



The Atlas of Impunity



Summary

Acknowledgements	3
Introduction	4
Lessons from the data	5
Methodology	8
Defining impunity	8
Dimensions of impunity	10
Overview of the data	15
Impunity by dimension	15
Impunity by geography	17
Impunity by income	26
Regional perspectives	28
North America	28
Europe	29
Eurasia	31
Latin America	33
South and Southeast Asia	34
East Asia	36
MENA	37
Sub-Saharan Africa	38
Conclusions	41
Appendix	42
Atlas of Impunity: Outperformers in terms of income	42



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Introduction

“I didn’t ever think they could bomb our hospital. Not a hospital. You would think it’s a safe place.”

“We’re appalled by continued attacks on healthcare. Innocent civilians and health workers continue to pay a heavy price in this conflict. Should any of us accept a world in which simply going to a hospital to deliver your newborn puts your life in grave danger? The international community has an obligation under international law to investigate these blatant attacks and hold perpetrators accountable.”¹

These statements—respectively by Elena Karas, a Ukrainian nurse recounting the horrific March 2022 Russian attack on the maternity hospital she worked at, and Dr. Muffadal Hamadeh, head of the Syrian American Medical Association commenting on a missile strike against the Al-Shifaa Hospital in Northern Syria in June 2021—speak to a sense of outrage as well as humanity. There are laws and norms against war crimes; a world where they do not mean anything is a world in danger of spinning out of control.

Thankfully most of the world is not at war. But while the impunity of bombing a hospital is not yet normalized, the abuse of power is increasingly evident. The documentation of the scale of that abuse is the purpose of this Atlas. It provides, for the first time, a rigorous definition of impunity across five key dimensions of national and international life, as well as the independent, credible data sets to measure impunity across them. These dimensions are unaccountable governance, conflict and violence, abuse of human rights, economic exploitation, and environmental degradation.

Impunity is the exercise of power without accountability, which becomes, in its starkest form, the commission of crimes without punishment. In a phrase, impunity is the idea that “the law is for suckers.”

Impunity thrives when the imbalance of power is so great that the powerful think they do not have to follow the rules. As such, it speaks to the old notion

that “power corrupts, and absolute power corrupts absolutely.” This feeling is one we think is prevalent, and which we fear is on the rise. Consequently, we believe that impunity provides an invaluable lens for understanding what is going on in the world today, not just in conflict zones where attacks on civilians have become routine but across a wider swath of national and international situations.

Why impunity?

There are many analytical frames for understanding global affairs. Democracy versus autocracy, East versus West, Global North versus Global South, or right-wing versus left-wing. All have their merits, but we believe that the frame of impunity versus accountability tells us more about what is happening in the world.

The lens of impunity aptly captures the multidimensional nature of global challenges. The impunity versus accountability framework incorporates critical points about behavior in war. It captures issues of governance and human rights. It also contemplates issues of economic inequality and environmental damage. The narrower lens of democracy versus autocracy by definition fails to capture these points. Put simply, while democratic governance is an important element of accountable societies, it is far from sufficient.

Furthermore, the impunity framework helps us understand the connection between what happens at home and what happens abroad. It speaks to interdependence in a way that national frameworks cannot.

Finally, viewing the world through the lens of impunity and accountability is useful because it is a global concept with a long historical tradition. Left-right political frameworks do not work in many countries where the dividing lines of politics do not fall on a left-right spectrum. Conceptions of the Global North and Global South or the West versus the East can be freighted by assumptions about the cultures of countries that mask the shared desires and common

¹ <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/04/13/world/europe/mariupol-hospital-attack-nurse.html>
https://www.sams-usa.net/press_release/two-staff-killed-eleven-injured-in-an-attack-on-al-shifaa-hospital-in-afghanistan/

failures of societies across geographic boundaries. Emphasizing the centrality of democracy alienates the many societies that do not operate under the principles of democratic governance and yet still care about constraining power. It also misses the internal debates over accountability that can happen within both democratic and nondemocratic societies.

By contrast, notions of impunity and accountability, and with them the notions of justice and community, can be found in the philosophical, moral, and political writings of a range of societies. For instance, when the late Archbishop Desmond Tutu described the African concept of ubuntu, which can be summarized as the idea that “a person is a person through other people,” he explained that it means “we are diminished when others are humiliated or diminished, when others are tortured or oppressed.”² This idea speaks to the very heart of what impunity takes from us collectively. The Jewish tradition of tikkun olam, often described as “perfecting the world,” emphasizes, according to the late Rabbi Jonathan Sacks, how our acts in the present can heal some of the wounds of the past through accountability, restoration, and justice. Impunity and accountability can also be found in Islamic thought, as evidenced by the Universal Islamic Declaration of Human Rights, which specifically calls out the way that “human rights are being trampled upon with impunity in many countries of the world,” and highlights the rights every person has to protection against the abuse of power. Finally, the accountability of power is a principle that can be found throughout Confucian teachings, often described in terms of “public responsibility.”³

Lessons from the data

The Atlas of Impunity is built on 67 statistical indicators drawn from 29 validated sources. It measures impunity across five dimensions:

- Unaccountable governance—Respect for the rule of law and responsiveness to citizens
- Abuse of human rights—Adherence to international human rights treaties and use of violence for political coercion

- Economic exploitation—Corruption, poor treatment of workers, and relationship between economic status and civil and political liberties
- Conflict and violence—Participation in conflict abroad and levels of violence within a country
- Environmental degradation—Contribution to the climate crisis, resource depletion, and pollution

Each of the five dimensions has between ten and 15 indicators underpinning its score. When curating the data, we sought data sets that were universal, independent, and credible, with annually updated statistics that could be used in future editions of the Atlas.

Overall, 197 countries and territories are scored on a 0-5 scale across each of these five arenas of impunity and accountability and then given an overall impunity score, with higher scores signifying more impunity and lower scores signifying less impunity. On the basis of these scores, the Atlas ranks countries, placing those with the highest levels of impunity at the top of the table (Afghanistan, Syria, and Yemen) and those with the lowest levels at the bottom (Finland, Denmark, and Sweden). Thirty-four of the countries or territories surveyed do not have sufficient data for a full score.

First and foremost, the data highlight the significant level of impunity that exists around the world in these five dimensions and the value of using impunity as a lens for tracking such abuses. Looking at the rankings may not yield especially notable surprises—it is not unexpected to see Yemen, for instance, rank worse on impunity than Denmark—but the most important lessons come from examining the data in more detail to understand which countries are performing better or worse than expected against their peers and in which of the five areas we still see impunity even among strong performers.

This Atlas produces different results than similar indices, which focus on narrower questions, such as the quality of democracy, the level of economic freedom, or the role of corruption. These differences highlight the value of using impunity as a frame and looking across all five areas simultaneously as opposed to studying them in isolation.

² <https://www.penguinrandomhouse.com/books/181253/no-future-without-forgiveness-by-desmond-tutu/>

³ <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/confucius/>

Some of the striking findings of the data include:

- **The legacies of colonialism and the slave trade are correlated with higher impunity scores.** Nearly all the 20 countries with the highest levels of impunity according to the Atlas are former colonies or affected by colonialism. Similarly, about one-third of the 30 worst-ranked countries were affected by the slave trade. But some countries that have suffered from the historical legacy of slavery and colonization, such as Ghana and Senegal, score well on the Atlas. This indicates that impunity scores are informed by circumstance but dictated by policy choices. In fact, on the abuse of human rights dimension, Senegal ranks better than the US.
- **Environmental degradation is where impunity continues to thrive, even among otherwise accountable societies.** Canada, which is one of the best performing countries on the Atlas and traditionally scores well on similar indices, is only moderately better than the mean in terms of environmental degradation. India, China, Russia, and the US—all among the largest greenhouse gas (GHG) emitters globally—place 20th, 70th, 78th, and 101st, respectively. Norway, New Zealand, Singapore, and Israel are all countries whose environmental rankings are notably worse than their overall rankings.
- **Violence against women and gender-based discrimination codified in law or by societal norms are global problems.** This type of impunity negatively affects the human rights and conflict and violence scores of theocracies such as Afghanistan. But it also affects some liberal democracies, states in conflict such as Syria, and peaceful countries including South Korea.
- **The US is closer to the median than top performers, though it ranks much better than Russia or China.** The surprising result reflects a weaker US performance on the conflict and violence and human rights indicators despite the generally strong governance score. More broadly, none of the “great” powers do great.
- **Human rights are being abused and accountability is falling even within democracies.** India,

Israel, Malaysia, and the US are all democratic countries that perform well on the unaccountable governance dimension but substantially worse on the abuse of human rights. Singapore, which is not a full-fledged liberal democracy, ranks better on unaccountable governance than several democratic countries including Italy and Hungary. Weaker democracies such as Mexico, Kenya, and Ukraine are scored on par with non-democratic countries including Jordan and the UAE.

Alongside these takeaways, there are some other critical themes that emerge from the data.

Circumstances are not destiny, and countries have agency

On average, the data show that higher income countries tend to perform better than lower-income ones. As a result, countries in high-income regions such as Europe and Oceania fare better than those in low- and middle-income regions such as Africa and Asia. All other things being equal, a 10% increase in GDP per capita is correlated with a 0.06-point improvement in a country's impunity score.

But it would be a mistake to assume that a country's income and geographic location alone determine whether impunity is allowed to thrive. Variations in impunity ultimately come down to politics, leadership, and policy choices. Across the economic spectrum, there are countries such as Myanmar, Saudi Arabia, Venezuela, and Argentina that perform significantly worse on impunity than their economic peers, while countries including Lesotho, Uruguay, and Estonia perform significantly better than their economic peers. Gambia scores better than half of the countries in the Atlas despite being a low-income country. Similarly, Cape Verde scores better than 75% of the countries in the Atlas despite being a lower middle-income country.

The data also highlight some of the important ways historical legacies of impunity can still trap countries. Formerly colonized countries, particularly those involved in the slave trade, show high levels of impunity. But even here, circumstances do not define destiny. Several of the countries that perform better than expected based on their income levels are formerly colonized and formerly enslaved countries such as Senegal.

The great powers are not so great

The most powerful countries in the international system, including global powers such as the US, China, and Russia, as well as regional ones such as India, Brazil, and Iran, all perform relatively poorly compared to their economic and geographic peers. Countries such as the US and Russia have lower scores because of their involvement in foreign conflicts and/or large arms export industries, as well as their poor performance on environmental degradation. Countries such as Saudi Arabia, Iran, and China score especially poorly for their abuse of human rights. Brazil and India receive low marks because of the level of violence within their own countries and against their own citizens. Among the most powerful countries in the international system, Germany and Japan perform the best, benefitting from their strong performance across all five dimensions and their lack of involvement in the types of conflicts that hurt the scores of more militarized powers including the US and Russia.

Perhaps it should not be a surprise that the most powerful countries suffer from impunity given that the impunity we see in the world is a product of unchecked power. But it should give pause to US observers who believe in the positive role their country can play in upholding rules-based systems that the country performs so much worse than it “should” given its peer group. These findings also highlight the danger of a world dominated by any other major power, such as China, which has also failed to create internal systems of accountability.

Democracy is not a guaranteed defense against impunity

A look at the rankings of countries on the unaccountable governance dimension shows the weakening of accountability even within nominally democratic countries and highlights how even though democratic countries generally perform better than nondemocratic countries on impunity, democracy is not sufficient to ensure an accountable society.

For instance, Singapore, which does not hold truly free and competitive elections but has robust systems

of accountability within its governance structures, ranks better on unaccountable governance than countries including Czechia, Italy, Poland, and Hungary. Weaker democracies such as Mexico, Kenya, and Ukraine are scored on par with non-democratic countries including Jordan and the UAE, highlighting the challenge for elections and party politics alone to ensure accountable governance.

This is even true with respect to basic human rights. Israel, the US, and India are all examples of democracies that score well on the accountable government metric but perform significantly worse on the human rights metric.

Moving toward a more accountable future

The Atlas of Impunity is in its first year. It is intended to stimulate debate. In future years we hope to refine and improve the Atlas. The business of finding solutions for impunity state by state, issue by issue is a matter that has to be pursued elsewhere. But the gaps in accountability that are revealed here should arm those arguing for change.

Impunity thrives in darkness. One of the troubles of the last decade has been the spread of darkness at a time when there are so many resources to shed light. One of the aims of the project is to put people in power on notice that their actions are being tracked. While the data from this inaugural Atlas of Impunity provide a snapshot in time of a single year, the hope is that subsequent editions will allow us to track improvements or degradations in impunity by country on a year-to-year basis. In this way, policymakers, concerned citizens, civil society activists, investigative journalists, and ethical private sector companies can make informed decisions about where impunity is thriving and where power is being held to account.

We are all responsible for building a more accountable future. Our hope is that this Atlas offers one more tool for those fighting against impunity worldwide and sparks a debate among those concerned with the rise of unaccountable power.

Methodology

Defining impunity

The purpose of the Atlas is to show that impunity provides a lens through which to understand the modern world, to draw attention to the perilous imbalance of power in many countries in many domains, and to call for a rebalance. The hope is to spark an honest debate about the role impunity and imbalances of power play in different aspects of our lives and push for hard conversations within each of our societies about the ways that power continues to go unchecked. In recent years, scholars have proposed different definitions of impunity, and the Atlas seeks to build on the work of legal experts, human rights advocates, and policymakers in describing and measuring the concept.

One definition of impunity, prevalent in the field of human rights, focuses on violations of international law—especially human rights abuses—and bringing perpetrators to justice. According to Diane Orentlicher, author of a 2005 independent study for the UN Commission on Human Rights, impunity means the impossibility, *de jure* or *de facto*, of bringing the perpetrators of violations to account—whether in criminal, civil, administrative, or disciplinary proceedings. This is because those perpetrators are not subject to any inquiry that might lead to their being accused, arrested, tried, and if found guilty, subject to the appropriate penalties and to making reparations to their victims.⁴

Similarly, the Center of Studies on Impunity and Justice (CESIJ) at the University of the Americas La Puebla, which produces a global impunity index, defines impunity primarily in judicial terms. However, for CESIJ's scholars, impunity is also a multidimensional phenomenon that goes beyond analyzing crimes that go unpunished. Instead, impunity is composed of the dimensions of security, justice, and human rights, which the center's researchers measure using a series of quantitative metrics on crime, criminal procedure, and the justice system.⁵ Since developing its index

of impunity, CESIJ has also sought to measure impunity at the sub-national level in Mexico and Colombia and in environmental policy in Mexico and across Latin America.⁶

By contrast, the Committee to Protect Journalists, in its annual impunity index project, focuses more narrowly on the number of unsolved murders of journalists around the world, especially those killed in retaliation for their work. Such acts are deplorable in their own right, but the killing of journalists also has a chilling effect. Silencing those who report on sensitive truths deters others from seeking to shed light on abuses of power, deepening the gloom in which impunity thrives.

A fourth interpretation of impunity is more closely related to the responsiveness of government, especially in democratic systems. Ideally, accountable government is free of corruption and duly enacts the policies desired by most of its constituents. Where governments do not respond to the will of the people, political pressure grows for a change in power. Yet in many systems, leaders fail to adequately consider the public's wishes. In these cases, accountability deteriorates, especially when officials prioritize personal gain over the common good or seek to bend their institutions to retain a hold on power.

The definition of impunity used for the Atlas draws on these definitions. For us, impunity is the abuse of power, enabled by the weakness of accountability. It therefore includes illegal acts such as war crimes, but it goes beyond a purely legalistic definition. We apply this definition across five dimensions of national and international life, some of which have a much more robust legal basis than others. These are unaccountable governance, abuse of human rights, economic exploitation, conflict and violence, and environmental degradation.

Indicators, dimensions, and scoring

Measuring the concept of impunity across countries is inherently difficult, especially when so broadly defined.

