



The Atlas of Impunity 2024

A People's Perspective



Summary

Introduction	3
Five things you will learn from reading this report	4
Impunity and its dimensions	6
Scoring and revisions	8
Impunity in 2024	9
Feature 1: A year of war and elections	11
Impunity by country	19
Biggest risers and fallers	20
Feature 2: Using qualitative data to counter impunity	25
Regional perspectives	26
North America	27
Feature 3: Tech oligarchs, impunity, and the resulting societal implications	28
Europe	30
Eurasia	32
Latin America	33
South Asia	35
Southeast Asia	36
East Asia	37
MENA	39
Sub-Saharan Africa	41
Conclusions	44
Appendix	46
Ranked countries	48
Unranked countries	53
Acknowledgements	54

Introduction

Impunity is the exercise of power without accountability. In its clearest form, it is the commission of crimes without punishment. While the chief perpetrators of impunity are often a country's most powerful actors, its victims are generally ordinary people.

Observers tend to describe impunity using national statistics or abstract terms, but for a country's citizens, acts of impunity are deeply personal. On a human level, impunity is the bribe solicited or the vote uncounted. It is the bombing or shooting that kills without redress. Impunity is the wage withheld, the child forced to work, or the peaceful gathering put down by police. Impunity is the home destroyed or the harvest lost, victims of a warming planet.

A year ago, we wrote that the world stood at a critical moment for impunity. Roughly 2.7 billion people were set to go to the polls, in hopes of holding leadership to account through some form of national election. At the same time, a series of wars were raging, leaving a devastating path of abuses in their wake.

In 2024, democracy showed its power to punish incumbents. But the political process failed to contain a record number of wars, which rained impunity and misery on tens of millions of people. The laws of war proved inadequate to protect civilian populations; international sponsorship of fighting was far more effective than support for peacemaking. And the danger is that this could get worse.

That said, and on a more encouraging note, citizens in a range of democracies voted successfully for change. Incumbents fared poorly in 2024's elections in the wake of inflationary shocks that squeezed households' purchasing power in wealthy and developing countries alike. Yet not all elections were conducted freely or fairly, and some results were met with repression.

In the US, one of the world's oldest and most powerful democracies, two assassination attempts targeting then-candidate Donald Trump nearly changed the course of history, underscoring the

threat posed by radicalization and political violence. Voters decisively returned Trump to the presidency, though he is notably the first convicted felon to win it. Trump has pledged to use his official powers to punish his enemies (quite a negative prospect for accountability) and to bring peace to the Middle East and eastern Europe (potentially a more positive development). At present, however, his resolve and ability to accomplish either remain unclear.

Meanwhile, the effects of war in key hotspots have only deepened, with fighting ongoing in Ukraine, Sudan, Myanmar, and Yemen, and only a fragile cease-fire in place in Gaza. War has also affected several other countries in the Middle East, such as Iran and Lebanon, and a range of lower-intensity conflicts continue to smolder around the world. The ouster of the Bashar al Assad regime in Syria—where citizens experienced the highest degree of impunity in 2024—offers some hope for peace after 13 years of civil war, though there is a serious risk that chaos and factional infighting will ensue instead.

Compared to previous editions of this report, the 2024 Atlas of Impunity takes a citizen-centric approach, putting a country's people at its core. This is more than a rhetorical shift. It is designed to address potential confusion that we were judging governments rather than the condition of the people, or that we were (wrongly) blaming countries for problems foisted upon them from outside. A citizen-centric approach means that the Atlas is answering a very simple question: How much impunity is faced by people living in a particular territory?

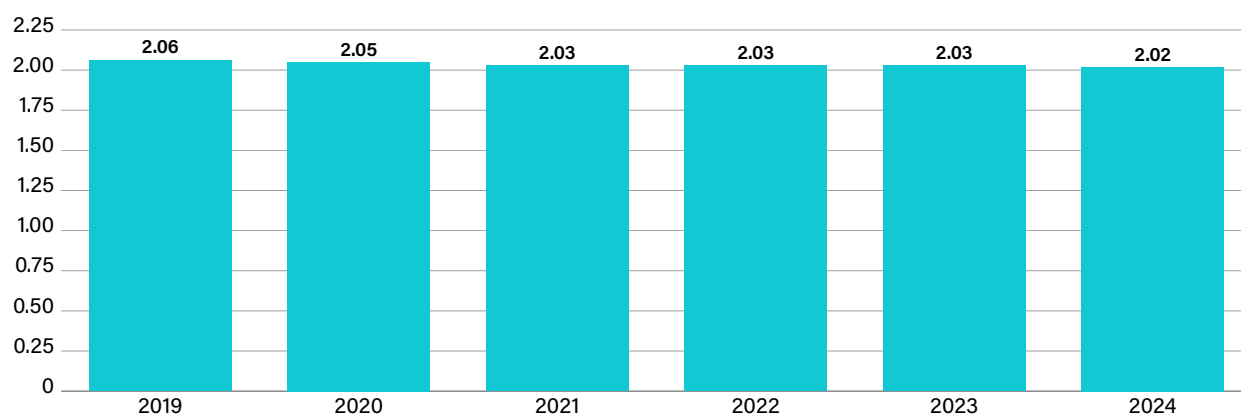
In keeping with this change in focus, the report's data for 2024 and its historical series have been revised to ensure that the figures included more clearly measure impunity as experienced by a country's residents. We have likewise sought to pay more attention to citizens' experiences with impunity in our regional analysis. Lastly, the report includes a special feature illustrating how people's qualitative accounts of acts of impunity can lay the groundwork for legal redress and enrich the comparisons made possible by our data.

Centering citizens in our analysis of impunity is also illuminating because it encourages us to look beyond the topline figures. The global average score on the Atlas, which remained broadly stable in 2024, masks some important developments at the national level. Among other things, the Atlas recorded a

notable uptick in unaccountable governance for citizens in most regions. The data, at the same time, highlight the effects of a persistently high incidence of violence and displacement endured by civilians in the world's numerous conflict zones.

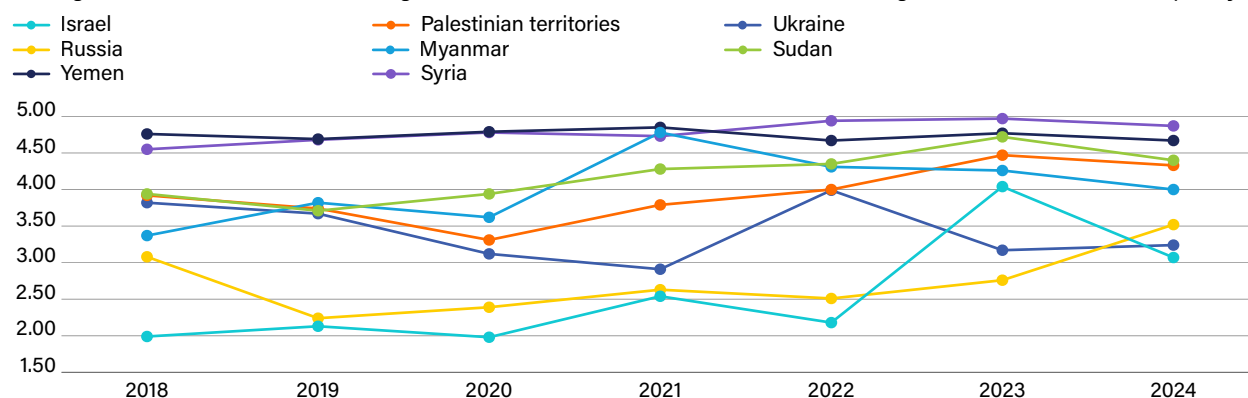
The global average impunity score remained broadly stable in 2024

Ranked countries; 0 = least impunity, 5 = most impunity



The Atlas's measures of violent events remain very high in the world's sites of conflict

Average of 5 ACLED scores measuring incidence of violence across conflict zones; higher scores mean more impunity



Whether 2025 will bring accountability to more of the world's citizens remains to be seen. A meaningful reduction in impunity will require serious efforts to foster peace, with a record number of wars ongoing globally. Among the world's democracies, the events of the last year demonstrate that the ballot box is not sufficient to safeguard accountability. Not only must steps be taken to ensure that elections are held cleanly and without interference. Even where the electoral process is unimpeachable, ordinary citizens and elites alike will need to rally in defense of their institutions and the rule of law.

Five things you will learn from this report

- Syria tops the 2024 Atlas of Impunity with an overall score of 3.43 out of 5. Largely as a result of the country's civil war, Syrians have experienced some of the world's highest levels of unaccountable governance, conflict and violence, and abuse of human rights in recent years. The fall of the Assad regime in December 2024 offers Syrians hope for a new political process that stabilizes the country and restores accountability if serious infighting can be averted.

- Some of the Atlas's most improved countries in 2024 provide further reasons for optimism. In Sierra Leone, where residents have seen the most improvement on these Atlas metrics since 2019, reduced violence and a series of reforms have greatly improved accountability. Laws aimed at bolstering free public schooling, eliminating the death penalty, improving press freedom, and lowering gender-based violence have all anchored the improvement. In Guatemala, the third-most improved country year-on-year, the election of anticorruption candidate Bernardo Arevalo in 2023 and the failure of authorities' efforts to keep him out of office or overturn the vote have underpinned greater accountability.
- Global and regional averages on the conflict and violence dimension of the Atlas remained relatively stable in 2024, but underlying raw data from key Atlas indicators point to a rise in levels of violence. Much of this fighting is concentrated in a small number of countries and territories that have recorded high scores on this dimension for several years—which explains the stability in the global average. According to the Armed Conflict Location and Event Data (ACLED) data utilized in the Atlas, people in 15 countries experienced about 80% of the world's armed combat on average from 2018 to 2024.
- In a major year for electoral politics, the Atlas recorded a notable uptick in unaccountable governance, both globally and in most geographic regions. This was largely driven by a series of indicators from the Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) Democracy Index and the Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem) datasets. These scores are backward-looking and largely reflect developments in 2023. They are more a description of the structural conditions against which 2024's elections unfolded than a response to election outcomes last year. A plausible interpretation of these results is that voters' mounting frustration with the political process contributed to the backlash against incumbents at the polls, generally a good thing for electoral accountability. On the other hand, the V-Dem scores also raise the prospect of a heightened risk of political violence in several regions, an unambiguously negative prospect for accountability.
- This report focuses on quantitative measures, but it also acknowledges the importance of qualitative data in fighting impunity. Personal accounts of serious human rights violations, often compiled by NGOs and journalists, play a critical role in communicating the human toll of impunity. High-quality qualitative data can be an effective means for raising awareness of abuses, especially where statistical information is scarce. Such qualitative data can, at the same time, be central to mobilizing pressure campaigns for change and systematically documenting human rights violations with an eye toward legal action.

Impunity and its dimensions

The Atlas of Impunity measures impunity across five dimensions: unaccountable governance, abuse of human rights, conflict and violence, economic exploitation, and environmental degradation. Guided by an expert advisory board, we have carefully selected 60 indicators from 24 reputable sources to measure impunity as experienced by citizens at the country level. As in previous years, the closing date for available data was 30 September.

Unaccountable governance

This dimension examines the extent to which government power is checked and the political process is accountable to citizens. It also assesses the functioning of government, institutional strength, the justice system's fairness and efficiency, the enforcement of regulations, and adherence to the rule of law.

Source	Indicator
EIU Democracy Index	• Electoral Process
EIU Democracy Index	• Functioning of Government
EIU Democracy Index	• Democracy and Political Culture
EIU Democracy Index	• Political Participation
RSF World Press Freedom Index	• Global Score
FFP Fragile State Index	• External Intervention
FFP Fragile State Index	• State Legitimacy
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 FIW	• Total Score

Abuse of human rights

Abuse of human rights assesses the protection or abuse of citizens' fundamental rights. It looks at how effectively individuals are protected from abuses by assessing the state's adherence to human rights obligations, such as UN treaty endorsements.

The indicator also seeks to capture respect for civil rights, legal protections, and the extent to which citizens may be subject to torture, capital punishment, ethnic cleansing, political terror, and forced disappearances.

Source	Indicator
UN OHCHR	• State's consent to be bound by the 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 Inst. Human Freedom Index	• Politically motivated disappearances

Source	Indicator
Cato Inst. Human Freedom Index	▪ Freedom from torture
Political Terror Scale project	▪ Average of 3 main scores
Amnesty International Executions	▪ Recorded executions and death penalties by year
Freedom House FIW	▪ Ethnic cleansing
ACLED	▪ Violence against civilians (by state)*
Georgetown U. Women Peace and Security Index	▪ Absence of Legal Discrimination

Economic exploitation

This dimension assesses whether economic disparities lead to the exploitation of citizens by private or state actors. It evaluates the functioning of a state's economic framework, focusing on property rights, government integrity, and corruption levels. It also examines

fairness in working conditions, class-based discrimination, and labor exploitation, as well as societal outcomes such as progress in eradicating poverty, hunger, and extreme income inequality.

Source	Indicator
Heritage Found. Economic Freedom Index	▪ Property Rights
Heritage Found. Economic Freedom Index	▪ Government Integrity
Freedom House FIW	▪ Functioning of Government
CLR Labour Rights Index	▪ Total score
Varieties of Democracy	▪ Social class equality in respect to civil liberties
UN SDGs	▪ Victims of modern slavery (per 1000)
UN SDGs	▪ Children involved in child labor (%)
UN SDGs	▪ SDI Goal 1 - No Poverty
UN SDGs	▪ SDI Goal 2 - Zero Hunger
IBP Open Budget Survey	▪ Total Score
Global Corruption Index	▪ Total score
World Bank Gini coefficient	▪ Normalized Gini 2007-22*

*Gives all countries a normalized score of 0 unless they have a Gini of 0.4 or higher; countries with a Gini greater than or equal to 0.4 and less than 0.5 get a 2.5; countries with a Gini of 0.5 or greater score a 5

Conflict and violence

The conflict and violence dimension looks at how citizens experience impunity through violent events within their country. More specifically, it focuses on how levels of violence—in terms of battles, riots, combat fatalities, killings per capita, and

displacement—affect individuals. It also seeks to capture impunity in the form of threats to women's safety, intimate partner violence, and ethnic or other societal grievances.

Source	Indicator
ACLED	▪ Number of battles*
ACLED	▪ Number of riots*
ACLED	▪ Total fatalities per capita (riots, battles, violence)*
ACLED	▪ Violence against civilians (by nonstate)*

Source	Indicator
IEP Global Peace Index	▪ Total Score
Georgetown U. Women Peace and Security Index	▪ Community Safety Perception
Georgetown U. 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
UNHCR Refugee Data Finder	▪ Refugees, asylum seekers, and IDPs per capita
*2024 data are estimated using annualized Jan-Sep figures extracted in late Nov.	

Environmental degradation

This dimension evaluates the extent to which people are exposed to pollution and other forms of environmental harm. Environmental degradation examines how well environmental issues are managed by balancing three key aspects: the sustainability of climate, land, and water policies

affecting a country’s people; the state’s adherence to environmental treaties and efforts to reduce and mitigate pollution; and the sustainability of a country’s resource consumption, ecological footprint, and agricultural practices.

Source	Indicator
UN SDGs	▪ Climate Action Goal
UN SDGs	▪ Life Below Water Goal
UN SDGs	▪ Life on Land Goal
Yale U. Environmental Protection Index	▪ Climate Change indicator
Yale U. Environmental Protection Index	▪ Air Quality indicator
Yale U. Environmental Protection Index	▪ Waste Management indicator
Yale U. Environmental Protection Index	▪ Agriculture indicator
Yale U. Environmental Protection Index	▪ Acid rain indicator
York U. Ecological Footprint of Countries 2018	▪ Ecological Footprint index
*Recalculated for all years according to the 2024 Yale EPI methodology.	

Scoring and revisions

The Atlas is scored on a scale from 0 to 5, with 0 corresponding to the lowest degree of impunity and 5 corresponding to the highest. Each of the Atlas’s component indicators is normalized onto the 0-to-5 scale, and scores are then averaged to produce a single score for each dimension. Overall impunity is the mean of the five dimensions.

Country scores are ranked in a specific dimension only if the state or territory has at least 60% of actual data available. To be included in the headline

ranking, a country must have at least 60% of actual data overall.

Missing data are addressed by using the latest available data point or, when this is not available, by imputing scores if a strong correlation exists between available data for that indicator and at least two others. No other quantitative or qualitative score adjustments are applied to the data.

One hundred and seventy countries receive a headline ranking in the 2024 Atlas, with 27 receiving

indicative scores. For these states, there is insufficient data to fully compare the degree that most citizens experience with that of other countries, and we do not produce a country ranking.

In consultation with our advisory board, we have implemented several conceptual and technical revisions to this edition to enhance the quality of the data and ensure a citizen-centric approach in examining impunity at the country level.

The changes have lowered the number of indicators from 66 to 60 and affect mainly the conflict and violence, economic exploitation, and environmental degradation dimensions. The revisions have been applied through the entirety of the time series included in this report and available for download on the 2024 Atlas website. A summary of the revisions can be found in Appendix A: Methodological changes since 2023.

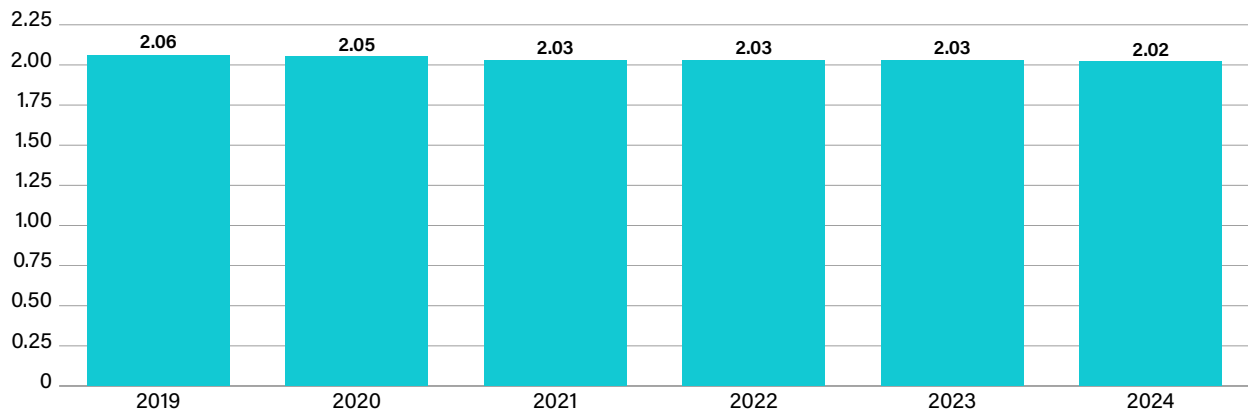
Impunity in 2024

The average impunity score of the 170 countries ranked in 2024 was 2.02, similar to the level recorded in 2021-2023. However, the global average masks some

more interesting developments at the dimension level as well as persistently high levels of impunity in the countries involved in conflict.

The global average impunity score remained broadly stable in 2024

Ranked countries; 0 = least impunity, 5 = most impunity

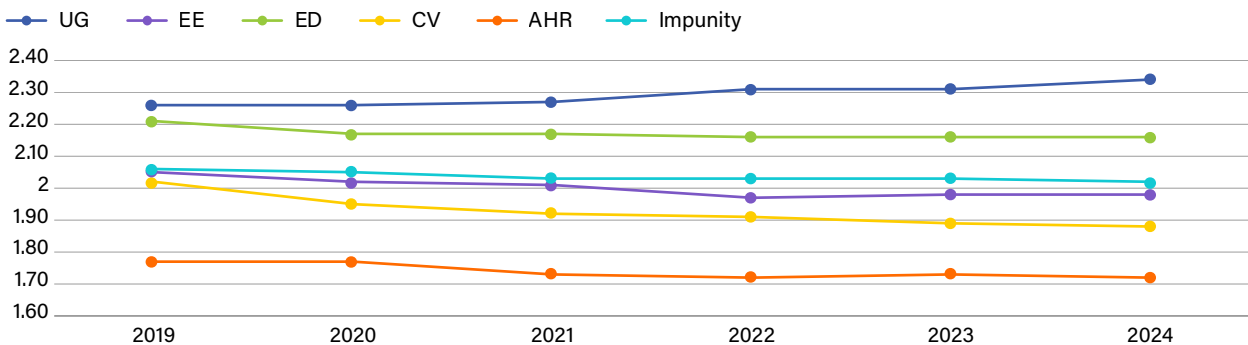


Despite the stability of the headline score, there is a greater degree of variation among the global averages of unaccountable governance, conflict and violence,

and environmental degradation. By contrast, the global averages for environmental degradation and abuse of human rights have remained relatively steady.

