely divert public funds to their own pockets at the expense of ordinary citizens. Separation of powers is another challenge: independent judiciaries

with the potential to act as a check on the executive branch are rare or non-existent.<sup>42</sup>

To improve citizens' trust in government, countries must build transparent and accountable institutions and prosecute wrongdoing. They should also hold free and fair elections and allow for citizen engagement and participation in decision-making.

## COUNTRIES TO WATCH

### Tunisia

With a score of 43, Tunisia remains at a standstill on the CPI despite advances in anti-corruption legislation over the past five years. Recent laws to protect whistleblowers and improve access to information, combined with stronger social accountability and space for civil society, are important steps, but they are not enough.

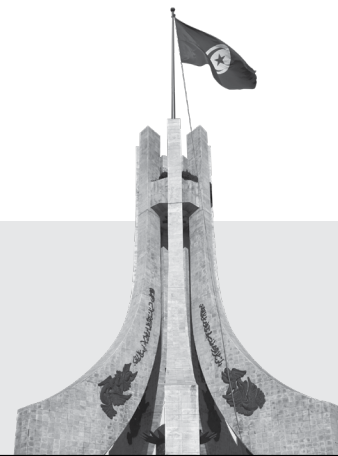
For anti-corruption laws to be effective, decrees and implementing orders from the executive branch are needed. In addition, financial and human resources are vital to strengthen the country's anti-corruption commission and increase its independence.

To date, few political leaders have been prosecuted for corruption,<sup>43</sup> and recovery of stolen assets is

slow.<sup>44</sup> An independent judiciary is another major challenge. While the recent establishment of a judiciary council is encouraging, the council is not yet fully operational and still lacks total independence from the legislative branch.<sup>45</sup>

*In Tunisia, the lack of enforcement of laws and regulations is a major challenge. Without proper implementation mechanisms and administrative decrees, laws will remain ineffective.*

Photo: ColorMaker/Shutterstock.com



### Saudi Arabia

With a score of 53, Saudi Arabia improved by four points since last year. However, its score does not reflect the myriad problems in the country, including a dismal human rights record and severe restrictions on journalists, political activists and other citizens.

In 2017, the Saudi Crown Prince Mohammad Bin Salman carried out an "anti-corruption" purge as part of his reform of the country. Despite government claims of recovering approximately US\$106 billion of stolen assets,<sup>46</sup> there was no due process, transparent investigation or fair and free trial for suspects.<sup>47</sup>

This year, Saudi Arabia takes on the presidency of the G20. As it assumes this leadership role, the country must end its crackdown on civil liberties and strengthen further checks on the executive branch to foster transparency and accountability.



*The social and economic reforms that helped improve Saudi Arabia's business environment and attract foreign investment came with a heavy human rights price tag.*

Photo: Faisal Nasser/Reuters

# SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

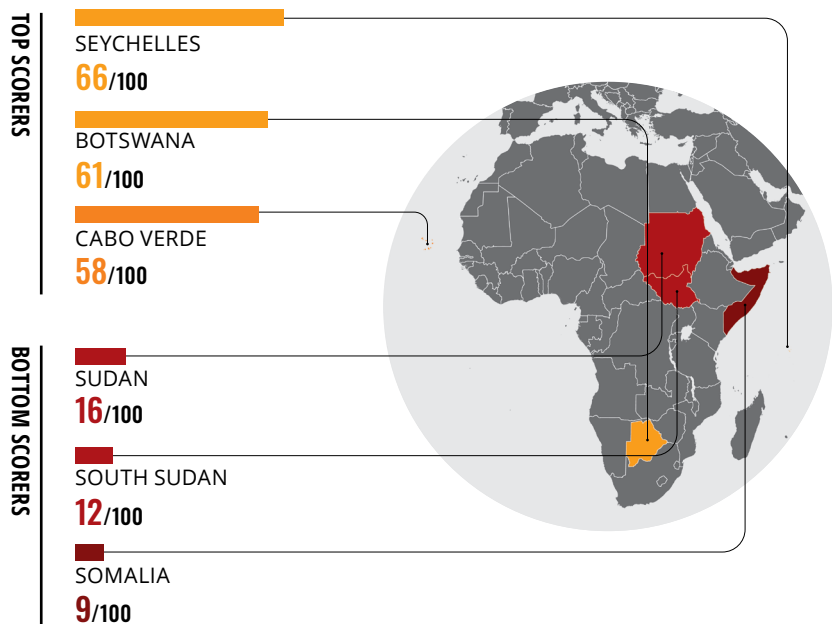
As the lowest-scoring region on the CPI, with an average of 32, Sub-Saharan Africa's performance paints a bleak picture of inaction against corruption.