⁴ <https://undocs.org/E/CN.4/2005/102/Add.1>

⁵ <https://issuu.com/webudlap/docs/global-impunity-index-2020>

⁶ <https://parispeaceforum.org/en/projects/environmental-impunity-index-latin-america/#:~:text=The%20Center%20on%20Impunity%20and,%2C%20security%2C%20and%20human%20rights.>

Atlas of Impunity advisory council members

David Miliband , <i>co-chair</i>	• President of International Rescue Committee (IRC), former UK foreign secretary
Monica Pinto , <i>co-chair</i>	• Argentine law professor, former UN special rapporteur on independence of lawyers and judges
Shirin Ebadi	• Iranian lawyer and activist; 2003 Nobel Peace Prize recipient
Oby Ezekwesili	• Former Nigerian minister (education, solid minerals); co-founder of Transparency International
Maina Kiai	• Kenyan lawyer; head of Human Rights Watch Alliances and Partnerships; former UN special rapporteur on freedom of peaceful assembly and association
DeRay Mckesson	• US activist and podcaster; co-founder of Campaign Zero to end police brutality and supporter of the Black Lives Matter movement
Ivo Daalder	• President of Chicago Council on Global Affairs; former US permanent representative to NATO
Anonymous expert (Asia)	
Anonymous expert (Middle East)	

We approached this challenge by specifying definitions of our five dimensions of impunity in consultation with an external, independent advisory board. The board is composed of human rights experts and activists, former diplomats, and former government officials with a range of regional and policy perspectives.

In collaboration with the advisory board, we selected 67 indicators from 29 sources to measure the degree of impunity at the country level across what we see as the most important facets of each dimension. Where possible, the project prioritizes high-quality, expert-generated social science indicators over national statistics. We do this because the latter are not harmonized or readily comparable in many cases, and in some instances, the data may be subject to political pressure. We have also selected source

datasets with an eye to maximizing country coverage, allowing us to rank 163 countries and produce indicative scores for another 34.

To calculate country scores, we normalize each indicator on a 0-5 scale, with the country exhibiting the greatest level of impunity scoring 5, and the country with the highest degree of accountability scoring 0. Indicators in each dimension are then aggregated by simple mean; a country's dimension mean is then min-max normalized from 0 to 5 once again into its dimension score. Each country's scores for the five dimensions are then averaged into a headline score, once again using equal weightings. This implies that equal conceptual importance is given to each dimension, just as each indicator is counted equally in its contribution to the dimension score.

Components of the Atlas of Impunity

Dimension	Indicators	Score
Unaccountable governance	15	0=best–5=worst
Abuse of human rights	13	
Economic exploitation	15	
Conflict and violence	14	
Environmental degradation	10	

Headline impunity score
(Simple mean of dimension scores;
0=best possible
5= worst possible)

Where data are missing, we have imputed values at the dimension level for countries with at least 60% of actual data available. For countries with less than 60% actual data, we generate a score for indicative benchmarking on the dimension but produce no ranking. This is because we do not view these scores as sufficiently robust to be confidently compared to others that are based on more complete data.

Likewise, for the headline impunity score, we exclude countries from the overall rankings if they have less than 60% of total source data available. As at the dimension level, the scores of countries that do not receive a headline ranking can be interpreted as roughly indicative of a country’s position in the global distribution based on the data we have. However, we cannot be sufficiently confident in these values to rank the country alongside others with a more complete set of indicators.

The Atlas scores seek to capture a moment in time based on most recent available data, but there are time lags in all source indicators—especially given that most are published just once per year. Our closing date for available data inputs was 1 July 2022. Just as the data cannot fully account for historical factors and are certainly not meant to justify past actions, the Atlas scores are not intended to predict the degree of impunity in a given country in the future, either.

Crucially, the Atlas allows for no qualitative score adjustments by our analysts, the project’s sponsors, or the advisory board. All implicit value judgements can therefore be attributed only to indicator selection and any subjective criteria built into the

source data, some of which do rely on independent expert assessments. After the Atlas’s publication, we plan to reconvene the advisory board prior to updating the data for subsequent editions of the Atlas. This will allow us to consider any needed data revisions, incorporating a variety of perspectives and a range of expertise.

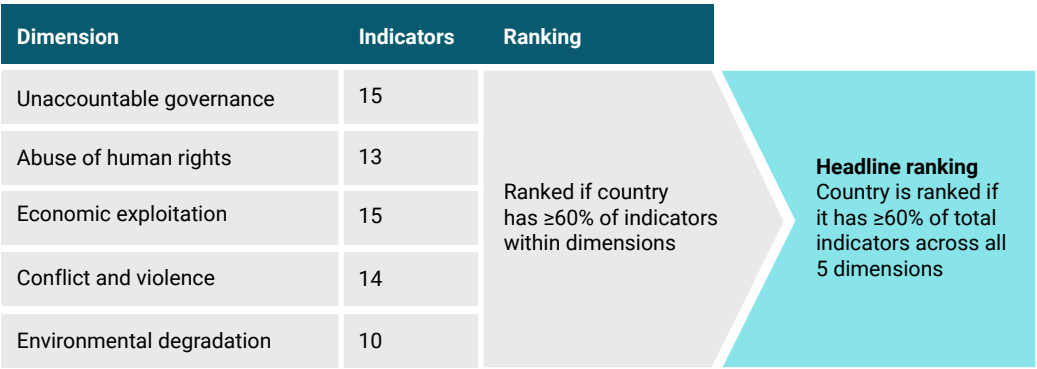
Dimensions of impunity

The Atlas uses as its framework five distinct dimensions of impunity within society: conflict and violence, unaccountable governance, abuse of human rights, economic exploitation, and environmental degradation. These dimensions have been chosen because they represent a cross-section of the phenomenon with both national and global implications that affect individual lives as well as the long-term trajectories of whole societies.

Unaccountable governance

Unaccountable governance also focuses on the functional performance of government. The dimension score therefore includes measures of institutional strength; the fairness and efficiency of the justice system; and the degree to which regulations are enforced and the rule of law is respected.

While we do view liberal democracies with strong protections for civil liberties and freedom of expression as generally more accountable than other types of regimes, this dimension is intended to go beyond contrasting full democracies with authoritarian and hybrid systems.



Source: Eurasia Group

Source	Indicator
Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) Democracy Index	▪ Electoral process
EIU Democracy Index	▪ Functioning of government
EIU Democracy Index	▪ Democracy and political culture
EIU Democracy Index	▪ Political participation
Reporters Without Borders World Press Freedom Index	▪ Global score
Fund for Peace (FFP) Fragile State Index	▪ External intervention
FFP Fragile State Index	▪ State legitimacy
World Justice Project (WJP) Rule of Law Index	▪ Regulatory enforcement
WJP Rule of Law Index	▪ Constraints on government power
WJP Rule of Law Index	▪ Criminal justice
WJP Rule of Law Index	▪ Civil justice
Varieties of Democracy	▪ Freedom from political killings
Varieties of Democracy	▪ Clientelism index
Varieties of Democracy	▪ Impartial public administration
Freedom House Freedom in the World (FIW)	▪ Total score

Conflict and violence

Conflict and violence are included in the Atlas because they are symptomatic of abuse of power. Moreover, we believe that how states behave at the extremes—that is, during times of war or domestic strife—is important. This issue can be a question of life or death, and it often arises in countries where the government claims a monopoly on violence.

Countries with a high degree of impunity in this dimension may be engaged in armed struggle at home or abroad. They are likely to be subject to recurrent violence perpetrated by the state, non-state groups, or individuals. The degree of militarization of society may be elevated, and perceptions of safety (especially for women) are likely to be low.

In practice, our measure focuses on empirical levels of violence within a country, including the number of battles, riots, combat fatalities, and murders per capita, as well as the number of people displaced by violent actions. The dimension also

incorporates indicators of women's safety and the prevalence of intimate partner violence, as well as the fault lines in society created by ethnic and other group grievances.

Finally, our measure seeks to capture the violence committed outside of a state's borders. It includes indicators on battles fought abroad by a country's military in the 36 months ending in mid-2022, as well as countries' indirect contributions to conflict via arms imports and exports.

As noted in the regional perspectives section below, the data underlying the arms-related indicators, published by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, do not differentiate between private-sector small arms sales and state-sanctioned transfers of weapons systems to allied governments, generally meant for national defense. We acknowledge that arms exports are an imperfect measure of a country's indirect involvement in conflict, but we do feel that the indicator is the best available proxy for the concept.

Source	Indicator
Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED)	▪ Number of battles
ACLED	▪ Number of riots
ACLED	▪ Total fatalities per capita (riots, battles, violence)
ACLED	▪ Violence against civilians (by nonstate actors)
ACLED	▪ Number of external battles
Institute for Economics and Peace Global Peace Index	▪ Total score
Georgetown University Women Peace and Security Index	▪ Community safety perception
Georgetown Women Peace and Security Index	▪ Intimate partner violence
Intentional Homicides	▪ Homicides per capita in 2018
FFP Fragile State Index	▪ Group grievance
WJP Rule of Law Index	▪ (Sub-score) People do not resort to violence to redress personal grievances
UN High Commissioner for Refugees Refugee Data Finder	▪ Refugees, asylum seekers, and internally displaced people per capita
Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) Arms Trade Imports	▪ Total imports trend
SIPRI Arms Trade Exports	▪ Total exports trend

Abuse of human rights

The extent to which a state protects or abuses the human rights of its inhabitants is central to measuring impunity. Beyond states' commitments under their own laws and constitutional provisions, governments have basic responsibilities to protect the human rights of their citizens as enshrined under the UN Convention on Human Rights.

This indicator gauges how well states live up to those obligations. It considers factors such as states' willingness to endorse UN human rights treaties,

inhabitants' civil rights and legal protections, and the use of torture and capital punishment. It also considers the incidence of ethnic cleansing, political terror, and forced disappearances.

A country with a high degree of impunity on this dimension is likely to lag on endorsement and implementation of international human rights treaties and allow the use of torture, capital punishment, or other forms of violence for political coercion or punishing crime. Civil liberties are likely to be limited, and the state may use its power to discriminate against or displace some social groups.

Source	Indicator
UN Human Rights Office	▪ States' consent to be bound by 18 human rights treaties
EIU Democracy Index	▪ Civil liberties
FFP Fragile State Index	▪ Human rights and rule of law
WJP Rule of Law Index	▪ Equal treatment and no discrimination
WJP Rule of Law Index	▪ Right to life and security
WJP Rule of Law Index	▪ Due process of the accused
Cato Institute Human Freedom Index	▪ Politically motivated disappearances
Cato Institute Human Freedom Index	▪ Freedom from torture

Source	Indicator
Political Terror Scale project	▪ Average of three main scores
Amnesty International Executions	▪ Recorded executions and death penalties by year
Freedom House FIW	▪ Ethnic cleansing
ACLED	▪ Violence against civilians (by states)
Georgetown Women Peace and Security Index	▪ Absence of legal discrimination

Economic exploitation

We view economic exploitation as a fourth key element of impunity because large economic disparities can often degenerate into an abuse of power. Impunity in this area may take the form of opaque and abusive economic practices undertaken by governments. It may also come about through undue influence over policy of large companies or wealthy individuals; inequitable conditions for workers; preferential treatment under the law; or a high incidence of corruption.

Accordingly, this dimension seeks to measure several functional aspects of a state's economic framework, such as the strength of property rights, government integrity and efficiency, the transparency of state budgeting, the degree of distortion caused by the tax code, and levels of corruption.

The economic exploitation dimension also seeks to gauge whether fair working conditions are respected, as well as the degree of class-based discrimination, and the incidence of pernicious practices like modern slavery and child labor. Finally, this dimension examines empirical outcomes, including a state's progress toward eradicating poverty and hunger and the degree of income inequality after taxes and transfers.

Including income inequality in the Atlas—as measured, in this case, by the most recent Gini coefficient readings from the World Bank—will strike some readers as controversial. We acknowledge that there are multiple paths to prosperity and that states exhibiting a range of values on the Gini index should be able to ensure economic accountability. Ultimately, our intent is to account for the fact that when inequality reaches extreme levels, accountability tends to suffer, and the abuse of power becomes more likely.

To do this, we apply parameters to a country's Gini reading before including it in the dimension score so that countries with a Gini coefficient below 0.4 (and those without a recent reading according to the World Bank's statistics) receive a score of zero—the best possible on the Atlas's scoring system. Countries with a Gini of 0.4 to 0.5 score a 2.5 on the inequality indicator, with about 45 countries falling into this category. In our view, a post-tax and transfer coefficient in this range is high and implies a concentration of economic power that may begin to undermine accountability. Finally, states with a Gini of 0.5 or above receive a score of 5, as post tax and transfer inequality at this level is extreme. Only 12 countries fall into this category.

Source	Indicator
Heritage Foundation Economic Freedom Index	▪ Property rights
Heritage Foundation Economic Freedom Index	▪ Government integrity
Freedom House FIW	▪ Functioning of government
Tax Justice Network (TJN) Corporate Tax Haven Index	▪ Total score
Center for Labour Research Labour Rights Index	▪ Total score
Varieties of Democracy	▪ Social class equality in respect to civil liberties
UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)	▪ Victims of modern slavery (per 1000)
UN SDGs	▪ Children involved in child labor (%)
UN SDGs	▪ Sustainable Development Initiative (SDI) goal 1: No poverty
UN SDGs	▪ SDI goal 2: Zero hunger
International Budget Partnership (IBP) Open Budget Survey	▪ Total score
Global Corruption Index	▪ Total score
TJN State of Tax Justice	▪ Total tax loss (% tax revenue)
TJN State of Tax Justice	▪ Harm done to other countries
World Bank Gini coefficient (most recent from period 2006-21; normalized)	▪ Gives all countries a normalized score of 0 unless they have a Gini of 0.4 or higher
World Bank Gini coefficient (most recent from period 2006-21; normalized)	▪ Countries with a Gini greater than or equal to 0.4 and less than 0.5 get 2.5. Countries with a Gini of 0.5 or greater score a 5

Environmental degradation

We believe that environmental degradation is a critical part of the Atlas because climate change, resource depletion, and pollution are existential issues that reflect the imbalance of power between polluters/high consumers and those most affected by their actions—whether that divide is between high- and low-income countries or between current and future generations.

Environmental degradation is expected to have the most dramatic effects on developing countries over the coming decades. Historically, these states have contributed less to global environmental challenges than others and had fewer opportunities to develop “easily” with abundant, low-cost, and heavily polluting energy commodities and industrial chemicals.

The populations of the developing world are larger, poorer, younger, and generally more exposed to the harmful effects of environmental degradation than those of developed countries. This implies a series of

generational, income-based, and geographic inequities for which there will almost certainly be no recourse.

In practice, the environmental degradation dimension of the Atlas seeks to balance three aspects of environmental management. These are the sustainability of a country's climate, land, and water policies; a country's commitment to environmental treaties and efforts at pollution mitigation and remediation; and the sustainability of a country's resource consumption, biological footprint, and agricultural practices.

A high degree of impunity in this area is typically characterized by a weak record in adopting and implementing environmental treaties; low environmental standards and poor implementation; and a large contribution to negative externalities affecting other countries. These externalities could take the form of a large ecological footprint; high carbon emissions or emissions embodied in traded goods; and outsized resource consumption and pollution per capita.

Source	Indicator
World Economic Forum (WEF) Global Competitiveness Report	▪ Environment-related treaties in force
UN SDGs	▪ Climate action goal
UN SDGs	▪ Life below water goal
UN SDGs	▪ Life on land goal
Yale University Environmental Protection Index	▪ Climate change indicator
Yale Environmental Protection Index	▪ Air quality indicator
Yale Environmental Protection Index	▪ Waste management indicator
Yale Environmental Protection Index	▪ Agriculture indicator
Yale Environmental Protection Index	▪ Acid rain indicator
York Ecological Footprint of Countries 2018	▪ Ecological footprint index

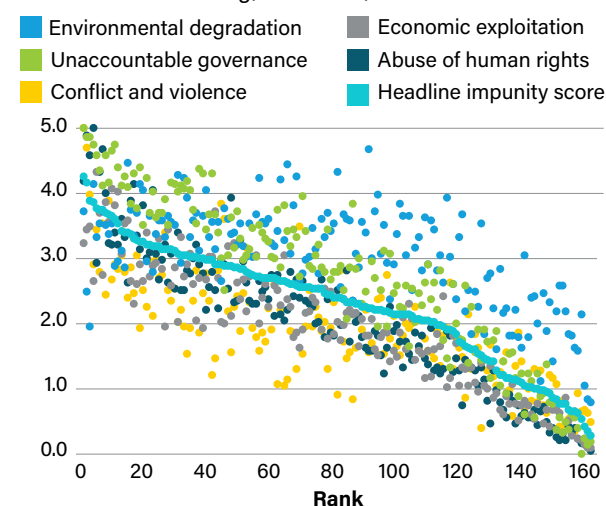
Overview of the data

Impunity by dimension

A first glance at the headline impunity scores and their components—for which higher values indicate a higher degree of impunity—reveals a strong positive correlation between overall impunity and unaccountable governance, economic exploitation, and human rights abuse. These relationships should not be surprising, as effective and accountable governance is the cornerstone of sound economic policymaking and the protection of human rights.