Among the Atlas's dimensions, unaccountable governance has deteriorated most in recent years

Global average of ranked countries; higher scores mean more impunity

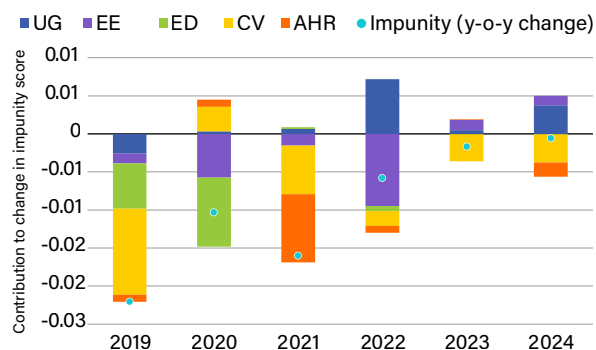


The consistent increase in unaccountable governance since 2019 is particularly noteworthy. This trend was driven in large part by sizable rises in 2022 and 2024. The unaccountable governance dimension also represents the biggest driver of variation in the global impunity score over the past year. In 2024, the increase was driven mostly by the worsening of a series of indicators from the EIU Democracy Index and V-Dem datasets. These scores are largely backward-looking, describing conditions in 2023 or early 2024, and their deterioration may partly explain why voters in so many countries punished incumbents at the polls last year.

On the other hand, the average conflict and violence score has trended downward since 2019, though this is in part a result of composition effects. The number of countries with a valid conflict and violence score has climbed from 160 to 186 over the last five years, mainly owing to the addition of more European countries to the ACLED dataset. The Atlas draws on this data to measure battles, riots, combat fatalities per capita, and violence against civilians.

In 2024, upward pressures on the global average from UG and EE were offset by CV and AHR

Index points, 0 - 5 scale; increases mean more impunity

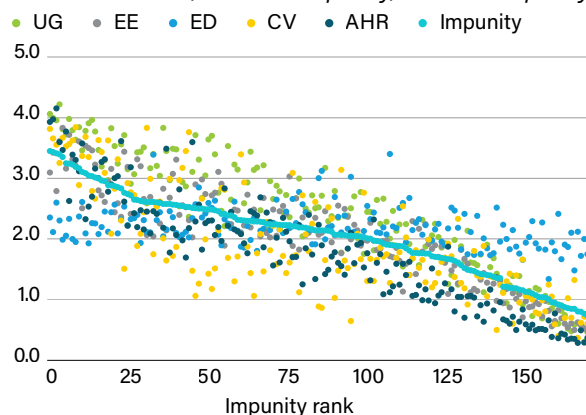


As in previous years, most of the Atlas's dimension scores are strongly correlated with each other and with a country's GDP per capita. Environmental degradation remains the exception and is only weakly associated with overall impunity or income per head. Citizens in wealthier countries tend to benefit from greener policies and higher environmental standards, but they also tend to consume more resources per capita than others. Some wealthy states are likewise large fossil fuel producers or importers, which further increases

their environmental footprint. Conversely, citizens in poorer countries consume and pollute less per capita, though environmental policies and their enforcement often lag the developed world. In contrast to the other dimensions, no ranked country scores below 1.0 in environmental degradation, highlighting the degree to which further action on climate is needed.

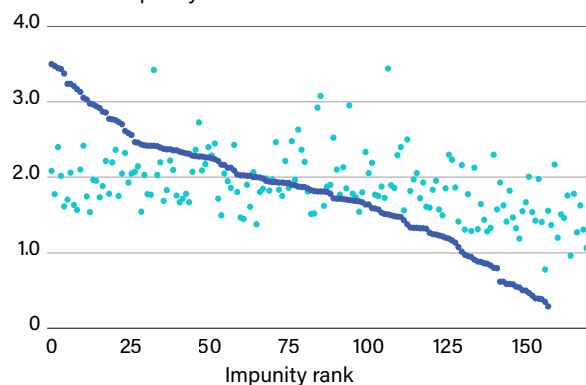
2024 impunity and dimension scores

Ranked countries; 0 = least impunity, 5 = most impunity



Headline impunity scores remain weakly correlated with ED

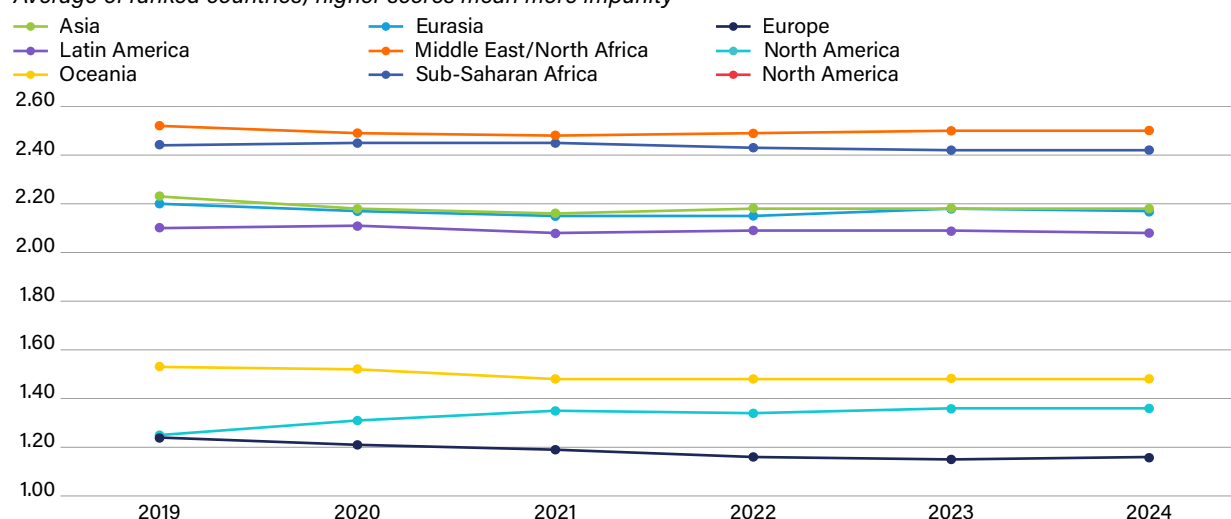
Legend: ED (cyan), Impunity (blue)



Examining the 2024 data by region reveals that people in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region and sub-Saharan Africa remain subject to a higher degree of impunity on average than citizens of other regions. Meanwhile, citizens of Europe, North America, and Oceania tend to enjoy greater accountability. The regional averages for Asia, Eurasia, and Latin America fall in the middle, with impunity scores above the global average but lower than those of the regions where the level of impunity is highest.

Since 2019, impunity has increased the most in North America and decreased the most in Europe

Average of ranked countries; higher scores mean more impunity



Most regional average scores have stayed relatively stable in recent years. Since 2019, however, North America and Europe have diverged in their trajectories. Five years ago, both regions recorded a similar average score, with a marginal difference of 0.01 points. By 2024, this gap had widened to a more substantial 0.20 points.

Since 2019, Europeans have experienced a moderate reduction in impunity on average (-0.08), while North Americans saw the most notable increase in impunity of any region over the same period (+0.11). That said,

North America's average score is composed of those of only two countries, which may amplify variations in score.

A similar but less pronounced trend is apparent in the scores of the MENA region and sub-Saharan Africa, where average impunity scores converged during the pandemic years of 2020-2021. Since then, the mean score in Africa has improved from 2.45 to 2.42, while the average score in the MENA region has worsened from 2.48 to 2.50.

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Asia	2.23	2.18	2.16	2.18	2.18	2.18
Eurasia	2.2	2.17	2.15	2.15	2.18	2.17
Europe	1.24	1.21	1.19	1.16	1.15	1.16
Latin America	2.1	2.11	2.08	2.09	2.09	2.08
Middle East/North Africa	2.52	2.49	2.48	2.49	2.5	2.5
North America	1.25	1.31	1.35	1.34	1.36	1.36
Oceania	1.53	1.52	1.48	1.48	1.48	1.48
Sub-Saharan Africa	2.44	2.45	2.45	2.43	2.42	2.42

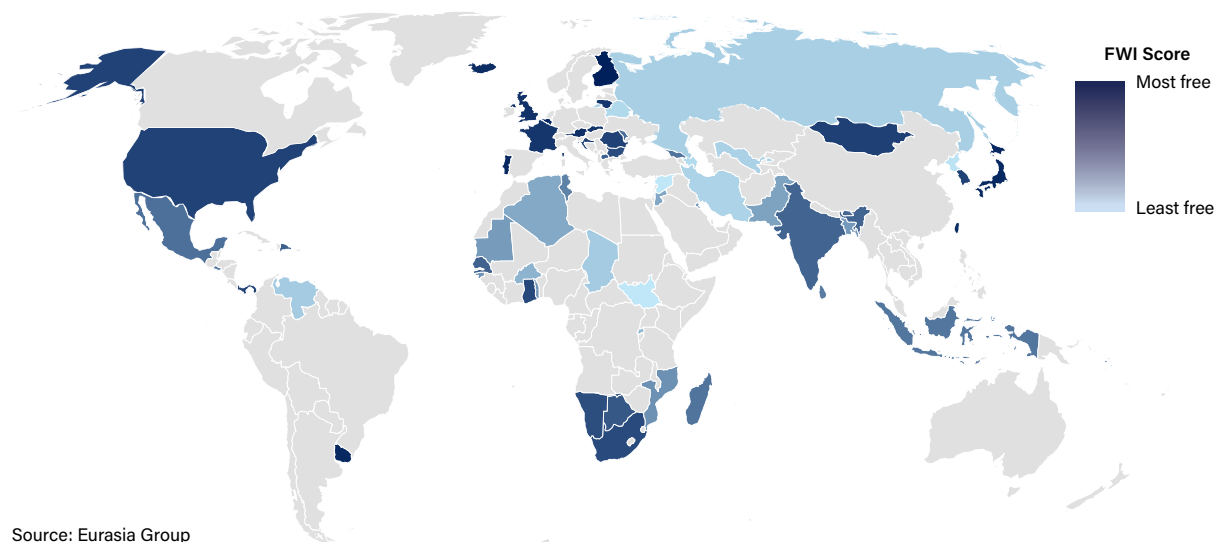
Feature 1: A year of war and elections

In many ways, developments in impunity were defined by two fundamental forms of political contestation in 2024: elections, on a positive note for accountability, and war, much more negatively.

Addressing the more hopeful developments first, more than 70 countries held some form of national vote during the year, bringing more than 1.5 billion people to the polls worldwide.¹

¹ <https://www.ft.com/content/350ba985-bb07-4aa3-aa5e-38eda7c525dd>

More than 70 countries held some form of national election in 2024



Source: Eurasia Group

Though accountability is not the exclusive preserve of democratic states, in practice, democracy tends to provide more personal freedoms and stronger checks and balances than other forms of government. Democracy is also the clearest means for ordinary citizens to change leaders and their policies peacefully and inclusively. Voters exercised this right to great effect in 2024, frequently deciding to oust incumbents against a backdrop of high inflation and the lingering effects of pandemic-era policies.

In South Africa, for example, voters chastened the ruling African National Congress, which saw its vote share fall to less than 50% for the first time since the early 1990s. This result forced the incumbent president, Cyril Ramaphosa, to form a broad coalition to retain his ability to govern. In India, the world's most populous democracy, voters punished the incumbent Bharatiya Janata Party of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who had to seek support from regional parties to secure a historic third term.

In the UK, voters propelled the Labour Party to a resounding win, ending 14 years of Conservative Party rule. Meanwhile, the US rejected the policies of outgoing Democratic President Joe Biden and his successor, Vice President Kamala Harris, by electing Trump and giving Republicans a majority in both houses of Congress. Trump's victory is both a clear expression of the will of US voters and a dubious development for accountability in the country overall. The degree of impunity will worsen if Trump—who

was subject to multiple indictments prior to the vote and is the only convicted felon to win the presidency—makes good on his threats to use official powers to punish his political enemies.

Some electoral contests in 2024 were much freer and fairer than others. Elections in a few authoritarian regimes, such as Russia and Iran, were heavily managed. In Venezuela, President Nicolas Maduro blatantly subverted the results, repressing opposition protests in response. Likewise, Pakistan's military sought to bar imprisoned former prime minister Imran Khan from the country's general elections. After the vote, the military only narrowly succeeded in keeping independent lawmakers associated with Khan out of power.

The 2024 Atlas scores raise some interesting questions about the relationship between impunity and electoral politics. As noted, both the global average impunity score and the scores of most dimensions were broadly stable year-on-year from 2023 to 2024. Among the five dimensions, only unaccountable governance worsened substantially at the global level, rising from 2.31 in both 2022 and 2023 to 2.35 in 2024.

The table below lists the contribution to year-on-year change in the global average score for unaccountable governance of each of the 15 indicators in the dimension. Most of the variation is explained by seven variables drawn from two source indexes, the EIU Democracy Index and the V-Dem dataset.

Contributions to global average UG score change, 2023-24

	2024
UG (change year on year)	0.032
EIU Electoral Pluralism	0.004
EIU Functioning of government	0.002
EIU Democracy and Political Culture	0.003
EIU Political Participation	0.004
World Press Freedom Index	0.000
FSI External Intervention	-0.005
FSI State Legitimacy	-0.001
RLI Regulatory Enforcement	0.000
RLI Constraints on Government Power	0.001
RLI Criminal Justice	0.002
RLI Civil Justice	0.002
VOD Freedom from political killings	0.010

VOD Clientelism index	0.001
VOD Impartial public administration	0.005
FH Freedom in the World score	0.002

On the EIU data, the average scores for electoral pluralism, functioning of government, democracy and political culture, and political participation all deteriorated noticeably. Among the V-Dem indicators, much of the upward pressure on the dimension score came from reduced freedom from political killings and a less impartial public administration.

As the chart below shows, the change in unaccountable governance varied by region, as did the weight of the dimension's components in explaining it. Asia and Oceania bucked the global trend, improving slightly on unaccountable governance compared to 2023, while the most abrupt regression was recorded in sub-Saharan Africa.

Contributions to change in average UG score, 2023-24

	Global	Europe	Asia	Middle East / North Africa	Sub-Saharan Africa	Latin America	Eurasia	Oceania	North America
UG (change year-on-year)	0.032	0.014	-0.006	0.025	0.067	0.035	0.017	-0.017	0.038
EIU Electoral Pluralism	0.004	-0.002	0.005	0.003	0.009	0.004	0.003	0.000	0.000
EIU Functioning of government	0.002	0.000	0.002	0.003	0.003	0.001	0.002	0.000	0.006
EIU Democracy and Political Culture	0.003	0.000	0.001	0.003	0.007	0.003	0.003	0.000	0.011
EIU Political Participation	0.004	-0.001	0.000	0.007	0.006	0.008	0.002	0.005	0.000
World Press Freedom Index	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	-0.001	0.000	0.000
FSI External Intervention	-0.005	-0.006	-0.004	0.002	-0.007	-0.009	-0.002	-0.008	-0.002
FSI State Legitimacy	-0.001	-0.005	-0.001	0.001	0.003	0.000	-0.004	-0.005	-0.002
RLI Regulatory Enforcement	0.000	0.000	0.000	-0.002	0.001	0.001	0.002	-0.005	0.000
RLI Constraints on Government Power	0.001	0.001	0.000	0.004	0.002	0.000	0.001	-0.003	0.001
RLI Criminal Justice	0.002	0.002	0.000	0.002	0.003	0.001	0.005	-0.005	0.003
RLI Civil Justice	0.002	0.002	0.002	0.002	0.003	0.002	0.002	0.002	0.002
VOD Freedom from political killings	0.010	0.007	-0.009	0.000	0.019	0.020	0.010	0.004	0.019
VOD Clientelism index	0.001	0.001	0.000	0.000	0.003	0.003	-0.004	-0.011	-0.002
VOD Impartial public administration	0.005	0.013	-0.002	-0.003	0.010	-0.001	-0.003	0.015	0.000
FH Freedom in the World score	0.002	0.001	-0.001	0.002	0.005	0.003	0.002	-0.006	0.002

The sharpest deterioration in the EIU Democracy Index scores was recorded in Africa and North America. Among the V-Dem metrics, the impact of political killings was also greatest in Africa and North

America, in addition to Latin America. On the other hand, worsening scores on the impartiality of public administration had an especially corrosive effect in Oceania, Europe, and Africa.

The EIU Democracy Index and the V-Dem data included in the 2024 Atlas were published early in the year and largely reflect developments in 2023. Rather than a response to election results in 2024, the rise in impunity on these metrics should instead be understood as the context against which the year's elections unfolded. One plausible interpretation of higher unaccountable governance in 2024—and in particular, the worsening of metrics related to democracy—is that voters' mounting frustration with the political process contributed to the backlash against incumbents at the polls. Viewed from this perspective, 2024's many electoral upsets are evidence that the democratic process is working.

The rise in the V-Dem political killings score is a more concerning and clearly negative driver of higher unaccountable governance scores. This could signal a greater risk of political violence, especially amid signs of growing radicalization in the US and several other countries. The repression following 2024 elections in countries such as Bangladesh, Pakistan, and Venezuela, as well as acts of political violence committed by individuals unaffiliated with the state—such as the failed assassination attempts against Trump during the US campaign and Slovakian Prime Minister Robert Fico ahead of the European Parliament elections—would be consistent with this reading of the data. These hypotheses, while tentative, do not bode well for the evolution of impunity in 2025 despite a vibrant period for electoral politics.

Even as much of the world went to the polls, many countries were marred by the ravages of war in 2024. At midyear, the Institute for Economics and Peace placed the number of ongoing conflicts at 56—the most at any time since World War II.² Some observers have described the effects of war as development in reverse, and the same can generally be said of accountability.³ War often leads to a higher incidence of human rights abuses, such as indiscriminate or disproportionate use of violence against civilians, forced displacement, collective

punishment, mistreatment of prisoners, and more frequent sexual or other gender-based violence.

At the dawn of 2025, fighting continues to grind on in eastern Ukraine, nearly three years since Russia's full-scale invasion. The Ukrainian forces' incursion into Kursk Oblast and the provision of more long-range arms by the US and its allies have brought more of the fighting to Russian territory than in 2022 or 2023. At the same time, Russia continues to sporadically target population centers and civilian infrastructure in Ukraine, with grim implications for local residents.

Meanwhile, 15 months after Hamas's October 2023 terrorist attacks, which killed 1,200 people, Israel and Hamas have agreed to a fragile 42-day cease-fire in Gaza. The conflict has killed at least 47,000 Palestinians⁴ and more than 400 Israeli soldiers⁵ in the territory, where humanitarian conditions remain dismal and aid flows have long been insufficient to meet the population's needs. One estimate points to about 62,000 deaths as a result of starvation in Gaza in the first year of the war,⁶ and in all likelihood, the actual human toll of the conflict is much higher.⁷ Tensions have spilled over to the West Bank, which has experienced an uptick in Israeli settler violence. The conflict also expanded to Lebanon, where Israel waged a military campaign against Hizbullah in late 2024, as well as Iran, which traded limited direct attacks with Israel via missile, drone, and air strikes.

Elsewhere, devastating civil wars continue to smolder. In Sudan, which has garnered relatively little international attention since hostilities broke out between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) in 2023, the death toll is estimated at roughly 150,000. The threat of famine looms, and about 11 million Sudanese are thought to be displaced.⁸ In the Middle East, the collapse of the Assad regime in Syria—the worst performer on the Atlas overall in 2024—provides some hope for peace following 13 years of civil conflict, though greater stability and security remain far from assured.

2 <https://www.visionofhumanity.org/highest-number-of-countries-engaged-in-conflict-since-world-war-ii/>

3 <https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/resrep02472.8.pdf>

4 <https://www.barrons.com/news/health-ministry-in-hamas-run-gaza-says-war-death-toll-at-47-460-f3dfb325>

5 <https://www.voanews.com/a/israeli-military-says-4-soldiers-killed-in-north-gaza-/7933570.html>

6 <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/66e083452b3cbf4bbd719aa2/t/66fcd754b472610b6335d66f/1727846228615/Appendix+20241002.pdf>

7 <https://www.thelancet.com/action/showPdf?pii=S0140-6736%2824%2901169-3>

8 <https://www.economist.com/leaders/2024/08/29/why-sudans-catastrophic-war-is-the-worlds-problem>

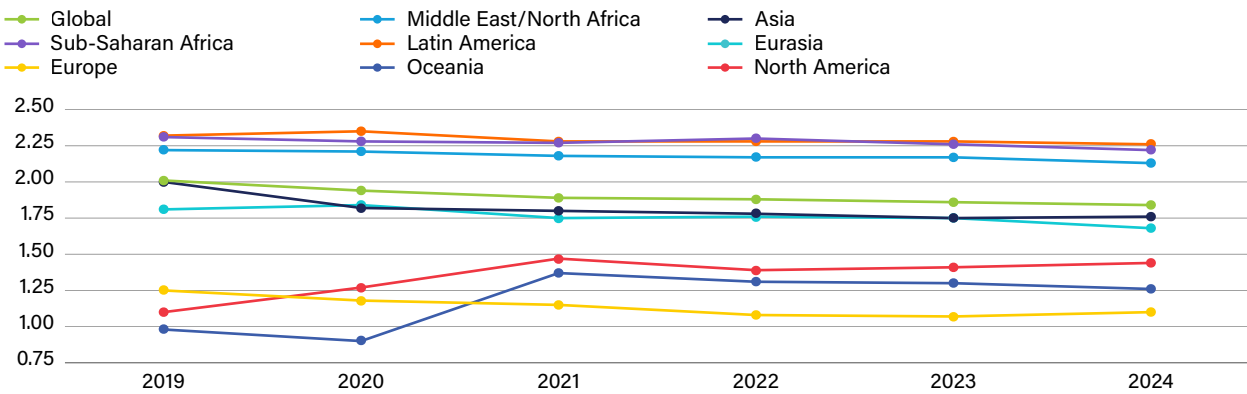
Regional and global average scores on the Atlas’s conflict and violence dimension are relatively stable for 2024 compared to 2023, which may seem at odds with a period of multiple wars. In fact, the Atlas’s scores do register a higher degree of violence globally, and the stability of regional and global averages is mainly the result of two features of the data.

