

Corruption in the Caribbean (a US perspective)



Introduction

The United States State Department's *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices* ("country reports") strive to provide a factual and objective record on the status of human rights worldwide. The 2021 country reports were published on 12 April 2022.

Section 4 of the country reports provides an assessment of Corruption and Lack of Transparency in Government which addresses the extent to which a country's law provides criminal penalties for corruption by officials and the level of implementation of these laws.

While 2021 scores for Caribbean countries published by Transparency International in their 2021 Corruption

Perceptions Index (CPI) report reveal material variations in anti-corruption performance, all Caribbean countries generally have criminal penalties for corruption by officials. The level of implementation of these laws, however, varies considerably. Inconsistent or ineffective implementation of penalties for corruption was reported in seven countries. Further discussion on corruption trends in Caribbean countries is provided [here](#).

Details of the overview comments for Caribbean countries in the 2021 country reports are provided below.

[Antigua and Barbuda](#)

“The law provides criminal penalties for corruption by officials, but full implementation of the law was hindered during the pandemic. Media reported several allegations of corruption against officials during the year. Media and private citizens reported government corruption was widespread and endorsed at the highest levels of government.”

[Bahamas](#)

“The law provides criminal penalties for corruption by officials, and the government generally implemented the law effectively. There was limited enforcement of conflicts of interest related to government contracts. There were reports of government corruption during the year where officials sometimes engaged in cronyism and accepted small-scale “bribes of convenience” with impunity.”

[Barbados](#)

“The law provides criminal penalties for corruption by officials, and the government generally implemented the law effectively. In October the government passed the Prevention of Corruption Act, which provides for the prevention, investigation, and prosecution of acts of corruption, and applies to persons in both the public and private sectors. There were no reports of government corruption during the year.”

Belize

“The law provides criminal penalties for corruption by officials, but the government did not implement the law effectively, and officials often engaged in corrupt practices with impunity. There were numerous reports of government corruption during the year.”

Cuba

“The law provides criminal penalties for corruption; however, the government did not implement the law effectively. There were numerous reports of government corruption, supported by a poorly regulated and opaque banking sector. The government was highly sensitive to corruption allegations and often conducted anticorruption crackdowns.”

Dominica

“The law provides criminal penalties for corruption by officials, but the government implemented the law inconsistently. According to civil society representatives and

members of the political opposition, officials sometimes engaged in corrupt practices.”

Dominican Republic

“The law provides criminal penalties for corruption by officials, and in a change from previous years noted by independent observers, the government generally implemented the law effectively. The attorney general investigated allegedly corrupt officials.

NGO representatives said the greatest hindrance to effective investigations was traditionally a lack of political will to prosecute individuals accused of corruption, particularly well connected individuals or high-level politicians. Under President Abinader, however, the attorney general pursued a number of cases against public officials, including high-level politicians and their families, mostly from the previous administration but also including members of the current administration. Nonetheless, government corruption remained a serious problem.”

Grenada

“The law provides criminal penalties for corruption by officials, and the government generally implemented the law effectively. There were isolated allegations by the political opposition and some members of media regarding government corruption during the year, but none proved credible.”

Guyana

“The law provides for criminal penalties for corruption by officials, and the government generally implemented the law effectively. There were isolated reports of government corruption during the year, and administration officials investigated these reports. There remained a widespread public perception of corruption involving officials at all levels and all branches of government, including the police and judiciary.”

Haiti

“The law criminalizes a wide variety of acts of corruption by officials, including illicit enrichment, bribery, embezzlement, illegal procurement, insider trading, influence peddling, and nepotism. There were numerous reports of government corruption, and a perception of impunity for abusers. The judicial branch investigated several cases of corruption during the year, but there were no prosecutions. The constitution mandates the Senate (vice the judicial system) prosecute high-level officials and members of parliament accused of corruption, but the body had never done so. The government’s previous anticorruption strategy expired in 2019, and as of October there was no formal anticorruption strategy.”

Jamaica

“The law provides criminal penalties for corruption by officials, but the government generally did not implement the law effectively. There were numerous reports of government corruption during the year, and corruption was a significant problem of public concern. Media and civil society organizations criticized the government for being slow and at

times reluctant to prosecute corruption cases.”

[Saint Kitts and Nevis](#)

“The law provides criminal penalties for corruption by officials, and the government generally implemented the law effectively. Media and private citizens reported government corruption was occasionally a problem.”

[Saint Lucia](#)

“The law provides criminal penalties for corruption by officials, and the government generally implemented these laws, but not always effectively. There were isolated reports of government corruption during the year.”