Atlas and dimension scores

Headline index ranking; 5 = worst; 0 = best



Correlation with headline score

CV	AHR	EE	ED	UG
0.80	0.95	0.93	0.69	0.96

Dimension correlation matrix

	CV	AHR	EE	ED	UG
CV	1.00				
AHR	0.74	1.00			
EE	0.66	0.82	1.00		
ED	0.40	0.60	0.59	1.00	
UG	0.67	0.91	0.89	0.62	1.00

The correlation between conflict and violence and the headline impunity score is slightly weaker. There are several plausible explanations for this, with one being that some states with relatively stronger economic and political institutions may still face serious difficulties in controlling violence and crime.

Two prominent examples of this phenomenon are Mexico and Brazil, which rank among the ten worst performers on the Atlas in terms of conflict and violence largely because of high levels of violence

perpetrated by non-state actors. Both countries score considerably better on the other dimensions of impunity, including abuse of human rights—which focuses on human rights violations perpetrated by the state—and unaccountable governance.

Likewise, some states score poorly on conflict and violence because of their involvement in conflicts abroad. Russia ranks poorly on the conflict and violence dimension (11th highest score on this dimension) owing to its engagement in foreign wars, most importantly its invasion of Ukraine, and its indirect participation in foreign conflicts via arms exports. These factors—along with a high level of group grievances—negate relatively better scores on indicators related to violent crime and domestic unrest. That said, low levels of unrest are also partly linked to effective security services and strong curbs on the political opposition, neither of which necessarily eliminate impunity.

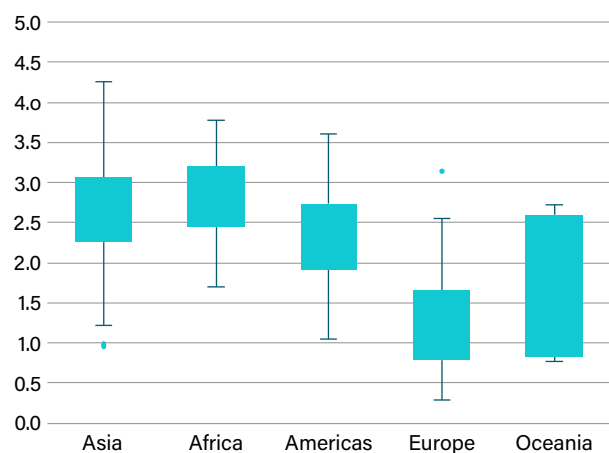
While no longer engaged in its foreign wars in Iraq or Afghanistan, the US also performs worse on conflict and violence than it does on unaccountable governance or abuse of human rights. This is mainly a result of arms exports and a high degree of group grievances generated by societal divisions. Though

higher than that of other wealthy countries, the US's per capita homicide rate is low in global comparison and therefore exerts a positive influence on the country's overall score for this dimension. The UK and France, which score considerably better than the US on conflict and violence, also see their scores negatively affected by their arms trade, albeit to a lesser degree.

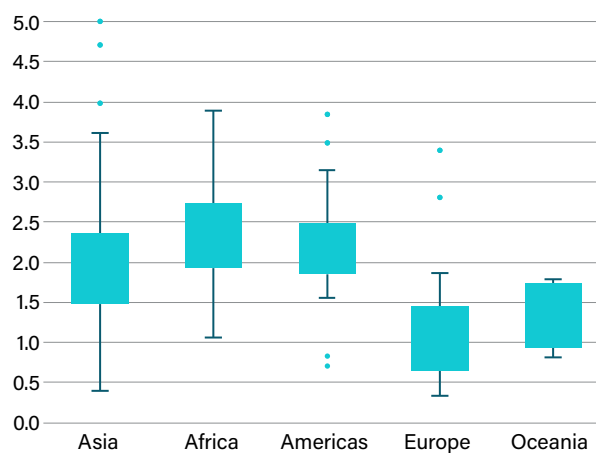
The relationship between environmental degradation and overall impunity is even weaker than that of conflict and violence. This reflects the complexity of the environmental degradation dimension, which seeks to balance measures of the sustainability of environmental practices with international cooperation and mitigation efforts, as well as a country's resource consumption and land use profile.

In some cases, this leads to counterintuitive results. For example, Norway performs worse on environmental degradation than on the other dimensions of the Atlas, where it generally scores among the best performers. Norway's environmental degradation score is negatively affected by the country's contribution to climate change—largely owing to its large fossil-fuel industry—and its high per-capita resource consumption, an issue for wealthy

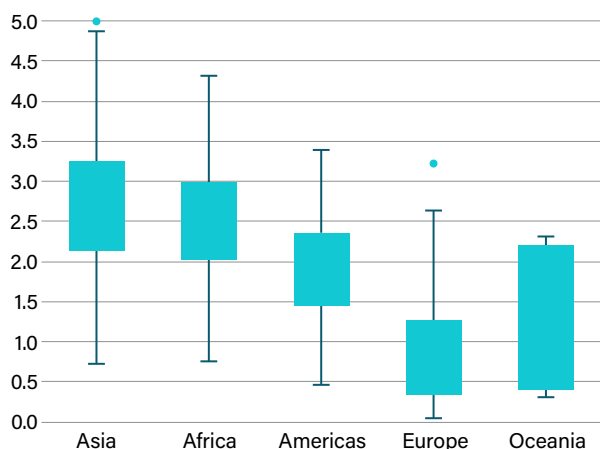
Overall score



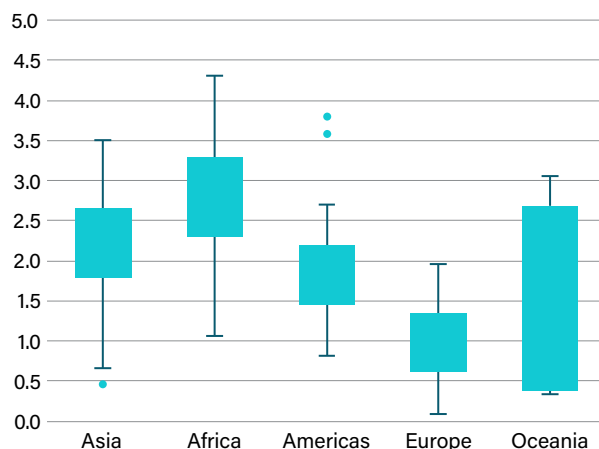
Conflict and violence



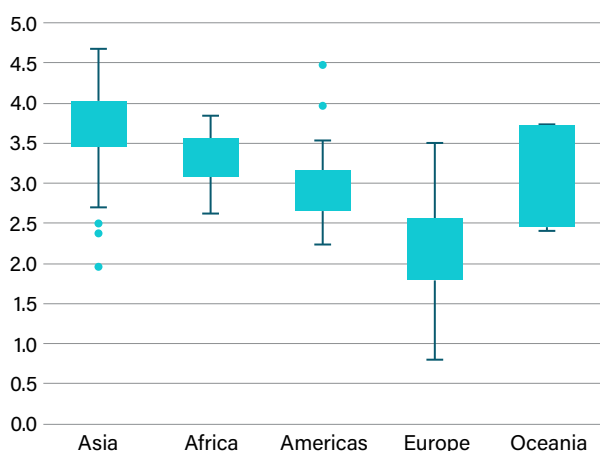
Abuse of human rights



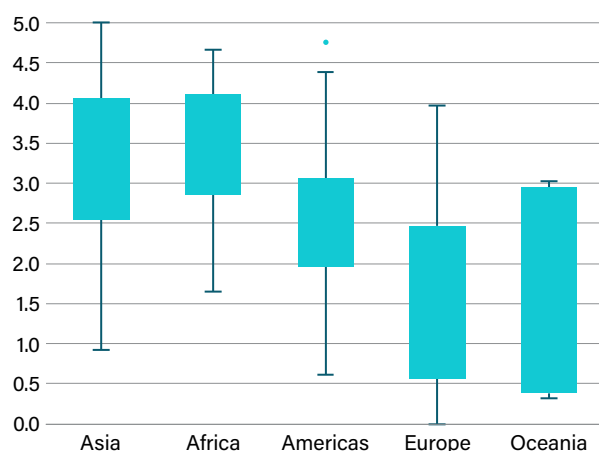
Economic exploitation



Environmental degradation



Unaccountable governance



countries more generally. These indicator readings contrast with stronger marks on endorsement of environmental treaties and air, water, and waste management quality, where Norway ranks similarly to high-performing, northern European peers.

Impunity by geography

A regional breakdown of the Atlas results shows Europe and Oceania as the best performers. Asia and Africa are somewhat worse performers, while the Americas fall in the middle, with a median score close to the center of the global distribution.

Africa and Asia overall tend to score poorly on unaccountable governance, abuse of human

rights, and economic exploitation. For economic exploitation, an economy's stage of development and growth model are likely to have some bearing on the score for this dimension.

As noted previously, we acknowledge that there are different strategies for achieving prosperity and poverty alleviation, some of which prioritize maximizing output—and ideally, benefiting all members of society—over reducing inequality in the near term. The treatment of income inequality in the Atlas's scoring method is designed to allow for a reasonable range of income inequality, penalizing only those countries where inequities are extreme.

Median scores by geographic macro-region					
	Asia	Africa	Americas	Europe	Oceania
Headline	2.68	2.85	2.22	1.12	1.61
CV	1.86	2.25	2.23	1.17	1.43
AHR	2.50	2.63	1.76	0.65	1.12
EE	2.11	2.71	1.82	0.77	1.07
ED	3.65	3.36	3.02	2.14	3.13
UG	3.43	3.41	2.56	1.24	1.62

In our view, extreme levels of inequality raise the risk of other abuses owing to the concentration of power in just a few hands.

Moreover, it is worth noting that inequality accounts for a small portion of a country's economic exploitation score (one indicator of 15). It should have little bearing per se on other indicators included in the dimension, such as the incidence of modern slavery, the strength of property rights, the transparency of state budgeting, or the incidence of child labor.

The lack of variation of environmental degradation scores across regions is also noteworthy. This is

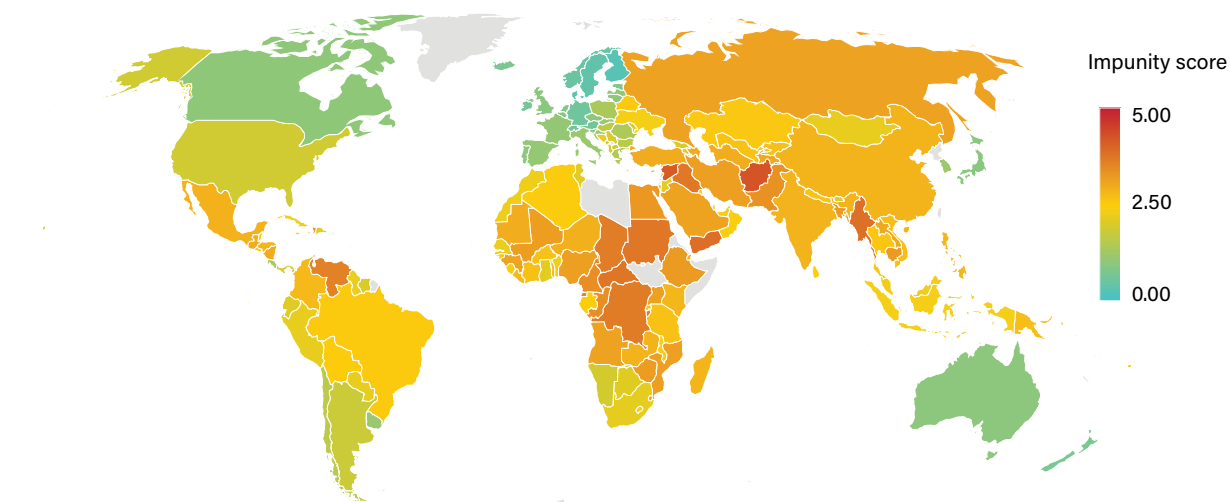
likely owing to the broad range of factors measured by the environmental degradation dimension. In practice, this results in heterogenous indicator scores—some negative, others middling, and some more positive—for many countries included in the Atlas.

The table below shows the ten countries with the highest levels of impunity; the ten middle performers, with UAE and Ukraine at the center of the rankings; and the ten best performers. Afghanistan tops the Atlas, with an impunity score of 4.25, while Finland is the best performer, with a score of 0.29.

	Country	Score	Region	Income level	Rank
Highest impunity scores	Afghanistan	4.25	Asia	Low income	1
	Syria	4.16	Asia	Low income	2
	Yemen	3.88	Asia	Low income	3
	Myanmar	3.85	Asia	Lower middle income	4
	Central African Republic	3.77	Africa	Low income	5
	Sudan	3.75	Africa	Low income	6
	Iraq	3.74	Asia	Upper middle income	7
	Burundi	3.70	Africa	Low income	8
	Congo - Kinshasa	3.67	Africa	Low income	9
	Chad	3.66	Africa	Low income	10

Middle impunity scores	Lesotho	2.46	Africa	Lower middle income	78
	Oman	2.45	Asia	High income	79
	Malawi	2.43	Africa	Low income	80
	Belize	2.40	Americas	Upper middle income	81
	United Arab Emirates	2.40	Asia	High income	82
	Ukraine	2.39	Europe	Lower middle income	83
	Indonesia	2.38	Asia	Upper middle income	84
	Malaysia	2.34	Asia	Upper middle income	85
	Benin	2.33	Africa	Lower middle income	86
	Cuba	2.32	Americas	Upper middle income	87
Lowest impunity scores	New Zealand	0.76	Oceania	High income	154
	Luxembourg	0.76	Europe	High income	155
	Switzerland	0.66	Europe	High income	156
	Austria	0.66	Europe	High income	157
	Ireland	0.66	Europe	High income	158
	Germany	0.62	Europe	High income	159
	Norway	0.53	Europe	High income	160
	Sweden	0.43	Europe	High income	161
	Denmark	0.35	Europe	High income	162
	Finland	0.29	Europe	High income	163