First, a large share of the violence in recent conflicts has occurred in a relatively small number of countries,

limiting the effect on global and regional means. The impact of war is more apparent when looking at the scores of individual countries. Second, only six of the Atlas’s 60 indicators directly count violent events or the number of people killed or displaced by conflict; many of the countries engaged in war have scored near the top of the Atlas’s five-point scale for several years on these variables, with little room for further deterioration. They remained among the worst performers in 2024.

Average CV scores remain highest in Latin America, Africa, and Asia

Average of ranked countries; higher scores mean more impunity



The table below (also presented previously, in the section on impunity and its dimensions) summarizes the indicators included in the Atlas’s conflict and violence dimension. Several—including indicators from the Global Peace Index, the Women Peace and Security Index, the Fragile State Index, and the World Justice Project’s Rule of Law Index—are measures of structural conditions in a country.

They are relatively stable, and as in the case of the EIU and V-Dem measures, these indicators tend to reflect developments recorded in 2023 or up to early 2024 at the latest. The indicators that respond most immediately to escalating levels of violence are the four from the ACLED dataset and figures from the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) on displaced people per capita.

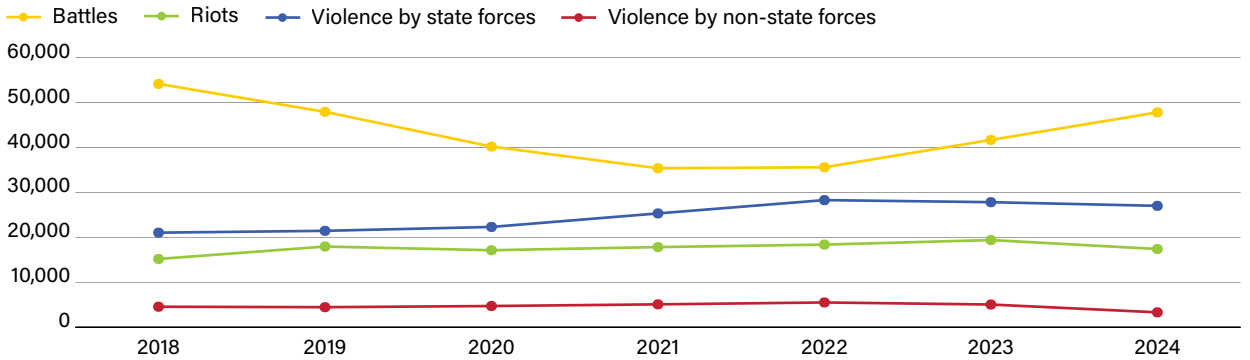
Source	Indicator
ACLED	▪ Number of battles*
ACLED	▪ Number of riots*
ACLED	▪ Total fatalities per capita (riots, battles, violence)*
ACLED	▪ Violence against civilians (by nonstate)*
IEP Global Peace Index	▪ Total Score
Georgetown U. Women Peace and Security Index	▪ Community Safety Perception
Georgetown U. 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

Source	Indicator
UNHCR Refugee Data Finder	Refugees, asylum seekers, and IDPs per capita
*2024 data are estimated using annualized Jan-Sep figures extracted in late Nov.	

The chart below reports global totals for the Atlas’s underlying figures from the ACLED data on the number of battles (defined as violent interactions between organized armed groups), riots (demonstrations that are violent or destructive), and

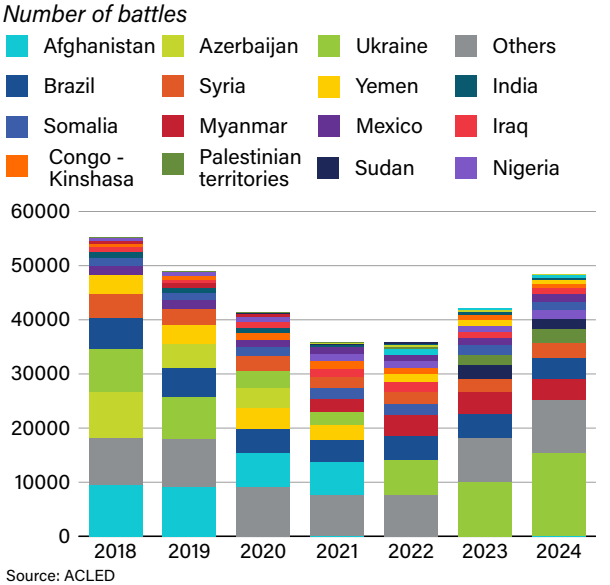
acts of violence against civilians by state and non-state groups.⁹ We present the data beginning in 2018, when ACLED’s coverage expanded to a majority of countries and territories. Data for 2024 are estimates, based on annualized figures from January-September.

The number of battles recorded in the Atlas data has risen sharply since 2022
Global totals for ACLED raw data included in the Atlas



The ACLED data point to a steady rise in violent clashes, with the estimated total for 2024 approaching 2018-2019 levels, when fighting in a handful of countries—most notably, Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, and Ukraine—was particularly intense. As noted, a large share of the violence recorded in the Atlas has occurred in a few states, where citizens experience a disproportionate degree of impunity compared to those living elsewhere. From 2018-2024, 15 countries accounted for about 80% of the fighting recorded in the data, with people in five states—Ukraine, Afghanistan, Brazil, Syria, and Azerbaijan—enduring nearly half. The same is true of violence against civilians perpetrated by state and non-state actors, where the five countries with the highest average counts from 2018-2024 accounted for about 40% and 50% of violent events, respectively.

People in 15 countries endure about 80% of the world's armed conflict



The chart below shows an average of the five normalized ACLED scores included in the Atlas (four in conflict and violence, one in abuse of human rights) for a group of countries currently involved in civil or interstate wars. Citizens of Yemen and

9 ACLED counts for 2024 are estimated by annualizing data for January-September, last updated in early November. Given that researchers tend to verify a greater number of violent events over time, the 2024 estimates likely represent an undercount.

February 2025

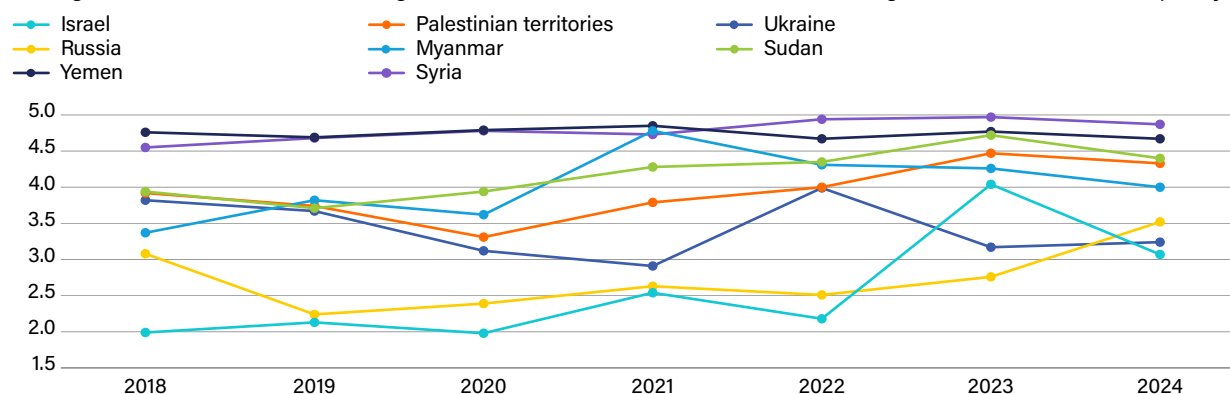
16

Syria have experienced some of the highest levels of violence in the world since 2018, with average scores between 4.0 and 5.0 during that period. People in Myanmar have endured similar conditions since 2021,

and Palestinians and Sudanese since 2023. Recent scores are somewhat lower—but still elevated—for Israel, Russia, and Ukraine.

The Atlas's measures of violent events remain very high in the world's sites of conflict

Average of 5 ACLED scores measuring incidence of violence across conflict zones; higher scores mean more impunity

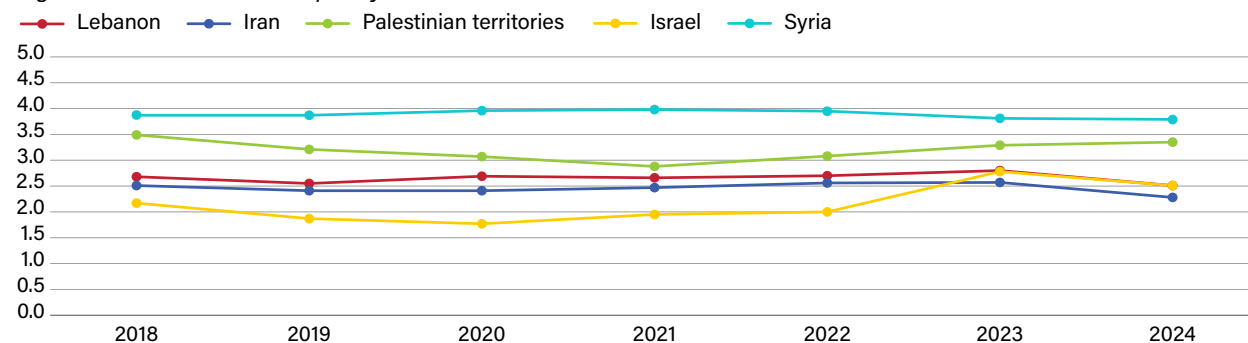


On the conflict and violence dimension overall, the Atlas attests to a pronounced worsening of conditions for residents of the Palestinian territories, which lack sufficient actual data for a headline impunity ranking but do have a valid score on conflict and violence. The dimension score increased from a recent low of 2.88

in 2021 to 3.35 in 2024. Citizens of Sudan, Myanmar, Yemen, and Syria also face an exceptional degree of conflict and violence, with scores clustering between 3.50 and 3.80 in 2024. These countries all rank among the 20 worst performers on the dimension.

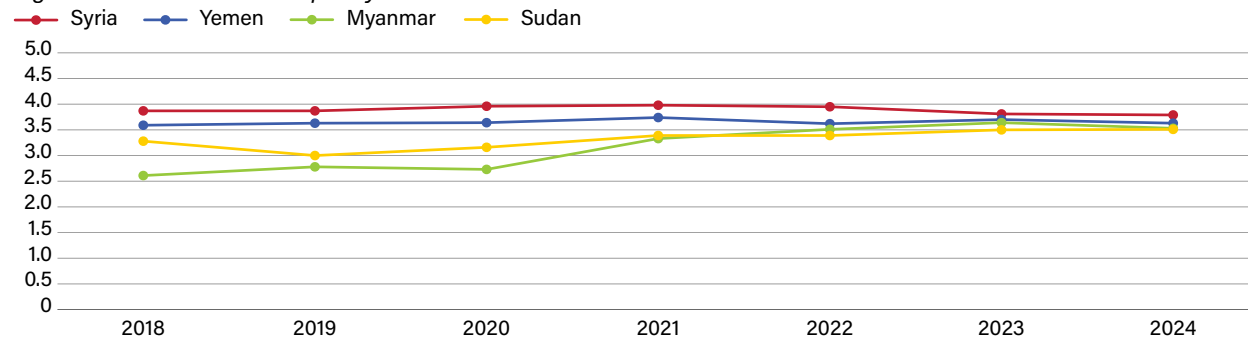
CV scores of countries involved MENA crisis

Higher scores mean more impunity



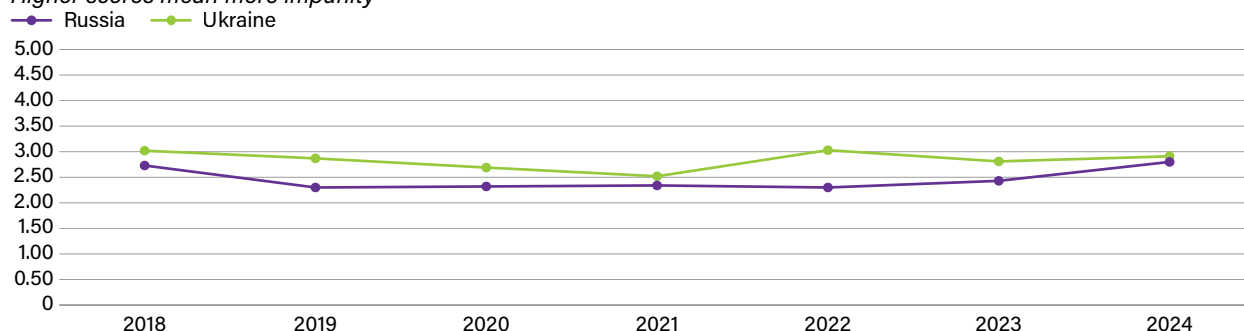
CV scores of countries affected by civil war

Higher scores mean more impunity



CV scores of Russia and Ukraine

Higher scores mean more impunity



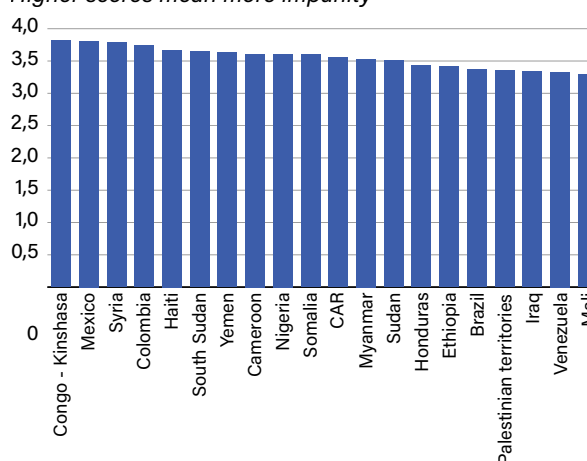
By comparison, conflict and violence spiked in Ukraine in 2022 and Israel in 2023 as a result of Russia's invasion and the 7 October attacks, respectively. The scores then fell back slightly in the following year. Both countries' scores remained substantially worse than pre-war levels in 2024, however. By comparison, the degree of conflict and violence experienced by Russians has risen more gradually, as the effects of war within the country's borders have mounted over time.

It is unclear whether 2025 will be a year of greater peace. Trump has promised to rapidly end the conflicts in Ukraine and the Middle East. But Trump's ability to deliver on these assertions remains to be seen, and it is unlikely that the end of either conflict will deliver full accountability to the people of Ukraine or the Palestinian territories, or civilians affected by conflict in Israel, Lebanon, or Iran. The fall of the Assad regime is a welcome development for many Syrians, though the prospect of chaos and continued fighting remains a distinct possibility. In other sites of conflict, such as Myanmar and Sudan, it is uncertain if or when conditions will improve.

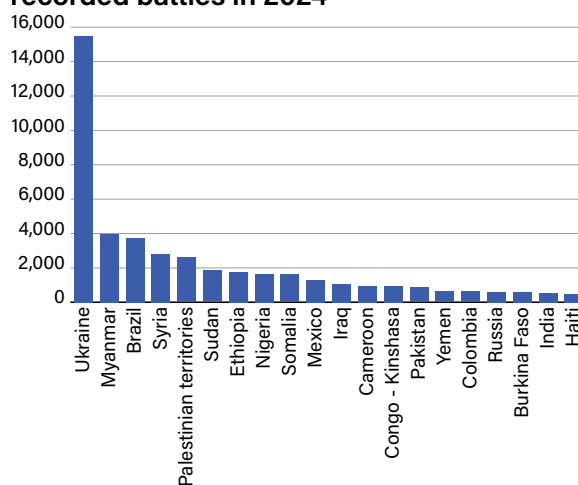
A final consideration raised by the conflict and violence scores is that much of the impunity in this dimension occurs in countries beyond those engaged in high-intensity, high-profile wars. The charts below report the 20 worst performers on the conflict and violence dimension overall and the estimated number of battles in 2024 drawn from the ACLED data.

Countries with the highest CV scores in 2024

Higher scores mean more impunity



Countries with the greatest number of recorded battles in 2024



On conflict and violence overall, several states not officially involved in any conflict score similarly to countries at war—including Mexico, Brazil, and India. In these countries, violent crime or clashes involving domestic security forces, criminal groups, or other organizations unaffiliated with the state are the most prominent sources of violence. Elsewhere, tenuous control over portions of the country and the presence of extremist or other armed groups is the predominant cause, as in Congo-Kinshasa—recently rocked by fighting with M23 rebels, reportedly with support from Rwanda—Nigeria, or Iraq. In a few countries, high levels of violence are also the result of a state that is virtually nonexistent, failing to provide

for the basic security of its citizens, as in Haiti, Somalia, or Mali.

The range of causes and contributing factors speaks to the challenge inherent in improving accountability in this area. Beyond ending ongoing wars, reducing conflict and violence might require a number of correctives depending on the context, including a stronger emphasis on policing and criminal justice, enhanced operations targeting terrorism and organized crime, efforts at mediation between groups divided by social cleavages, and policies aimed at improving underlying economic and social conditions that exacerbate tensions, making violence more likely.

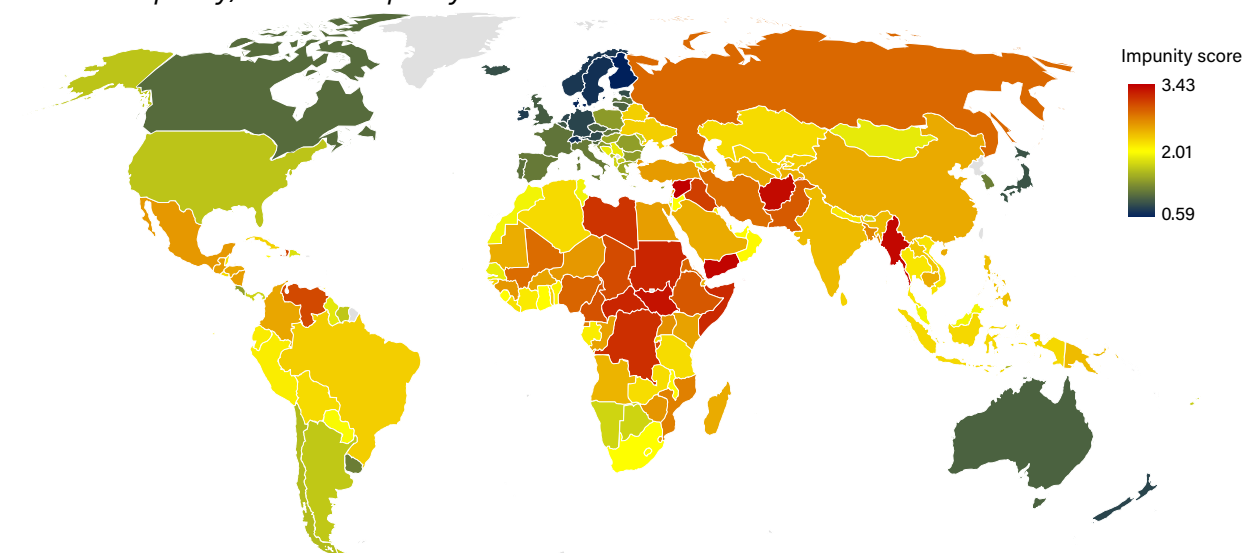
Impunity by country

The 2024 Atlas scores suggest that Syrians faced the highest degree of impunity, with an overall score of 3.43, followed by the people of Yemen and Myanmar. Among the ten countries or territories where impunity is most rampant, many are grappling with significant challenges, particularly in areas such as human rights, government accountability,

and economic stability—largely exacerbated by conflicts and high levels of violence. On the low end of the scores, where citizens enjoy the highest degree of accountability, Finland is once again the top performer, followed by Denmark, Sweden, and several European countries, along with New Zealand.

2024 impunity score

0 = least impunity; 5 = most impunity



Source: Eurasia Group

Highest level of impunity			Middle ten			Lowest level of impunity		
Country	Score	Rank	Country	Score	Rank	Country	Score	Rank
Syria	3.43	1	Ivory Coast	2.13	82	Netherlands	0.83	161
Yemen	3.41	2	Ecuador	2.12	83	New Zealand	0.82	162
Myanmar	3.39	3	Kuwait	2.12	84	Germany	0.82	163
Afghanistan	3.38	4	Qatar	2.11	85	Luxembourg	0.78	164
South Sudan	3.33	5	Gabon	2.11	86	Ireland	0.77	165
Sudan	3.23	6	Peru	2.11	87	Norway	0.74	166
CAR	3.22	7	Benin	2.09	88	Switzerland	0.71	167
Somalia	3.20	8	Oman	2.05	89	Sweden	0.70	168
Congo - Kinshasa	3.17	9	Lesotho	2.04	90	Denmark	0.63	169
Libya	3.14	10	Jamaica	2.04	91	Finland	0.59	170

While citizens of countries at the extremes tend to be confronted with very high or low levels of impunity for broadly similar reasons, the circumstances of the middle performers are a better illustration of the different paths that can lead to greater impunity or accountability. These middle-tier countries highlight the complex interplay of various factors that influence a country's scores and may offer useful insights for comparative analysis.