[Saint Vincent and the Grenadines](#)

“The law provides criminal penalties for corruption by officials, but the government did not always implement the law effectively.”

[Suriname](#)

“The law provides criminal penalties for corruption by officials, and the government implemented the law effectively at times. The 2017 Anti-Corruption Law, which was unanimously approved by the National Assembly, had not been implemented as of October, but authorities stated they were able to prosecute

cases of corruption based on existing law.

Corruption cases reported to the Attorney General's Office were investigated. There were numerous accusations from political opponents, civil society, and media that officials engaged in corrupt practices."

Trinidad and Tobago

"The law provides criminal penalties for corruption by officials, but the government did not enforce the law effectively, and officials sometimes engaged in corrupt practices with impunity. There were credible reports of police and government corruption during the year."

Conclusion

The laws in Caribbean countries generally provide relatively robust criminal penalties for corruption by officials.

The above-mentioned country reports, however, reveal there are currently significant variations in Caribbean government efforts to implement legislation covering criminal penalties for corruption.

Regional Caribbean SIDS PFM digital transparency update



Our June 2020 video “[Improving PFM digital transparency in SIDS finance ministries](#)” examined finance ministries (MoFs) use of digital platforms such as websites and social media to provide public financial management (PFM) related information in [small island developing states \(SIDS\)](#). Recent PFM digital transparency regional trends in Caribbean SIDS are examined in our “Regional Caribbean SIDS PFM digital transparency update” [video](#).

Caribbean SIDS PFM digital transparency regional trends

PFM digital transparency trends were analysed for 18 Caribbean SIDS where MoF websites were active in the 2020 September quarter to provide the basis for this regional trends analysis:

- Belize
- Cayman Islands
- Cuba
- Curacao
- Dominica
- Dominican Republic
- Grenada
- Guyana
- Haiti
- Jamaica
- Montserrat
- Puerto Rico
- Saint Lucia
- St. Kitts & Nevis
- St. Vincent & Grenadines
- Suriname
- Trinidad & Tobago
- US Virgin Islands

Eleven Caribbean SIDS did not have active MoF websites in the 2020 September quarter. Although The Bahamas MoF did not have a standalone website, it does have an active Facebook page.

Charts for the following regional indicators are presented:

- **MoF website penetration levels for the 2020 March and September quarters.** The figures used in these charts were obtained using a two-step process. Actual visit data for the March and September 2020 quarters was annualised to provide projections of estimated 2020 visits. The resulting 2020 annual MoF website visit projections were divided by the number of country internet users to obtain MoF website penetration levels.
- **Domestic and non-resident visits to MoF websites for the 2020 March and September quarters;** these charts reflect the percentage of visits to MoF websites attributable to local residents and non-residents in the 2020 March and September quarters based on actual visit data.
- **Rates of change in MoF website visits;** this data is based on changes to MoF visit levels between the 2020 March and September quarters.
- **MoF Facebook penetration levels as at June 2020 and October 2020;** these figures were obtained by dividing actual MoF Facebook follower numbers by the number of country Facebook subscribers.
- **Changes in Facebook follower numbers between June 2020 and October 2020;** these charts reflect changes in the respective MoF Facebook follower numbers.
- **MoF Twitter penetration levels as at October 2020;** these figures were obtained by dividing actual MoF Twitter follower numbers by the number of country Twitter subscribers.
- **Changes in Twitter follower numbers between June 2020 and October 2020;** these charts reflect changes in the respective MoF Twitter follower numbers.

Key regional analysis findings

Some of the key findings from our analysis are as follows:

- Estimated total Caribbean SIDS MoF 2020 visits in the 2020 September quarter were 11.07% higher than in the 2020 March quarter for the 12 MoFs where data was available for both quarters
- Total Caribbean SIDS local resident MoF visits to the above-mentioned 12 MoF websites increased by 24.66% in the 2020 September quarter over the 2020 March quarter whilst total non-resident MoF visits fell by 30.98%
- Caribbean SIDS MoF Facebook follower numbers (and overall Caribbean SIDS average MoF Facebook penetration levels) increased by 14.99% between June 2020 and October 2020 where comparative data was available
- Caribbean SIDS MoF Twitter follower numbers (and overall Caribbean SIDS average MoF Twitter penetration levels) increased by 51.45% between June 2020 and October 2020 where comparative data was available

Global SIDS PFM digital transparency update



Global SIDS PFM digital transparency update December 2020

By John Leonardo, PFMConnect

Our June 2020 video “[Improving PFM digital transparency in SIDS finance ministries](#)” examined finance ministries (MoFs) use of digital platforms such as websites and social media to provide public financial management (PFM) related information in small island developing states (SIDS). In this “Global SIDS PFM digital transparency update December 2020” [video](#) recent SIDS PFM digital transparency trends are examined on a regional and country basis.