49

COUNTRIES ASSESSED

32/100

AVERAGE REGIONAL SCORE



With a score of 66, the Seychelles earns the highest mark in the region, followed by Botswana (61), Cabo Verde (58), Rwanda (53) and Mauritius (52). At the bottom of the index are Somalia (9), South Sudan (12), Sudan (16) and Equatorial Guinea (16).

Significant improvers since 2012, Cote d'Ivoire (35) and Senegal (45) still have much work to do. The political will demonstrated by the leaders of both countries, which saw a number of key legal, policy and institutional reforms implemented in their early days in office, has been on a backslide since 2016.

Since 2012, several countries, including Congo (19), Liberia (28), Madagascar (24) and Malawi (31) have significantly declined on the CPI. Congo has been the subject of repeated reports of money laundering and embezzlement of public funds by the country's political elite<sup>48</sup> with no action taken by national authorities.<sup>49</sup>

In Madagascar, despite a 2018 constitutional court ruling against electoral amendments favouring the incumbent president and cited as unconstitutional, judicial independence remains a concern.<sup>50</sup> More recently, the national anti-corruption agency

began legal action against more than half of the country's parliamentarians, who stand accused of taking bribes.<sup>51</sup>

Money is used to win elections, consolidate power and further personal interests. Although the African Union Convention on Preventing and Combatting Corruption has provisions to prevent corruption and encourage transparency in campaign financing, implementation is weak.

## COUNTRIES TO WATCH

### Angola

Following four decades of authoritarian rule, Angola (26) jumped seven points in this year's CPI, making it a significant improver. However, given its overall low score, the country is still well below the global average of 43.

Isabel Dos Santos, the former president's daughter, who is

also known as "Africa's richest woman", was fired from her job as head of the state oil and gas firm, Sonangol, months after President Lourenço's election. In December 2019, as investigations into corruption allegations progressed, an Angolan court ordered a freeze of Dos Santos's assets.<sup>52</sup>

Although the country has

recovered US\$5 billion in stolen assets, more needs to be done to strengthen integrity and promote transparency in accounting for oil revenue.<sup>53</sup>



*Following a change of regime in 2017, the Angolan government introduced a set of governance reforms to crack down on corruption.*

Photo: Stephen Eisenhammer/Reuters

### Ghana

Known as a beacon of democracy in West Africa, Ghana dropped seven points on the CPI since 2014, moving from 48 in 2014 to 41 in 2019. Revelations of bribery in Ghana's high court in 2015<sup>54</sup>

and the murder of investigative journalist Ahmed Hussein-Suale in early 2019<sup>55</sup> cast serious doubts on the country's anti-corruption efforts.

Despite these developments, there is hope for change. In 2017,

the Office of Special Prosecutor was established, which has the power to investigate and prosecute cases of corruption. In 2019, a right to information bill was also passed. These efforts, combined with the enhanced performance of the Auditor General's office, offer hope for improvement.



