

Transparency in Action: Analysing the CPI 2025 Report and Strategic Recommendations for Somalia

Introduction

Transparency is the cornerstone of good governance and sustainable development. In a world where corruption undermines economic growth, erodes public trust, and exacerbates inequality, the need for transparency has never been more critical. The Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) 2025 Report, published by Transparency International on February 10, 2026, sheds light on the state of corruption across the globe, offering valuable insights into the challenges and opportunities faced by nations striving for integrity and accountability.



For Somalia, a country grappling with decades of conflict, political instability, and systemic corruption, the CPI 2025 Report serves as both a mirror and a roadmap. This 31st edition of the index reveals that Somalia remains at a critical crossroads, scoring just 9 out of 100. This ranking reflects stagnation from the previous year, highlighting a

Persistent "Accountability Gap" that hinders the nation's recovery and the delivery of essential public services to its citizens. This article delves into the findings of the CPI 2025 Report, analyses its implications for Somalia, and provides strategic recommendations for fostering transparency and combating corruption.

I. Understanding the CPI 2025 Report: A Global Perspective

The Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) ranks 182 countries and territories based on perceived levels of public sector corruption, using a scale of zero (highly corrupt) to 100 (very clean).



1. Global Stagnation and Decline

The 2025 data paints a somber picture of the global fight against graft. For the first time in more than a decade, the global CPI average has dropped to just 42 out of 100. The vast majority of nations are failing to keep corruption under control, with 122 out of 182 countries scoring below 50. Furthermore, the group of high performers is shrinking; the number of countries scoring above 80 has

fallen from 12 a decade ago to just five in 2025.

2. The Backsliding of Democracies

A worrying trend identified in the 2025 report is the decline of established democracies, which are typically stronger on anti-corruption. Performance has slipped in several key nations:

- New Zealand: Down two points to 81.
- Canada: Scored 75.
- United Kingdom: Received its lowest ever score of 70.
- United States: Dropped to 64, its worst showing since the current methodology was adopted in 2012.

3. Corruption and Civic Space

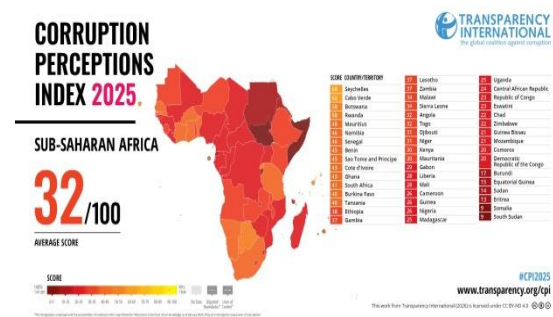
Persistently low or declining CPI scores often go hand in hand with the erosion of democratic checks and balances and a failure to safeguard civic space. Since 2012, 36 of the 50 countries with the most significant score declines have also experienced reduced freedoms of expression, association, and assembly. This environment makes it increasingly dangerous for journalists, civil society organizations, and whistleblowers to speak out against the abuse of power.

4. The Rise of Gen-Z Activism

In 2025, a surge of popular protest movements, often led by Gen-Z, targeted governments failing to deliver basic services and economic opportunity. In countries like Nepal (34) and Madagascar (25), these uprisings successfully brought down governments of the day as citizens demanded an end to impunity for corrupt officials.

II. Somalia's CPI 2025 Ranking: A Closer Look

1. Historical and Current Performance



Somalia's struggle with corruption is deeply rooted in its history of civil war and fragmented governance. In the 2025 Report, Somalia received a score of 9 out of 100, placing it at 181st out of 182 countries. This score ties Somalia with South Sudan at the absolute bottom of the global index. Historically, Somalia has consistently been listed among the most corrupt nations, holding the lowest position for 13 consecutive years between 2007 and 2020.

2. Factors Fueling Systemic Corruption in Somalia

Institutional Fragility: While technical reforms have progressed, weak institutions lack the independence and capacity to effectively combat corruption or hold high-level officials accountable.

The Oversight Vacuum: A critical lack of bold leadership in establishing independent anti-corruption bodies has allowed a culture of impunity to persist.

Security Sector Impact: Corruption remains a fundamental threat to national security. Reports indicate that funds intended for counterterrorism operations are often misappropriated, exacerbating instability.

Economic Consequences: Widespread bribery and the embezzlement of donor funds deter foreign investment and hinder economic recovery.

III. Sub-Saharan Africa: A Regional Comparison

Sub-Saharan Africa remains the lowest-performing region globally in 2025, with an average score of just 32 out of 100. Out of the 49 countries assessed in the region, only four managed to score above 50.

