

2022 Corruption Perceptions Index Reveals Cycle of Corruption, Organized Crime and Instability in the Americas

No country has significantly improved its score since 2017

A statement from Transparency International
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Berlin, Washington, D.C. – The [2022 Corruption Perceptions Index \(CPI\)](#) released today by Transparency International shows that corruption remains prevalent across the Americas, as rates remain stagnant in the region.

Throughout Latin America, leaders have failed to take decisive action against corruption and strengthen public institutions. This has allowed criminal networks to strengthen their hold, wielding significant power over politicians in many countries and aggravating violence in the region with the highest per capita homicide rate. To tackle such crime and gang violence, some governments are consolidating control in the executive branch, undermining transparency and accountability—and threatening human rights while opening up more opportunities for corruption and abuse.

Delia Ferreira Rubio, Chair of Transparency International said:

Pervasive corruption across the Americas fuels the many other crises facing the region. Weak governments fail to stop criminal networks, social conflict, and violence, and some exacerbate threats to human rights by concentrating power in the name of tackling insecurity. The only way forward is for leaders to prioritise decisive action against corruption to uproot its hold and enable governments to fulfil their first mandate: protecting the people.

Gary Kalman, Executive Director of Transparency International U.S. said:

Sadly, the stagnant U.S. score feels intuitively right. We are still a rule of law nation but deep partisan divides and manipulation of democratic practices foster a dangerous skepticism about our politics. At the same time, the United States remains a safe haven for international corruption. Perhaps that's a place to start. With rare bipartisan support for

closing our financial system to corrupt money, Congress and the Biden Administration can adopt critical reforms and begin to restore the integrity of our own democracy.

AMERICAS 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).

The Americas average holds at 43, and nearly two-thirds of countries rank below 50.

- **Canada** (74), **Uruguay** (74) and the **United States** (69) lead the region.
- **Nicaragua** (19), **Haiti** (17) and **Venezuela** (14) are the lowest in the region, all of which have public institutions that have been infiltrated by criminal networks.
- **Cuba** (45), **Guatemala** (24) and **Nicaragua** (19) are all at historic lows this year.
- Since 2017, **Honduras** (23), **Nicaragua** (19) and **Haiti** (17) have significantly declined on their CPI scores.

For each country's individual score and changes over time, as well as analysis for each region, see the region's 2022 CPI page.

CORRUPTION, CONFLICT AND SECURITY

In the Americas, corruption has weakened public institutions, allowing criminal networks to flourish, destabilizing governments and increasing violence across the region. This vicious spiral most hurts those who are already in dire need, including indigenous and Afro-descendent groups, LGBTQ communities, women and girls, as well as decimating the environment and natural resources.

- The combination of corruption, authoritarianism and an economic downturn has proved especially volatile in **Brazil** (38), where President Jair Bolsonaro's term was marked by the dismantling of anti-corruption frameworks, the use of corrupt schemes to favor political allies and amass political support in the legislature, disinformation and attacks on civic space. In January, after Bolsonaro lost his re-election bid, his supporters launched a violent attack against the parliament, supreme court and presidential palace, threatening the lives of police officers and journalists and vandalizing buildings, with the goal of disrupting the peaceful transition of power to newly elected President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva.
- **Peru** (36) has suffered years of instability with six different governments in as many years. This December, facing imminent impeachment, in part due to ongoing investigations over corruption, then-President Pedro Castillo attempted a coup by trying to dissolve parliament and take control of the judiciary and the prosecutor's office. His subsequent removal from office and transition of power to the vice president sparked the deadliest clashes between security forces and protestors in decades, which have killed more than 50 people thus far.

- In **Guatemala** (24), state institutions have been co-opted by political and economic elites and organized crime, all of whom protect their own interests at the expense of the majority of the population – triggering violence and threatening democracy in the country. This undue influence has led the government to restrict civic space, launching criminal investigations against journalists, activists and prosecutors. In January, the Special Prosecutor Against Impunity's Office significantly reversed past progress against corruption by releasing an official charged for money laundering and then launching legal action against those who held him accountable.
- Weak law enforcement institutions and high levels of corruption have allowed drug cartels to expand to the Caribbean. In Transparency International's 2019 Global Corruption Barometer, 50 per cent of the population in **Jamaica** (44) and 61 per cent in **Trinidad and Tobago** (42) considered the police to be corrupt. While Trinidad and Tobago saw a decrease in homicides during the pandemic, crime remains a significant problem for both.

Transparency International calls on governments to prioritize the fight against corruption by reinforcing checks and balances, strengthening public institutions, upholding rights to information, freedom of expression and press, protecting whistleblowers to finally rid the Americas of corruption – and the violence it brings.

Daniel Eriksson, Chief Executive Officer of Transparency International said:

The good news is that 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.

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.

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 this article: [The ABCs of the CPI: How the Corruption Perceptions Index is calculated](#).

MEDIA CONTACT

Gary Kalman, Executive Director, Transparency International U.S.

Telephone: +1 215 439 7090

Email: gkalman@transparency.org

Twitter: @TransparencyUSA

In case of queries around regional and global findings, please contact the Transparency International Secretariat: press@transparency.org.