For example, the scores of the Gulf states that rank near the median are pushed up by their poor performance on environmental degradation, mostly because of oil and gas production and sizable carbon footprints. Meanwhile, residents of countries such as Gabon struggle with relatively low levels of government accountability, while Peru's position is broadly similar across dimensions

Biggest risers and fallers

Although the global average and most regional average scores have remained broadly stable in recent years, some countries have seen their ranks and scores move substantially on a year-on-year and

a five-year basis. The tables below show the countries that improved or declined the most in terms of overall ranking from 2023 to 2024.

Most improvement, 2023-2024

Country	2023-24 rank change	2023-24 score change	2024 rank	2024 score
Eswatini	14	-0.14	39	2.54
Tajikistan	14	-0.12	51	2.46
Guatemala	12	-0.11	38	2.55
Paraguay	12	-0.07	100	1.98
Sierra Leone	10	-0.05	95	2.02
Rwanda	9	-0.06	74	2.2
Azerbaijan	8	-0.14	56	2.36
Djibouti	8	-0.06	52	2.45
Zambia	8	-0.04	75	2.2
Belize	7	-0.05	79	2.16

Most deterioration, 2023-2024

Country	2023-24 rank change	2023-24 score change	2024 rank	2024 score
Niger	-22	0.15	32	2.59
Comoros	-21	0.13	28	2.62
Bolivia	-12	0.09	70	2.21
Ukraine	-12	0.08	61	2.28
Ecuador	-11	0.09	83	2.12
Oman	-11	0.07	89	2.05
Indonesia	-9	0.04	68	2.23
Lesotho	-7	0.03	90	2.04
Togo	-7	0.05	62	2.28
China	-6	0.02	45	2.49

Eswatini and Tajikistan had the greatest year-on-year improvement in rank (14 places), followed by Guatemala (12 places). Several African countries are also on the top ten list, with Sierra Leone, Rwanda, Djibouti, and Zambia recording strong improvements in accountability for the average citizen between 2023 and 2024. The baseline level of impunity among these states varied broadly, however. Guatemala scores 2.55 and has the 38th highest level of impunity among 170 countries, while Paraguay scores 1.98 and ranks 100th, similarly to South Africa, the Maldives, Malaysia, or Morocco.

Residents of Eswatini experienced the greatest reduction in impunity, with the country's overall score falling by 0.14 points. Most of the score improvement was driven by progress on the conflict and violence dimension (though Eswatini's overall score remains high). In 2021, a series of protests took hold against the monarchy and in favor of democratization. The protests became violent when met with a hardline stance from the government, continuing in some measure until mid-2023, a few months before elections. By early 2024, the unrest had generally ceased despite very low approval ratings for the administration, which brought down the level of impunity overall.

Tajikistan also improved by 14 places, with a score change of -0.12. As in other countries among the three largest improvers, however, the degree of baseline impunity in Tajikistan remains relatively high, at 2.46. Tajiks experienced the greatest

improvement in economic exploitation (-0.20) and abuse of human rights (-0.19). The improvement was driven mostly by better scores on indicators related to child labor, social class equality with respect to civil liberties, and national budget transparency.

The reduction in abuse of human rights was driven by fewer violent actions against civilians by the state. In 2023, Tajik authorities repressed protesters and activists in the Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Oblast (GBAO) following the violent dispersal of demonstrations in 2021-2022. Officials refused to acknowledge the Pamiri people of Gorno-Badakhshan as a distinct ethnic minority. Protests and violence ceased heading into 2024, leading to an improvement in Tajikistan's score—though the underlying issues that triggered the unrest appear to be unresolved.

Guatemala gained 12 places in the ranking between 2023 and 2024, with a score reduction of 0.11. This reflects a notable improvement in the degree of conflict and violence faced by many in the country, alongside a slight reduction in the economic exploitation score.

The election of the anticorruption candidate Arevalo in August 2023 has been closely related to the country's performance. Arevalo won the presidential race despite authorities' manipulation of state institutions to make the playing field uneven. In October 2023, Guatemalans took to the streets to protest efforts to overturn the election results. They demanded the resignation of the attorney general,

which prompted the government to use force to contain demonstrations and clear roadblocks. In 2024, the repression and the demonstrations ceased, leading to a marked improvement on the conflict and violence dimension.

In 2024, the people of Niger, Comoros, and Bolivia experienced sizable increases in impunity, with these countries' rankings deteriorating the most. Niger's drop in the rankings was due principally to the unaccountable governance dimension, probably caused by the recent military coup that led to restrictions on freedom of expression and the erosion of the country's civic space.

Meanwhile, Comoros's 2024 score rose by 0.13, bringing it to 2.62. The country's overall rank moved up by 21 places from 2023 to 2024, and 36 places from 2018 to 2024. Last January, the military dictator Azali Assoumani was elected for a fifth term as president. Initially gaining power in a military coup in 1999, he subsequently contested and won four elections, including after a controversial 2018 referendum

had removed term limits. Allegations of fraud and irregularities marked the 2024 election, which led to widespread violent protests, the arrest of opposition leaders, and a night-time curfew.

The rise in impunity faced by many Bolivians owed primarily to an increase in its scores on the abuse of human rights (+0.19) and unaccountable governance (+0.17) dimensions. In 2023, Bolivia's political landscape was marked by continued tensions, economic difficulties, and greater social unrest. One of the key issues was the ongoing political rivalry and polarization between the administration led by President Luis Arce from the Movement for Socialism (MAS) party and opposition groups. The decline in the abuse of human rights dimension was mainly due to an increase in the indicator that measures violence against civilians by state forces. For unaccountable governance, the indicators that deteriorated the most year-on-year measured the level of impartial public administration, political participation, and freedom from political killings.

Most improvement, 2019-2024

Country	2023-24 rank change	2023-24 score change	2024 rank	2024 score
Sierra Leone	28	-0.30	95	2.02
Armenia	23	-0.26	109	1.86
Thailand	23	-0.22	81	2.15
Zambia	22	-0.21	75	2.20
Belize	20	-0.20	79	2.16
Rwanda	18	-0.19	74	2.20
Gambia	17	-0.19	93	2.03
Egypt	16	-0.20	37	2.55
Cambodia	16	-0.16	50	2.47
Saudi Arabia	16	-0.17	47	2.48

Most deterioration, 2019-2024

Country	2023-24 rank change	2023-24 score change	2024 rank	2024 score
Comoros	-36	0.28	28	2.62
Belarus	-32	0.24	63	2.28
Russia	-21	0.31	21	2.85
Benin	-21	0.20	88	2.09
Cuba	-20	0.12	65	2.26
Ecuador	-20	0.16	83	2.12

Country	2023-24 rank change	2023-24 score change	2024 rank	2024 score
Guinea	-20	0.12	30	2.59
Papua New Guinea	-20	0.16	54	2.39
Burkina Faso	-19	0.16	42	2.52
Kyrgyzstan	-19	0.08	59	2.29

Looking further back, over a five-year period, Sierra Leone (28 places), as well as Armenia and Thailand (23 places each), recorded the biggest improvement in rankings compared to 2019. Other African states, such as Zambia, Rwanda, and Gambia, are also among the countries that improved the most in ranking over the last five years.

Greater accountability in Sierra Leone was driven by strides in two dimensions: conflict and violence and abuse of human rights. Reduced conflict and violence is mainly the result of fewer violent events recorded in the ACLED indicators. In recent years, a series of reforms have also anchored improvements on abuse of human rights and may eventually lead to better outcomes on unaccountable governance and economic exploitation. In keeping with its development strategy, the government rolled out its Free Quality School Education initiative in 2018. In addition, it took measures to abolish the death penalty, strengthen press freedom, and devise new strategies to contain violence against women. Toward the end of 2022, important legislation was passed on land reform and women's rights.

Armenia likewise recorded a strong improvement since 2019, moving 23 places in the rankings and seeing its score fall by 0.26 points. Progress was broad-based, affecting all dimensions over the five-year period. Armenians experienced the greatest improvement in accountability in abuse of human rights (-0.42), followed by economic exploitation (-0.27) and conflict and violence (-0.26). The score improvement is likely primarily due to the resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, which flared on several occasions between the second Karabakh war in 2020 and Baku's lightning offensive in September 2023, triggering an exodus of the ethnic Armenian population from the breakaway region. This is supported by the fact that the indicator that drove most of the abuse of human rights score improvement was the one that measured violence against civilians from state forces. With the end of the conflict, violence decreased and the score improved.

Thailand has also experienced a notable positive shift, in both its ranking (23 places) and score (-0.22 points). After five years of military rule, the country transitioned to a semi-elected regime in 2019 and held general elections in 2023. These changes paved the way for broad-based improvement on the Atlas, driven mostly by better scores on the unaccountable governance dimension. However, the military continued to retain significant influence over Thai politics. The military-appointed senate blocked the leading opposition party, Move Forward, from forming a government in 2023, and the constitutional courts, aligned with the military and royal establishment, dissolved the party last August. The composition of the Senate has since changed, though it is still broadly aligned with the conservative establishment. The erosion of democratic principles, coupled with public discontent over the monarchy's involvement in governance, sparked protests in 2020 and 2021.

The recent decline in these protests has contributed to a reduction in Thailand's score for conflict and violence. Nevertheless, this was mostly a consequence of the government's crackdown and resulting fragmentation of the protest movement. These events illustrate that despite considerable progress, the country still faces challenges.

By contrast, Comoros has experienced the biggest increase in impunity over the last five years, followed by Belarus and Russia. Since 2019, the dimensions that drove most of the deterioration in Comoros were unaccountable governance and abuse of human rights. Assoumani, who first came to power in a coup more than 25 years ago, controversially suspended the constitutional court in 2018 and held a constitutional referendum.

Proposed changes included an end to the country's one-term presidency, which rotated among leaders of its three islands; granting the president the power to dismiss the three vice presidents; and an end to

Comoros's secular status. Despite an opposition boycott, Assoumani claimed victory, leading to a wave of unrest. Early elections were held in 2019, once again amid claims of irregularities, returning him to the presidency. Such events contributed to the deterioration of the unaccountable governance dimension, particularly on indicators such as electoral process and pluralism, impartial public administration, and state legitimacy.

Belarus's score also worsened, mostly as a result of the unaccountable governance dimension and, to a lesser extent, abuse of human rights and economic exploitation. In unaccountable governance, the indicator that deteriorated most was freedom from political killings. Since the fraudulent 2020 election that reconfirmed the rule of President Aleksandr Lukashenko, the number of political killings in the country has spiraled.

After imprisoning or forcing into exile the majority of opposition politicians, human rights advocates, civil society leaders, and independent journalists, the regime then initiated mass criminal prosecutions against ordinary citizens who had participated in the protests. These Belarusians allegedly faced raids, detentions, torture, and years of jail time. These acts affected the abuse of human rights dimension, causing Belarus's ranking to fall by 33 places.

Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 has consistently pushed up Russia's overall score since then. The country already scored among the Atlas's worst quartile on all dimensions except economic exploitation, and over the last three years, Russians have experienced an uptick in impunity on all fronts. Since 2019, the strongest driver of the rise in impunity has been the conflict and violence dimension, which increased by 0.50 points, followed by abuse of human rights (0.44) and economic exploitation (0.34). Since the early months of the war, the rise in conflict and violence is largely a result of a greater number of Ukrainian attacks on Russian territory, which increased the ACLED battles indicator to the maximum score.

Russia's score on unaccountable governance has also worsened by 0.25 points since 2019 as President Vladimir Putin's authoritarian regime has tightened its grip on the country and eliminated any serious opposition, including via the imprisonment and death of Alexei Navalny.

Feature 2: Using qualitative data to counter impunity

The Atlas of Impunity seeks to gather information in a manner that is standardized and readily comparable, drawing on indexes and statistical measures of various aspects of impunity covering as many states and territories as possible. However, the Atlas's indicator scores are quantitative aggregates. A deeper understanding of impunity requires a closer examination of individual narratives.

The human toll of serious human rights violations is inevitably obscured by index scores or national statistics, which fail to convey their personal impact. For international audiences, qualitative accounts also help to transform objects of analysis into subjects, adding context that helps to raise awareness of abuses and mobilize pressure for change.

Perhaps most importantly, systematically documenting and corroborating accounts of abuse is critical to seeking redress. This work can facilitate legal action before domestic and international courts, eventually securing justice for victims of human rights violations. In this context, the work of civil society is indispensable. International lawyers, journalists, and a range of NGOs facilitate the timely collection of firsthand accounts through in-depth, on-the-ground research and collaboration with affected communities.

In addition to conducting their own research, some organizations, such as Project Expedite Justice (PEJ), train local partners to ensure that victims' accounts meet the standards for admissibility in court. For example, in its effort to document human rights abuses committed in Sudan's civil war, PEJ has conducted witness interviews in refugee camps in Chad with the participation of Sudanese lawyers and investigators to build a body of evidence for submission to the International Criminal Court.

According to PEJ's 2023 Annual Report: "PEJ staff model how to conduct such interviews in a trauma-informed way that yields actionable evidence. We also model evidence storage and security. This skill set will equip Sudanese actors to assume the mantle of justice work in Sudan when it is safe to do so."

The report added: "In 2023, PEJ went on a mission to Chad to interview Sudanese refugees and document

their stories. Using trauma-informed and gender-sensitive interview techniques, PEJ spoke with more than 100 survivors and witnesses of grave human rights violations. These brave individuals had endured or witnessed horrendous crimes, including indiscriminate attacks against civilians, killings and summary executions, torture, forced displacement, abductions, rape, and destruction of civilian infrastructure, among other crimes. Because of PEJ's work, these atrocities have been documented according to the highest evidentiary standards.”¹⁰

The work of organizations such as PEJ and the Reckoning Project can also help to establish new legal pathways for seeking accountability. Prior to the breakdown in the functioning of Sudan's court system, PEJ and its partners sought to bring a suit against the country's interior minister for the use of excessive force against anti-coup protesters, given the NGOs' inability to identify the security officials responsible:

“Before the war erupted, PEJ and its partners were collaborating on several strategic litigation and advocacy projects at the national level. A Khartoum-based partner filed a civil suit against the Minister of Interior, Ezzeldin El Sheikh, on behalf of a victim injured by a projectile used to disperse anti-coup protesters. The decision to sue the Minister of Interior was strategic because there was no clear evidence showing which police officer or security agent had fired the shot. It was a test case to establish a precedent on behalf of those hurt during peaceful protests.”¹¹

Likewise, testimony and evidence of torture collected by the Reckoning Project were instrumental in formulating the first universal jurisdiction complaint filed in Argentina against members of Putin's military for crimes committed in Ukraine. The principle of universal jurisdiction allows states or international entities to prosecute individuals for severe violations of international law—such as genocide, war crimes, and crimes against humanity—irrespective of the crime's location or the nationality of those involved.

For victims of human rights abuses, such novel strategies provide a ray of hope amid the limitations posed by international courts and special tribunals. A

pivotal witness in the case, who reported severe abuse at the hands of Russian forces, stated:

“I am one of many. So many other people I know were subjected to even worse treatment. I want to tell the world about our pain. These practices continue to happen in Ukrainian territories occupied by Russia. ... In Argentina, I understood that justice is a long path, and it is possible when people unite. I met people who went through the horrors of torture, but who never gave up. Because people here understood my pain, I hope the chance for accountability exists.”¹²

Qualitative data have also been instrumental in catalyzing broader discussions on human rights, justice, and reform on the international stage. Organizations such as Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International undertake extensive efforts to document human rights violations around the world, ensuring they are brought to the forefront of public consciousness. Through careful research, they produce detailed reports that highlight systemic abuses and advocate for change.

In a report from last June, Amnesty International brought attention to the armed conflict in northeast Nigeria between Boko Haram and government security forces. According to Amnesty International, Boko Haram has engaged in widespread abductions and sexual violence, and the military has unlawfully imprisoned and forcibly “disappeared people,” especially girls, for years. The report shed light on the crimes committed following a meticulous qualitative research process.

According to its authors: “This report is based on 126 interviews, 76 with girls and young women who are survivors of Boko Haram, conducted between December 2019 and May 2024. The research examines abuses and violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law the girls endured by Boko Haram, as well as by the Nigerian authorities, including the military. It sets out to better understand the unique experiences of these girls and young women, and their aspirations, to inform support and reintegration efforts across northeast Nigeria.”¹³

10 https://www.projectexpeditejustice.org/files/ugd/882c6a_a92d946cc3ba45ad958a09791bfc7f69.pdf

11 Ibid.

12 <https://www.thereckoningproject.com/uk/justice/press-release->

13 <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/afr44/7883/2024/en/>

Qualitative data become especially important when high-quality quantitative data are limited or unavailable. Some countries and territories, such as the Palestinian territories, have too little data available to receive a headline score and ranking on the Atlas, and for the same reason are often excluded from similar comparative measures. However, journalists and NGO staff have ensured that the public remains informed about human rights violations occurring in the West Bank and Gaza, deemed by Reporters without Borders as the most dangerous place in the world for journalists in 2024.¹⁴ After the outbreak of war in Gaza in 2023, Human Rights Watch conducted an extensive investigation into the water crisis affecting Palestinians in the territory:

“Human Rights Watch interviewed 66 Palestinians in Gaza between October 18, 2023, and July 23, 2024. They described the near-impossibility of securing water for themselves and their families. Human Rights Watch also spoke to four of Gaza’s Coastal Municipalities Water Utility (CMWU) employees, 31 doctors and healthcare professionals, and 15 individuals working with UN agencies and international aid organizations in Gaza, who described Israeli forces’ actions that have deprived Palestinians in Gaza of water, as well as the devastating health impacts, including death.

“Human Rights Watch also analyzed satellite imagery and verified photographs and videos captured between the beginning of the hostilities and August 2024. These show extensive damage and destruction to water and sanitation infrastructure, including the apparently deliberate, systematic razing of the solar panels powering four of Gaza’s six wastewater treatment plants by Israeli ground forces, as well as Israeli soldiers filming themselves demolishing a key water reservoir.”¹⁵

An important limitation of qualitative data in combating impunity is that not all stories can be told now. While the effects of climate change and other forms of environmental degradation are mounting, their impact today likely pales in comparison to what future generations will face. Quantitative data on climate can be used to model the effects of what is to come—albeit with some uncertainty—though projections often fail to convey the human tragedy of the communities most affected. On the other hand, personal accounts of climate change or the hardships imposed by adjustment may presage future effects but also have their limits in informing long-term policies. If they are not interpreted carefully, these types of qualitative data run the risk of biasing policy toward near-term considerations, without paying sufficient attention to far-sighted solutions designed to be most equitable for future generations.

Regional perspectives

North America



North America is the Atlas’s smallest region in terms of number of countries, comprising just the US and Canada. The region’s average score was 1.36 in 2024,

well below the global mean but still somewhat higher than the degree of impunity experienced by citizens of most western European countries and other wealthy democracies.

Among the Atlas’s dimensions, most North Americans face the lowest degree of impunity in unaccountable governance and economic exploitation (scores of 0.96). Average scores for conflict and violence (1.44) and abuse of human rights (1.20) are slightly higher, but still lower than the mean in international comparison. Environmental degradation is North America’s weakest dimension, with an average score of 2.20 that is slightly above the global mean.

¹⁴ <https://rsf.org/en/rsf-s-2024-round-journalism-suffers-exorbitant-human-cost-due-conflicts-and-repressive-regimes#:~:text=Palestine%20is%20the%20most%20dangerous,according%20to%20our%20latest%20information>.

¹⁵ <https://www.hrw.org/report/2024/12/19/extermination-and-acts-genocide/israel-deliberately-depriving-palestinians-gaza>

Since 2019, North Americans' exposure to impunity, as captured by the headline score, has worsened more than that of any other region, led by higher scores in conflict and violence (+0.43) and, to a lesser extent, unaccountable governance (+0.17) and abuse of human rights (+0.07). Over the same period, North Americans have benefited from marginally better conditions on environmental degradation and economic exploitation.

Canadians continue to experience low levels of impunity, as the country performs toward the top of the class on the Atlas of Impunity. Its score of 1.07 points reflects a marginal improvement compared to 2023, and its overall ranking has correspondingly improved by one place to 150th. As in previous years, the level of accountability in Canada is especially high on measures of unaccountable governance, conflict and violence, and abuse of human rights. Yet Canada's ranking for economic exploitation has deteriorated somewhat in recent years, and its score for environmental degradation lags considerably behind its peer industrialized democracies in the US and western Europe.

Over the past five years, Canada's score has remained broadly stable. Indeed, while Canada is hardly immune to global trends, its robust rule of law culture, democratic and parliamentary institutions, free and open civil society, nonpartisan civil service, relative social inclusion, and high degree of internal security provide powerful bulwarks against impunity.

