

## CPI Regional Analysis: Sub-Saharan Africa

### Undemocratic regimes in Sub-Saharan Africa undermine anti-corruption efforts

*A continuous struggle in fighting corruption across the region*

#### Snapshot of the region

This year's Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) presents a largely gloomy picture for Africa – only eight of 49 countries score more than 43 out of 100 on the index. Despite commitments from African leaders in declaring [2018 as the African Year of Anti-Corruption](#), this has yet to translate into concrete progress.

Seychelles scores 66 out of 100, to put it at the top of the region. Seychelles is followed by Botswana and Cabo Verde, with scores of 61 and 57 respectively.

At the very bottom of the index for the seventh year in a row, Somalia scores 10 points, followed by South Sudan (13) to round out the lowest scores in the region.

With an average score of just 32, Sub-Saharan Africa is the lowest scoring region on the index, followed closely by Eastern Europe and Central Asia, with an average score of 35.

#### Corruption and a crisis of democracy

Sub-Saharan Africa remains a region of stark political and socio-economic contrasts and many longstanding challenges. While a large number of countries have adopted democratic principles of governance, several are still governed by authoritarian and semi-authoritarian leaders. Autocratic regimes, civil strife, weak institutions and unresponsive political systems continue to undermine anti-corruption efforts.

Countries like Seychelles and Botswana, which score higher on the CPI than other countries in the region, have a few attributes in common. Both have relatively well-functioning democratic and governance systems, which help contribute to their scores. However, these countries are the exception rather than the norm in a region where most democratic principles are at risk and corruption is high.

#### Improvers

Notwithstanding Sub-Saharan Africa's overall poor performance, there are a few countries that push back against corruption, and with notable progress.

Two countries – Côte d'Ivoire and Senegal – are, for the second year in a row, among the significant improvers on the CPI. In the last six years, Côte d'Ivoire moved from 27 points in 2013 to 35 points in 2018, while Senegal moved from 36 points in 2012 to 45 points in 2018. These gains may be attributed to the positive consequences of legal, policy and institutional reforms undertaken in both countries as well as political will in the fight against corruption demonstrated by their respective leaders.

With a score of 37, Gambia improved seven points since last year, while Seychelles improved six points, with a score of 66. Eritrea also gained four points, scoring 24 in 2018. In Gambia and Eritrea, political commitment combined with laws, institutions and implementation help with controlling corruption.

#### Decliners

In the last few years, several countries experienced sharp declines in their CPI scores, including Burundi, Congo, Mozambique, Liberia and Ghana.

In the last seven years, Mozambique dropped 8 points, moving from 31 in 2012 to 23 in 2018. An increase in [abductions and attacks](#) on political analysts and investigative journalists creates a culture of fear, which is detrimental to fighting corruption.

Home to one of Africa's biggest corruption scandals, Mozambique recently faced indictments of several of its former government officials by US officials. Former finance minister and Credit Suisse banker, Manuel Chang, [is charged with concealing more than US\\$2 billion dollars](#) of hidden loans and bribes.

Many low performing countries have several commonalties, including few political rights, limited press freedoms and a weak rule of law. In these countries, laws often go unenforced and institutions are poorly resourced with little ability to handle corruption complaints. In addition, internal conflict and unstable governance structures contribute to high rates of corruption.

### **Countries to watch**

Angola, Nigeria, South Africa and Kenya are all important countries to watch, given some promising political developments. The real test will be whether these new administrations will follow through on their anti-corruption commitments moving forward.

With a score of 27, Nigeria remained unchanged on the CPI since 2017. Corruption was one of the biggest topics leading up to the 2015 election and it is expected to remain high on the agenda as the country prepares for this year's presidential election taking place in February.

Nigeria's Buhari administration took a number of positive steps in the past three years, including the establishment of a presidential advisory committee against corruption, the improvement of the anti-corruption legal and policy framework in areas like public procurement and asset declaration, and the development of a national anti-corruption strategy, among others. However, these efforts have clearly not yielded the desired results. At least, not yet.

With a score of 19, Angola increased four points since 2015. President Joao Lourenco has been championing reforms and tackling corruption since he took office in 2017, [firing over 60 government officials, including Isabel Dos Santos](#), the daughter of his predecessor, Eduardo Dos Santos. Recently, the former president's son, [Jose Filomeno dos Santos](#), was charged with making a [fraudulent US\\$500 million transaction](#) from Angola's sovereign wealth fund. However, the problem of corruption in Angolan goes far beyond the dos Santos family. It is very important that the current leadership shows consistency in the fight against corruption in Angola.

With a score of 43, South Africa remains unchanged on the CPI since 2017. Under President Ramaphosa, the administration has taken additional steps to address anti-corruption on a national level, including through the work of the Anti-Corruption Inter-Ministerial Committee. Although the National Anti-Corruption Strategy (NACS) has been in place for years, the current government continues to build momentum for the strategy by soliciting public input.

In addition, citizen engagement on social media and various commissions of inquiry into corruption abuses are positive steps in South Africa. The first commission of inquiry, the [Zondo Commission](#), focuses on state capture, while the second focuses on tax administration and governance of the

South African Revenue Service (SARS). Given that previous commissions of inquiry produced few results, the jury is still out on whether the new administration will yield more positive change.

Another example of recent anti-corruption efforts in South Africa is the Special Investigating Unit (SIU) [report](#) on corruption in the Gauteng Department of Health. While the report never saw the light of day under previous administrations, under President Ramaphosa it exposed several high profile individuals, including members of the ruling party.

In both Kenya and South Africa, citizen engagement in the fight against corruption is crucial. For example, social media has played a big role in driving public conversation around corruption. The rise of mobile technology means ordinary citizens in many countries now have instant access to information, and an ability to voice their opinions in a way that previous generations did not.

In addition to improved access to information, which is critical to the fight against corruption, government officials in Kenya and South Africa are also reaching to social media to engage with the public. [Corruption Watch](#), our chapter in South Africa, has seen a rise in the number of people reporting corruption on Facebook and WhatsApp. However, it remains to be seen whether social media and other new technologies will spur those in power into action.

### **Recommendations**

Governments in Sub-Saharan Africa must intensify their efforts and keep in mind the following issues, when tackling corruption in their countries:

- Demonstrate visible commitment to anti-corruption from political leaders, notably in Burundi, Congo and Mozambique.
- Protect human rights defenders, political analysts, anti-corruption activists and investigative journalists and enable them to speak out on corruption issues.
- Improve the health of democratic institutions. This includes supporting participation, transparency and trust, along with necessary checks and balances.