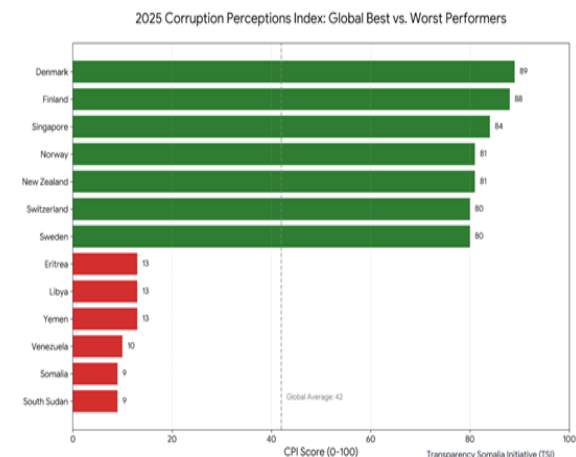
Rank/Tier	Country	2025 Score	Key Context
Regional Leader	Seychelles	68	Top performer, though concerns exist over prosecution delays.
High Performer	Cabo Verde	62	Consistently strong regional standards.
High Performer	Botswana	58	Tied for third highest in the region.
High Performer	Rwanda	58	Leading performer in East Africa.
Regional Average	Sub-Saharan Africa	32	Facing mounting debt and declining aid.
Bottom Tier	Sudan	14	Devastated by ongoing conflict.
Bottom Tier	Eritrea	13	Repressive regime with weak institutions.
Lowest Ranked	Somalia	9	Tied for global bottom with South Sudan.

Spotlight on Corruption:

Best and Worst Performers

At the pinnacle of the index, Denmark continues its reign as the world's cleanest nation with a score of 89, followed closely by Finland at 88. Singapore rounds out the top three with a score of 84, a position it maintains even as it faces global scrutiny for its role as a financial gateway. However, the

report highlights a troubling "Decline in Leadership" even at these heights. A decade ago, twelve nations scored above 80; today, that elite circle has withered to just five. Established powers like Canada (75), the United Kingdom (70), and the United States—which hit a historic low of 64—illustrate a global trend where democratic institutions are weakening and oversight is failing.



On the opposite end of the spectrum, the narrative is one of severe institutional collapse and the total repression of civic voices. Somalia and South Sudan remain tied at the absolute bottom of the global rankings, each anchored with a score of 9. These nations represent the "Worst Performers," where corruption is not just a problem but a survival mechanism for a ruling elite. In these contexts, the absence of independent oversight is often paired with a dangerous environment for those who dare to speak out.

IV. Strategic Recommendations for Somalia

To break the cycle of stagnation and move off the bottom of the index, the Transparency Somalia Initiative (TSI) proposes the following strategic actions for 2026:

1. Bold Leadership and Institutional Empowerment

The Federal Government must move beyond rhetoric and fully re-install and empower

the **Independent Anti-Corruption Commission (IACC)**. This body must be granted the resources and legal mandate to investigate and prosecute graft without political interference.

2. Full Enforcement of Legal Frameworks

Anti-corruption commitments must be translated into decisive actions. This includes the active prosecution of high-level corruption cases and the recovery of stolen public assets.

3. Protection of Civic Space and Whistleblowers

The government must halt the intimidation of journalists, NGOs, academics, civil society leaders, and human rights defenders. This protection must extend to whistleblowers and the principled politicians legislating for transparency; safeguarding all who champion anti-corruption is essential for public oversight and accountability.

4. Digitalization and Transparency in Public Finance

Implementing digital systems for public procurement and tax collection can reduce human interference and the opportunities for bribery. Additionally, closing secrecy loopholes regarding company ownership is vital to stop the flow of illicit funds.

5. Strengthening Judicial Independence

A transparent and independent judiciary is a necessary pillar for holding corrupt officials accountable and restoring public trust in state institutions.

Final Thoughts

The road to transparency and accountability is long and fraught with challenges, but it is a journey worth taking. For Somalia, the CPI 2025 Report is not just a measure of where

the country stands, but a final call to action. The score of 9 underscores that corruption is a "grave and imminent threat to national security" that cannot be ignored. By choosing to act for the public interest rather than private gain, leaders can build a more equitable and prosperous future for all Somali citizens. The time for bold leadership is now.

About The TSI

The **Transparency Somalia Initiative (TSI)** plays a pivotal role in this journey, promoting transparency, accountability, and good governance across Somalia. Through research, advocacy, and strategic partnerships, we combat corruption and empower communities. Together, we can build a society rooted in integrity and trust.

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