Atlas of Impunity overall scores



Source: Eurasia Group

Ranked countries												
	Impunity (overall)		Unaccountable governance		Conflict and violence		Abuse of human rights		Economic exploitation		Environmental degradation	
	Score	Rank	Score	Rank	Score	Rank	Score	Rank	Score	Rank	Score	Rank
Afghanistan	4.25	1	5.00	1	5.00	1	4.18	6	3.23	17	3.72	25
Syria	4.16	2	4.86	2	4.70	2	4.87	2	3.44	..	2.50	..
Yemen	3.88	3	4.85	3	3.98	3	4.59	4	3.50	11	1.96	..
Myanmar	3.85	4	4.73	6	2.91	19	5.00	1	2.66	40	4.13	11
Central African Republic	3.77	5	4.58	9	3.44	10	2.92	35	4.31	1	3.33	76
Sudan	3.75	6	4.35	15	2.78	26	4.33	5	3.69	7	3.54	57
Iraq	3.74	7	4.12	25	3.52	8	4.66	3	2.75	31	3.73	23
Burundi	3.70	8	4.58	10	2.43	42	4.00	9	3.87	4	3.51	61
Congo - Kinshasa	3.67	9	4.16	23	3.89	4	3.23	21	3.56	9	3.38	69
Chad	3.66	10	4.66	7	2.67	32	3.21	24	4.06	3	3.54	54
Venezuela	3.61	11	4.75	5	2.90	20	3.40	16	3.80	5	2.89	116
Equatorial Guinea	3.54	12	4.40	12	2.84	..	3.20	25	4.03	..	2.94	108
Cameroon	3.41	13	4.11	27	3.05	14	3.61	13	3.08	20	3.11	93
Congo - Brazzaville	3.40	14	4.25	19	2.78	25	3.33	19	3.54	10	2.87	117
Haiti	3.39	15	4.08	28	2.40	44	2.63	53	3.58	8	4.47	2
Pakistan	3.37	16	3.84	36	2.87	21	3.89	11	2.65	41	3.74	22
Egypt	3.30	17	4.31	16	2.45	41	4.14	7	2.31	59	3.34	73
Ethiopia	3.27	18	3.78	39	3.05	16	3.35	18	2.60	45	3.70	27
Cambodia	3.26	19	4.38	13	1.94	75	3.14	26	2.91	26	4.14	10
Bangladesh	3.24	20	3.51	53	2.50	37	3.81	12	2.64	42	4.05	13
Zimbabwe	3.21	21	4.24	20	2.27	52	3.01	30	3.40	13	2.96	107
Mali	3.20	22	3.71	43	2.96	18	3.08	27	2.72	34	3.65	33
Iran	3.19	23	4.03	31	2.11	63	4.05	8	2.89	28	2.79	122
Nigeria	3.19	24	3.62	49	2.97	17	3.07	29	2.93	25	3.37	71
Mozambique	3.18	25	3.69	45	2.69	31	2.67	46	3.31	15	3.58	45
Uganda	3.15	26	3.70	44	2.74	30	2.97	32	2.84	30	3.58	44
Russia	3.14	27	3.91	34	3.40	11	3.22	22	1.95	85	3.32	78
Angola	3.14	28	3.51	52	2.51	36	2.64	51	3.44	12	3.64	35
Saudi Arabia	3.13	29	4.16	22	2.36	47	3.07	28	2.58	48	3.55	51
Guinea	3.11	30	4.14	24	2.53	35	2.53	56	2.87	29	3.52	60
Bahrain	3.07	31	4.01	32	2.03	67	3.40	17	2.02	80	4.28	5
Eswatini	3.05	32	4.12	26	2.20	59	2.52	59	3.32	14	2.94	109
Laos	3.05	33	4.07	29	1.94	73	2.51	60	2.73	32	4.22	8
Tajikistan	3.04	34	4.19	21	1.54	117	2.80	38	2.90	27	3.92	16
Djibouti	3.03	35	4.05	30	1.93	76	2.77	42	3.08	19	3.31	80
Lebanon	3.03	36	3.75	40	2.35	49	3.00	31	2.61	44	3.57	46

Ranked countries												
	Impunity (overall)		Unaccountable governance		Conflict and violence		Abuse of human rights		Economic exploitation		Environmental degradation	
	Score	Rank	Score	Rank	Score	Rank	Score	Rank	Score	Rank	Score	Rank
Turkey	3.01	37	3.53	50	2.82	22	3.21	23	2.04	77	3.69	28
Nicaragua	3.01	38	4.38	14	1.87	86	2.91	36	2.69	36	3.12	92
Azerbaijan	2.99	39	4.29	18	2.47	39	2.77	43	1.92	86	3.66	32
Guatemala	2.98	40	3.45	55	2.77	27	2.21	78	2.68	38	4.04	14
Mauritania	2.98	41	3.67	47	2.35	48	2.55	55	3.02	23	3.33	75
Turkmenistan	2.97	42	4.30	17	1.21	139	2.80	40	3.02	24	3.56	48
Comoros	2.92	43	3.68	46	1.46	123	2.52	58	3.71	..	3.13	90
Niger	2.91	44	3.40	61	2.80	24	2.23	77	2.69	37	3.56	47
Mexico	2.90	45	3.00	78	3.84	5	2.97	33	2.03	78	2.64	129
India	2.89	46	2.52	103	3.61	7	2.90	37	2.00	81	3.76	20
Zambia	2.88	47	3.05	72	2.18	60	2.53	57	3.19	18	3.61	38
China	2.88	48	3.63	48	1.56	112	3.93	10	2.12	72	3.37	70
Madagascar	2.86	49	3.16	68	2.26	54	2.33	71	3.23	16	3.40	68
Honduras	2.86	50	3.71	42	2.42	43	2.34	70	2.63	43	3.22	84
Philippines	2.83	51	3.30	63	1.89	84	3.28	20	2.38	56	3.54	52
Kenya	2.83	52	2.99	80	2.46	40	2.95	34	2.67	39	3.20	85
Colombia	2.79	53	3.04	74	3.15	12	2.64	52	2.18	66	3.02	100
Liberia	2.78	54	3.13	69	2.33	50	2.34	69	2.72	33	3.53	58
Togo	2.75	55	3.46	54	1.92	79	2.30	73	3.03	22	3.02	102
Papua New Guinea	2.73	56	3.02	75	1.79	94	2.31	72	3.05	21	3.68	29
Vietnam	2.71	57	3.52	51	1.58	107	2.65	49	1.99	82	4.23	7
Kyrgyzstan	2.70	58	3.40	60	1.87	87	2.48	62	2.40	55	3.55	49
Rwanda	2.70	59	3.29	64	1.73	98	2.55	54	2.59	46	3.54	56
Côte d'Ivoire	2.70	60	3.25	65	2.23	56	2.38	66	2.26	64	3.60	41
Tanzania	2.69	61	3.01	76	1.90	81	2.74	45	2.70	35	3.24	83
Burkina Faso	2.68	62	3.01	77	2.61	34	2.11	81	2.58	47	3.19	86
Uzbekistan	2.67	63	3.74	41	1.07	143	2.74	44	2.51	51	3.43	65
Nepal	2.65	64	2.86	87	2.20	58	2.13	80	2.27	62	4.20	9
Guinea-Bissau	2.64	65	3.81	37	1.06	..	2.06	83	3.05	..	3.27	82
Qatar	2.62	66	3.42	58	1.13	142	2.20	79	2.36	57	4.44	3
Thailand	2.61	67	3.19	67	1.89	82	2.78	41	2.26	63	3.06	96
Kazakhstan	2.59	68	3.44	56	1.85	89	2.41	63	1.78	97	3.81	19
Kuwait	2.58	69	3.33	62	1.29	134	2.66	48	1.87	89	4.25	6
Brazil	2.56	70	2.72	93	3.48	9	2.40	64	1.63	104	2.66	128
Belarus	2.56	71	3.96	33	1.54	115	2.64	50	1.90	88	2.76	125
Algeria	2.56	72	3.41	59	1.95	72	2.36	68	2.16	70	2.98	106
El Salvador	2.55	73	2.89	83	2.50	38	2.30	74	2.18	67	3.01	104

Ranked countries												
	Impunity (overall)		Unaccountable governance		Conflict and violence		Abuse of human rights		Economic exploitation		Environmental degradation	
	Score	Rank	Score	Rank	Score	Rank	Score	Rank	Score	Rank	Score	Rank
Sierra Leone	2.54	74	2.84	88	1.96	71	2.26	75	2.40	54	3.47	63
Bolivia	2.53	75	3.05	73	2.26	53	2.00	86	2.33	58	3.13	91
Gabon	2.53	76	3.20	66	2.09	64	2.02	84	2.54	49	2.77	124
Sri Lanka	2.52	77	2.87	85	1.89	83	2.67	47	1.91	87	3.61	40
Lesotho	2.46	78	2.78	92	2.03	68	1.79	100	2.53	50	3.33	74
Oman	2.45	79	3.43	57	1.29	133	2.38	67	1.76	99	3.71	26
Malawi	2.43	80	2.66	95	1.94	74	1.87	93	2.50	52	3.42	66
Belize	2.40	81	2.79	..	2.32	51	1.82	95	1.84	..	3.54	55
UAE	2.40	82	2.79	91	0.90	149	2.51	61	2.02	79	4.32	4
Ukraine	2.39	83	2.89	84	2.80	23	1.98	88	1.74	100	2.56	135
Indonesia	2.38	84	2.51	105	1.72	99	2.38	65	1.98	84	3.67	30
Malaysia	2.34	85	2.07	118	1.46	124	2.80	39	2.17	68	3.61	39
Benin	2.33	86	2.87	86	1.57	110	1.71	102	2.21	65	3.58	42
Cuba	2.32	87	3.84	35	0.83	..	2.36	..	2.14	71	2.36	145
Gambia	2.31	88	2.83	89	1.63	104	2.02	85	2.17	69	3.07	95
Morocco	2.31	89	3.00	79	2.07	65	2.11	82	1.64	103	2.85	118
Senegal	2.26	90	2.31	110	1.91	80	1.80	99	2.06	75	3.55	50
Guyana	2.25	91	2.48	106	2.20	57	1.64	105	1.80	95	3.40	67
Mongolia	2.23	92	2.22	116	1.55	113	1.58	108	1.82	94	4.68	1
Paraguay	2.23	93	2.95	81	1.69	100	1.59	107	2.06	76	3.00	105
Fiji	2.22	94	2.70	94	1.57	109	1.88	92	1.61	105	3.73	24
Trinidad & Tobago	2.21	95	1.95	122	2.37	46	1.80	98	1.52	112	3.97	15
Peru	2.21	96	2.51	104	2.39	45	1.51	111	1.78	98	3.08	94
Bosnia	2.20	97	3.12	70	1.53	118	1.24	132	1.85	92	3.50	62
South Africa	2.18	98	1.96	121	2.75	29	1.63	106	1.87	91	2.93	110
Jordan	2.17	99	3.08	71	1.76	96	2.26	76	1.43	115	2.38	143
Tunisia	2.15	100	2.47	108	2.12	62	1.89	90	1.57	110	2.90	113
Armenia	2.15	101	2.59	99	1.66	102	1.99	87	1.49	113	3.37	72
Ghana	2.15	102	2.25	114	1.52	119	1.73	101	1.87	90	3.84	18
Timor-Leste	2.15	103	2.23	115	1.81	93	1.33	120	2.09	73	3.64	36
Dominican Republic	2.14	104	2.59	100	2.01	69	1.71	103	1.60	106	3.04	99
Botswana	2.13	105	1.65	131	1.93	77	1.53	109	2.30	61	3.65	34
Ecuador	2.11	106	2.53	102	2.01	70	1.45	115	2.08	74	2.52	136
Jamaica	2.08	107	2.02	119	2.25	55	1.85	94	1.43	114	3.17	88
Moldova	2.06	108	2.47	107	1.60	106	1.66	104	1.59	109	3.32	79
Suriname	2.05	109	2.28	111	2.05	66	1.81	97	1.53	111	2.81	120
Georgia	2.04	110	2.63	96	1.76	97	1.48	112	1.16	122	3.62	37

Ranked countries												
	Impunity (overall)		Unaccountable governance		Conflict and violence		Abuse of human rights		Economic exploitation		Environmental degradation	
	Score	Rank	Score	Rank	Score	Rank	Score	Rank	Score	Rank	Score	Rank
Serbia	2.03	111	2.91	82	1.58	108	1.37	116	1.59	108	2.90	115
Bhutan	2.03	112	2.36	109	1.56	111	1.93	89	1.17	121	3.58	43
Montenegro	2.01	113	2.62	97	1.48	122	1.27	129	1.60	107	3.45	64
Panama	1.98	114	2.20	117	1.88	85	1.34	118	1.84	93	2.80	121
Albania	1.97	115	2.82	90	1.35	129	1.23	133	1.65	102	3.05	97
Namibia	1.95	116	1.73	129	1.82	92	1.29	125	2.43	53	2.62	130
Israel	1.91	117	1.46	135	1.92	78	1.89	91	1.02	130	3.92	17
US	1.91	118	1.33	140	2.62	33	1.81	96	1.16	123	3.02	101
North Macedonia	1.89	119	2.60	98	1.31	130	1.26	131	1.80	96	2.62	131
Argentina	1.84	120	2.01	120	1.79	95	1.47	113	1.69	101	2.36	144
Mauritius	1.71	121	1.76	126	1.63	103	1.27	130	1.06	126	3.32	77
Cape Verde	1.69	122	1.75	127	1.49	121	0.75	146	1.33	119	3.67	31
Hungary	1.66	123	2.58	101	0.87	150	1.45	114	1.30	120	2.18	152
Chile	1.63	124	1.40	138	2.15	61	1.32	122	1.04	129	2.52	137
Bulgaria	1.61	125	2.26	113	1.30	131	1.33	119	1.33	118	1.83	159
Barbados	1.60	126	1.56	132	1.84	91	1.27	128	1.09	124	2.50	138
Greece	1.53	127	1.92	123	1.62	105	1.06	138	0.96	132	2.26	147
Singapore	1.50	128	1.44	136	0.40	166	1.32	121	1.38	116	3.54	53
Romania	1.45	129	1.91	124	1.44	125	1.13	136	1.04	127	1.83	158
Cyprus	1.44	130	1.71	130	1.29	135	0.82	142	1.01	131	2.70	126
Costa Rica	1.41	131	1.16	145	1.67	101	0.46	157	1.36	117	2.77	123
Poland	1.41	132	1.74	128	1.18	140	1.28	126	0.86	137	2.23	149
Croatia	1.28	133	1.88	125	1.04	145	0.98	139	0.94	134	1.60	168
South Korea	1.22	134	1.04	147	1.27	137	0.78	144	0.66	147	2.83	119
Italy	1.20	135	1.42	137	1.43	126	0.67	149	0.61	150	2.15	154
Uruguay	1.17	136	0.93	148	1.55	114	0.56	153	0.89	135	2.23	148
Slovakia	1.17	137	1.53	134	0.97	147	0.91	140	0.77	140	1.82	162
Malta	1.14	138	1.55	133	0.59	161	0.80	143	1.07	125	1.81	163
Spain	1.14	139	1.17	144	1.35	128	0.45	158	0.78	139	2.21	150
France	1.12	140	0.88	151	1.87	88	0.75	145	0.51	154	1.80	164
Latvia	1.09	141	1.23	142	1.41	127	0.57	152	0.75	142	1.62	167
Canada	1.04	142	0.61	156	0.71	155	0.63	151	0.82	138	3.04	98
Lithuania	1.02	143	1.23	143	0.99	146	0.55	154	0.73	143	1.79	165
Portugal	1.02	144	1.11	146	0.81	152	0.55	155	0.61	151	2.40	142
Australia	1.00	145	0.55	159	1.30	132	0.67	148	0.54	152	2.41	141
Czechia	1.00	146	1.24	141	0.80	153	0.44	159	0.77	141	1.99	156
UK	0.97	147	0.89	150	1.28	136	0.65	150	0.95	133	1.12	171

Ranked countries												
	Impunity (overall)		Unaccountable governance		Conflict and violence		Abuse of human rights		Economic exploitation		Environmental degradation	
	Score	Rank	Score	Rank	Score	Rank	Score	Rank	Score	Rank	Score	Rank
Japan	0.97	148	0.92	149	0.75	154	0.72	147	0.46	155	2.47	139
Slovenia	0.96	149	1.36	139	0.63	158	0.50	156	0.67	146	1.89	157
Belgium	0.94	150	0.79	153	1.21	138	0.33	163	0.41	156	2.34	146
Estonia	0.86	151	0.77	154	1.17	141	0.40	161	0.68	144	1.41	170
Netherlands	0.83	152	0.37	163	1.07	144	0.26	166	0.67	145	2.19	151
Iceland	0.78	153	0.56	157	0.42	165	0.22	170	0.62	149	2.57	134
New Zealand	0.76	154	0.32	164	0.82	151	0.31	165	0.33	157	2.59	133
Luxembourg	0.76	155	0.49	160	0.42	164	0.22	169	0.86	136	2.18	153
Switzerland	0.66	156	0.38	162	0.52	162	0.42	160	0.52	153	1.83	160
Austria	0.66	157	0.62	155	0.59	160	0.33	164	0.29	158	1.82	161
Ireland	0.66	158	0.56	158	0.34	167	0.40	162	0.65	148	1.64	166
Germany	0.62	159	0.40	161	0.94	148	0.24	167	0.23	159	1.59	169
Norway	0.53	160	0.00	168	0.65	157	0.16	172	0.21	160	2.14	155
Sweden	0.43	161	0.23	165	0.68	156	0.23	168	0.14	161	1.05	172
Denmark	0.35	162	0.15	167	0.62	159	0.18	171	0.10	162	0.84	173
Finland	0.29	163	0.18	166	0.48	163	0.04	173	0.09	163	0.79	174