*Given recent scandals, corruption is expected to feature prominently in electoral debates during the upcoming elections in 2020.*

Photo: demerzel21/iStockphoto.com

# WESTERN EUROPE & EUROPEAN UNION

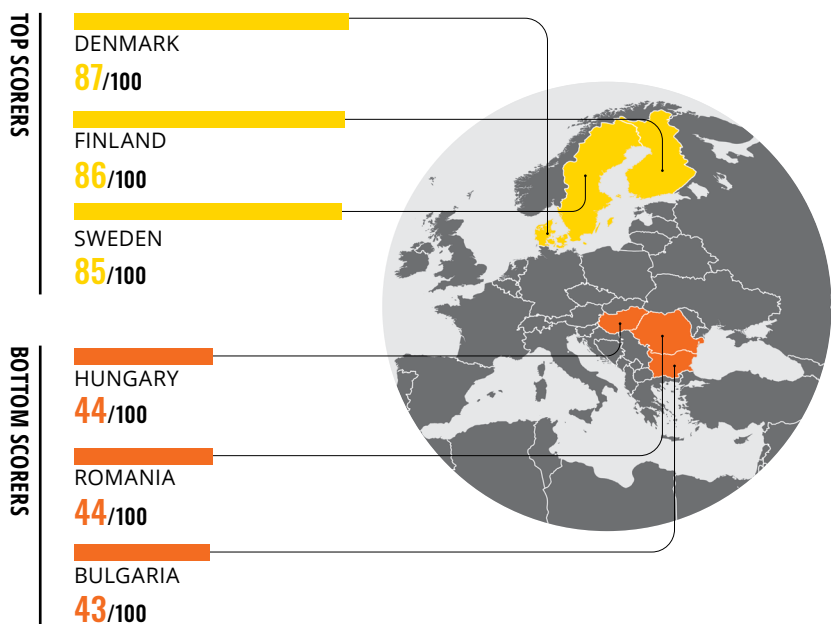
Fourteen of the top 20 countries in this year's CPI are from Western Europe and the European Union (EU), including nine countries from the EU alone.

31

COUNTRIES ASSESSED

66/100

AVERAGE REGIONAL SCORE



Despite being the best performing region, with an average score of 66 out of 100, Western Europe and the EU are not immune to corruption.

With 87 points, Denmark is the highest-scoring country in the region, followed by Finland (86), Sweden (85) and Switzerland (85). At the bottom of the region are Bulgaria (43), Romania (44) and Hungary (44).

With a score of 53, Italy increased by 11 points since 2012 while Greece (48) increased by 12 points during the same period. Both countries experienced

concrete improvements, including legislative progress in Italy with the passage of anti-corruption laws<sup>56</sup> and the creation of an anti-corruption agency<sup>57</sup> in both countries.

Most post-communist EU member states are struggling to address corruption effectively. Several countries, including Hungary, Poland and Romania, have taken steps to undermine judicial independence, which weakens their ability to prosecute cases of high-level corruption.<sup>58</sup>

In the Czech Republic (56), recent scandals involving the

prime minister and his efforts to obtain public money through EU subsidies for his company highlight a startling lack of political integrity.<sup>59</sup> The scandals also point to an insufficient level of transparency in political campaign financing.

Issues of conflict of interest, abuse of state resources for electoral purposes, insufficient disclosure of political party and campaign financing, and a lack of media independence are prevalent and should take priority both for national governments and the EU.



## COUNTRIES TO WATCH

### Malta

With a score of 54, Malta is a significant decliner on the CPI, dropping six points since 2015. Given the “pair of political machines [that] have [for decades] operated with impunity on the island”<sup>60</sup> it’s no wonder that two years after

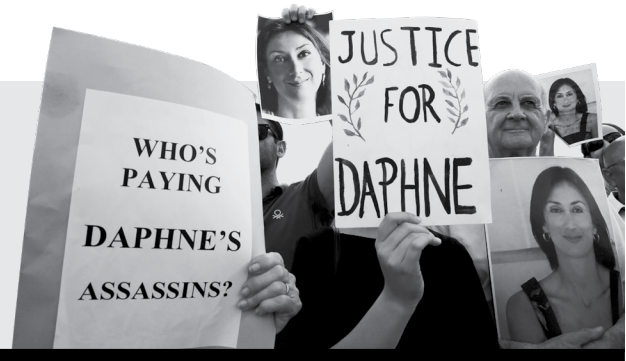
the assassination of journalist Daphne Caruana Galizia, who was killed while reporting on corruption, the country is still mired in corruption.

