

MEDIA CONTACT: press@worldjusticeproject.org

South Africa Ranks 54 out of 140 in Rule of Law Index

- **2022 WJP Rule of Law Index®** finds rule of law fell globally for 5th consecutive year
- Authoritarian trends and some pandemic pressures continue in majority of countries
- South Africa's score decreased, ranks 5th out of 34 regionally

WASHINGTON (26 October 2022) – For the fifth year in a row, the rule of law has declined globally, according to the [2022 World Justice Project \(WJP\) Rule of Law Index®](#), released today.

The World Justice Project's original data in 140 countries and jurisdictions shows that adherence to the rule of law fell in 61% of countries this year—including South Africa.

Globally, 4.4 billion people live in countries where rule of law has declined over the past year.

“We are emerging from the pandemic, but the global rule of law recession continues,” said Elizabeth Andersen, executive director of the [World Justice Project](#) (WJP). “At its heart, rule of law is about fairness—that is, accountability, equal rights, and justice for all. And a less fair world is bound to be a more volatile one.”

Index data shows that authoritarian trends that predate the pandemic—such as weaker checks on executive power and increased attacks on the media—continue to erode the rule of law globally.

However, declines are less widespread and extreme than last year, when Covid shutdowns dramatically disrupted justice systems, and governments exercised emergency powers that curtailed civic freedoms and bypassed transparency mechanisms.



www.worldjusticeproject.org



[@TheWJP](https://twitter.com/TheWJP)



[/thewjp](https://www.facebook.com/thewjp)



[/worldjusticeproject](https://www.youtube.com/worldjusticeproject)

Rule of law in South Africa

South Africa's overall rule of law score decreased 1.3% in this year's Index. It ranks 54th out of 140 countries worldwide, falling two positions since last year.

Regionally, South Africa ranks 5th out of 34 countries in Sub-Saharan Africa.* The region's top performer is Rwanda (ranked 42nd out of 140 globally), followed by Mauritius and Namibia. The three countries with the lowest scores in the region are Mauritania, Cameroon, and Democratic Republic of the Congo (137th globally).

In the last year, 20 out of 34 countries declined in Sub-Saharan Africa. Of those 20 countries, 15 had also declined in the previous year.

Among upper-middle income countries, South Africa ranks 12th out of 42.**

Global rankings and trends

Globally, the top-ranked country in the *WJP Rule of Law Index 2022* is Denmark, followed by Norway, Finland, Sweden, and the Netherlands. The country with the lowest score is Venezuela, then Cambodia, Afghanistan, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and Haiti.

The [WJP Rule of Law Index](#) is the world's leading source of independent rule of law data. It draws on in-depth surveys with more than 154,000 everyday people and 3,600 legal practitioners and experts to measure rule of law across eight factors: Constraints on Government Powers, Absence of Corruption, Open Government, Fundamental Rights, Order and Security, Regulatory Enforcement, Civil Justice, and Criminal Justice. Factor scores are averaged to assign an overall rule of law score to each country.

Some of the biggest global declines this year were in the Index factors associated with rising authoritarianism and the longer-term erosion of rule of law. This year, respect for fundamental rights declined in two-thirds of countries. Checks on government powers—such as oversight by the judiciary, legislature, and media—fell in 58% of countries this year.

The other top factor driving this year's global declines is Civil Justice, largely due to continued pandemic-related delays, weakened enforcement, and rising discrimination in civil justice systems. Scores for this factor fell in 61% of countries this year.



South Africa's WJP Rule of Law Index rankings

Overall score global rank: 54 / 140

Overall score regional rank: 5 / 34

Factor score rankings:

FACTOR	GLOBAL RANK	REGIONAL RANK*	INCOME RANK**
Constraints on Government Powers	40/140	3/34	4/42
Absence of Corruption	64/140	6/34	18/42
Open Government	33/140	1/34	2/42
Fundamental Rights	47/140	3/34	9/42
Order and Security	119/140	23/34	37/42
Regulatory Enforcement	56/140	7/34	12/42
Civil Justice	48/140	4/34	11/42
Criminal Justice	56/140	5/34	14/42

(1 is best in WJP Rule of Law Index rankings)

To see South Africa's performance across all 44 subfactors the Index measures, visit: www.worldjusticeproject.org/rule-of-law-index/country/2022/South%20Africa/

Explore the full rankings and findings of the 2022 World Justice Project (WJP) Rule of Law Index at: www.worldjusticeproject.org/rule-of-law-index/.

###

- Find the global press release and all 140 country press releases by region [here](#).
- Access the complete 2022 Rule of Law Index and "Insights" booklet [here](#).
- See graphics (regional rankings, global rankings, and comparative maps) [here](#).

MEDIA CONTACT & INTERVIEW REQUESTS:

press@worldjusticeproject.org



www.worldjusticeproject.org



@TheWJP



/thewjp



/worldjusticeproject

ABOUT THE WJP RULE OF LAW INDEX:

The [World Justice Project \(WJP\) Rule of Law Index®](https://www.worldjusticeproject.org/rule-of-law-index) is the world's leading source for original, independent data on the rule of law. Now covering 140 countries and jurisdictions, the Index relies on more than 154,000 household surveys and 3,600 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 underpins development, accountable government, and respect for fundamental rights, and it is the foundation for communities of justice, opportunity, and peace. 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.

*Countries and jurisdictions measured in the Sub-Saharan Africa region: Angola, Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Gabon, The Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Kenya, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria, Republic of the Congo, Rwanda, Senegal, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Sudan, Tanzania, Togo, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

**Upper-middle income countries and jurisdictions: Albania, Argentina, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Bulgaria, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Gabon, Georgia, Grenada, Guatemala, Guyana, Jamaica, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kosovo, Lebanon, Malaysia, Mauritius, Mexico, Moldova, Namibia, North Macedonia, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Romania, Russia, Serbia, South Africa, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, Thailand, Turkey, Venezuela.