Source: Eurasia Group

Unranked countries							
	Impunity (overall)		Unaccountable governance		Abuse of human rights		Environmental degradation
	Score	Indicators (of 67)	Score	Score	Score	Score	Score
South Sudan	3.64	37	4.57	3.79	3.77	4.08	1.19
Eritrea	3.64	37	4.61	2.48	3.12	4.26	3.53
Somalia	3.58	40	4.73	3.08	3.58	3.79	2.24
North Korea	3.24	32	4.80	1.80	3.42	5.00	0.01
Libya	3.09	38	4.50	2.76	3.44	2.92	1.24
Palestine	2.32	34	3.78	3.05	2.47	1.60	0.00
Brunei	2.24	37	3.42	0.88	1.31	1.89	4.13
Micronesia (Federated States of)	2.20	21	3.94	0.61	1.43	0.76	5.00
Maldives	2.19	40	2.52	1.54	1.53	1.99	3.75
Solomon Islands	1.98	33	2.97	0.86	1.23	1.82	3.29
Bahamas	1.93	38	1.98	1.68	1.52	1.80	2.91
São Tomé & Príncipe	1.92	40	1.91	1.97	0.68	2.30	2.90
Dominica	1.88	30	2.28	1.84	1.31	1.52	2.61
St. Lucia	1.81	33	1.89	1.50	1.35	1.82	2.69
Samoa	1.77	28	2.58	1.02	0.90	1.48	3.16

Grenada	1.77	34	2.39	1.85	1.29	1.04	2.44
Tonga	1.74	28	1.42	1.51	1.64	1.51	3.01
St. Vincent & Grenadines	1.67	31	1.93	1.71	0.91	1.24	2.85
Kosovo	1.65	9	..	0.58	0.19	3.92	..
Antigua & Barbuda	1.59	32	2.13	1.41	1.12	0.76	2.91
Hong Kong	1.56	32	2.27	0.70	1.28	1.89	..
Seychelles	1.47	38	1.72	0.72	1.18	1.04	3.19
Vanuatu	1.39	29	1.43	0.00	0.74	1.46	4.03
Marshall Islands	1.26	21	0.39	0.00	0.58	1.61	4.68
St. Kitts & Nevis	1.18	24	1.83	1.78	1.15	0.01	..
Kiribati	1.15	23	0.39	0.00	0.91	1.01	4.39
Taiwan	0.81	36	0.82	0.36	0.00	0.54	2.87
Nauru	0.63	16	1.31	0.00	0.99	0.20	..
Monaco	0.57	15	0.91	0.00	0.33	0.96	..
Andorra	0.52	14	1.05	0.00	0.43	0.54	..
Liechtenstein	0.51	18	0.58	0.07	0.33	1.01	..
Palau	0.46	16	0.45	0.31	1.16	0.00	..
Tuvalu	0.37	14	0.39	0.00	1.16	0.00	..
San Marino	0.28	15	0.39	0.00	0.16	0.53	..

Source: Eurasia Group

The states with the lowest levels of impunity on the Atlas tend to be high-income, liberal democracies located in western Europe. The only non-European country among the Atlas's top performers is New Zealand.

We believe that liberal democracy is the most effective system of government for protecting civil liberties, freedom of expression, and institutional checks and balances; it is also best suited to maximizing the responsiveness of government to the desires of most of its constituents. Several of the indicators included in the unaccountable governance dimension—including scores related to electoral process, democracy and political culture, and overall political freedom—therefore explicitly favor well-functioning electoral democracies.

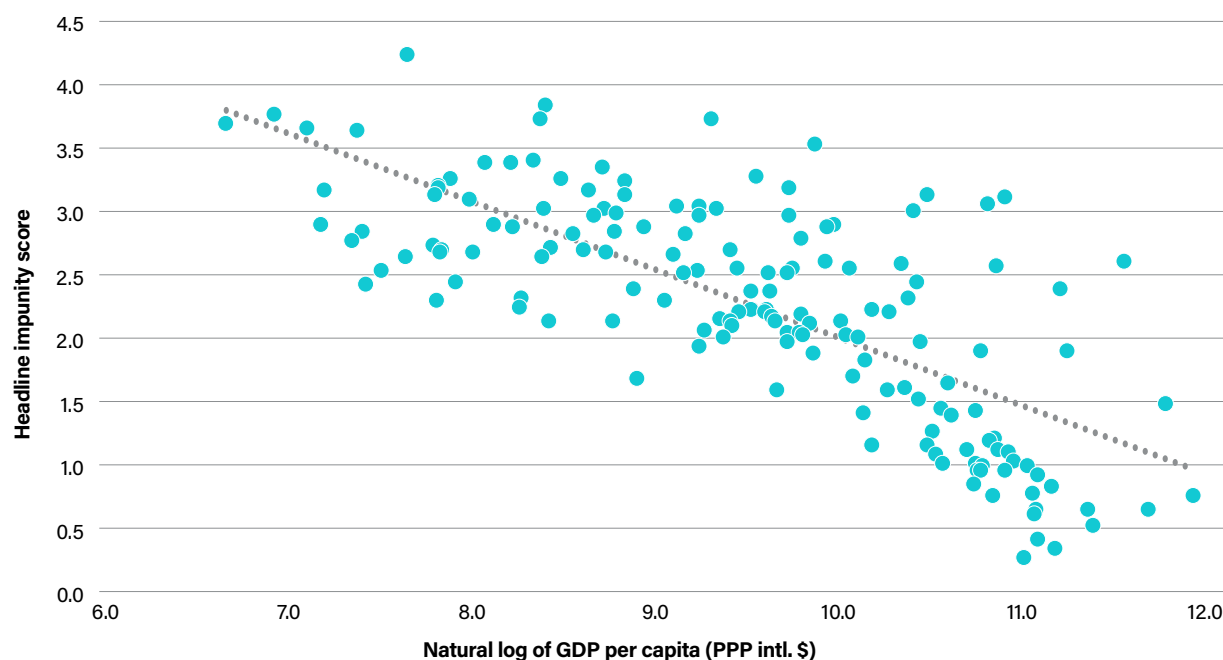
However, the debate over accountability versus impunity also goes beyond the institutional differences between democracies, autocracies, and hybrid regimes. Singapore—in which political rights are more limited than in many other developed markets—is a case in point. The country has a better

ranking in the Atlas than several long-consolidated liberal democracies, such as the US and Israel.

The case of Singapore demonstrates that some states with limited civil rights and political freedoms can perform strongly in terms of economic equity, responsiveness of government, freedom from corruption, and respect for human rights. However, it is also worth noting that Singapore is by far the best-performing state that is not a full-fledged liberal democracy and that it also ranks similarly to Hungary and Poland, two avowedly illiberal democracies which have enacted policies detrimental to various aspects of accountability in recent years.

Much like the top performers on the Atlas, the states with the highest levels of impunity exhibit a number of similarities. Most of these countries are classified as low-income and all are located in Asia or Africa. Many—including Syria, Yemen, Myanmar, Sudan, and Chad—are currently grappling with internal conflict, and several others, such as Iraq and Afghanistan, were recently subject to invasion by a foreign power.

All other things equal, a 10% rise in GDP per capita implies a 0.06-point improvement on the Atlas*



$$*y = -0.55x + 7.49 \mid R^2 = 0.55$$

In many of the countries with the highest levels of impunity, conflict is directly related to poor scores on a number of the indicators included in the Atlas, such as arms imports; the number of battles, combat fatalities, and homicides per capita; the frequency of human rights abuses, including the use of torture and capital punishment; and the incidence of gender-based violence. War is also likely to worsen scores on economic injustice and environmental degradation, as destruction disrupts economic output, causing rates of poverty and hunger to rise. One might also expect environmental objectives to fall by the wayside in the face of dire and immediate security concerns.

The Atlas's middle performers, by contrast, seem to have less in common than the countries at the top and bottom of the rankings. The countries nearest to the median are spread across Asia, Africa, Europe, and the Americas and comprise states of all income levels. More than the best and worst performers on the Atlas, the Atlas's mid-range performers also tend to have divergent scores on the five dimensions of impunity.

Malaysia, for instance, ranks among the best quartile of countries in terms of conflict and violence. However, it also falls into the worst performing quartile for environmental degradation and does poorly in terms of abuse of human rights. On the other hand, Ukraine performs poorly in terms of conflict in violence—due in large part to the war with Russia being waged within its borders—while the country is among the strongest quartile of performers on the Atlas's environmental degradation dimension. Meanwhile, Belize, Indonesia, and Benin all score considerably worse on environmental degradation than they do on the other dimensions of impunity, causing a deterioration in their overall impunity scores.

Impunity by income

The data suggest that there is a relationship between impunity and income, though income is clearly not everything. All other things being equal, a 10% increase in GDP per capita at purchasing-power parity implies 0.06-point reduction (or improvement) in the level of impunity as measured

on our five-point scale. The relationship is moderate in strength, with income per capita explaining just over half of the variation in the headline impunity score without controlling for other factors.

The correlation between GDP per capita and the five dimensions of impunity suggests that the relationship is strongest with economic exploitation and unaccountable governance. On the other hand, among the five dimensions, the correlation between income and environmental degradation is the weakest. This is partly because inhabitants of wealthier countries tend to consume more resources per capita than those in poorer countries, a greater proportion of whom lack access to reliable utility services, motor vehicles, and public transit. Likewise, some wealthy economies are driven by large-scale extractive industries—particularly of fossil fuels—or they import many carbon-intensive products, thereby expanding their ecological footprints and increasing their contributions to climate change.

Atlas score correlations with GDP per capita					
Headline	CV	AHR	EE	ED	UG
-0.70	-0.62	-0.59	-0.68	-0.48	-0.68

At all levels of income—low, upper and lower middle, and high—some countries score better and worse, respectively, than GDP per capita alone would imply. Some of this variation is undoubtedly the product of different circumstances, such as geographic location, the presence of conflict

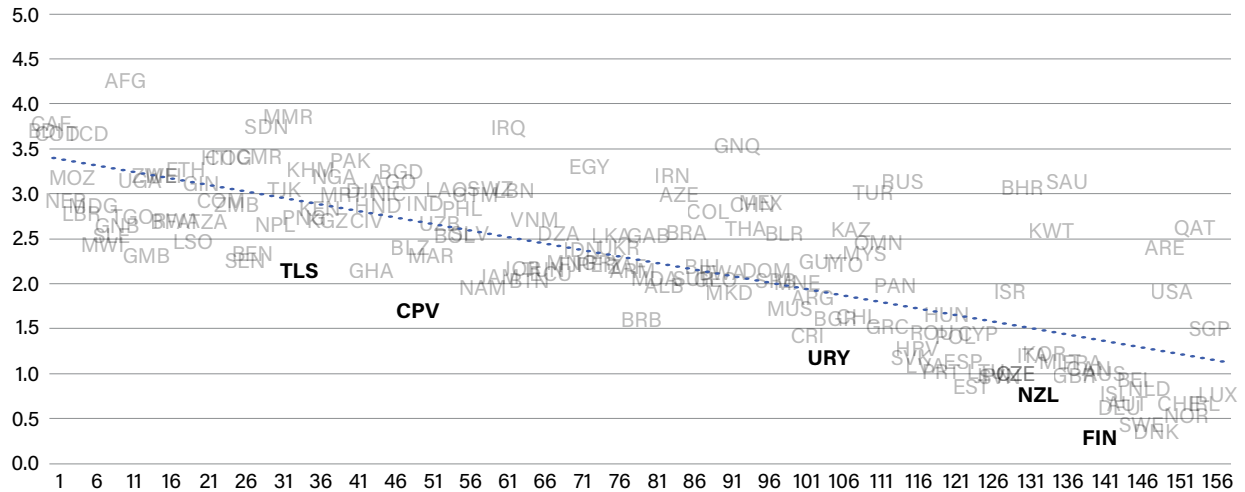
or other forms of societal strife, or a country’s resource endowments. But a portion of the divergence is also attributable to policy.

The chart below maps the 164 countries ranked in the Atlas against their respective ranks in terms of GDP per capita. Some countries fall further than others from the impunity score implied by the trendline, where we might expect them to stand on the basis of their place in the world in terms of GDP per capita alone.

Among these countries, the states that have the best impunity scores compared to their income-predicted values are Finland, Cabo Verde, Denmark, Gambia, and Malawi. The strongest outperformers in Asia, the Americas, and Oceania are Timor-Leste, Uruguay, and New Zealand, respectively.

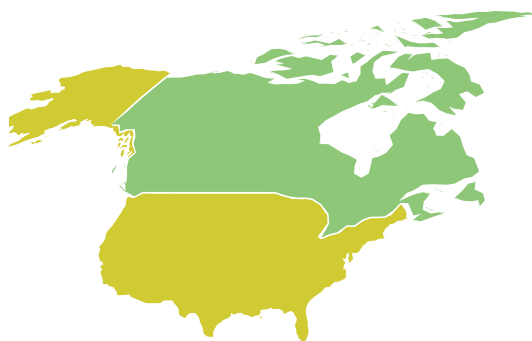
Some of these states are the high-income, northern European states at the bottom of the Atlas. Several others are high- and middle-income island nations. With the exception of Malawi, all have small populations—in Cape Verde’s case, less than a million. Beyond these characteristics, the “outperformers” on the basis of income would seem to have little in common. It is likely that these countries’ policies hold lessons for others on how to improve accountability even with limited resources. For a more detailed snapshot of the greatest outperformers on the basis of income by region, please see the appendix on pg. 42.

Timor Leste, Cape Verde, Uruguay, New Zealand, and Finland outperform on the basis of income



Regional perspectives

North America



Canada is one of the world's oldest and most deeply rooted constitutional democracies, so it is unsurprising that it is the 22nd-best performer in the Atlas of Impunity. With an independent legal system, robust rule-of-law culture, non-corrupt civil service, and government accountability delivered through free and fair elections, Canada's public institutions provide a powerful bulwark against impunity and abuse.

Canada also performs well on a variety of social and economic measures, which are correlated with low levels of impunity. Its incidence of conflict and violence is low, with a high degree of internal order and security despite relatively elevated levels of gun ownership compared to other advanced industrial democracies. Universal healthcare provides a basic safety net for Canadians of all social classes, while a strong private sector economy is matched by generous social support.

However, there are two notable areas where Canada performs poorly compared to its peers. The first is environmental degradation. Here, Canada's geography and climate work against it, given that it is energy-intensive to travel domestically and to heat homes during the cold winter and cool them during the hot and humid summers. This means that Canadians are among the world's largest per capita GHG emitters.

Moreover, Canada has sizable natural resource and energy sectors. While proponents will argue that Canadian energy is comparatively ethical and its critical minerals are essential to the

development of new, green technologies, it is nonetheless true that these sectors have significant environmental impacts.

The second area where Canada underperforms is its degree of equal treatment and absence of discrimination. This is probably the result of the disproportionate poverty, violence, and incarceration rates suffered by its indigenous population—a social reality without a clear parallel among its overwhelmingly European peer countries. The generational trauma and contemporary discrimination faced by indigenous Canadians cannot be understated or downplayed. Although progress on reconciliation has advanced in recent years, including through a public Truth and Reconciliation Commission and official apologies from the Canadian government for past injustices, the goal of equal treatment and opportunity for indigenous Canadians remains an aspiration.

Much like its northern neighbor, the US is a long-established representative democracy with high GDP per capita. It ranks 118th in the Atlas with a score of 1.91. Although most residents enjoy full civil liberties and low levels of mass conflict or violence, the US has a higher level of impunity than many other high-income countries. The US is hurt by middling scores in some of the datasets the Atlas is built upon for discrimination, inequality, and democratic access. The country's arms exports are an even bigger negative factor.

The majority of Americans have full civil rights and lead peaceful lives. There are low levels of human rights abuses and a high degree of women's rights, though the US is hurt in the Atlas by a small number of ratified human rights treaties. The country's impunity score is also driven up by its history of racial discrimination, particularly against Black Americans. This is partly a function of the legacy of slavery and, until recently, an open immigration policy that made the US a multi-ethnic country.

The state does not inflict mass violence upon civilians, and the government is held accountable by the public and its own structure, which includes a complicated system that checks the power of any individual branch of government and balances administrative duties among the federal government and multiple levels of state and local

governments. A 2021 attempt to overturn election results and overthrow elected officials failed, and the perpetrators have faced legal consequences.

The US has the world's largest economy, and most Americans are economically empowered. There are low levels of poverty, hunger, and worker exploitation, though the country underperforms Canada and other wealthy democracies on these metrics. The US government is highly transparent and not corrupt. A robust media acts without impediment from government.