Despite calls from Maltese citizens, Caruana Galizia’s family and the international community to solve the case, the government

dragged its feet in the judicial procedures. Several scandals involving the Panama Papers, the collapse of a Maltese bank and the “golden visa” scheme that sells Maltese citizenship to wealthy overseas investors may also contribute to Malta’s decline on the CPI.

*In Malta, corruption is undermining the rule of law. A significant lack of political integrity contributes to politicians and others hiding illicit wealth behind secret companies.*

Photo: Darrin Zammit Lupi/Reuters



### Estonia

For the past decade, Estonia (74) has seen a stable rise on the CPI. A significant improver, the country increased its score by 10 points since 2012. A comprehensive legislative framework, independent institutions and effective online tools make it possible to reduce

petty corruption and make political party financing open and transparent. There is a need, however, to legally define and regulate lobbying to prevent and detect undue influence on policy-making.

Although private sector corruption is not captured on the CPI, recent money

laundering scandals involving the Estonian branch of Danske Bank demonstrate a greater need for integrity and accountability in the banking and business sectors.<sup>61</sup> The scandal also highlights a need for better and stronger EU-wide anti-money laundering supervision.<sup>62</sup>



*The public institutions of Estonia are largely characterised by high levels of integrity and transparency.*

Photo: Kollawat Somsri/shutterstock.com

# TROUBLE AT THE TOP

Top scoring countries on the CPI like Denmark, Switzerland and Iceland are not immune to corruption. While the CPI shows these public sectors to be among the cleanest in the world, corruption still exists, particularly in cases of money laundering and other private sector corruption.

The Nordic economies stand out as leaders on the CPI, with Denmark (87), Finland (86), Sweden (85), Norway (84) and Iceland (78) taking five of the top 11 places.

However, integrity at home does not always translate into integrity abroad, and multiple scandals in 2019 demonstrated that transnational corruption is often facilitated, enabled and perpetuated by seemingly clean Nordic countries.

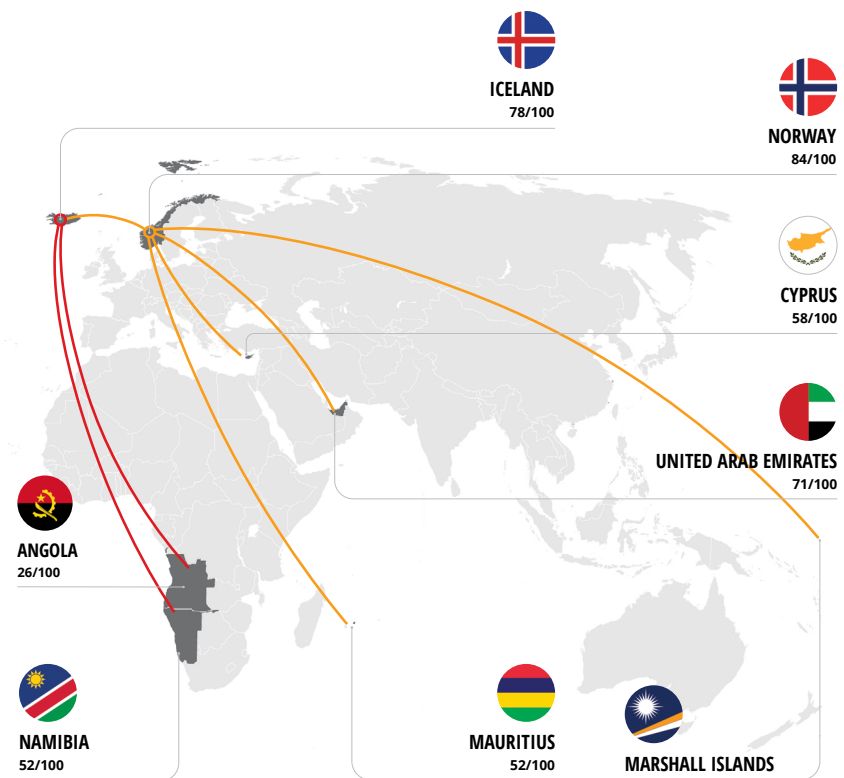
Despite some high-profile fines and prosecutions, our research shows that enforcement of foreign bribery laws among OECD countries is shockingly low.<sup>63</sup> The outsized roles that some companies play in their national economies gives them political support that too often triumphs over real accountability. Some banks and businesses aren't just too big to fail – they're also too powerful to pay. Anti-money laundering supervision and sanctions for breaches are often disjointed and ineffective.