Regional PFM digital transparency analysis

Global SIDS PFM digital transparency trends have been analysed

using the following regional classifications for countries where MoF websites were active:

- Africa/Asia/Middle East (7 countries)
- Caribbean (18 countries)
- Pacific (11 countries)

Non-active SIDS MoF websites in the 2020 September quarter in the above-mentioned regions were as follows:

- Africa/Asia/MiddleEast (3 countries)
- Caribbean (11 countries)
- Pacific (8 countries)

Charts for the following indicators are presented:

- ***MoF website penetration levels for the 2020 March and September quarters.*** The figures used in these charts were obtained using a two-step process. Actual visit data for the March and September 2020 quarters was annualised to provide projections of estimated 2020 visits. The resulting 2020 annual MoF website visit projections were divided by the number of country internet users to obtain MoF website penetration levels.

- ***Domestic and non-resident visits to MoF websites for the 2020 March and September quarters***; these charts reflect the percentage of visits to MoF websites attributable to local residents and non-residents in the 2020 March and September quarters based on actual visit data.
- ***Rates of change in MoF website visits***; this data is based on changes to MoF visit levels between the 2020 March and September quarters.
- ***MoF Facebook penetration levels as at June 2020 and October 2020***; these figures were obtained by dividing actual MoF Facebook follower numbers by the number of country Facebook subscribers.
- ***Changes in Facebook follower numbers between June 2020 and October 2020***; these charts reflect changes in the respective MoF Facebook follower numbers.
- ***MoF Twitter penetration levels as at October 2020***; these figures were obtained by dividing actual MoF Twitter follower numbers by the number of country Twitter subscribers.
- ***Changes in Twitter follower numbers between June 2020 and October 2020***; these charts reflect changes in the respective MoF Twitter follower numbers.

The above-mentioned regional analyses are also available here:

- Africa/Asia/Middle East
- Caribbean
- Pacific

Key regional analysis findings

Some of our key findings from the regional analysis are as follows:

- Increases were recorded in SIDS overall regional MoF penetration scores for SIDS MoF websites, SIDS Facebook followers and SIDS Twitter followers. This growth is partially attributable to MoF posts relating to COVID-19 topics.
- A material increase in the SIDS Caribbean MoF Twitter follower penetration score contributed to strong growth in the SIDS overall regional Twitter follower penetration score.
- The increased interest in MoF digital platforms also resulted in material increases in the proportion of MoF website visits attributable to local residents and a consequent reduction in the proportion of MoF website visits attributable to non-residents. This trend was particularly evident in the Pacific where there was strong growth in Papua New Guinea MoF local resident visits.

- In four of the SIDS countries with MoF Facebook pages, the number of Facebook followers exceeded estimated 2020 MoF website visits demonstrating the role social media can play in boosting transparency about SIDS MoF activities.

SIDS country PFM digital transparency analysis

SIDS PFM digital transparency trends have also been analysed for the 36 countries examined in the above-mentioned regional analysis.

Country charts presenting the following PFM digital transparency indicators are available:

- ***MoF website penetration levels for the 2020 September quarter.*** The figures used in these charts were obtained using a two-step process. Actual visit data for the September 2020 quarter was annualised to provide projections of estimated 2020 visits. The resulting 2020 annual MoF website visit projections were divided by the number of country internet users to obtain MoF website penetration levels.
- ***Domestic and non-resident visits to MoF websites for the 2020 September quarter;*** these charts reflect the percentage of visits to MoF websites attributable to local residents and non-residents in the 2020 September quarter based on actual visit data.

- **MoF Facebook penetration levels as at October 2020**; these figures were obtained by dividing actual MoF Facebook follower numbers by the number of country Facebook subscribers.
- **MoF Twitter penetration levels as at October 2020**; these figures were obtained by dividing actual MoF Twitter follower numbers by the number of country Twitter subscribers.

Each country chart presents the following results for each indicator: the available country results, the average regional score and the average score for all SIDS countries where a MoF website was available.

Analyses of trends in key country PFM digital transparency indicators are also available here:

- Africa/Asia/Middle East
 - Caribbean
 - Pacific
-

Human Development Report 2015



Read UNDP's Human Development Report 2015

The report discusses how work can assist improvements in human development. The contents will interest a wide range of stakeholder groups.

The report can be accessed here: [Human Development Report 2015](#).