As noted in the 2023 Atlas of Impunity, the relatively high level of impunity experienced by Canadians on environmental degradation—2.27, the same as in 2023, and good for just a ranking of 61st globally—reflects in part the substantial contribution of the energy and natural resource sectors to the Canadian economy. In 2023, the last year for which data are available, Canada was the world's fourth-largest producer of crude oil and the fifth-largest producer of natural gas, which together constitute its most significant source of greenhouse gas emissions.

Most Canadian crude oil, moreover, is extracted from bitumen deposits in northern Alberta in a process that requires tremendous energy input and is more emissions-intensive than conventional oil production. Other forms of natural resource extraction, such

as mining and forestry, also produce considerable environmental externalities. Although Canada's energy and resource sectors are well-regulated and contribute disproportionately to GDP growth and job creation, among advanced industrial democracies only Australia compares with Canada's relatively high score in this area.

Similarly, Canada's human rights score of 0.56 is unchanged from 2023 and again trails predominantly northern and western European states on the Atlas of Impunity. Its closest analogue, however, is again Australia, which like Canada continues to grapple with the negative legacies of colonialism for its indigenous population. Although all major political parties in Canada have committed to advance reconciliation with Canadian First Nations, Metis, and Inuit peoples, indigenous Canadians continue to suffer systemically poor socio-economic outcomes, which likely accounts for Canada's divergence from many peer countries on this metric.

One surprising finding in the 2024 Atlas of Impunity is its confirmation of Canadians' deteriorating position on measures of economic exploitation. Whereas its year-on-year score improved to 0.86 (from 1.00 in 2023), good enough for 27th best in the world, Canada scored 0.65 as recently as 2019 and has slumped since on metrics related to corruption, functioning of government, budgetary oversight, and social inequality with respect to civil liberties. Without an obvious trigger for that sustained—albeit relatively marginal—deterioration, it is perhaps best seen as a reminder that citizens of countries with robust institutions cannot rest on their laurels when it comes to the threat of impunity.

Meanwhile, the level of impunity experienced in the US continues to be exceptional among its peer group of high-income countries. It ranks well above any central or western European country; it is closer to El Salvador or Peru than to Australia, the UK, or Canada. The US is a clear outlier in the index: It is the rare example of a high-income country whose impunity score makes it look more like a middle-income country.

US exceptionalism is due to a combination of structural and contingent factors. The structural factors that weighed on the US's impunity in 2023 continued to do so in 2024. Although the US has

robust human rights protections for most civilians, the government has not ratified any human rights treaties in the last year, dragging its score upward compared to European countries, and it maintains very high levels of incarceration and punitive executions, especially relative to its peers.

The US is still the world's biggest oil producer and lacks a federal carbon mitigation scheme, which in combination pushes its environmental degradation score upward. Lastly, high levels of innovation—owing in part to a relatively lax regulatory environment—have contributed to a high per-capita income but have also exacerbated economic inequality, on net hurting US citizens on the economic exploitation score in particular.

Trump is the contingent factor. His election to another term as president hangs over the US score in this edition of the Atlas. Much ink has been spilled over the notion that democratic governance is generally failing in the US, and that the country is heading for a Hungarian or Turkish form of competitive authoritarianism under a second Trump term. The Atlas's own data suggest that this trend may already be at work: US citizens have experienced an increase of 0.17 points (from 1.06 to 1.23) in the unaccountable governance dimension over the last five years, which included the events of 6 January 2021. Since 2012, when the Atlas's time series began, the score has risen from 0.93 to 1.23.

Over the next five years, it seems more likely than not that the level of impunity experienced in the US will continue to increase. That Trump's election will in effect terminate all legal action against him, pertaining largely to his attempt to overturn the result of the 2020 election, should arguably weigh upward on the US's score, representing as it does "impunity" in a relatively distilled form. Many of Trump's campaign promises—politicizing federal law enforcement in order to deploy it against his political enemies, mobilizing the military domestically to carry out mass deportations, and seeking to purge the civil service of ideologically nonaligned members—will, if carried out, effect a mechanical increase in the unaccountable governance score. If inequality grows as a result of Trump's fiscal and tariff measures, and oil production soars to historic highs as a result of

a lax regulatory landscape, that would drive other components of the index up as well.

The Atlas is a lagging indicator, not a leading one, making its 2024 score poorly suited to predict future movement. But the direction of travel in the US's score is clear. Though impunity levels in the US are already high among its peer group, they seem more likely to increase than to decrease in the coming years.

Feature 3: Tech oligarchs, impunity, and the resulting societal implications

In the current political landscape, the influence of oligarchs—business leaders who wield significant control over political and policy decisions, and who typically face a very different set of options and consequences than ordinary citizens—cannot be understated. Their influence highlights a shift in how power is wielded and perceived globally. This dynamic is particularly salient in the US, where the political system is often critiqued as broken, favoring a wealthy elite who can sway politics and policy. The concentration of power among wealthy individuals—the new Trump administration features an unprecedented 13 billionaires in senior roles—highlights this shift and presents risks reminiscent of oligarchic structures.

No industry has embraced politics as quickly as tech. The sector has been producing billionaires for decades, but only recently have tech moguls taken an active interest in influencing politics and playing a direct role in policymaking. The emergence of Elon Musk, the world's richest man, as a major force in the Trump administration underscores a broader trend of economic and political power reinforcing each other, creating a self-sustaining cycle.

This nexus of influence is not relegated to the entrepreneurial experts exercising control behind closed doors; it manifests openly in political decisions and public forums. For example, several tech CEOs donated \$1 million to Trump's inauguration and were seated prominently on the dais. Like oligarchs in other countries, the CEOs gained access and influence, but their presence also implies tacit endorsement of Trump's policies in the hope that

some of those policies will favor their enterprises, potentially skewing public policies to align with their interests. The dynamic is self-reinforcing, as Trump's highly personalized, loyalty-driven political style enables entrepreneurs and others to curry favor with the president through personal donations and other displays.

What sets apart tech oligarchs from many past influential business tycoons is their control over the information space in addition to a critical sector. This has widespread ramifications in the age of social media, where a relative lack of regulation (and none in the US) has allowed platforms to essentially govern themselves. Musk has used his control of X to boost his political influence and views, but the choices of just a handful of tech billionaires determine the information flow of billions of people every day.

Meanwhile, the spread of disinformation through social media platforms exacerbates these challenges, creating and perpetuating toxic information environments. Such dis- and misinformation deepens societal divides, amplifies conspiracy theories, and at its worst, heightens the perceived legitimacy of violence as a form of political expression.

For instance, baseless claims of a "stolen" 2020 US presidential election helped to fuel the Capitol riots of 2021, demonstrating how misinformation can incite violence under the guise of defending democracy. Upon returning to office in January 2025, Trump pardoned about 1,500 defendants from that incident, including some convicted of violent crimes. Similarly, in Brazil's 2022 election, disinformation fueled narratives of electoral fraud and prompted calls for a military coup, escalating radicalization and culminating in an attack on congress. More recently, in December 2024, an alleged Russian disinformation campaign centered on TikTok videos helped to propel an ultranationalist presidential candidate to victory in Romania, highlighting how foreign influence has the potential to destabilize democracy. Romania's constitutional court subsequently annulled the vote, calling for a rerun election in May 2025.

Under the stewardship of Musk and Mark Zuckerberg, vast global social media empires operate with minimal oversight. This lack of accountability is

stark, particularly as platforms under their influence have played pivotal roles in political debate in the run-up to and aftermath of elections and in broader public discourse. In the backdrop of another Trump administration, there is evidence that Zuckerberg modified platform policies to align with ideological agendas, potentially weakening safeguards against foreign disinformation campaigns.

The escalating energy needs of AI development also threads into the narrative of tech-driven geopolitics. Whereas for years the tech industry could operate fairly autonomously, the emerging AI revolution means it needs something from government now: support in building physical infrastructure. As governments consider prioritizing resource allocation to maintain competitive dominance in technological arenas, tech firms are poised to benefit from specific decisions. Strategic infrastructure investments, long-term energy agreements, and upgrades to support data center expansions highlight this race for supremacy—among countries and companies.

Influential companies that have the ear of national leaders may gain an advantage in securing control over valuable resources. State and corporate agendas are likely to collide, often at the expense of broader societal implications. The focus on securing resources necessary for sustaining digital and communications infrastructure mirrors historical contests for tangible resources such as oil or minerals—and the implications in today's interconnected world promise to be just as profound.

The confluence of unchecked tech oligarchy, widespread disinformation, and the race for strategic resources to contest the AI competition presents a daunting landscape for governance and societal equilibrium. The narratives of tech entrepreneurs shaping destinies across policy spheres—coupled with impunity born from vast unchecked power—demand rigorous scrutiny and reform. The challenge is no longer simply identifying the points of fracture but crafting systems robust enough to restore accountability and foster more equitable governance. Only through a deliberate reevaluation of these power structures can we hope to negate the cycle of impunity and redefine the balance between private interests and public good.

Europe



Most of the Atlas's strongest performers are located in Europe, including the countries with the eight lowest overall impunity rankings. Moreover, Europeans' exposure to impunity showed improvement over the past five years as the regional average score fell from an already low 1.24 to 1.17 in 2024. Citizens of Nordic and western European countries experienced the lowest levels of impunity in the region, while those in eastern and southeastern European countries were exposed to comparatively higher levels of impunity. Turkey is the region's worst performer by far and stands apart from the rest of Europe, ranking 35th globally and scoring 2.57 in 2024.

Of note, however, is that Europe's average regional score (1.17) failed to improve and deteriorated marginally compared to 2023 (1.16). This marks the first time the regional average increased, improving or remaining stable in all previous years of the time series. The number of countries whose overall score worsened last year (23) was much larger than those that saw an improvement (14).

Strong performance on the Atlas tends to overlap with EU membership, reflecting the impact of the EU treaty and accompanying legislative framework, in addition to the bloc's extensive governance-related accession criteria. These institutional parameters set high standards for accountability across a range of factors intended to limit many of the drivers of impunity, from labor standards and the rule of law to democratic governance and sound macroeconomic management. That said, citizens of some newer EU member states faced relatively higher impunity levels, including those of former socialist countries such as Bulgaria, Hungary, Poland, and Romania. In the latter two, performance worsened marginally in 2024 compared to the previous year (by 0.01).

Improvements to the metrics in 2024 tended to be concentrated in central Europe, including in the Czech Republic, Hungary, Slovakia, and Austria, as well as in the Baltics (Lithuania, Estonia). Malta also experienced positive shifts, as did Moldova among countries vying to join the EU.

Residents of the Balkans experienced sizable increases in metrics of impunity to varying degrees. Serbians and Croatians in particular faced notable increases, by 0.10 in both, but so too did Bosnians (+0.03), Albanians (+0.02), and Romanians (+0.02) to a lesser extent, along with Portuguese and Spanish citizens. It is likewise noteworthy that the Nordic region, while exhibiting some of the lowest levels of impunity globally, showed modest increases across all its component countries (in Norway and Sweden but also in Finland and Denmark).

Violence and unrest were by far the biggest drivers of changes in performance in many countries, in both directions. Large shifts in the conflict and violence scores were primarily driven by waves of unrest and (sometimes violent) protests, rather than armed conflict as in other parts of the world. That said, some caution is in order when interpreting the resulting shifts in overall impunity scores.

More riots and protests may mean that more people within European countries are affected by violent acts of impunity. But equally, protest (especially when peaceful) can be a valid means to hold leadership to account and can be a healthy part of political life within a democracy; it can provide evidence of a thriving or expanding civil society.

The rise in conflict and violence in some parts of Europe may therefore overstate the degree to which people are experiencing impunity in these states. Furthermore, the drivers of protests across different European countries were quite varied. These range from antigovernment protests denouncing corruption and poor governance to the cost of living and wage-related recriminations, opposition to mining projects, racially driven anti-immigration riots, and unrest targeted toward authorities by disaffected groups.

In terms of impunity experienced in individual ranked countries, citizens in the Czech Republic and Malta experienced the biggest declines in impunity metrics in 2024 compared to the previous year (by 0.05 and

0.04, respectively). In the Czech Republic especially, the improvement was driven to a good extent by the conflict and violence dimension. In Malta, the decline was more broad-based, underpinned by lower scores on the human rights, economic exploitation, and conflict and violence dimensions.

In both countries, this was in line with a steady decline in overall impunity levels over the last decade, from 1.34 in 2012 to 1.01 in 2024 in the case of the Czech Republic, and from 1.38 to 1.17 for Malta.

In contrast, France's overall score of 1.13 in 2024 is noticeably higher than five years ago (1.09 in 2019), reflecting a longer-term negative trend resulting from chronic societal unrest.

On the other hand, levels of impunity have increased in a number of European countries over the past year, most significantly in Serbia and Croatia, and to a lesser extent in the UK, Portugal, Norway, and Spain, among others. Once again, conflict and violence was the most significant factor in these negative shifts.

Serbian citizens experienced the single-largest increase to 1.87—still within the range of the last decade—driven by declines across most dimensions, followed closely by Croatians. In Serbia, a gradual crackdown on civil society and dissent explains the deterioration in the abuse of human rights and unaccountable governance scores, as well as the economic exploitation score. The conflict and violence score in particular registered a very notable change, likely reflecting the recent wave of protests that swept the country last year. These were primarily fueled by public resentment toward corruption and poor governance and also by pushback against plans for massive mining projects to develop the largest lithium reserves in Europe.

Croatia also registered a noteworthy increase in impunity last year, with a score of 1.35, in a sharp reversal of improvements over the last five years. Again, this was driven mainly by the violence and conflict dimension and the economic exploitation dimension to a lesser extent. This bucks the otherwise mostly downward trend in Croatians'

overall exposure to impunity following the country's accession to the EU in 2013.

A similar picture emerges in Portugal, which shows a clear deterioration in the level of accountability experienced by its citizens, underpinned by higher scores across all dimensions but especially conflict and violence—reflecting a recent wave of sometimes violent protests, spurred primarily by police violence.

Turkish citizens have been exposed to growing levels of impunity over the past five years, mainly owing to a further weakening of constraints on government power. Free (though not fair) national elections in May 2023 showcased incumbency advantages amid continued democratic backsliding. Yet these factors did not prevent substantial opposition victories in local elections last year, and Turkey recorded a modest improvement in its overall impunity score in 2024—bucking the longer-term trend. This owed to improvements in the abuse of human rights, conflict and violence, and economic exploitation scores, while the unaccountable governance score worsened. Economic conditions will likely continue to improve, even in the absence of corresponding improvements to the rule of law and basic freedoms.

European countries that should be watched for potential improvement in 2025 are primarily located in the western Balkans, as they are expected to make further progress on their path toward EU accession. Poland will also be important to watch. The governing coalition is expected to win this year's presidential election, which will remove a major impediment to the reform agenda geared toward walking back a previous overhaul of the judiciary, restoring the rule of law, and improving women's and LGBTQ+ rights.

Nevertheless, some EU countries, such as Hungary and Slovakia, are at risk of further deterioration of the rule of law as populist leadership and rising concerns about economic conditions and migration weigh more heavily. Meanwhile, Romania could emerge as a new flashpoint, given recent tensions around its presidential election, which was annulled by the constitutional court amid allegations of foreign interference favoring far-right candidates; the vote will be repeated in 2025.

Eurasia



As is the case with most other regions, citizens in Eurasia, on average, experienced little change in their exposure to impunity relative to one year ago. Changes to the mean dimension scores effectively cancel each other out and leave the overall score almost unchanged from 2023 at 2.23. That puts the Eurasia region at the same level as the Asia region, with a slightly worse performance than Latin America.

Ongoing violent conflict and its legacy are key factors driving many score changes among countries in Eurasia. That is the case for Russia, where citizens by far experienced the highest level of impunity in the region with a score of 2.85, up 0.09 from the previous year, with a rank of 21. Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022 has been a leading driver of an overall score increase since 2021 of 0.28.

For Russian citizens, the most significant year-on-year increase was for the conflict and violence dimension. This is likely a reflection of Ukraine's ground incursion into Russian territory in August, as well as an uptick in Ukrainian drone and missile attacks against military targets and oil refineries throughout 2024.

At the same time, there have been limited changes to Russia's year-on-year unaccountable governance score, which is its biggest driver of impunity. Putin began a new six-year term after an election last March that was neither free nor fair. Political repression of anti-war sentiment and criticism of the regime is keeping the abuse of human rights dimension score high as well.

The war also is a major driver of the impunity endured by Ukraine's citizens. Ukraine recorded a more substantial increase of 0.08 over a year ago to 2.28, but it would be misleading to compare its overall score with similar scores of authoritarian states in the region, given the disparity in the effects of individual dimensions. The magnitude of impunity faced by Ukrainians in the conflict and violence dimension grew again in 2024 and is higher than that of any other Eurasian state, including Russia. This is mostly because Ukrainian residents bear the brunt of the

war's effects, as the conflict unfolds almost entirely within the country's borders.

Other scores likewise appear to reflect the effects of the war. This is most notable in the upward trend in Ukraine's unaccountable governance score since 2022. That rise coincides with the imposition of martial law, made necessary by the Russian invasion.

In the South Caucasus sub-region, residents saw some improvement in accountability levels in 2024 after an upsurge of violence in 2023, primarily attributed to the longstanding conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan over the previously disputed Nagorno-Karabakh enclave.

The level of impunity experienced by people in Azerbaijan fluctuated over the past five years but improved considerably in 2024, with the country's ranking moving from 48th place in 2023 to 56th—one of the most notable jumps registered this time. However, the change largely reflects the resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict but may not capture the lingering effects of the immediate aftermath. Azerbaijan's military offensive in September 2023 later led to the exodus of more than 100,000 ethnic Armenian residents into Armenia and other countries.

Despite ranking better than most Eurasian countries, Azerbaijan's human rights situation worsened in late 2024. As Baku prepared to host the UN climate summit (COP29) last November, the government intensified its crackdown and arrests of dissidents, journalists, and activists. According to the Union "For Freedom of Political Prisoners in Azerbaijan," political prisoners, including journalists and activists, now exceed 300—the highest since the early 2000s. This is particularly evident in Azerbaijan's rising unaccountable governance score, which climbed from 3.44 in 2023 to 3.51 in 2024.

Corruption scandals have further affected Azerbaijan's ranking and score for economic exploitation, including recent cases involving Western officials. In May 2024, the US Department of Justice charged Representative Henry Cuellar (D-TX) with bribery linked to acting as a foreign agent and promoting Baku's interests in Washington. Earlier in the year, Germany indicted two former members of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe on suspicion of receiving bribes in exchange for voting in Azerbaijan's favor at the Council of Europe.

Elsewhere in Eurasia, Georgians experienced a slight improvement in impunity levels since 2019, making their country one of the better performers overall in the region. That said, the contested results of the October parliamentary elections, in which the ruling Georgian Dream-Democratic Georgia (GDDG) party claimed 54% of the national vote, as well as the revived “foreign agent law,” have led to a renewed political crisis and civil unrest. Democratic backsliding is only partially reflected in the 2024 scores, as they are based on data collected before the elections. These factors, though, are likely to contribute to higher unaccountable governance scores in 2025.

Most countries in Central Asia had improved scores compared to 2023, and remain in a range from the best performer, Kazakhstan (2.21), to worst performer Turkmenistan (2.48). One exception in terms of score direction is Kyrgyzstan, which registered a 0.02-point increase to 2.29. Unaccountable governance is a particular concern for the country, with an increase in the mean score of 0.17 since 2023 and a five-year rise of 0.66. Government crackdowns on the political opposition and civil society are likely factors behind these changes.

People in all countries in the sub-region have seen a notable decline in their countries’ conflict and violence scores. This appears due to an easing of disputes among the five Central Asian states, as well as the limited security risks that materialized following the Taliban’s 2021 takeover of Afghanistan.

Latin America



On average, the level of impunity experienced in Latin America saw little variation, with its overall score remaining unchanged between 2023 and 2024.

Over the past five years, the region's score has also stayed relatively stable. Latin America's current impunity score of 2.08 is slightly higher than the global average of 2.02 but remains notably lower than the regional averages experienced in Asia (2.18), sub-Saharan Africa (2.42), and the Middle East and North Africa (2.50).

In 2024, Latin America's conflict and violence score dipped by 0.05 compared to 2023. This reflects the importance of security among voter priorities and the efforts by different governments to address this issue. However, recent progress is offset by a steady uptick in the region's unaccountable governance score, which has risen by 0.07 since 2019, signaling ongoing challenges in institutional accountability. The region also exhibits notable variations among countries. The low levels of accountability experienced in Haiti and Venezuela continue to position these countries among the worst performers worldwide, whereas Uruguay and Costa Rica achieve scores comparable to Europe's regional average (the lowest regional impunity score globally).

Residents of Central America experienced varied shifts in impunity levels last year, with Guatemala standing out for the most significant improvement, dropping its score from 2.66 in 2023 to 2.55 in 2024 (a 0.11 decrease), its lowest since 2016. This reduction reflects a notable decrease in Guatemala's conflict and violence score (-0.56 from 2023), alongside a slight reduction in the economic exploitation (-0.08) score. Since taking office in January 2024, center-left President Bernardo Arevalo has improved the country's political capabilities, which should enable incremental improvements in his transparency agenda.