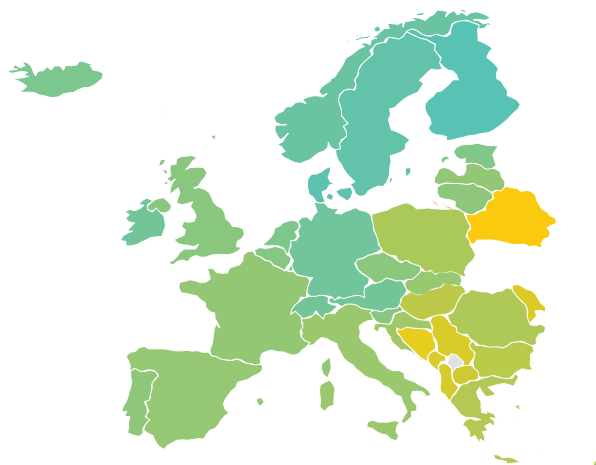
While the US performs well on most measures of economic exploitation, there is a higher degree of class inequality compared to similarly ranked countries. This likely stems from a long history of strike-breaking and union-busting that has undermined the power of organized labor. Individuals and corporate entities—both companies and labor unions—have a constitutionally protected right to petition the government, creating a robust lobbying landscape that allows the two major political parties to be very responsive to narrow interest group needs. This has contributed to low levels of taxation of capital income, a tax system with high levels of compliance but inconsistent enforcement, and a national minimum wage that has not risen with inflation.

The country's prosperity and relatively poor score on the Atlas are somewhat dissonant, but the score suffers from the US's weaker performance in environmental degradation and conflict and violence. The US experiences the impacts of climate change inconsistently, with southern and coastal states more immediately affected. Per capita resource consumption is higher than that of many other countries in the Atlas, and the US is a major oil producer and exporter, but it lacks a carbon emissions mitigation scheme.

While daily violence is confined to a very small number of areas across the country, the US is the largest exporter of weapons in the Atlas. This is partly a result of the US's place in the global security architecture. The index's arms indicators—produced by the SIPRI—do not differentiate between small arms weapons exports that might be expected to fuel regional conflicts and the US's primarily

government-sanctioned transfers of weapons systems that support allied governments. The US is perhaps unfairly punished by the criteria chosen for the Atlas on this dimension, as such exports also help to preserve global stability and allow for secure commercial navigation by air and sea.

Europe



Most of the Atlas's strongest performers are located in Europe, especially its Nordic and German-speaking regions. Strong performance on the Atlas also tends to overlap with EU membership, reflecting the EU treaty and legislative framework, as well as the bloc's extensive governance-related accession criteria. These institutional parameters set high standards for accountability across a range of factors, from labor standards and rule of law to democratic governance and sound macroeconomic management.

Indeed, the 27 EU member states all rank in the top one-third of performers, though there are noteworthy differences within the bloc. Norway and Switzerland—both high income, non-EU countries and well-functioning democracies—are two strong performers outside of the union, though both are also well integrated into EU legal frameworks in practice through a series of foreign treaties.

However, countries including Poland, Hungary, Romania, and Bulgaria—all EU members, but also former socialist countries and relatively new democracies—exhibit higher levels of impunity

than their western European peers such as France, Belgium, and the Netherlands. Meanwhile, Turkey, some of the Balkan states, and countries in eastern Europe—most of which are not EU members—tend to fare worse than others, with relatively poor performances across all five dimensions of impunity.

Levels of conflict and violence are relatively low across the region. The Nordic countries perform especially strongly, with relatively infrequent societal violence and riots and a high level of order and security. In western Europe, levels of conflict and violence are also relatively low, though France is a slight outlier, with higher rates of recorded group grievances and lower levels of order and security than Germany and Austria. Eastern and southern European countries, namely Greece, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Moldova, do notably worse on conflict and violence than neighboring states. Turkey has the worst ranking among European countries on this dimension, primarily because of group grievances within society. On the conflict and violence metric, Belgium performs notably poorly owing to the relatively high percentage of women who report feeling unsafe walking alone at night.

By and large, Europe also outperforms others on the abuse of human rights, although intra-regional differences are an issue in this dimension of impunity as well. In western Europe, levels of impunity are low, with strong protections for civil liberties and low levels of state-sanctioned violence against citizens. Still, in countries such as Ireland, Estonia, and Iceland, the failure to ratify more human rights treaties slightly undermines otherwise strong scores. Among central and eastern European countries, Hungary and Poland stand apart from other EU member states with higher rates of discrimination and lack of equal treatment.

Measures of rule of law and protections for human rights tend to be weaker in the Balkans than in much of the rest of the continent. Greece and Croatia rank poorly on factors of discrimination and equal treatment compared to most other EU countries. Turkey remains an outlier on this dimension, faring poorly on the Atlas's measures of discrimination, state-sanctioned violence, and torture.

European states generally exhibit low levels of economic exploitation, but several factors—

particularly corporate tax avoidance by multinationals in some jurisdictions—have a noticeable impact on overall scores. As on other dimensions of impunity, the Nordic countries perform best, while the Balkan countries and Turkey perform worse, owing in part to higher levels of clientelism and corruption. Belgium, Germany, and Austria also perform well on factors such as tax revenue diversion from other countries and child and slave labor (both virtually non-existent in western Europe), as well as the Atlas's indicators related to working conditions, parental leave, and worker protections.

While Europe broadly performs well in terms of environmental degradation, countries across the region are failing to meet standards on climate change mitigation. Finland does the best on this metric, with relatively low levels of environmental degradation, closely followed by Denmark, Sweden, and the UK. Overall, EU member states perform well in areas relating to the UN SDGs and the ratification of international treaties, likely partly owing to EU-level standards. Montenegro, Turkey, and Bosnia are notable regional outliers with lower levels of investment in waste management infrastructure and poorer air quality.

As on the other dimensions of impunity, levels of accountability in governance differ substantially by geography, with northern and western European countries performing better than others. In southern Europe, Portugal and Spain do best in terms of accountability of governance whereas Greece performs worst, with a particularly weak score on the influence of external actors over state action. Norway, Denmark, Sweden, and Finland are the top performers in Europe on accountability, particularly the metric of impartiality in public administration.

The Balkan and eastern European countries perform worse than their regional counterparts, owing in part to factors including a recent history of ethnic conflict, higher rates of poverty, and a greater degree of external influence on state action. Turkey stands apart from the rest of Europe with the worst performance in the region and occupying the 37th spot in the overall impunity ranking given its weak constraints on government power and pervasive partiality in public administration.

Eurasia



Just over 30 years after the collapse of the Soviet Union, its successor states find themselves at a turning point. Russia's invasion of Ukraine on 24 February 2022 plunged the region into a military, diplomatic, and economic crisis and spurred many neighboring countries to reduce economic or even security dependencies on Russia. Over time, this shift will raise the profile of other geopolitical actors in the region—especially China, which is unlikely to press its partners on domestic political or institutional reforms. Still, whether stepping out of Russia's shadow can bring improvements in the rule of law or other key Atlas metrics such as environmental justice is a key question for many of these states.

Russia has entered a dangerous and uncertain period. President Vladimir Putin is attempting to cement what he and much of Russia's national security establishment view as their rightful sphere of influence. The Russian military's underperformance, however, combined with high Ukrainian morale and military support by Western governments, is sinking Russia into a long-term conflict. The effort is also dragging the Russian economy into recession. This is in no small part because the EU, US, and allies have imposed on Russia the harshest ever sanctions on a G20 economy, conditioning their removal on a peace deal acceptable to Ukraine. With no organized opposition or internal checks on the Kremlin's decision-making, Russia's leadership has left itself in a situation without good choices; it must either continue to pour blood and treasure into the war effort, or it must walk back its objectives.

With an Atlas ranking of 27, Russia has the highest level of impunity in the region, the result of poor scores for conflict and violence, abuse of human rights, and unaccountable governance. In the current circumstances, the Russian public faces

political repression and economic costs not seen since the Soviet collapse. For much of Putin's time in power, the government offered the promise of political and economic stability in exchange for acquiescence to authoritarian control of nominally democratic institutions. That stability has given way to stagnation, and the system has become dependent on the one man at the top. Now, Russians face the prospect of a military draft, the first wave of which lasted from September to October 2022, while online media faces the harshest censorship controls yet in modern Russia. These include punishment of up to 15 years in prison for spreading what authorities deem to be false information about the armed forces. The space for protests is smaller than ever, and leading opposition figure Alexei Navalny remains in a maximum-security prison, serving a nine-year sentence after a March 2022 conviction on dubious charges.

High energy prices are helping the government pad its budget and avoid worst-case economic scenarios. But with few near-term prospects for removal of the sweeping economic sanctions and Russia's main customers in Europe reducing their dependence on Russian energy, there is little chance for human-capital intensive industries to grow and reduce the country's dependence on oil, gas, and minerals. And given Russia's increased reliance on commodity exports, any prior plans to reduce carbon emissions or bolster environmental protections are unlikely to make significant advances. Russia scores poorly generally on environmental indicators, though it is worth noting that benchmarks that extend to the Soviet period may be based on what were even worse standards and emissions than before independence. This means that any target measured against 1990 levels should be viewed with a grain of salt, as these may permit a rise in emissions.

Meanwhile, Ukraine is in a state of general mobilization as the country fights to repel Russia's invasion. As a result, several of the governance benchmarks included in the Atlas should be treated with caution; indeed, many are based on the operation of Ukrainian institutions in peacetime, as not all indicators fully reflect the effects of war. Ukraine's 83rd position in the ranking reflects mixed progress on economic and governance goals and a

deteriorating security environment. These factors are likely to undergo significant shifts over time, based on the assumption that the war moves beyond its most active phase and Ukraine begins to rebuild.

Apart from the war, Ukraine's enduring challenge is to follow through on its commitments to join Western institutions. In June 2022, the EU granted member-state candidacy to Ukraine, with the understanding that full accession will remain a long-term process tied to reforms. Since the 2014 "Revolution of Dignity," Ukraine's efforts at economic and political reform have produced positive changes on balance, though there have also been periods in which these reforms stalled or even in some cases regressed. Strengthening state capacity and improving the quality of governance were at the top of these priorities, alongside anticorruption policy and a law aimed at "de-oligarchization." These issues will someday return to the top of Ukraine's agenda and play a significant role in its intended process of EU accession.

Belarus is one of the few regional states to have accepted Russia's position on the war, in effect tying the political survival of President Alexander Lukashenko to Moscow. It ranks 71, primarily the result of poor scores on unaccountable governance and the abuse of human rights. Indeed, the Atlas's data likely understate the violent repression perpetrated by the Lukashenko regime against its own citizens, as well as the extent of its support for Russia's war effort. Though Minsk is not at the time of writing sending troops into Ukraine, its territory is used as a staging ground and logistics hub for Russia's war effort. Lukashenko likely left himself with little choice; after Belarus's last presidential election in August 2020, the government forced opposition candidate Svitlana Tikhanovska into exile and launched a mass crackdown on any semblance of political opposition across the country. These actions frayed ties with Europe and the US, to which Belarus had occasionally turned as part of a balancing act with Russia.

Several other conflicts have flared in Eurasia in 2022. The dispute between Armenia and Azerbaijan for control of Nagorno Karabakh threatened to spill over into a broader interstate war in September 2022,

nearly two years after Azerbaijan took control of much of the region in November 2020. Azerbaijan is likely shaping the negotiating environment in its favor as the two sides seriously consider a peace agreement that builds on the 2020 cease-fire. In particular, Armenia has offered a key concession by proposing dropping its territorial claims in exchange for protection of the local ethnic Armenian population. These negotiations still involve Russia, traditionally the leading mediator in the dispute, but Moscow's reduced influence has prompted a shift in favor of bringing the EU and the US into the talks. The situation is still fraught, however, and any failure to secure a peace agreement threatens to escalate tensions again.

In Central Asia, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan have experienced major incidents of violence near contested border areas in 2021 and 2022. These borders in the Fergana Valley area were never settled following the Soviet collapse, and inhabitants in the patchwork of ethnic enclaves in the area occasionally clash over access to land, water, and other resources. While the governments of both countries have engaged in talks over border demarcation, their rhetoric has been heated and investment in military hardware has been on the rise. There is a real risk of another major outbreak of violence involving both countries' armed forces.

Elsewhere, Georgia, Kazakhstan, and Uzbekistan face questions about the prospects for their respective reform agendas. Georgia ranks 110 in the Atlas, making it the best performer in the non-EU, post-Soviet space thanks to good scores on economic exploitation and human rights. That said, Georgia's candidacy for EU membership is tied to special conditions based on concerns about democratic backsliding. These primarily relate to growing control of the judicial branch by the government and the abuse of state resources against opposition media and electoral campaigns. Georgia is nonetheless one of the few democracies in the post-Soviet space and one in which the business and media environment remain relatively open compared to its peers.

In the case of Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, both countries are pursuing reform agendas under the successors to two long-serving heads of state who

left power in 2019 and 2016, respectively. Kazakhstan ranks 68 in the Atlas, its performance undermined primarily by its scores on environmental degradation and unaccountable governance, while Uzbekistan ranks 63 for similar reasons. Though the governments of both countries are pledging more openness, actual progress so far is constrained by authoritarian systems, weak rule of law, and by large state influence over the economy. In the case of Kazakhstan, the oil and gas industry contributes to its poor score in the Atlas, but the government depends on those exports for revenue that sometimes is funneled into economic stimulus, infrastructure development, and the broader social safety net.

Latin America



Latin America is made up mostly of post-colonial and post-conflict societies, though its countries score diversely in the Atlas of Impunity. One commonality, however, is that conflict and violence indicators drive up levels of impunity for many countries. Indeed, all but Uruguay, Costa Rica, and Chile fall outside the best-performing quartile of countries with the lowest levels of impunity.

While the region's performance reflects additional problems related to political instability, corruption, and property rights, scores on electoral democracy, environmental policies, and post-conflict rebuilding are more encouraging. For example, Chile, Argentina, and Paraguay each experienced violent dictatorships in the 20th century, but now rank 61st, 95th, and 100th, respectively, on the conflict and violence dimension.

Venezuela is a particular hotspot for impunity. It ranks 11th on the Atlas, reflecting a higher level of

impunity than Haiti (15th) and Nicaragua (38th), largely the result of the authoritarian rule of Nicolas Maduro, who has intensified repression even as he takes a more pragmatic approach to the economy. Venezuela is among the five worst performers on the unaccountable governance dimension—just behind North Korea and ahead of Myanmar—something that is unlikely to change for the foreseeable future. Maduro is unlikely to agree to a competitive presidential election in 2024, given the very high personal exit costs associated with losing power. These include the prospect of international prosecution in response to the regime's abuses.

Central American countries also rank toward the top of the Atlas, with the notable exceptions of Costa Rica and Panama, whose much lower levels of impunity place them in the 131st and 114th spots, respectively. Northern Triangle countries are especially prone to presidential or elite influence over institutions, including the courts, while Costa Rican society is characterized as strongly democratic, though it tends to suffer from political gridlock. In addition, Costa Rica has not suffered from violent conflict since the end of its civil war in 1948, after which it eliminated its military and redirected defense spending to education and social programs.

Meanwhile, Brazil—which has the region's largest population and economy—ranks 70th on the Atlas, with a slightly worse level of impunity than the median. Brazil performs fairly well on the economic exploitation and environmental degradation dimensions (104th and 128th, respectively) but the country's overall ranking suffers because of two main issues. On the socioeconomic front, systematic corruption and white-collar crimes are frequent, while acute inequality continues to hamper improvements elsewhere. In terms of environmental policy, Brazil has sought to promote sustainable agricultural systems but suffers from high levels of deforestation and has a consequential carbon footprint. Given the 2022 presidential election result, however, the country's policies on deforestation may change substantially.

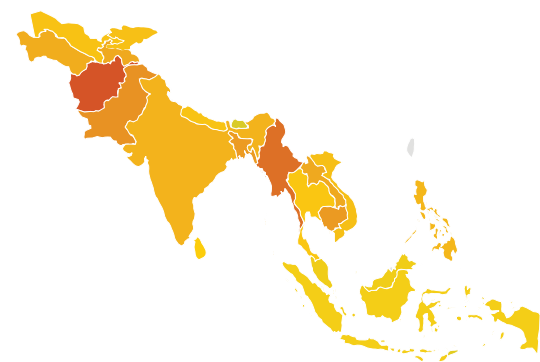
Brazil has a lower level of impunity than Colombia and Mexico, which rank 53rd and 45th, respectively. Yet all three score poorly on conflict and violence, mainly because of high crime rates and drug-related

conflicts. Mexico has the 5th highest impunity score on this dimension worldwide, while Brazil comes in 9th and Colombia 12th. Brazil, Mexico, and Colombia also score poorly on the abuse of human rights dimension, standing at 64th, 33rd, and 52nd, respectively. This negative performance is due to a systemic lack of equal legal treatment and high levels of discrimination. Mexico and Colombia also score poorly on the indicator for politically motivated disappearances.

