

UNDER EMBARGO – DO NOT PUBLISH UNTIL:

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UNITED STATES RANKED 20 OUT OF 126 COUNTRIES ON RULE OF LAW, DROPPING ONE POSITION

World Justice Project (WJP) Releases 2019 WJP Rule of Law Index

For Second Year, More Countries Declined Than Improved in WJP Rule of Law Index

WASHINGTON, DC (28 February 2019) – The World Justice Project (WJP) today released the *WJP Rule of Law Index*® 2019, an evaluation of rule of law adherence worldwide based on more than 120,000 household and 3,800 expert surveys in 126 countries. Featuring current, original data, the *WJP Rule of Law Index* measures countries' rule of law performance across eight factors: Constraints on Government Powers, Absence of Corruption, Open Government, Fundamental Rights, Order and Security, Regulatory Enforcement, Civil Justice, and Criminal Justice.

At 20th place out of 126 countries worldwide, the United States declined one position for overall rule of law performance in the *WJP Rule of Law Index 2019* edition. (Note that this change in ranking was calculated by comparing the positions of the 113 countries measured in the 2017-2018 edition of the Index with the rankings of the same 113 countries in 2019, exclusive of 13 new countries indexed in 2019).

The United States' score places it at 14 out of 24 countries in the European Union, European Free Trade Association, and North American region* and 20 out of 38 among high income** countries. Significant trends included a deterioration in "Constraints on Government Powers."

The top three overall performers in the *WJP Rule of Law Index 2019* were Denmark (1), Norway (2), and Finland (3); the bottom three were the Democratic Republic of the Congo (124), Cambodia (125), and Venezuela (126).

Globally, the new *WJP Rule of Law Index* scores show that more countries declined than improved in overall rule of law performance for a second year in a row, continuing a negative slide toward weaker rule of law around the world. In a sign suggesting rising authoritarianism, the factor score for "Constraints on Government Powers" declined in more countries than any other factor worldwide over the last year (61 countries declined, 23 stayed the same, 29 improved).

"This slide in rule of law in general and checks on government powers in particular is deeply concerning," commented Elizabeth Andersen, executive director of the World Justice Project.

Regionally, the European Union, European Free Trade Association, and North America’s top performer in the *Index* is Denmark (1st out of 126 countries globally), followed by Norway and Finland. The three countries with the lowest scores in the region were Croatia, Bulgaria, and Hungary (57th out of 126 countries globally).

The *WJP Rule of Law Index*® is the world’s leading source for original data on the rule of law. The *Index* relies on more than 120,000 household and 3,800 expert surveys to measure how the rule of law is experienced and perceived in practical, everyday situations by the general public worldwide. Performance is measured using 44 indicators across eight primary rule of law factors, each of which is scored and ranked globally and against regional and income peers: Constraints on Government Powers, Absence of Corruption, Open Government, Fundamental Rights, Order and Security, Regulatory Enforcement, Civil Justice, and Criminal Justice.

“Effective rule of law is the foundation for communities of justice, opportunity, and peace,” said William H. Neukom, WJP founder and CEO. “No country has achieved a perfect realization of the rule of law. The *WJP Rule of Law Index* is intended to be a first step in setting benchmarks, informing reforms, stimulating programs, and deepening appreciation and understanding for the foundational importance of the rule of law.”

The complete 2019 report—including country profiles, data visualizations, methodology, and download options—is available on February 28 at: www.worldjusticeproject.org/rule-of-law-index

UNITED STATES RANKINGS

WJP Rule of Law Index 2019 performance (1 is best)

UNITED STATES OVERALL GLOBAL RANK: 20/126
 UNITED STATES OVERALL REGIONAL RANK*: 14/24

| FACTOR | GLOBAL RANK | REGIONAL RANK* | INCOME RANK** |
|----------------------------------|-------------|----------------|---------------|
| Constraints on Government Powers | 19/126 | 15/24 | 18/38 |
| Absence of Corruption | 20/126 | 13/24 | 20/38 |
| Open Government | 13/126 | 11/24 | 13/38 |
| Fundamental Rights | 27/126 | 18/24 | 26/38 |
| Order and Security | 49/126 | 21/24 | 29/38 |
| Regulatory Enforcement | 19/126 | 13/24 | 19/38 |
| Civil Justice | 30/126 | 17/24 | 27/38 |
| Criminal Justice | 23/126 | 16/24 | 23/38 |

*Countries measured in the European Union, European Free Trade Association, and North American region: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, United Kingdom, United States

****High income countries:** Antigua and Barbuda, Australia, Austria, 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, 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 WORLD JUSTICE PROJECT:

The World Justice Project (WJP) is an independent, multidisciplinary organization working 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. Learn more at: www.worldjusticeproject.org

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