Impunity levels in Honduras improved in 2024, decreasing by 0.06 compared to 2023. Still, its 2024 score of 2.51 remains higher than the regional average and aligns more closely with the higher scores in the Middle East and North Africa. Notably, the country recorded a sizable reduction in its abuse of human rights score, dropping from 1.85 in 2023 to 1.67 in 2024. This was driven by a decrease in the number of violent events by state forces against civilians.

But the outlook looks more challenging given a recent narco trafficking scandal linked to President Xiomara Castro's inner circle and her controversial cancelation of a longstanding extradition treaty with the US. Meanwhile, negotiations around a UN-backed anticorruption body have stalled and are unlikely to prosper under this administration, which concludes in January 2026.

Citizens in Costa Rica, Panama, and the Dominican Republic benefited from some of the lowest impunity scores in Central America and the Caribbean (1.39, 1.73, and 1.82, respectively). Other Caribbean states, such as Barbados, Grenada, and Dominica, also maintain low scores, all under 1.50. Costa Rica's score has remained relatively stable, decreasing slightly to 1.31 in 2022 and 1.29 in 2023 and then increasing by 0.10 in 2024. This change is primarily due to growing security challenges as Costa Rica becomes a more important narco trafficking transit route, as reflected in a 0.31 rise in its conflict and violence score.

Meanwhile, the Dominican Republic has had a steady drop in ranking, moving from 95th in 2018 to 111th in 2024. Second only to Belize (-0.20), it achieved one of the biggest reductions in impunity scores over the past five years, with a decline of 0.19. President Luis Abinader is using a strong second term to strengthen institutions, including a recent constitutional revision that grants more independence to the attorney general's office.

Despite remaining one of the countries with higher levels of impunity faced by its residents, Venezuela experienced an improvement in its overall score compared to the previous year, moving from 3.06 to 3.02. This reflects partial improvements in accountability of governance, as the Maduro regime initially adhered to some aspects of the Barbados Agreements reached with opposition forces. The deal temporarily eased repression and allowed for some degree of political dissent. However, the score does not incorporate the terms of last July's fraudulent presidential election or the subsequent uptick in repression. According to local NGOs, the regime has imprisoned more than 1,800 people, including prominent opposition leaders, and forced opposition leader Edmundo Gonzalez into exile. A deterioration in score is likely to be recorded next year.

With a score of 3.06, Haiti is the country with the greatest impunity in Latin America, ranking 12th worldwide in the 2024 Atlas. The people of Haiti have endured a continued deterioration in their country's impunity levels over the past five years, driven primarily by an escalating political conflict and violence. The security environment has suffered in the last year, as criminal groups remain in control of Haiti, particularly in the capital Port-Au-Prince, with international security missions failing to bring stability. Furthermore, Haiti's unaccountable governance score worsened following the collapse of the national government last April, when former prime minister Ariel Henry resigned after criminal groups denied his return to the country. Since then, the transition government has failed to establish a unified project and provide political stability, ousting Henry's successor Garry Conille in November, while new elections are nowhere in sight.

Brazil improved its headline impunity score, with a 0.05 decrease (compared to 2023) and a 0.04 decrease over a five-year period. Brazilians benefited from some progress in unaccountable governance, which had the greatest improvement, both annually and on a five-year basis. Conflict and violence remain a problem in the country, however, reflecting organized crime active throughout Brazil. This dimension continues to range above 3.0 and worsened in the last five years by 0.09 points. The remaining indicators saw only marginal improvements in past years; environmental degradation experienced some improvement under the current administration.

Mexicans experienced a marginal improvement in impunity 2024, as their country's score decreased to 2.59 from 2.60 in 2023. This change was driven primarily by a 0.10 reduction in the economic exploitation score and a 0.04 reduction in the abuse of human rights score—though these improvements were largely offset by a worsening of unaccountable governance and conflict and violence. The level of impunity experienced in Mexico remains above the regional average, and the country has dropped three positions in the global ranking over the past five years. Nevertheless, these scores reflect the final months of former president Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador's tenure and do not yet account for potential shifts under President Claudia Sheinbaum's leadership.

Argentina's score has remained roughly unchanged, decreasing 0.04 points compared to the previous year. It continues to be a robust overall performer (with a score of 1.66, rank of 122th), along with Chile (score of 1.59, rank of 127th) and Uruguay (score of 1.19, rank of 142th). The slight variation in Argentina's score responds to a worsening of economic indicators during former president Alberto Fernandez's last year in office (2019-2023), with output contracting, inflation running above 100%, and poor social conditions. From 2019-2024, Argentina's impunity score decreased by 0.04 points. These scores do not reflect the first year in office of libertarian President Javier Milei, who has implemented a drastic stabilization plan to address longstanding imbalances and rein in inflation.

South Asia



In 2024, accountability levels experienced by people in South Asia varied from poor to near median in the global context. With a score of 3.38, Afghanistan remained the worst performer in the region in terms of the degree of impunity endured by its residents and the fourth worst in the Atlas overall. Following the Taliban's takeover in 2021, the country has experienced gradual improvement in the conflict and violence dimension over the last five years. But economic exploitation and abuse of human rights worsened in 2024, as more than half the country remains in need of immediate humanitarian assistance, and the Taliban continues to clamp down on basic freedoms and impose restrictions on women and girls.

Neighboring Pakistan was the second-worst performer in the region, with a score of 2.93, ranking 18th in the Atlas. Last year, Pakistani citizens benefited from some improvement in the economic exploitation dimension as the economy stabilized to a degree and inflation

eased to single digits. However, the overall level of impunity in Pakistan increased owing to the country's poor performance in unaccountable governance and the abuse of human rights. National elections were held in February 2024, but the military rigged them to keep Imran Khan—the country's most popular politician—out of power. Khan remains imprisoned in politically motivated cases while the military-backed government continues to crack down on his party.

Bangladesh performed somewhat better, with a score of 2.70 and a ranking of 26th in the Atlas. Citizens in Bangladesh saw a slight improvement in their country's overall impunity score, though unaccountable governance and conflict and violence scores regressed. Sheikh Hasina suppressed her political opponents and critics ahead of national elections last January, ensuring her victory. She was forced to flee the country only a few months later, though, after student-led demonstrations escalated despite a brutal police crackdown, ultimately leading to the collapse of her regime. A period of instability followed, but the interim government gradually restored law and order.

India, the largest country in South Asia with a population of 1.4 billion, struggles with some of the limitations caused by fragmented political sovereignty. People in India also face some of the developmental challenges typical of lower-middle-income countries. India scored 2.39, slightly improved on the Atlas compared to 2023, and ranks 55th overall—although its performance across the five dimensions is varied. It is among the worst performers when it comes to ensuring accountability to its citizens for human rights violations and sits in the bottom third of the Atlas when it comes to conflict and violence and environmental degradation. On the other hand, it ranks above the median in terms of unaccountable governance and economic exploitation.

India's conflict and violence score has improved dramatically because the Atlas no longer considers arms imports. However, the score remains high because ethnic violence in the northeastern state of Manipur continues to be a problem. One might argue that the data overstate the degree of conflict in India as violence is primarily restricted to the countryside while its population centers remain peaceful. The ACLED data factored into the Atlas also point to a

higher frequency of riots in the country than official sources do; India's government records indicate far fewer instances of unrest.

Besides this, Indians benefited from some improvement in the country's unaccountable governance score, and India held free and fair national elections last year. India scores well on the integrity of its democratic processes, reflecting its high and socially balanced voter turnout and use of electronic voting machines.

Citizens in Sri Lanka and Nepal, the two other major South Asian states, experienced lower levels of impunity than those in India, as reflected in their lower ranking in the Atlas. Sri Lanka (score of 2.26) ranks 66th, and Nepal (score of 2.16) ranks 80th. Both countries' impunity scores in 2024 remained broadly stable compared to 2023. Sri Lanka held successful presidential and parliamentary elections at the end of the year, the first since the economic crisis of 2022, but any improvement in its unaccountable governance scores will be reflected in the next iteration of the Atlas.

Bangladesh, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka are the three countries to watch in South Asia in 2025. Bangladesh is in flux, and its impunity score could either improve or worsen depending on the performance of the Muhammad Yunus-led interim government. For now, the timeline for fresh elections is unclear, and it is yet to be seen whether Yunus can enact reforms that reduce economic exploitation. Meanwhile, Pakistan's ranking could tumble further in 2025. The government recently amended the constitution to strengthen the military's position and undermine the country's judiciary, which could increase unaccountable governance. Furthermore, continued terrorist attacks and political instability could worsen Pakistan's conflict and violence score.

On the other hand, Sri Lanka elected an antiestablishment president—Anura Kumara Dissanayake—and gave his party an overwhelming majority in parliament. There is a risk of Dissanayake centralizing power and making sweeping constitutional changes. That said, he could also use his mandate to drive the country's economic recovery.

Southeast Asia



For citizens of Southeast Asia, the level of impunity has generally been consistent over the past five years, with the regional average remaining unchanged from the previous year's score of 2.19. Southeast Asian states generally rank in the middle in the 2024 Atlas of Impunity. Myanmar is a noteworthy outlier having one of the world's highest levels of impunity, scoring 3.39. Meanwhile, Thailand and Vietnam are among the countries most improved in ranking since 2019.

People living in Myanmar continue to endure high levels of impunity—unsurprisingly, Myanmar's score is the third highest for 2024, behind only Syria and Yemen—with the country now into the fourth year since the coup. Conflict in Myanmar has further heightened in the past year, with the state and rebel groups digging their heels in over the future of the country. The sustained violence has also led to enhanced economic exploitation, with the UN Development Programme highlighting that close to half of the population is now living in poverty (double from 2017).

UN figures indicate that the conflict has displaced at least 3.5 million people and left 15.2 million facing food insecurity. These challenges are further exacerbated by climate vulnerability and barriers to humanitarian assistance. Equally alarming for the future of Myanmar's population is the collapse of the healthcare and education systems, which not only threatens immediate well-being but also undermines the country's long-term development prospects. This deterioration in critical sectors is likely to have profound adverse impacts on the country's ability to cultivate a skilled workforce, ensure public health, and foster economic growth, ultimately hindering Myanmar's potential for recovery.

Inhabitants of the rest of Southeast Asia, though, face minimal internal and external violence, contributing to robust scores for the conflict and violence dimension. The region achieved an average score of 1.67 for conflict and violence in 2024, marking a small improvement from 1.70 in 2023. However, tensions are mounting in the South China Sea. In these contested waters, confrontations and "shadowing" incidents between Chinese and ASEAN vessels have become more frequent, with an increase in Chinese incursions into disputed exclusive economic zones, including near oil and gas exploration sites. The Philippines in particular has experienced violent clashes, resulting in injuries to its personnel. Nonetheless, an agreement reached in July between Manila and Beijing to smooth deliveries to a Philippine ship marooned at a hotly disputed reef in the South China Sea has helped ease friction in bilateral relations. Both countries seek to avoid a more serious conflict, especially one involving the US.

For those living in the region, unaccountable governance remains the worst dimension of impunity, and it goes hand-in-hand with the abuse of human rights (the third worst dimension for the region). Democratic backsliding and politicization of the judiciary have been intensifying, particularly "lawfare" against political opponents in several countries. In August, Thailand's Constitutional Court, which tends to favor the royal-military establishment, ruled to dissolve the main opposition party Move Forward; a week later, it ousted then prime minister Srettha Thavisin. Current premier Paetongtarn Shinawatra's position remains under threat from legal threats. In Malaysia, opposition leaders have been charged with crimes ranging from sedition to corruption, while those linked to the ruling coalition receive favorable treatment. More legal power plays by the establishment in these countries can be expected in the years ahead.

Nevertheless, there have been encouraging signs of judicial independence in Indonesia, which may not be fully reflected in the declining unaccountable governance score. This is likely due to more recent pro-democracy rulings by the Constitutional Court last year, which lowered candidate nomination thresholds to boost competition in November's provincial/regional elections and overturned an earlier verdict by the supreme court that would have benefited the then-

president's son. The country will likely experience more tensions between the legislature (and the executive) and the judiciary in the years ahead.

Related to the retreat of democracy, economic exploitation is still an area of concern for residents of Southeast Asia. In Malaysia, given that the incumbent's political stability partly depends on the king's support—as any challenge to overthrow the government through the legislature would require the king's endorsement—the monarchy has utilized its growing influence by establishing a pattern in which firms with royal affiliations appear to receive preferential treatment. Favorable treatment of the king's commercial ventures will probably continue for the foreseeable future.

In Vietnam, former general secretary Nguyen Phu Trong's intense anticorruption crackdown, known as the "blazing furnace," appeared to have little impact on the country's economic exploitation score; it is possible that the large number of high-profile scandals exposed by the campaign in fact reduced confidence in the system. The anticorruption campaign is likely to moderate under new party leader To Lam, though.

The environmental degradation score for the region has not changed and remains the second-worst dimension for ASEAN. Although energy transition plans and net-zero targets have been put in place in recent years in all countries except the Philippines, growing demand for energy from increased manufacturing activity (partly because of shifts in production from China to the region) and new data centers has heightened the need for more electricity production using fossil fuels. It is likely that these economic demands will continue to constrain Southeast Asia's environmental rejuvenation.

East Asia



Since 2019, citizens in the region have experienced a steady improvement in impunity levels, as reflected by the average impunity score, which improved from 1.69 in that year to 1.62 in 2024. It is important to note, however, that this average excludes countries such as North Korea, Taiwan, and Hong Kong, as there are not enough data available to include them in the main ranking.

Improvements in accountability levels across East Asia were primarily due to progress in the areas of conflict and violence, abuse of human rights, and economic exploitation, even if challenges persist at the country level. Over the past five years, people in Southeast Asia have been confronted with fluctuations in unaccountable governance—the second-worst-performing dimension in the region. This is probably heavily influenced by the presence of authoritarian regimes such as China's. Meanwhile, environmental degradation has consistently held the highest score among all categories, reaching 2.42 in 2024—0.8 points higher than the region's impunity score of 1.62. This is largely because of Mongolia's performance in this area. With a score of 3.38, Mongolia ranks as the worst performer globally on the environmental degradation dimension given its significantly heavy ecological footprint, poor air quality, and inadequate waste management.

With an overall score of 0.92, Japan ranks 157th on the Atlas, among the countries with the lowest levels of impunity faced by citizens. Its closest peers are Belgium and Iceland. Japan is the best performer among Northeast Asian countries; in 2024, both its score and ranking were about the same as in 2023. Japanese citizens experience the lowest level of impunity on conflict and violence (0.56), positioning the country as the fifth best in the world. Japan's scores on economic exploitation, abuse of human rights, and unaccountable governance align closely with its overall standing, while the overall score is pulled down by its much higher score for environmental degradation (1.77). This is mostly due to high consumption levels and moderate pollution, especially marine pollution.

South Korean citizens benefited from a score of 1.19, making their country the second-best-ranked in East Asia after Japan and positioning it just behind European countries such as Spain, Italy, and Malta.

Yet South Korea's overall ranking slipped slightly in 2024 to 141st from 143rd the previous year—its worst position in the Atlas since 2018. This is a reflection of a change in South Korea's position relative to other countries rather than domestic causes, as its score changed only marginally, by 0.01 points.

The biggest change in score compared to the previous year (0.06) occurred within the conflict and violence dimension. Rising security tensions with North Korea are to blame, even as the risk of war on the Korean Peninsula remains very low. South Korea also continues to score poorly in terms of environmental degradation (2.21), given the country's heavy power consumption and slow transition to renewable energy sources. President Yoon Suk-yeol's declaration of martial law in December might negatively affect the 2025 score for accountable governance. But the country's democratic institutions have remained resilient, with strong reactions from both lawmakers and civil society. The conflict and violence score could likewise be negatively affected in 2025 if efforts to detain Yoon lead to domestic clashes, or if North Korea ratchets up its aggression against South Korea in response to the leadership vacuum in Seoul. However, these are both unlikely scenarios.

The level of impunity in China (2.49) positions the country at 45th globally, with a score similar to that of Colombia, Turkmenistan, and Saudi Arabia. China's position rose by six places in the overall impunity ranking compared to 2023, reversing a gradual improvement that began in 2018. In 2024, China's strongest source of impunity was once again its abuse of human rights score (3.58), which increased by 0.05 from the previous year, making China the world's seventh-worst performer in this category. According to the dataset, the biggest drivers of human rights abuse are violent events against civilians by state forces, the number of executions, and the state of civil liberties in the country.

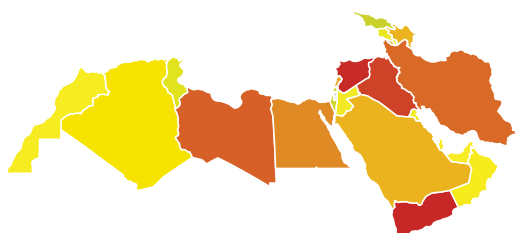
For those living in China, unaccountable governance was the second-largest source of impunity (3.08), reflecting the opacity of the justice and legal systems and concerns about the rule of law. As the world's top emitter, China has the third-worst environmental degradation score in the region, and its ranking further deteriorated by 11 places over the past five years; indeed, the country's environmental record

is a motivating factor behind the government's push to expand its renewable energy capacity. Among ranked East Asian countries, China has the worst score when it comes to the amount of economic exploitation endured by its residents (2.00), and it gained five places since the previous year. This is also the dimension that saw the most deterioration in East Asia since 2023, reflecting growing levels of inequality across different social groups.

While Taiwan has too little actual data to receive a ranking, its indicative score is on par with those of industrial democracies such as Australia and Lithuania. The only dimension with sufficient data to produce a ranking is unaccountable governance; here, Taiwan holds the lowest score (0.89) in the region. However, military tensions are likely to intensify this year in the Taiwan Strait as Beijing ramps up its gray-zone coercion against the island, putting upward pressure on Taiwan's conflict and violence indicators—even though a Chinese invasion remains very unlikely in the near and medium term.

Hong Kong is also unranked, but its indicative score is similar to those of Cyprus and Romania. The only reliable dimension scores are for abuse of human rights (1.11) and unaccountable governance (2.07). Since 2019, Hong Kong's performance in both areas has steadily worsened, leading to a deterioration of 22 and 18 positions, respectively; this owes to the government's crackdown on widespread pro-democracy protests. The implementation of the national security law in 2020 has led to the arrests of activists and politicians and increased media censorship. The sentencing of 45 pro-democracy activists last November and the ongoing high-profile trial of media tycoon Jimmy Lai will likely further dent Hong Kong's scores in 2025.

Middle East and North Africa



Citizens of countries in the Middle East—especially those facing internal conflict—continue to face some of the highest levels of impunity, with Syria and Yemen, respectively, ranking one and two overall (as in 2023). The 2024 impunity score for the MENA region (2.50) is most comparable to that of sub-Saharan Africa (2.42), a trend that has held for the previous five years. Otherwise, the region's impunity score has remained relatively stable since 2019.

Syria scores highest on the Atlas, at 3.43, in large part because of the civil war, which has fragmented the country into warring factions. Syria has held either the number one or two position in the rankings since 2015, a year that marked an intensification of hostilities with large-scale interventions by Russia and Iran. Meanwhile, Syrians have consistently suffered a high degree of abuse of human rights, conflict and violence, and unaccountable governance. The collapse of the Assad regime at the end of 2024, and the possibility for a new political process that ends the civil war and stabilizes the country, bolsters the prospects for the impunity score to meaningfully improve in 2025.

Iran and Iraq are not currently in a state of persistent armed conflict, but still their citizens suffer high levels of impunity (of 2.81 and 3.08, respectively). Both countries score poorly on abuse of human rights and unaccountable governance, with Iraq also being plagued by high levels of conflict and violence, at least compared to Iran.

Iran's impunity score has worsened over the last five years by 0.08 points to 2.73. This deterioration is a function of changes across nearly every dimension, including unaccountable governance, where Tehran's highly controlled presidential and parliamentary elections have become even less competitive owing to the mass disqualification of candidates. The election of President Masoud Pezeshkian in 2024 marked an important reversal of this trend, although it is not clear whether this is an aberration caused by the unexpected death of former president Ebrahim Raisi.

Year-on-year, Iran's 2024 impunity score improved compared to 2023, when it was 2.88. This is mainly due to slight improvements in the areas of economic exploitation and conflict and violence. The latter is the result of the end of the "Women, Life, Freedom" mass

demonstrations in late 2022 and the resultant (and relative) decline in the level of state violence.

Although the Palestinian territories lack sufficient data for a reliable headline score or rank, they do have full scores and rankings on two dimensions of the Atlas—conflict and violence and unaccountable governance. On the former, the Palestinian territories score 3.35, corresponding to the 17th-highest level of impunity experienced by a population globally. This is in large part due to the war in Gaza since 7 October 2023, which contains a large proportion of the Palestinian population. The war has killed more than one in 50 Gazans since then¹⁶ and brought the Palestinian territories' score to the maximum of 5.0 on all of the dimension's indicators from the ACLED dataset.

The Palestinian territories also consistently score 5.0 on UNHCR figures for refugees per capita. On unaccountable governance, the degree of impunity suffered by the Palestinian population is only marginally less severe, scoring similarly, but ranking 32nd, with especially poor scores for foreign intervention, functioning of government, and personal freedoms. The 42-day cease-fire agreed between Israel and Hamas in January provides much-needed relief to Gaza's population, though the current peace is fragile. If progress is not made toward establishing a framework for governance without Hamas, fighting is likely to resume.