Chile and Argentina, meanwhile, rank 124th and 120th in the Atlas. Argentina outperforms on the environmental degradation dimension due to its environmental practices but has a relatively high degree of security issues. Meanwhile, Chile fares well on the economic exploitation and unaccountable governance dimensions, though its level of inequality is elevated.

Uruguay is a success story in terms of accountability for South American countries. Ranked 136th on the Atlas, it is Latin America's best performing country and better positioned than several countries with higher GDP per capita such as Italy, South Korea, Greece, Israel, and the US. This is primarily the result of the country's stable democratic regime, which has enacted a series of strong public policies and has institutions to safeguard human rights, economic justice, and accountability.

South and Southeast Asia



As a democracy of 1.4 billion people with a per capita income of less than \$3000, India struggles with the limitations caused by fragmented political sovereignty and the normal developmental problems of a lower middle-income nation. It ranks 46th in the Atlas, though its performance across the five

dimensions is varied. The country scores in the weakest quartile in terms of conflict and violence, abuse of human rights, and environmental degradation. On the other hand, it ranks near the median in terms of economic exploitation and in second-best quartile of countries on unaccountable governance.

India scores particularly well on the integrity of its democratic processes, reflecting its high and socially balanced voter turnout and use of electronic voting machines. However, it does less well in areas where a more complex web of institutions, social norms, and state capacity are required, such as civil liberties and successful criminal investigations.

Another issue is the disparity of social and economic progress in different parts of the country. Southern and western India are rated highly for their standards of governance, but the state governments of India's north and east are less competent. Most notably, India scores very poorly in terms of weapons imports, though the government has sought to develop domestic armament industries, and defense spending has declined as a share of GDP since the late 1980s.

Some trend lines may improve over time. Egregious civil liberties violations, whether by non-state actors or police, will depend on developments in insurgencies or insurrections in a few contested regions of the country. Moreover, policymakers have prioritized addressing acute problems related to air quality, waste management, and climate mitigation.

Turning to Southeast Asia, most countries in the region are near the median in the Atlas, though Myanmar (which has the fourth highest impunity score in the Atlas), Timor Leste (ranked 103rd), and Singapore (ranked 128th) are notable regional outliers. Myanmar's position is unsurprising—the country fares poorly in all dimensions, following a severe breakdown of the rules-based system since the military coup in February 2021. On the other end of the spectrum, Singapore does well in all dimensions except for environmental degradation. Timor Leste is a unique case, being one of the poorest countries in Asia-Pacific yet possessing one of the region's most competitive democracies—it has a low score in abuse of human rights and unaccountable governance.

Most Southeast Asia states score well on the conflict and violence dimension, driven by low levels of violence both within and beyond their borders. The relatively low rates of export and import of major conventional weapons (compared to other regions) also contribute to this strong performance. That said, there is a high level of group grievances in Thailand, the Philippines, and Indonesia—countries where there are political differences that remain hard to bridge (Thailand), a history of social divisions (South Thailand and South Philippines), and increasing concerns over identity politics and religious divisions (Indonesia in recent years).

Southeast Asia fares poorly on environmental degradation. Based on the indicator-level scores, most of the region's climate change mitigation efforts are insufficient. The level of political will for action on this issue remains mixed in Southeast Asia, even though it is often cited as a vital challenge, both nationally and at the ASEAN level. Southeast Asian nations are among those expected to suffer the most from climate change.

There remains limited international support for many ASEAN countries seeking to incorporate environmental sustainability into their national-level policy plans. For example, the region remains dependent on the use of cheap coal, and while both Indonesia and Vietnam are hoping to shift toward renewable energy with assistance from the G7's Just Energy Transition Partnership (JETP) and other multilateral funding, this will likely be a lengthy and gradual process; Indonesia's \$20 billion JETP, signed on 15 November on the sidelines of the G20 Summit in Bali, is among the largest single climate financing deals, though Indonesia will have to set new and higher emission reduction targets to access the funds. Progress on energy transitions—especially in Malaysia, Indonesia, and Thailand—will remain slow, and the fossil fuel industry is expected to remain an important contributor to economic growth for these countries for the foreseeable future.

Air quality (a longstanding concern for residents in several countries) and waste management

practices worsen overall scores for environmental degradation in the region. That said, there has been some progress in tackling maritime pollution. In May 2021, ASEAN launched the Regional Action Plan for Combating Marine Debris, a starting point for countries to implement joint strategies over the next few years.

With the exceptions of Singapore and Timor Leste, Southeast Asia generally performs poorly in abuse of human rights. Myanmar is the worst performer. The situation there has deteriorated since the coup, with civil liberties significantly curtailed, weak rule of law, and questionable judicial processes. As of November 2022, more than 13,000 people remain arbitrarily detained in the country, including many supporters of the anti-junta movement. The junta has also begun seizing property and valuables since late 2021 as part of an intimidation campaign against its detractors; Assistance Association for Political Prisoners (AAPP) reports that at least 900 houses and buildings have been confiscated by the military regime in the past year.

The level of state-sanctioned or state-perpetrated violence has also risen dramatically in Myanmar. Under the military's crackdown on the pro-democracy movement, the AAPP has reported the killing of more than 2,500 civilians as of November 2022, though this number is likely a significant underestimation. The situation in Myanmar is unlikely to improve substantially in the this year.

Most Southeast Asian countries have poor to average rankings in the economic exploitation dimension, though Singapore is a strong performer. They generally suffer from high levels of corruption and lower perceived levels of government capacity owing to a lack of transparency—Cambodia, Laos, and Myanmar score particularly poorly in these two areas. In the unaccountable governance dimension, Myanmar, Cambodia, and Laos all have poor rankings, largely driven by poor electoral processes and low levels of state legitimacy.

East Asia



Countries in East Asia vary widely in their positions in the Atlas: 48th for China, 92nd for Mongolia, 134th for South Korea, and 148th for Japan, the region's top performer. (Neither North Korea nor Taiwan is ranked given a lack of sufficient data, though the indicators that are available suggest a high level of impunity in the former and a low level in the latter.) While the level of conflict and violence is generally very low in the region, the historically unresolved conflicts on the Korean Peninsula and across the Taiwan Strait pose tail risks to peace.

Regarding human rights and governance measures, East Asian democracies—Mongolia, South Korea, Japan, and Taiwan—perform much better than China and North Korea, which have authoritarian systems. Similarly, in terms of economic exploitation, democracies fare better than authoritarian states but with a narrower performance gap. East Asian states with sufficient data for rankings face significant environmental challenges. Mongolia is the world's worst performer in this category.

With its 48th position in the ranking, China is situated at the upper-middle level of the global distribution of impunity scores. Among East Asian countries, it has the second highest impunity score after that of North Korea's and the highest score among the ranked nations of the region. Across the five dimensions, China ranks well in conflict and violence (112nd) and near the middle of the pack in economic exploitation (72nd) and environmental degradation (70th). However, it performs poorly in unaccountable governance (48th), and abuse of human rights (10th).

China has not fought a civil war or external conflict in more than forty years, which contributes to its

low conflict and violence score. But if it were to decide to invade Taiwan in the future, its score would significantly worsen.

The relatively low economic exploitation score shows that China's rapid economic growth from the 1990s to 2010s has dramatically reduced poverty and hunger. But the country's economy faces several challenges, which may elevate the score if left unaddressed. Growth is constrained by the aftermath of the now-defunct zero-Covid policy, a distressed property sector, severe income inequality, overcapacity, and declining levels of productivity. In President Xi Jinping's third term, he aims to boost the country's economy in the short term, reduce income inequality, and address other quality-of-life issues through the common prosperity agenda over the long term.

China's poor performance on the unaccountable governance dimension reflects an authoritarian political system and widespread corruption. Xi has been consolidating power in his own hands since 2012 and controls key elements in domestic and foreign policy decision-making. His anticorruption campaigns have addressed some legitimate governance problems for the public but have simultaneously sidelined his political rivals. Following the 20th Party Congress, Xi will further dominate top party bodies. Based on these trends, China's unaccountable governance score will likely deteriorate further.

A poor environmental degradation score reflects China's status as the world's largest carbon emitter and its continued reliance on coal and other conventional fuel sources. The country suffers from frequent natural disasters such as floods and severe droughts and has severe air pollution. Amid the war in Ukraine and China's worsening relations with the West, Beijing is prioritizing short-term energy security over its long-term carbon neutrality goals, negatively affecting its score.

On the Atlas of Impunity's measures, China has the 10th worst human rights record in the world. The Chinese state devotes immense resources to its internal security. It condones torture, capital punishment, arbitrary detention, censorship, mass

surveillance, and provides little protection for women, children, and minorities. The ongoing mass detention of Uyghurs and other Turkic Muslims in Xinjiang is likely to lead to further deterioration of China's abuse of human rights score.

South Korea, by contrast, scores significantly better than China. Overall, it ranks 134th in the world, placed among mostly European countries. As both a high-income country and a vibrant democracy, South Korea performs best in the unaccountable governance, economic exploitation, and abuse of human rights dimensions. It has the worst scores in the areas of conflict and violence and environmental degradation. The country's ongoing diplomatic and security tensions with North Korea harm it on the former, while its high rates of energy consumption hurt it on the latter. Given a recent uptick in tensions with North Korea in 2022 combined with the election of a conservative president who is more skeptical of the emissions reduction targets made by the previous center-left government, South Korea's score will likely deteriorate over time.

Japan likewise does well on the index, ranking 148th in the world, placed between the UK and Slovenia. Japan performs better than its overall ranking in terms of conflict and violence and economic exploitation. Its rankings on the unaccountable governance and abuse of human rights dimensions are about the same as its overall position.

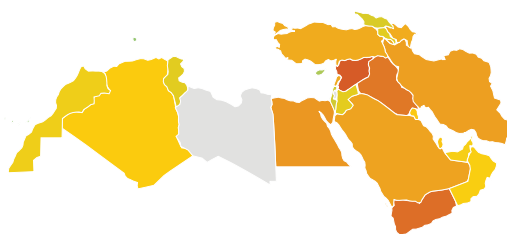
Japan performs less well, however, in the dimension of environmental degradation. Its return to the use of nuclear power for electricity generation instead of fossil fuels may improve its ranking in the future by reducing carbon emissions.

While there is insufficient data to rank North Korea, what information is available implies that it would stand among the worst ranked countries in the world if there were. Based on available data, North Korea is among the world's most oppressive regimes but is able to shield from the world's view the full extent of its impunity. According to the metrics included in the index, North Korea would rank first in the world in economic exploitation—by a wide margin—and rank behind only Afghanistan, Syria, and Yemen in terms of unaccountable governance. An impoverished country, North Korea may also be the world's most unequal economy, although

reliable GDP per capita data is lacking. Moreover, the UN estimates that 41% of the country's population is malnourished.

Not surprisingly, North Korea would also rank extremely poorly in terms of abuse of human rights. It might perform slightly better in its conflict and violence score, as the government is more likely to engage in bombastic threats than actual combat. Owing to the dire state of its economy and low levels of fossil fuel consumption, North Korea would likely rank better in terms of environmental degradation, although its leadership has made no effort to combat climate change.

MENA



Impunity levels are high in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA). The region is going through a period of change, and given that many of the sources for the Atlas's indicators are updated annually, it is possible that some of the data do not fully reflect some recent changes. Some countries are experiencing a deterioration of impunity-related metrics while others are taking concrete steps to make improvements. For example, Tunisia's 100th position in the impunity ranking may not fully reflect some political backsliding that has occurred since President Kais Saied took power in July 2021 and the subsequent decline in credibility of democratic institutions.

Improvements are expected among some MENA countries—for example, in environmental degradation scores, which are poor compared to the rest of the world. This is unsurprising given the prominence of oil and gas production in the region, as well as limited regulation on environmental protection in many MENA countries. The environmental degradation scores are poor compared to those of the rest of the world, but there are efforts underway to address this

issue, so a quick improvement is potentially attainable on an annual basis.

Overall, the region scores quite low for abuse of human rights. Given the high amount of conflict, violence, and human rights abuses in countries such as Syria, Yemen, and Sudan, along with a lack of democratic institutions across most of the region, it is unsurprising that some MENA countries are among the Atlas's worst performers. Their rankings vary greatly, with Iran in the 23rd position, Qatar 66th, Morocco 89th, and Jordan 99th.

As with many geographic groupings, the MENA region is quite diverse. The Atlas places equal weight on each of its five dimensions, including the strength of governance institutions, lack of environmental degradation, and lack of economic exploitation. Yet most of these dimensions focus on the impact on the lives of citizens, so in some countries, the issues facing immigrants, visitors, or stateless people who may reside or work within a country might not be fully integrated into the assessments. This consideration could be relevant for Palestinian labor in Israel and foreign labor in some of the Gulf countries.

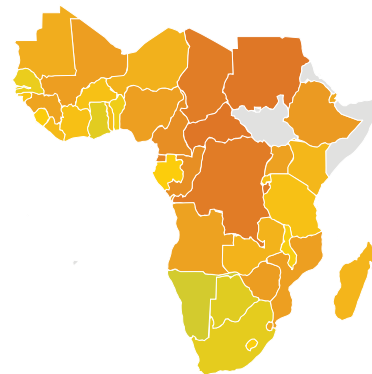
Moreover, the Atlas's results for members of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) show that per capita GDP alone is not necessarily a determining factor for levels of impunity. Although the index's overall data suggests a broad trend of higher per capita GDP correlating positively with better impunity scores, there are significant outliers to this trend, particularly among the members of the GCC. Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, for example, rank 29th and 69th, respectively, despite their high levels of GDP per capita. Gulf countries are monarchies with limited checks and balances, likely contributing to worse impunity rankings.

However, the GCC countries and others in the region could potentially ramp up investment in areas of concern highlighted by the Atlas. Some are starting to increase spending on renewable energy, which could help them advance in the rankings. For example, Morocco has been increasing its efforts on renewable energy projects, particularly when compared to the rest of North Africa, which earned it a strong ranking of 118 in the economic degradation dimension. Meanwhile, some Gulf countries are also slowly implementing reforms in their treatment of foreign workers, which

could have positive implications for their rankings in the economic exploitation dimension.

With its 82nd position in the Atlas ranking, the UAE is the best placed of the GCC countries and has the best score among its peers in the unaccountable governance dimension. Most of the GCC countries hold elections for municipal authorities or parliament, though these bodies have limited authority. This reality illustrates a potential limitation of the data, given the variability in the democratic credentials of Gulf state institutions.

Sub-Saharan Africa



The Atlas rankings for Africa highlight the strong challenges that many African states face on accountable governance, political participation, conflict, and economic inclusion. Poor scores tend to correlate with low per capita income, but as in other regions, the relationship is imperfect, and several states score better than income alone would imply. This discrepancy is particularly evident on the environmental degradation dimension, as lower income countries pollute less and emit far fewer greenhouse gases than wealthier ones. It should be noted that the ability of many African countries to mitigate climate change and invest in green infrastructure is also predicated on climate finance commitments made by wealthy countries.

Among the large countries of the region, the best ranked are Ghana, Namibia, and Botswana. They are followed by South Africa. This performance partly reflects the middle-income status of these states. South Africa scores near the median in

terms of economic exploitation (91st ranking), reflecting the country's high rate of unemployment and high degree of income inequality. The country's Gini coefficient stood at 0.63 after taxes and transfers in the last available reading from the World Bank, the highest in the world.

South Africa's ranking in the Atlas also reflects its problems with corruption and rent seeking. From 2018 to 2022, the Zondo Commission has been investigating allegations of public sector corruption and fraud. Among other things, it has looked into multiple accusations against former president Jacob Zuma. Zuma refused to testify before the commission, prompting his imprisonment in 2021. The Zondo Commission's findings also led to the arrest of members of the prominent Gupta family in 2022 for fraud and money laundering.

