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HONG KONG SAR, CHINA RANKED 16 OUT OF 128 COUNTRIES ON RULE OF LAW

2020 WJP Rule of Law Index Shows Sustained Negative Slide Toward Weaker Rule of Law Around the World

Hong Kong SAR, China Placed 5th out of 15 in the East Asia & Pacific Region

WASHINGTON, DC (11 March 2020) – The World Justice Project (WJP) today released the *WJP Rule of Law Index*[®] 2020, an annual report based on national surveys of more than 130,000 households and 4,000 legal practitioners and experts around the world.

The *WJP Rule of Law Index* measures rule of law performance in 128 countries and jurisdictions across eight primary factors: Constraints on Government Powers, Absence of Corruption, Open Government, Fundamental Rights, Order and Security, Regulatory Enforcement, Civil Justice, and Criminal Justice. The Index is the world's leading source for original, independent data on the rule of law.

Hong Kong SAR, China's overall rule of law score decreased by less than 1% in this year's Index. At 16th place out of 128 countries and jurisdictions worldwide, Hong Kong SAR, China remained in the same position for global rank. Hong Kong SAR, China's score places it at 5 out of 15 countries in the East Asia and Pacific region* and 16 out of 37 among high income** countries.

Denmark, Norway, and Finland topped the *WJP Rule of Law Index* rankings in 2020. Venezuela, RB; Cambodia; and Democratic Republic of the Congo had the lowest overall rule of law scores—the same as in 2019.

More countries declined than improved in overall rule of law performance for a third year in a row, continuing a negative slide toward weakening and stagnating rule of law around the world. The majority of countries showing deteriorating rule of law in the 2020 Index also declined in the previous year, demonstrating a persistent downward trend. This was particularly pronounced in the Index factor measuring Constraints on Government Powers.

The declines were widespread and seen in all corners of the world. In every region, a majority of countries slipped backward or remained unchanged in their overall rule of law performance since the 2019 *WJP Rule of Law Index*.

Regionally, East Asia and Pacific’s top performer in the Index is New Zealand (7th out of 128 countries globally), followed by Australia and Singapore. The three countries with the lowest scores in the region were the Philippines, Myanmar, and Cambodia (127th out of 128 countries globally).

Countries with the strongest improvement in rule of law were Ethiopia (5.6% increase in score, driven primarily by gains in Constraints on Government Powers and Fundamental Rights) and Malaysia (5.1%, driven primarily by gains in Constraints on Government Powers, Fundamental Rights, and Regulatory Enforcement).

The largest declines in the rule of law were seen in Cameroon (-4.4%, driven primarily by falling scores in Order and Security and Fundamental Rights) and Iran (-4.2%, driven primarily by falling scores in Criminal Justice). Over the last five years, countries experiencing the largest average annual percentage drop in the rule of law were Egypt (-4.6 %); Venezuela, RB (-3.9%); Cambodia (-3.0%); Philippines (-2.5%); Cameroon (-2.4%); Hungary (-2.1%); and Bosnia and Herzegovina (-2.1%).

The single biggest decline by factor over the past five years was Egypt’s and Poland’s score for Constraints on Government Powers, with an average annual decline of -8.5% and -6.8%, respectively.

“The rule of law is not just a matter for judges or lawyers,” said William H. Neukom, WJP founder and CEO. “It is the bedrock of communities of justice, opportunity, and peace. We are all stakeholders in the rule of law and therefore we all have a role to play in upholding it. The 2020 Index underscores that we have our work cut out for us.”

The complete 2020 report—including country profiles, data visualizations, methodology, and download options—is available on March 11 at: www.worldjusticeproject.org/2020-Index

HONG KONG SAR, CHINA RANKINGS

WJP Rule of Law Index 2020 performance (1 is best)

HONG KONG SAR, CHINA OVERALL GLOBAL RANK: 16/128

HONG KONG SAR, CHINA OVERALL REGIONAL RANK*: 5/15

FACTOR	GLOBAL RANK	REGIONAL RANK*	INCOME RANK**
Constraints on Government Powers	31/128	7/15	27/37
Absence of Corruption	8/128	3/15	8/37
Open Government	15/128	3/15	15/37
Fundamental Rights	38/128	6/15	32/37
Order and Security	2/128	2/15	2/37
Regulatory Enforcement	12/128	4/15	12/37
Civil Justice	11/128	4/15	11/37
Criminal Justice	14/128	5/15	14/37

*Countries and jurisdictions measured in the East Asia and Pacific region: Australia; Cambodia; China; Hong Kong SAR, China; Indonesia; Japan; Malaysia; Mongolia; Myanmar; New Zealand; Philippines; Republic of Korea; Singapore; Thailand; Vietnam

****High income countries and jurisdictions:** Antigua and Barbuda; Australia; Austria; The Bahamas; Barbados; Belgium; Canada; Chile; Croatia; Czech Republic; Denmark; Estonia; Finland; France; Germany; Greece; Hong Kong SAR, China; Hungary; Italy; Japan; Netherlands; New Zealand; Norway; Panama; Poland; Portugal; Republic of Korea; Singapore; Slovenia; Spain; St. Kitts and Nevis; Sweden; Trinidad and Tobago; United Arab Emirates; United Kingdom; United States; Uruguay

ABOUT THE WJP RULE OF LAW INDEX

The *WJP Rule of Law Index*[®] is the world's leading source for original, independent data on the rule of law. Now covering 128 countries and jurisdictions, the Index relies on more than 130,000 household surveys and 4,000 legal practitioner and expert surveys to measure how the rule of law is experienced and perceived worldwide. The Index provides current and reliable information to policy makers, civil society organizations, academics, citizens, and legal professionals, among others, and is intended to encourage policy reforms, guide program development, and inform research to strengthen the rule of law.

ABOUT THE WORLD JUSTICE PROJECT:

The World Justice Project (WJP) is an independent, multidisciplinary organization working to create knowledge, build awareness, and stimulate action to advance the rule of law worldwide. Effective rule of law reduces corruption, combats poverty and disease, and protects people from injustices large and small. It is the foundation for communities of justice, opportunity, and peace—underpinning development, accountable government, and respect for fundamental rights.

The World Justice Project defines the rule of law as a durable system of laws, institutions, norms, and community commitment that delivers: accountability, just laws, open government, and accessible justice. Learn more about these four universal principles and our work at: www.worldjusticeproject.org

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