Meanwhile, Lebanon's score has moved from 2.65 in 2019 to 2.58, with a resultant improvement in its rank from 30 to 34. This change affects citizens' experience with impunity across all dimensions except unaccountable governance, which rose from 2.90 in 2019 to 3.18 in 2024. This can be attributed in part to the country's dysfunctional political process, which resulted in repeated failures to elect a new president prior to 2025 (army chief Joseph Aoun became president in early January) and left Lebanon with a caretaker government since 2022. If the cease-fire between Hizbullah and Israel does not hold in 2025, and the conflict continues, it is reasonable to expect Lebanon's conflict and violence score to worsen, leading to higher overall impunity as well.

Israelis enjoy the greatest degree of accountability in the region, though it is worth noting that a number of the Atlas's source indexes do not include

Palestinians in Israeli-controlled portions of the West Bank in their metrics for the country. Israel's score has nonetheless worsened by 0.20 points over the last two years, from 1.65 to 1.85. This is mainly linked to efforts by the government of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to overhaul the judicial system to decrease its independence (and therefore government accountability), as well as increased levels of conflict and violence connected to the 7 October terrorist attacks by Hamas.

Several factors could further erode Israel's impunity score: an uptick in the conflict and violence score owing to heightened tensions with Iran under the new Trump administration, continued efforts to curtail judicial independence, and the possible annexation of Palestinian territories that would bring more Palestinians under Israeli control without full political rights. On the other hand, a permanent end to the Gaza war would probably lower the conflict and violence score, in turn improving Israel's impunity score and ranking.

In the Gulf, Bahrain and Saudi Arabia remain at the lower end of the Atlas, ranking 33rd and 45th, respectively, with Saudi Arabia's score increasing marginally year-on-year, to 2.48, while Bahrain improved slightly, to 2.59. This is mainly due to lack of effort on environmental and human rights issues, especially compared to many other wealthy countries. Qatar and Kuwait score somewhat better at 2.11 and 2.12, respectively, ranking near the median. The UAE and Oman fared slightly better, with scores of 2.05 and 2.03 last year. It is likely that their enhanced efforts to invest in renewable energy (compared to the rest of the Gulf region) helped them in this regard.

The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries continue to be outliers to a broader trend seen in the Atlas, whereby wealthier states tend to have lower impunity scores. Part of this is due to the Gulf region's ongoing efforts to accrue as much hydrocarbons revenue as it can despite the environmental consequences, in an effort to turn petrodollars into economic diversification. This is reflected in the region's environmental degradation scores: Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, Oman, and the UAE all perform poorly on this dimension. In the long term, however, the Gulf states have the potential to improve their environmental

¹⁶ [The top 10 crises the world can't ignore in 2025 | International Rescue Committee \(IRC\)](#)

performance, as they are investing more in renewable energy, particularly solar projects.

At the same time, countries such as Saudi Arabia and the UAE are slowly making legislative changes to better protect the rights of foreign workers—though over the next few years, the GCC countries' scores on the economic exploitation and abuse of human rights dimensions may still worsen. These countries are planning massive projects that will require cheap labor sourced from poorer countries. In addition, the government response to pro-Palestinian sentiment among the Gulf population has largely been a tougher crackdown on demonstrations and tighter surveillance.

The demonstrations have been most intense in Bahrain, and the crackdown on individual rights there has correspondingly increased. This is reflected in Bahrain's poor performance in the abuse of human rights dimension, where it ranks 32nd. The internal security systems and surveillance in Saudi Arabia, the UAE, and Qatar are so strong and sophisticated that there have not been any demonstrations in these countries at all. Their rankings on abuse of human rights are 28th, 61st, and 73rd, respectively. Qatar and the UAE perform better in this area, though it may be that the Atlas's metrics do not fully pick up on efforts to clamp down on citizens' rights in these states.

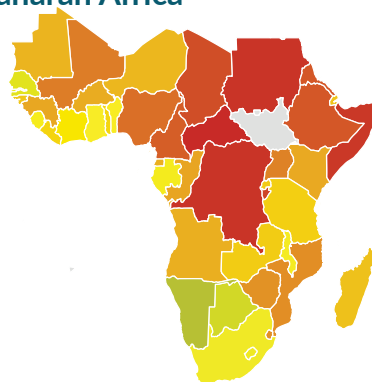
In North Africa, Tunisia remains an odd top performer in terms of low levels of impunity (1.93). The score could be explained by some of the indicators, such as due process for the accused or electoral process (at least through the first half of the year, before Tunisia held a significantly flawed presidential election in which the elections authority refused to allow candidates capable of challenging President Kais Saied). The process also saw low levels of participation and the arrest and hasty sentencing of one of the only two candidates allowed to run against Saied. Even so, unaccountable governance is the country's weakest dimension, having increased from 1.89 in 2020 to 2.22 in 2024.

Elsewhere, Libya remains among the worst performers of the Atlas in general (10th) because of the continued de facto division of the country and the substantial control of militias, especially in the west. By contrast, Morocco is another top performer in the region, scoring just behind Tunisia at 1.94, despite declining a few spots from 98th to 102nd. The kingdom's scores

are notably affected by relatively high impunity when it comes to climate indicators. These are unlikely to improve much owing to droughts and water stress that the government is working to address but unlikely to turn around quickly.

Egypt and Algeria are close to the regional average of 2.52, with scores of 2.55 and 2.22, respectively. While Algeria's President Abdelmadjid Tebboune was easily reelected last September, as expected, Egypt will hold parliamentary elections in 2025 that are largely insignificant and heavily influenced by security services. This might negatively affect Egypt's performance this year considering it was one of the Atlas's best improving scores over the past five years.

Sub-saharan Africa



Impunity levels in sub-Saharan Africa have remained consistently high in recent years. The average impunity score for the region, 2.42, was unchanged year-on-year, despite some movement in the Atlas's dimensions. As in 2023, people in sub-Saharan Africa experienced the second-highest degree of impunity globally, scoring better than only the Middle East and North Africa. Four African countries—South Sudan, the Central African Republic, Somalia, and Congo-Kinshasa—were ranked among the ten highest-impunity states.

For those living in the region, unaccountable governance has been the weakest dimension over the years, and Africa's average score was 2.86 in the 2024 Atlas. Unaccountable governance is also the dimension that deteriorated the most on both a year-on-year and a five-year basis. On the other hand, the conflict and violence dimension score showed the greatest improvement among all dimensions

for the region between 2023 and 2024. Over a five-year horizon, the economic exploitation dimension improved the most (-0.14), even though the region's individual score for this dimension in 2024 is the second highest, at 2.65.

As noted in the biggest risers and fallers section, the two countries with the steepest drop in rankings were Niger and Comoros, by 22 and 21 places, respectively. Niger's military coup in July 2023 was captured in the 2024 data, reflecting the country's new reality and resulting in an overall impunity score of 2.59, an increase of 0.15 from the 2023 score. Niger's scores on all dimensions deteriorated, with the unaccountable governance area suffering the most (by 0.50 points); this reflected the military coup and the worsening security situation.

On the other hand, Comoros's poor score was driven mostly by the conflict and violence dimension. Such an increase was a reflection of violent protests against the reelection of Assoumani.

After a slight improvement in both ranking and score in the 2023 Atlas, Senegal's score deteriorated by 0.03 points and it dropped four places in the rankings in the 2024 Atlas. This decline had already been predicted in the 2023 Atlas. It reflects violent protests that occurred in 2023 and early 2024 ahead of the country's presidential election. Residents were concerned that then-president Macky Sall would run for a third term despite term limits, and they were upset that the vote was postponed. However, Sall opted against seeking reelection and a relatively peaceful transfer of power ensued, with Bassirou Faye securing the presidency in a first-round victory.

Impunity levels experienced in several major markets in the region including Kenya, Nigeria, and Ethiopia stayed the same in the rankings from the 2023 Atlas and saw their scores change only marginally. Kenya's score improved slightly, from 2.54 to 2.53, primarily owing to improvements in the conflict and violence dimension. That said, nationwide protests in June and July against an onerous finance bill, which sought to introduce new and higher taxes, culminated in the storming of parliament and temporary military deployment.

These events could cause the country's score to worsen in the 2025 Atlas.

Ethiopia's score deteriorated slightly, by 0.01 points to 2.94. The level of accountability experienced by residents eroded for the past five years, but the rate of decline has slowed, with 2024's being the smallest since 2020, when the Tigray war broke out. In November, the country marked two years since the Pretoria peace deal was signed to end these hostilities. However, domestic insurgencies in the Amhara and Oromia regions continue to elevate Ethiopia's conflict and violence score, which is its worst-performing dimension.

For the third straight year, Zambia's scores improved, and the country dropped eight places in the rankings. Across a five-year span, it has the second-best improvement in rankings in the region. Citizens could benefit from higher accountability levels in the conflict and violence dimension, likely because of few or no battles, fatalities from riots, or violent events against civilians.

Eswatini saw the biggest improvement not only in the sub-Saharan Africa region but also in the 2024 Atlas overall on a year-on-year basis. This improvement in 2024 scores came after previously being on the list of most notable declines in the 2023 Atlas. The last absolute monarchy in Africa has been undergoing a gradual and constant worsening of its score since 2018. However, the 2024 data showed a significant improvement of 0.14 points and a drop of 14 places in the ranking.

People living in Eswatini benefited from improvements in all areas except for environmental degradation, which stayed constant. In past years, Eswatini's worsening score was mainly driven by issues of conflict and violence, as well as abuse of human rights. In 2021, protests against the killing of a law student were met with violent repression and dozens of deaths; and in 2023, a prominent human rights lawyer was brutally killed. However, the vast improvement in the 2024 rankings does not seem to reflect any major improvements to the fundamentals—no major constitutional, institutional, or legislative changes have been made. Instead, the improvement could simply reflect a cooling down of extreme actions relative to those

witnessed at the height of crackdowns in previous years.

Sub-Saharan countries to watch in the 2025 Atlas include Mozambique and Tanzania. In Mozambique, violent protests erupted in October and persisted through early December after the opposition alleged that the results of the 2024 general elections had been manipulated. There were also two apparent political assassinations—of the main opposition candidate’s lawyer and an opposition politician. The country’s scores in the 2024 Atlas already deteriorated by 0.06, and these events will likely cause a further decline.

In Tanzania, the administration ramped up its oppressive tactics to limit political space ahead of local elections in November. These activities included arrests and killings of opposition leaders and sanctioning of the press. The ruling Chama Cha Mapinduzi (CCM) party eventually won 99% of seats in the legislature, and these tactics are likely to be used again as the country prepares for a presidential election this October. This could lead to a deterioration of the country’s score in future editions of the Atlas, after a marginal improvement in 2024.

Conclusions

The contrast between impunity and accountability provides a revealing lens through which to understand trends in the modern world—and in our view, a more useful one than the more common distinction between democracy and autocracy. Democracies do tend to provide their people with more freedoms, better checks and balances, and more say in the political process, though some states with other forms of government are relatively successful in ensuring that rule of law prevails in their societies and that fundamental human rights are protected.

The people-centered approach of the 2024 Atlas emphasizes this distinction by bringing further nuance to the conversation on impunity. It is meant to highlight how individuals experience the responsiveness of government, protections for personal security and fundamental human rights, basic guarantees of economic freedoms, and environmental protections.

Following a tumultuous 2024, the prospects for greater accountability for many of the world's citizens in 2025 remain deeply uncertain. On the one hand, last year's many electoral upsets have profoundly shuffled the political leadership in several countries. These results have given people an opportunity for more electoral accountability, which—if one takes a hopeful view of developments at the polls—could lead to improvements in unaccountable governance, perhaps reversing some of the global deterioration recorded in this area over the last five years.

Lower levels of impunity for the people of the world's democracies should not be taken as a given, however. Newly elected leaders in some states have made pledges that—if duly implemented—could further erode the rule of law and quality of governance for ordinary citizens. Two prominent examples are Morena's judicial system overhaul in Mexico and Trump's promises to punish his political foes in the US. Moreover, the policy responses of incoming leaders may not be successful in addressing the frustrations that led citizens to vote for change in the first place. As noted in this report's feature on tech oligopoly, the growing influence of a small group of powerful executives is unlikely to reduce the

frustrations of those who feel that politics and the economy have been rigged against them.

Trump's victory in the US also has uncertain implications for the most worrisome source of impunity for the people of several regions in 2024—namely, the world's numerous ongoing domestic and interstate conflicts. The new US president has pledged to press for peace in eastern Europe and the Middle East, which—if he is successful—would likely do much to relieve the suffering of the people of Ukraine and the Palestinian territories. But the terms of peace are also critical, and it remains unclear to what extent the Trump administration will be interested in solutions that bring full accountability to the wars' many civilian victims. The potential for a partitioned Ukraine, a devastated post-war Gaza with dim economic and political prospects, or Israeli hostages left in the hands of Hamas would all be clearly negative developments for accountability.

Just as concerning, the second Trump administration has vowed to take a more transactional approach to international affairs—eschewing multilateralism, seeking to intimidate the US's adversaries (and some of its allies), and cutting deals with other states in the interests of US citizens. A purely “America First” approach to foreign policy and an overt disregard for cooperation would do little to resolve the many lower-intensity conflicts that fuel much of the violence recorded in the Atlas in 2024. These wars risk continuing to fester in an environment where the world's foremost economic and military power shows little interest in promoting norms of accountability, either domestically or abroad.

Despite this concerning backdrop, a few of the Atlas's most improved countries in 2024 offer some hopeful lessons, demonstrating how countries can change the experience of their people in fundamental ways. In Sierra Leone, where residents experience levels of impunity slightly lower than the global median, reduced violence and a series of reforms have helped to improve conditions in recent years. Legislation aimed at bolstering free public schooling, eliminating the death penalty, improving press freedom, and reducing gender-based violence has anchored improvements in score and ranking. In Guatemala,

which featured scores somewhat worse than the median, the election of anticorruption candidate Arevalo in August 2023 despite authorities' efforts to keep him out of office and citizens' protests against efforts to overturn the vote have also led to greater accountability.

Also, although these events are not yet captured in the Atlas, in Korea, the combined resolve of the public, members of the security services, and the country's lawmakers thwarted efforts by Yoon to use martial law to consolidate power in December.

These cases demonstrate how ordinary people, accountability-oriented political elites, and a country's public servants can all stand together against impunity, often overcoming formidable challenges. The construction of similar coalitions is likely to become increasingly important in 2025, especially in a global environment where external guardrails against impunity may be significantly weakened. In many countries, accountability's main beneficiaries may thus need to assume a role as its most ardent defenders—a grave responsibility for citizens in every region.

Appendix: Methodological changes to the Atlas

Following the publication of the 2023 Atlas of Impunity, the Eurasia Group Geostrategy team and the report's other contributors engaged in a methodological review process in consultation with the Atlas's Advisory Board. The review's objective was to improve the quality and consistency of the data while also addressing some critiques that emerged during the report's launch and our engagement with human rights advocates and practitioners.

The changes implemented reduced the total number of indicators included in the Atlas from 66 in 2023 to 60 in 2024. We have applied these revisions throughout the time series; all data in the 2024 report and made available for download on the Atlas website adhere to the 2024 methodology. The most notable change to the Atlas was an effort to eliminate variables that do not measure impunity as it is experienced by the people of a country or territory, in keeping with a citizen-centric approach. As the Atlas of Impunity evolves, the writers are committed to continuing to review and improve the data, addressing any shortcomings and integrating the latest research on impunity and accountability.

Technical changes

To improve the accuracy and timeliness of our assessments, we have removed the lag in the ACLED data that was present in the 2023 Atlas, which monitor conflict and violent events globally. Previously, our scoring used data from the preceding full calendar year (for example, 2023 scores on the ACLED indicators in the Atlas were calculated using January-December 2022 data). Now, scores on the ACLED indicators correspond to the data from the recently concluded year, providing a more immediate reflection of recent events.¹⁷ As noted in the 2023 Atlas report, headline impunity scores tend to respond to key developments in impunity with a delay of at least a year. The adjustment to the ACLED series is meant to reduce this lag.

In addition, we have applied the 2024 methodology of the Yale Environmental Performance Index (EPI) consistently throughout the time series to reduce data volatility and produce clearer and more reliable results. As noted in the 2023 Atlas, methodological changes to the Yale EPI previously generated large swings in the data year to year that could not be explained by changes in the underlying indicators. Our revised treatment of the data should strip out much of the variation in the environmental degradation dimension that was due purely to technical factors rather than actual differences in environmental performance.

Lastly, two indicators from the State of Tax Justice (SOTJ) dataset—on total tax loss and harm done to other countries—have been excluded from the analysis. These indicators caused misleading step changes in the country level and global averages of economic exploitation. This is because these indicators are both heavily skewed and were introduced recently, with the first data points available only in 2020. The Atlas does not seek to impute missing values prior to the first year of any series used to produce its scores and ranks, so a number of economic exploitation mean scores move substantially in 2020, when the SOTJ indicators enter the dataset. Furthermore, the score on tax harm is difficult to reconcile with a citizen-centric approach to impunity from a conceptual standpoint, as discussed with respect to the ACLED external battles and corporate tax haven indicators below.

Conceptual changes

First, in the 2024 Atlas, we removed the arms trade export and import trend indicators produced by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) from the conflict and violence dimension. This decision stems from the figures' inability to distinguish between weapons used for human rights violations and those used to deter aggression or for

¹⁷ The Atlas's closing date for available source data is 30 September. To produce estimated scores for 2024, the Atlas now annualizes current-year data from the five ACLED series included in the index for the first nine months. This adjustment yields 2024 indicator scores more readily comparable to previous years. Notably, however, the estimated data likely represent undercounts in many cases, as ACLED's researchers tend to confirm a greater number of violent events as time passes. In 2025, we will revise the 2024 data with actuals from the ACLED dataset and produce an estimate based on annualized figures for the current year.

defensive purposes. The SIPRI figures also mostly exclude small arms. In some cases, small arms sales may fuel a greater degree of conflict than official transfers of large-scale weapons systems between militaries, which may serve deterrent or defensive purposes. While we acknowledge that any sale of weapons, regardless of their purpose or size, poses serious ethical and humanitarian considerations, we believe that this change allows for a more precise assessment of impunity.

Second, we have revised our approach to country-level execution data from Amnesty International. In addition to new death sentences and executions, we previously included counts of inmates on death row. This approach can obscure changes to policy related to capital punishment, such as the US's 2021 federal execution moratorium. After discussions with our advisory board, we adjusted the data to solely reflect new death sentences and executions within a given year.

Lastly, as we sought to focus the Atlas scores more clearly on impunity as it is experienced by citizens

within each country covered, we decided to remove both the State of Tax Justice Corporate Tax Haven indicator and the ACLED External Battles indicator. We removed the former because many of the countries with the most easily manipulable corporate tax codes tend to do more damage to other countries than themselves in terms of lost revenue. Some of the worst performers on the index attract sufficient foreign investment to impose little to no income tax on their own citizens, challenging the notion that people in these countries are necessarily subject to a higher degree of impunity.

We eliminated the external battles indicator because in most cases, domestic populations tend to be insulated from the fighting that a country's military conducts abroad. The remaining five ACLED indicators—which count total number of battles, riots, violent events against civilians perpetrated by state and non-state actors, and combat fatalities per capita—now measure more consistently the degree of violence occurring within a country, which tends to have a greater effect on a typical resident.