The CPI highlights where stronger anti-corruption efforts are needed across the globe. It emphasises where businesses should show the greatest responsibility to promote integrity and accountability, and where governments must eliminate undue influence from private interests that can have a devastating impact on sustainable development.

## THE FISHROT FILES

In November, the Fishrot Files investigation revealed that Samherji, one of Iceland's largest fishing conglomerates, allegedly bribed government officials in Namibia (52) and Angola (26) for rights to massive fishing quotas. The company established shell companies in tax havens such as the UAE (71), Mauritius (52), Cyprus (58) and the Marshall Islands, some of which were allegedly used to launder the proceeds of corrupt deals. Many of the funds seem to have been transferred through a Norwegian state-owned bank, DNB.<sup>64</sup>

- bribery
- illicit finances



## TELECOM BRIBERY

Last year, Swedish telecoms giant, Ericsson, agreed to pay over US\$1 billion to settle a foreign bribery case over its 16-year cash-for-contracts campaign in China (41), Djibouti (30), Kuwait (40), Indonesia (40) and Vietnam (37). This is the second largest fine paid to US authorities.<sup>65</sup>

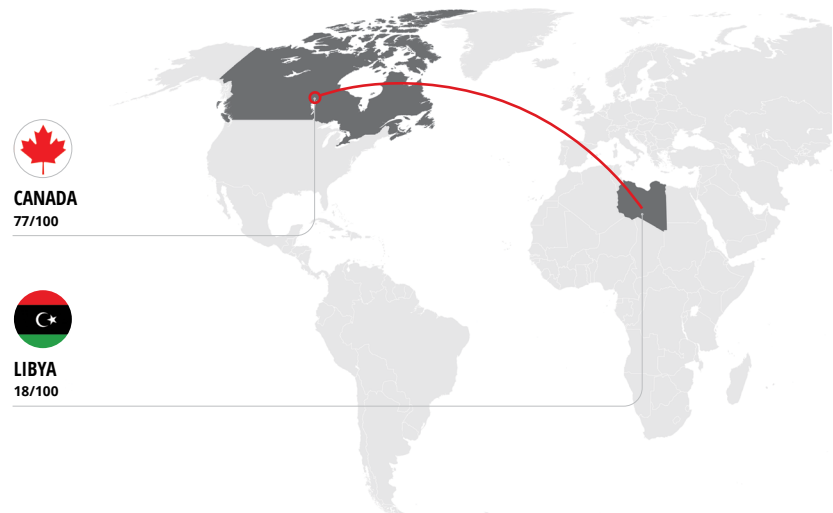
○ bribery



## THE SNC-LAVALIN AFFAIR

In Canada (77), which drops four points since last year, a former executive of construction company SNC-Lavalin was convicted in December over bribes the company paid in Libya (18).

○ bribery



## DANSKE BANK SCANDAL

Following the money laundering scandal at Danske Bank, the largest bank in Denmark (87), major banks like Swedbank in Sweden (85) and Deutsche Bank in Germany (80), were reportedly investigated in 2019 for their role in handling suspicious payments from high-risk non-resident clients, mostly from Russia (28), through Estonia (74).

○ illicit finances



# METHODOLOGY

The Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) aggregates data from a number of different sources that provide perceptions by business-people and country experts of the level of corruption in the public sector. The following steps are taken 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 2019 is calculated using 13 different data sources from 12 different institutions that capture perceptions of corruption within the past two years.

**2. Standardise data sources to a scale of 0-100.** This standardisation is done 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 with the value of the CPI standard deviation in 2012 (20) and adding the mean of CPI in 2012 (45), so that the data set 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.

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