Major South African public sector entities such as energy utility Eskom have also faced allegations of corruption. The ruling African National Congress (ANC) and other South African political parties have made fighting graft a key part of their platforms. On 23 October 2022, President Cyril Ramaphosa announced sweeping anticorruption measures, though they will require the passage of new legislation.

In the unaccountable governance dimension, South Africa gets high marks for the functioning of government, despite public perceptions that basic services are breaking down. This is particularly evident in the power sector, where South Africa's state-owned utility, Eskom, has failed to modernize its aging coal-fired power plants, leading to ongoing load-shedding and blackouts. If basic service provision or the perception of these services continues to deteriorate, South Africa's performance in the Atlas's unaccountable governance dimension would decline.

Meanwhile, Kenya's scoring reflects challenges on metrics of democratic governance and electoral processes in the past two decades. Kenya recently elected a new president, William Ruto, whose record on integrity has raised concerns about accountability in the country.

Governance is seemingly at a critical juncture regarding corruption, institutional independence, and electoral processes. The new president appears to have added the fight against corruption to his agenda.

A signpost for accountability in governance in Kenya are opportunities for enhanced institutional independence. The new administration campaigned on granting increased financial independence to various institutions, such as the police and courts, and it has begun to follow through on this promise. Similarly, the president has been taking steps toward relaxing political control over the judiciary. The supreme court has proven increasingly willing to stand up to the government in recent years, annulling the 2017 elections and declaring unlawful the Building Bridges Initiative, which aimed to pave the way for constitutional reform.

The August 2022 polls showed improvements in election administration. After the annulment of the 2017 vote and the institution of new procedures by the supreme court, the 2022 polls were transparent and delivered real-time results. Although there were still some procedural problems, there were no major irregularities. Though the opposition candidate Raila Odinga challenged the results, he accepted the court's ruling to uphold them, signaling improvements in electoral processes and institutional maturity.

Kenya is close to the median in terms of environmental degradation, though its performance is weaker on the climate-change mitigation indicator. However, Kenya has taken steps toward improving the sustainability of its energy supply. Geothermal energy powers 93% of Kenya's grid, making the country a world leader in renewable energy use.

A critical factor in Kenya's conflict and violence score is the country's counterterrorism campaign. The country has suffered terrorist attacks from al Shabaab and Al Qaeda affiliates based in Somalia, targeting universities and shopping malls. Kenya's ability to operate effective counterterror operations without marginalizing the country's ethnic Somalis will be important, as there is a history of state violence and exclusion against Somalis born in and living in the country.

Meanwhile, Tanzania is at an important stage in its efforts to improve accountability since the death of then-president John Magufuli in March 2021. The former president led a crackdown on the political opposition, and following the 2020 election, shut down the internet in the country, depriving citizens of their right to information.

Since Magufuli's death, President Samia Suluhu Hassan's record on government accountability has been mixed. On the one hand, officials released opposition leader Freeman Mbowe from prison and lifted a newspaper ban. However, police continue to suppress opposition rallies. In October 2022, the president's political reform taskforce made a number of recommendations, including enshrining the independence of media monitoring bodies and the electoral commission, allowing court challenges of election results, and removing the 2016 ban on opposition rallies. While the report may force the ruling party to act on some of these issues, continued reform momentum will largely depend on internal politics in the ruling party.

Angola may also be at an inflection point, especially in the Atlas's unaccountable governance dimension, as the party that has ruled the country since independence in 1975 loses popularity to the benefit of the opposition. This has led to increased pressure for constitutional reform and anticorruption efforts. Angola scores relatively poorly on electoral processes. However, President Joao Lourenco is currently advancing constitutional reforms to overhaul municipal elections. If Lourenco can implement these reforms quickly, that would represent a change for the better in government accountability, as the opposition would probably perform well in these elections. Conversely, significant delays in the reforms would represent a continuation of existing negative trends.

Angola also scores poorly on corruption. During Lourenco's first term, an anticorruption drive targeted members of former president Jose Eduardo dos Santos's family. The fight against corruption will likely continue in Lourenco's

second term, which began in 2022. The key signpost will be if just a few people are targeted for investigation or if more broad-based anticorruption practices are adopted.

For Nigeria, Africa's most populous country, its relatively low levels of accountability are the result of human rights abuses, corruption, and security challenges. Nigeria scores poorly on abuse of human rights, with violations perpetrated regularly by private citizens and by the state. Mob justice has made headlines since the "Aluu 4" incident of 2012 in which four young men accused of robbery were killed by a large group of people in the town of Aluu. The video of this event went viral, and the practice of mob justice has continued, with more than 200 similar deaths occurring in the past three years.

Additionally, the #EndSARS movement and protests in 2020 highlighted police brutality, especially when the protests were forcefully suppressed by authorities. Moreover, kidnappings and other violent crimes pose a threat to citizen safety, especially those related to armed conflict in northeast Nigeria with Islamist groups, the most notorious of which is Boko Haram. There is also banditry in the northwest and separatist violence in the southeast. Security issues will feature prominently in the country's 2023 elections, with ruling party candidate Bola Tinubu pledging to invest more in military hardware and police reform. Other candidates are expected to take similar positions. Nigeria's ability to bring down levels of violence will be key for its future impunity rankings.

Poor performance in the economic exploitation dimension is another important aspect of impunity in Nigeria. The country's economic institutions afford the oil industry and the political elites associated with it many privileges, including greater access to foreign exchange. This resource-dominated economic model has led to high levels of corruption, clientelism, and rent seeking. Corruption, such as bribe taking, is common.

Political elites, if found guilty of corruption, do not face significant punishment in Nigeria. While

anticorruption rhetoric has grown common, few tangible actions have been taken to address the challenge. Many consider anticorruption promises to be solely rhetoric, given the lack of results from high-profile prosecutions. It remains to be seen if the issue will feature prominently in the 2023 election campaign.

Conclusions

Impunity thrives in darkness, and the first step toward fostering greater accountability is awareness. A core objective of the Atlas of Impunity is to give civil society, journalists, and ordinary citizens a practical and accessible tool to draw attention to abuses of power and press policymakers for change. More precisely, it is our hope that this report and the accompanying data begin to shine a light on the norms and practices that perpetuate unaccountable governance, abuse of human rights, conflict and violence, economic exploitation, and environmental degradation.

As the preceding regional perspectives highlight, nearly all countries have room for improvement. Neither development nor democratic governance

is sufficient to guarantee accountability. Moreover, the world's most powerful states—such as the US, China, and Russia, which so often seek to dictate terms to others—exhibit serious shortcomings on the metrics used. More broadly, the Atlas underscores the need to do more to safeguard women's rights; hold leaders accountable for racial, ethnic, and class-based discrimination; and repair the damage done through historical injustices, such as the slave trade, colonialism, and other forms of foreign intervention.

At the same time, this report offers many reasons to be hopeful. A number of states, such as Finland, Cape Verde, Denmark, Gambia, and Malawi, perform considerably better on the Atlas than their income alone would predict. Several countries have pledged or initiated important reforms that have the potential to improve accountability if they are duly implemented. For instance, South Africa's anticorruption drive may lay the framework for improved accountability in the future, while Kenya has the opportunity to improve transparency and accountability on a number of fronts. It is our hope that progress made toward accountability will serve as an example for others so that policy lessons can lead to better outcomes elsewhere. The road to progress will be long—and in many cases, difficult—but the benefits to improving accountability will be manifold, and happily, accrue to all.

Appendix

Atlas of Impunity: Outperformers in terms of income

Higher income per capita is associated with lower levels of impunity as measured by the Atlas, but several countries exhibit remarkably lower impunity scores—and higher levels of accountability—than their income alone would predict. This box examines the strongest outperformers in terms of income in Asia, Africa, Latin America, Oceania, and Europe. More precisely, these are the countries in each region whose observed impunity scores are the lowest compared to the value suggested by their global rank in income per capita at purchasing power parity (PPP). It is our hope that a closer look at the characteristics and policies that set these countries apart from their regional and economic peers may provide insight into which factors support greater accountability, even when income is limited.



Asia, Timor Leste

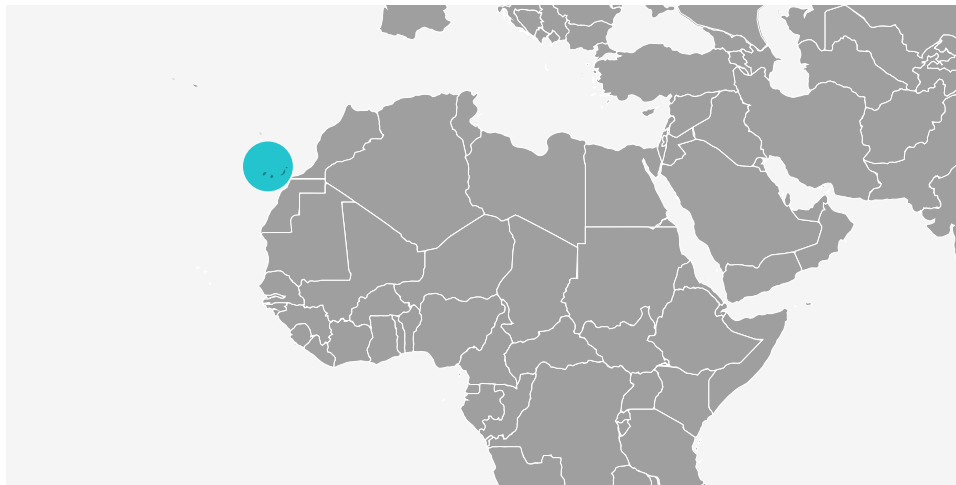
- **Atlas rank of 103; impunity score of 2.15 (5 is worst; 0 is best)**
- **Lower middle income; GDP per capita: \$4,418 at PPP**

Timor Leste, a young nation, has the lowest income among the regional outperformers. The country's declaration of independence from Portugal in 1975 prompted Indonesia to invade Timor Leste, beginning a violent military occupation. Indonesian rule ended in 1999, following a UN-administered referendum on independence. Several years of paramilitary violence and political instability followed the poll, and the UN remained directly engaged in Timorese affairs until 2012 to address issues related to political stability, national reconciliation, and state capacity.

Despite its difficult birth, Timor Leste now benefits from a competitive democratic system. Its strong performance on the Atlas relative to other countries of similar income, such as Tajikistan, Myanmar, Papua New Guinea, and Cambodia, is likely owing in large part to the Timorese's embrace of post-crisis peace and UN-assisted efforts to maintain stability. Timor Leste now scores well on indicators related to civil liberties, open political culture, media freedom, and electoral participation. The country has also made significant progress in rebuilding infrastructure and

improving its performance on measures of human development, such as the UNDP Human Development Index (HDI).

Still, Timor Leste's HDI scores lag the average for the East Asia and Pacific region. In addition, the country's democratic institutions remain fragile as Timor Leste contends with the legacy of occupation and colonization. Among other issues, administrative and judicial efficiency are undermined by capacity constraints, and figures from the independence struggle still dominate the country's politics.



Africa, Cape Verde

- **Atlas rank of 122; impunity score of 1.69 (5 is worst; 0 is best)**
- **Lower middle income; GDP per capita of \$7,028 at PPP**

Cape Verde is often praised as an exemplary democracy in Africa. After gaining independence from Portugal in 1975, Cape Verde established a one-party political system that remained in place until 1991, when a constitutional amendment legalized opposition parties and prompted multi-party elections. Since then, the country has had a stable democratic system, with competitive elections and periodic transfers of power between two rival parties: the African Party for the Independence of Cape Verde and Movement for Democracy.

Cape Verde's well-functioning political system, effective judiciary, and press freedoms combine to promote civil liberties. Civil and political rights are also enshrined in the constitution and widely protected in practice, which is reflected in Cape Verde's respectable performance on the unaccountable governance dimension.

Cape Verde also performs well on the abuse of human rights dimension, especially on indicators involving state-perpetrated abuses and measures of conflict and violence, as it does not have high crime rates or levels of unrest. Corruption is an issue, particularly at the municipal level, but the country scores well overall in the economic exploitation category.

One factor that may contribute to Cape Verde's outperformance is its small population of just over half a million people. A small population is a characteristic shared by several other countries that do better than expected on the basis of income. In addition, the great majority of Cape Verde's population is of mixed European and African descent, often referred

to as Crioulo, and over three-quarters of the population identifies as Roman Catholic. The relative homogeneity of Cape Verdean society may therefore support social cohesion. This is especially evident when compared to neighbors such as Mauritania, Senegal, and Guinea-Bissau, all of which face some degree of tension between groups in society.



Latin America, Uruguay

- **Atlas rank of 136; score of 1.17 (5 is worst; 0 is best)**
- **High income; GDP per capita of \$24,626 at PPP**

Uruguay, a mid-ranking outperformer in terms of income per capita and Latin America's best-ranked country on the Atlas, is a success story in terms of accountability. The country ranks 136th worldwide, with a better impunity score than several much wealthier countries. These outcomes are largely owing to the country's large middle class and the stable democratic governance that has taken root since the mid-1980s when the country emerged from a period of authoritarian military rule.

Uruguay developed throughout much of the 20th century as one of Latin America's more progressive societies, enacting advanced social legislation and developing a larger middle class than others in the region. In line with the country's institutions, social attitudes tend to be tolerant, especially regarding issues such as immigration and same-sex marriage. The country also has been spared some post-colonial scarring, given the lack of precious metals and opportunities to profit from indigenous labor compared to its neighbors.

Moreover, after the end of the military regime, Uruguayan governments enacted a series of strong public policies and institutions to safeguard human rights, economic justice, and accountability. In the 2000s, presidents Tabare Vazquez and Jose "Pepe" Mujica were also credited with financing social programs and investigating disappearances, murders, and other crimes committed under the military regime. After Argentina's financial crisis spilled over to its smaller neighbor in 2002, Uruguay enacted a series of policies to bolster financial stability and diversify the country's exports away from Argentina and Brazil.



Oceania, New Zealand

- **Atlas rank of 154; score of 0.76 (5 is worst; 0 is best)**
- **High income; GDP per capita of \$46,420**

New Zealand considerably outperforms countries in its income group, which includes a number of wealthy liberal democracies such as Italy, South Korea, and the UK. The biggest differences between New Zealand and its economic peers are evident in the Atlas's governance indicators. This is likely due in part to the combination of a strongly proportional electoral system, a unicameral legislature, and a highly efficient public sector, resulting in effective and transparent governance.

Some observers view the introduction of mixed-member proportional representation in the 1990s as having increased the proportionality, inclusiveness, and geographic representation of the electoral system. Though the voting law often produces coalition governments, these tend to be stable. Furthermore, New Zealand's policymaking process is simpler than that of many other liberal democracies, given the absence of a second legislative chamber.

Against this backdrop, productive legislatures have helped New Zealand maximize its potential in terms of economic and governance outcomes. In the mid-1980s, the country undertook a groundbreaking reform of the public sector, giving rise to the so-called "New Zealand model" of public management, which has been refined and updated through the years. Regular investments in the civil service have yielded one of the lowest levels of corruption in world and a high degree of accountability for public officials.



Europe, Finland

- **Rank of 163; score of 0.29 (5 is worst; 0 is best)**
- **High income; GDP per capita of \$55,007 at PPP**

The wealthiest of the regional outperformers, Finland is the best ranked country on the Atlas, doing better than a number of even richer countries, such as Germany, Luxembourg, the US, and Norway. Finland has one of the highest civil society participation rates in the world, and like its Nordic neighbors, the country has invested in creating strong institutions and promoting regular, constructive dialogue between authorities and civil society.

One hypothesis for the country's strong performance is that Finland's lawmakers are especially attentive to the recommendations of civil society groups, leading to a strong sense of democratic inclusion in the policymaking process. Interestingly, some of Finland's Nordic neighbors (namely, Denmark and Norway) score slightly better on the unaccountable governance dimension of the Atlas, though Finland outperforms these states in all other dimensions.

Moreover, Finland's strong commitment to equality before the law and to eliminating socioeconomic disparities have served as the guiding principle as policymakers have sought to build more transparent institutions and policymaking processes. This approach has produced a highly progressive tax system as well as fines and penalties that are based on ensuring a proportionate contribution or punishment. The public's high degree of trust in governance is supported by Finland's ranking as one of the least corrupt countries on Transparency International's 2022 Corruption Perception Index.