Ranked countries												
	Impunity (overall)		Unaccountable governance		Economic exploitation		Environmental degradation		Conflict and violence		Abuse of human rights	
	Score	Rank	Score	Rank	Score	Rank	Score	Rank	Score	Rank	Score	Rank
Syria	3.43	1	4.04	2	3.07	17	2.33	47	3.79	3	3.91	3
Yemen	3.41	2	3.97	4	3.40	7	2.09	108	3.63	7	3.95	2
Myanmar	3.39	3	3.93	7	2.77	26	2.57	16	3.53	12	4.13	1
Afghanistan	3.38	4	4.20	1	3.59	3	2.28	60	3.23	21	3.58	6
South Sudan	3.33	5	3.79	..	3.81	1	1.96	135	3.65	6	3.45	..
Sudan	3.23	6	3.70	14	3.14	15	2.03	125	3.51	13	3.75	4
Central African Republic	3.22	7	3.96	5	3.70	2	2.31	51	3.55	11	2.60	26
Somalia	3.20	8	3.77	..	3.29	9	1.98	131	3.60	10	3.37	10
Congo - Kinshasa	3.17	9	3.62	19	3.19	12	1.93	142	3.82	1	3.28	12
Libya	3.14	10	3.82	9	3.59	..	2.34	42	2.87	31	3.09	16
Iraq	3.08	11	3.44	27	2.48	46	2.59	15	3.34	18	3.56	8
Haiti	3.06	12	3.76	12	3.52	4	2.07	118	3.67	5	2.30	41
Venezuela	3.02	13	3.89	8	3.48	5	1.90	149	3.33	19	2.51	29
Chad	3.01	14	3.95	6	3.44	6	2.24	66	2.76	35	2.67	24
Burundi	2.99	15	3.75	13	3.21	11	2.23	68	2.64	40	3.14	15
Cameroon	2.97	16	3.45	26	2.78	25	2.05	120	3.61	8	2.98	19
Ethiopia	2.94	17	3.17	41	2.70	31	2.17	78	3.41	15	3.25	13
Pakistan	2.93	18	3.28	36	2.59	38	2.43	32	3.07	24	3.29	11
Nigeria	2.87	19	2.94	54	2.93	21	2.09	102	3.61	9	2.75	23
Eritrea	2.86	20	3.81	11	3.13	..	2.42	36	2.06	57	2.88	20
Russia	2.85	21	3.51	22	2.42	55	2.55	21	2.80	33	2.98	18
Mali	2.83	22	3.22	37	2.57	39	2.07	117	3.29	20	3.01	17
Iran	2.81	23	3.54	20	2.34	59	2.30	56	2.28	51	3.59	5
Equatorial Guinea	2.74	24	3.69	16	3.42	..	2.51	24	1.48	110	2.59	..
Mozambique	2.72	25	3.13	45	3.17	14	2.21	72	2.90	30	2.19	50
Bangladesh	2.70	26	2.89	58	2.39	56	2.30	54	2.75	36	3.16	14
Uganda	2.63	27	3.05	49	2.67	33	2.32	49	2.70	38	2.40	37
Comoros	2.62	28	3.41	31	3.29	8	2.37	41	1.86	69	2.17	52
Zimbabwe	2.60	29	3.42	30	3.17	13	1.91	146	2.06	58	2.45	30
Guinea	2.59	30	3.49	23	2.64	37	2.29	58	2.42	47	2.13	58
Mexico	2.59	31	2.56	76	2.04	84	2.09	106	3.81	2	2.43	33
Niger	2.59	32	3.14	44	2.67	32	2.08	111	2.97	27	2.07	62
Bahrain	2.59	33	3.38	33	2.02	88	3.37	2	1.72	81	2.43	32
Lebanon	2.58	34	3.18	40	2.53	41	2.29	59	2.51	45	2.39	38
Turkey	2.57	35	3.02	51	2.23	66	2.42	35	2.59	42	2.58	27
Nicaragua	2.56	36	3.81	10	2.80	24	2.02	126	1.99	63	2.16	54
Egypt	2.55	37	3.43	28	2.11	77	2.13	93	1.62	101	3.47	9

Ranked countries												
	Impunity (overall)		Unaccountable governance		Economic exploitation		Environmental degradation		Conflict and violence		Abuse of human rights	
	Score	Rank	Score	Rank	Score	Rank	Score	Rank	Score	Rank	Score	Rank
Guatemala	2.55	38	2.95	53	2.66	34	2.44	31	2.97	26	1.75	80
Eswatini	2.54	39	3.47	24	3.05	18	2.34	45	1.70	85	2.15	56
Congo - Brazzaville	2.54	40	3.45	25	3.28	10	2.07	114	1.84	71	2.04	64
Kenya	2.53	41	2.51	77	2.38	58	2.01	128	2.95	28	2.79	22
Burkina Faso	2.52	42	2.92	56	2.53	40	2.04	124	3.15	22	1.95	67
Honduras	2.51	43	2.85	60	2.50	44	2.09	103	3.43	14	1.67	87
Colombia	2.50	44	2.34	91	2.28	62	2.00	129	3.74	4	2.16	55
China	2.49	45	3.08	48	2.00	89	2.32	48	1.45	114	3.58	7
Turkmenistan	2.48	46	3.69	15	2.88	23	2.55	19	1.03	153	2.26	45
Saudi Arabia	2.48	47	3.29	35	2.50	45	2.83	6	1.24	141	2.54	28
Madagascar	2.48	48	2.65	69	2.96	20	2.33	46	2.64	41	1.80	78
Mauritania	2.47	49	3.02	50	2.72	28	2.40	38	1.97	64	2.24	47
Cambodia	2.47	50	3.62	18	2.46	51	2.57	18	1.40	121	2.27	44
Tajikistan	2.46	51	3.68	17	2.70	30	2.49	29	1.15	148	2.28	43
Djibouti	2.45	52	3.37	34	2.74	27	2.61	13	1.49	109	2.04	65
Angola	2.43	53	2.74	64	3.08	16	2.04	123	2.12	56	2.17	53
Papua New Guinea	2.39	54	2.44	83	2.89	22	1.87	154	2.81	32	1.94	68
India	2.39	55	2.19	102	1.87	100	2.30	55	2.79	34	2.81	21
Azerbaijan	2.36	56	3.51	21	2.23	67	2.22	70	1.66	91	2.19	51
Philippines	2.36	57	2.62	73	2.22	68	2.16	82	2.39	48	2.42	34
Laos	2.33	58	3.20	38	2.46	50	2.59	14	1.27	134	2.14	57
Kyrgyzstan	2.29	59	3.12	46	2.45	52	2.11	100	1.69	88	2.10	59
Brazil	2.28	60	2.06	107	2.09	78	1.85	155	3.37	16	2.06	63
Ukraine	2.28	61	2.56	75	2.20	71	1.83	158	2.91	29	1.90	71
Togo	2.28	62	2.91	57	2.71	29	2.19	76	1.85	70	1.74	81
Belarus	2.28	63	3.42	29	2.17	72	1.96	136	1.41	118	2.43	31
Uzbekistan	2.27	64	3.12	47	2.46	49	2.32	50	1.04	152	2.40	36
Cuba	2.26	65	3.15	42	2.28	63	1.78	164	1.74	80	2.36	..
Sri Lanka	2.26	66	2.45	82	2.02	87	2.11	99	2.06	60	2.66	25
Guinea-Bissau	2.25	67	3.19	39	2.65	35	2.14	88	1.44	115	1.84	75
Indonesia	2.23	68	2.13	103	2.07	81	2.25	62	2.26	52	2.41	35
Algeria	2.22	69	2.93	55	2.00	90	2.12	95	1.79	74	2.25	46
Bolivia	2.21	70	2.64	72	2.46	48	2.24	64	2.19	54	1.54	95
Kazakhstan	2.21	71	2.86	59	2.03	86	2.62	12	1.56	105	2.00	66
El Salvador	2.21	72	2.76	62	2.43	54	2.14	90	2.14	55	1.58	89
Tanzania	2.21	73	2.42	86	2.52	43	2.07	116	1.70	84	2.33	40
Rwanda	2.20	74	2.70	65	2.39	57	2.43	33	1.41	119	2.09	60

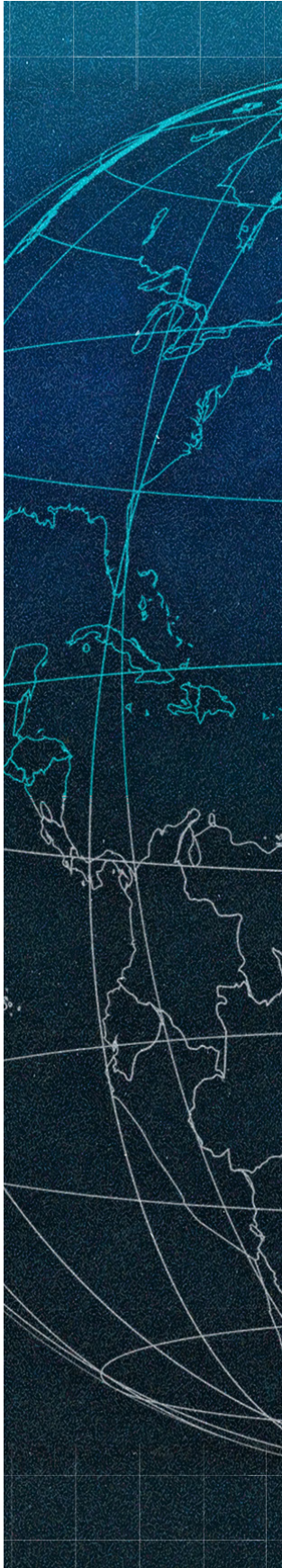
Ranked countries												
	Impunity (overall)		Unaccountable governance		Economic exploitation		Environmental degradation		Conflict and violence		Abuse of human rights	
	Score	Rank	Score	Rank	Score	Rank	Score	Rank	Score	Rank	Score	Rank
Zambia	2.20	75	2.33	92	3.01	19	2.15	83	1.58	103	1.93	69
Trinidad & Tobago	2.18	76	1.68	123	1.86	102	2.63	11	3.07	25	1.67	86
Liberia	2.18	77	2.65	70	2.65	36	2.23	67	1.71	83	1.68	85
Vietnam	2.17	78	2.98	52	1.80	107	2.75	8	1.09	149	2.20	49
Belize	2.16	79	2.02	..	2.33	..	2.55	20	2.70	39	1.23	108
Nepal	2.16	80	2.48	81	2.04	83	2.42	34	2.05	61	1.82	76
Thailand	2.15	81	2.41	87	2.08	79	2.11	98	1.77	77	2.37	39
Ivory Coast	2.13	82	2.70	66	2.12	75	1.89	151	2.23	53	1.72	83
Ecuador	2.12	83	2.49	79	2.33	61	1.89	150	2.58	43	1.31	105
Kuwait	2.12	84	2.50	78	2.04	82	2.98	5	0.86	168	2.21	48
Qatar	2.11	85	2.69	67	2.08	80	3.10	3	0.84	169	1.87	73
Gabon	2.11	86	3.15	43	2.43	53	1.97	134	1.62	98	1.39	101
Peru	2.11	87	2.27	95	2.16	73	2.17	79	2.50	46	1.47	99
Benin	2.09	88	2.35	89	1.92	97	2.19	75	2.31	49	1.69	84
Oman	2.05	89	2.77	61	2.04	85	2.67	9	1.00	160	1.75	79
Lesotho	2.04	90	2.32	93	2.53	42	2.34	44	1.45	113	1.58	91
Jamaica	2.04	91	1.75	120	1.74	110	2.08	110	3.12	23	1.53	96
Malawi	2.04	92	2.35	90	2.47	47	2.36	42	1.62	99	1.38	102
Gambia	2.03	93	2.36	88	2.34	60	2.15	86	1.49	108	1.81	77
United Arab Emirates	2.03	94	2.48	80	1.97	91	3.00	4	0.62	177	2.08	61
Sierra Leone	2.02	95	2.68	68	2.21	70	2.09	105	1.56	106	1.57	92
Ghana	2.02	96	1.99	110	2.12	76	2.06	119	2.06	59	1.88	72
Jordan	2.01	97	2.75	63	1.86	101	1.91	147	1.64	94	1.91	70
South Africa	2.01	98	1.73	121	1.96	92	2.11	101	2.74	37	1.51	97
Maldives	1.98	99	2.42	..	1.95	94	2.52	23	1.28	133	1.74	..
Paraguay	1.98	100	2.42	85	2.24	65	2.30	53	1.65	93	1.29	106
Malaysia	1.95	101	1.79	119	1.95	95	2.41	37	1.28	131	2.29	42
Morocco	1.94	102	2.62	74	1.80	108	2.08	109	1.63	96	1.58	90
Tunisia	1.93	103	2.22	99	1.81	106	2.07	115	1.83	72	1.72	82
Bosnia	1.90	104	2.64	71	1.94	96	2.17	80	1.69	87	1.06	118
Senegal	1.88	105	2.26	96	1.95	93	2.05	121	1.72	82	1.43	100
Mongolia	1.88	106	1.98	111	1.69	111	3.38	1	1.25	139	1.09	116
Serbia	1.87	107	2.44	84	1.67	113	2.18	77	1.87	67	1.19	111
Guyana	1.86	108	2.11	104	1.83	104	2.15	84	1.66	90	1.56	94
Armenia	1.86	109	2.21	101	1.61	115	2.49	28	1.76	78	1.22	109
Israel	1.85	110	1.52	131	1.10	131	2.57	17	2.51	44	1.57	93
Dominican Republic	1.82	111	2.22	100	1.57	117	1.92	143	2.00	62	1.38	103

Ranked countries												
	Impunity (overall)		Unaccountable governance		Economic exploitation		Environmental degradation		Conflict and violence		Abuse of human rights	
	Score	Rank	Score	Rank	Score	Rank	Score	Rank	Score	Rank	Score	Rank
Bhutan	1.78	112	1.89	114	1.38	122	2.65	10	1.38	122	1.60	88
Namibia	1.75	113	1.65	125	2.27	64	2.12	96	1.65	92	1.03	121
Georgia	1.74	114	2.25	97	1.40	121	2.24	65	1.79	75	1.05	119
Botswana	1.74	115	1.54	129	2.14	74	2.30	52	1.50	107	1.21	110
Albania	1.74	116	2.29	94	1.77	109	2.04	122	1.63	97	0.96	129
São Tomé e Príncipe	1.74	117	1.85	..	2.22	69	2.21	73	1.26	136	1.14	..
Panama	1.73	118	1.89	115	1.89	98	1.96	137	1.96	65	0.96	130
Fiji	1.69	119	2.03	108	1.81	105	1.95	138	1.18	146	1.49	98
North Macedonia	1.68	120	2.22	98	1.87	99	2.13	91	1.25	138	0.91	132
Moldova	1.67	121	2.01	109	1.68	112	2.22	69	1.41	117	1.04	120
Argentina	1.66	122	1.83	118	1.86	103	1.93	140	1.60	102	1.09	117
Suriname	1.65	123	1.90	113	1.58	116	1.87	153	1.67	89	1.24	107
United States	1.64	124	1.23	137	1.07	134	2.15	85	1.90	66	1.85	74
Bahamas	1.63	125	1.38	..	1.46	..	2.50	26	1.69	86	1.14	113
Montenegro	1.61	126	1.96	112	1.54	119	2.44	30	1.35	128	0.78	138
Chile	1.59	127	1.22	138	1.24	125	2.16	81	2.31	50	1.02	126
Timor-Leste	1.54	128	1.85	117	1.79	..	1.81	162	1.25	140	1.02	125
Cape Verde	1.50	129	1.61	126	1.64	114	2.39	40	1.16	147	0.67	142
Hungary	1.46	130	2.11	105	1.56	118	1.72	171	0.89	166	1.03	123
Mauritius	1.45	131	1.59	127	1.09	132	2.09	107	1.46	112	1.03	122
Greece	1.44	132	1.58	128	1.15	127	1.71	173	1.78	76	1.01	127
Cyprus	1.42	133	1.54	130	1.12	130	2.36	43	1.37	123	0.69	140
Romania	1.40	134	1.72	122	1.30	123	1.73	169	1.35	126	0.88	134
Costa Rica	1.39	135	1.10	145	1.41	120	1.99	130	1.86	68	0.61	146
Bulgaria	1.38	136	1.88	116	1.25	124	1.82	159	1.03	157	0.91	133
Poland	1.37	137	1.51	132	1.14	129	1.71	174	1.36	125	1.14	114
Croatia	1.35	138	1.66	124	1.24	126	1.74	167	1.34	129	0.79	137
Singapore	1.33	139	1.40	133	0.95	137	2.49	27	0.47	184	1.34	104
Barbados	1.33	140	1.27	136	1.29	..	1.93	141	1.22	143	0.93	131
South Korea	1.19	141	1.10	144	0.91	141	2.21	71	1.08	150	0.65	143
Uruguay	1.19	142	0.91	149	1.15	128	1.97	132	1.27	135	0.63	145
Italy	1.17	143	1.21	139	0.85	145	1.81	161	1.40	120	0.57	148
Malta	1.17	144	1.36	135	1.08	133	2.12	94	0.57	181	0.69	141
Spain	1.16	145	1.12	142	0.99	136	1.85	156	1.37	124	0.47	154
Slovakia	1.14	146	1.36	134	1.06	135	1.74	168	0.93	165	0.61	147
France	1.13	147	0.89	152	0.68	149	1.63	178	1.64	95	0.81	136
Portugal	1.10	148	1.05	146	0.95	139	1.91	145	1.03	154	0.56	149

Ranked countries												
	Impunity (overall)		Unaccountable governance		Economic exploitation		Environmental degradation		Conflict and violence		Abuse of human rights	
	Score	Rank	Score	Rank	Score	Rank	Score	Rank	Score	Rank	Score	Rank
Latvia	1.10	149	1.11	143	0.85	144	2.01	127	1.03	155	0.48	153
Canada	1.07	150	0.70	156	0.86	143	2.27	61	0.97	162	0.56	150
Slovenia	1.04	151	1.16	140	0.93	140	1.90	148	0.76	172	0.46	157
Lithuania	1.02	152	1.14	141	0.90	142	1.82	160	0.74	173	0.48	152
Australia	1.01	153	0.66	157	0.70	148	2.25	63	0.96	163	0.49	151
Czechia	1.01	154	1.03	147	0.95	138	1.80	163	0.77	171	0.47	155
United Kingdom	0.98	155	0.93	148	0.79	147	1.31	182	1.22	142	0.63	144
Belgium	0.93	156	0.83	153	0.53	156	1.92	144	1.02	158	0.36	160
Japan	0.92	157	0.90	150	0.62	151	1.77	165	0.56	182	0.74	139
Iceland	0.89	158	0.57	159	0.80	146	2.39	39	0.37	185	0.33	162
Estonia	0.88	159	0.79	154	0.66	150	1.64	177	0.88	167	0.41	158
Austria	0.85	160	0.72	155	0.58	154	1.88	152	0.67	176	0.40	159
Netherlands	0.83	161	0.49	162	0.51	157	1.84	157	1.00	161	0.31	166
New Zealand	0.82	162	0.45	163	0.58	153	2.08	113	0.68	175	0.33	163
Germany	0.82	163	0.56	161	0.47	159	1.46	181	1.30	130	0.32	165
Luxembourg	0.78	164	0.58	158	0.60	152	2.09	104	0.34	186	0.26	168
Ireland	0.77	165	0.56	160	0.55	155	1.69	175	0.59	179	0.46	156
Norway	0.74	166	0.27	168	0.50	158	1.97	133	0.69	174	0.26	167
Switzerland	0.71	167	0.44	164	0.45	160	1.72	170	0.57	180	0.34	161
Sweden	0.70	168	0.42	165	0.40	161	1.53	179	0.80	170	0.33	164
Denmark	0.63	169	0.35	167	0.31	163	1.69	176	0.56	183	0.24	169
Finland	0.59	170	0.40	166	0.34	162	1.46	180	0.61	178	0.17	170

Source: Eurasia Group

Unranked countries							
	Impunity (overall)	Missing indicators (of 60)	Unaccountable governance	Conflict and violence	Abuse of human rights	Economic exploitation	Environmental degradation
	Score	Score	Score	Score	Score	Score	Score
Seychelles	1.39	25	1.44	1.01	0.84	1.12	2.53
Andorra	0.94	43	1.05	0.88	0.56	0.83	1.39
Antigua & Barbuda	1.64	30	1.56	1.75	1.15	1.59	2.14
Brunei	2.01	28	2.59	1.04	1.74	1.88	2.78
Dominica	1.50	30	1.58	1.41	0.99	1.40	2.13
Micronesia (Federated States of)	1.41	35	1.54	0.94	0.98	1.39	2.20
Grenada	1.43	28	1.53	1.21	1.02	1.42	1.94
Hong Kong	1.36	26	2.07	0.65	1.11	1.19	1.78
Kiribati	1.43	38	1.53	1.09	1.09	1.32	2.14
St. Kitts & Nevis	1.30	37	1.37	1.57	0.94	1.05	1.55
Kosovo	1.53	40	1.99	1.35	0.99	1.59	1.72
St. Lucia	1.63	30	1.46	1.82	0.93	1.45	2.50
Liechtenstein	0.97	43	0.85	0.88	0.45	0.68	2.00
Monaco	1.24	47	1.64	0.94	0.91	1.26	1.45
Marshall Islands	1.13	44	1.23	0.93	0.70	0.87	1.92
Nauru	1.31	46	1.63	1.06	1.13	1.19	1.54
Palau	1.18	45	1.33	1.15	0.93	1.08	1.41
North Korea	2.91	28	4.01	1.46	3.21	3.58	2.29
Palestine	2.90	25	3.39	3.35	2.92	2.58	2.26
Solomon Islands	1.74	28	2.26	1.28	1.38	1.69	2.12
San Marino	1.08	47	1.32	0.72	0.61	0.86	1.88
Tonga	1.69	33	1.91	1.20	1.40	1.62	2.29
Tuvalu	1.18	43	1.25	0.80	0.87	0.90	2.10
Taiwan	1.02	32	0.89	0.93	0.68	0.75	1.83
St. Vincent & Grenadines	1.41	32	1.43	1.62	0.91	1.38	1.72
Vanuatu	1.47	31	1.67	1.03	1.23	1.36	2.08
Samoa	1.43	29	1.72	1.25	1.05	1.37	1.75



Acknowledgements

The Atlas of Impunity is a joint effort by David Miliband and Eurasia Group's Geostrategy team. It was made possible by generous financial support from the Open Society Foundations and the Carnegie Corporation of New York.

We would like to acknowledge the critical contributions of our data technicians, Nhat Nguyen and Giorgio Bechis. Without them, this project would not have come to fruition.

We are also especially grateful for the time and intellectual contributions of the Atlas's advisory board, the writing and research provided by Eurasia Group's regional analysts, and the support of Eurasia Group's editorial, design, and communications teams.



