

UNDER EMBARGO UNTIL:

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DENMARK TOPS RULE OF LAW RANKING; VENEZUELA BOTTOM PERFORMER OUT OF 113 COUNTRIES

2016 World Justice Project Rule of Law Index Measures How Rule of Law Is Experienced by the General Public Worldwide

WASHINGTON, DC (20 October 2016) – The World Justice Project (WJP) today released the *WJP Rule of Law Index 2016*[®], the annual report that measures how the rule of law is experienced by the general public worldwide. The top three overall performers in the *WJP Rule of Law Index 2016* were Denmark (1), Norway (2), and Finland (3); the bottom three were Afghanistan (111), Cambodia (112), and Venezuela (113).

Countries leading their regions in overall rule of law scores included: Nepal (S. Asia), Georgia (E. Europe & Central Asia); South Africa (Sub-Saharan Africa); Uruguay (Latin America & Caribbean); United Arab Emirates (Middle East & North Africa); New Zealand (East Asia and Pacific), and Denmark (EU & EFTA & North America).

The *WJP Rule of Law Index* is the world's leading source for original data on the rule of law. The 2016 edition expands coverage to 113 countries and jurisdictions (from 102 in 2015), relying on more than 100,000 household and expert surveys to measure how the rule of law is experienced 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.**

The biggest movers in the *2016 WJP Rule of Law Index* included Egypt, Iran, and Argentina (calculated by comparing countries against the original *2015 WJP Rule of Law Index* country set, excluding 11 new countries added this year). Egypt, now ranked at 110th out of 113 countries, fell 13 positions over the 2015 Index rankings. Iran, now ranked 86th out of 113 countries overall, rose 13 positions. Argentina, now at 51st out of 113 countries, increased 12 positions.

“Effective rule of law is the foundation for communities of peace, equity, and opportunity,” said William H. Neukom, WJP Founder and CEO. “No country has ever attained—let alone sustained—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 and guiding reforms, and deepening appreciation and understanding for the foundational importance of the rule of law.”

Regional Highlights:

- **When compared globally**, countries in the Western Europe and North America continue to top the *WJP Rule of Law Index*, followed by countries in the East Asia & Pacific region. On average,

the South Asia region obtained the lowest scores.

- **Western Europe and North America** (defined as EU + EFTA + North America) accounts for 8 of the top 10 places in the rankings, with Denmark remaining the highest-ranked country in rule of law followed by Norway. Romania was the biggest mover in the region's rankings, rising 4 positions to 32nd out of 113 countries worldwide over 2015 rankings. Meanwhile, France and Hungary each lost 3 positions, to 21st and 49th respectively.
- **Sub-Saharan Africa's** top performer is South Africa, surpassing Ghana and Botswana in this year's rankings and into 43rd place globally. Nigeria and Burkina Faso were the biggest movers among the 18 countries indexed in the region, climbing 11 and 10 spots respectively. In contrast, Botswana lost 6 positions while Kenya and Ethiopia each lost 5 places.
- **East Asia and Pacific** is the second-ranked region in rule of law, behind Western Europe and North America. New Zealand and Singapore are the top performers in the 2016 rankings, ranking 8th and 9th respectively out of 113 countries worldwide. The biggest mover was Vietnam, rising 7 positions to 67th globally. The biggest decliner was the Philippines, dropping 9 positions to 70th. Malaysia and Republic of Korea also recorded significant declines.
- **Eastern Europe and Central Asia's** leader is Georgia, ranking 34th out of 113 countries worldwide, followed by Bosnia and Herzegovina and Macedonia, FYR. Apart from Albania, Turkey, and Russia, most countries in this region remained largely unchanged since 2015. Albania dropped 9 positions to 72nd globally; Turkey fell 8 positions to 99th; and Russia moved down 6 positions to 92nd.
- **Latin America and the Caribbean's** top performer is Uruguay at 20th out of 113 countries, followed by Costa Rica and Chile. Argentina was the biggest mover, jumping 12 spots up to the 51st position worldwide. Meanwhile, El Salvador lost 8 positions, while Venezuela is the weakest performer among all the 113 indexed countries.
- **Middle East and North Africa's** top performer among the 7 countries indexed in this region is the United Arab Emirates, at 33rd overall. Iran climbed 13 positions to 86th, while Egypt dropped the same number of positions to 110th out of 113 countries worldwide.
- **South Asia's** top performer is Nepal, coming in at 63rd position globally. With the exception of Nepal, which dropped 5 positions in 2016, the performance of most countries in this region remained in line with last year.

The complete 2016 report—including online data visualizations and download options— is available on October 20 at: www.worldjusticeproject.org/rule-of-law-index

ABOUT THE WORLD JUSTICE PROJECT:

The World Justice Project (WJP) is an independent, multidisciplinary organization working to advance the rule of law around the world. 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 peace, opportunity, and equity—underpinning development, accountable government, and respect for fundamental rights. Learn more at: www.worldjusticeproject.org

MEDIA CONTACT & INTERVIEW REQUESTS:

press@worldjusticeproject.org

(206) 792-7676