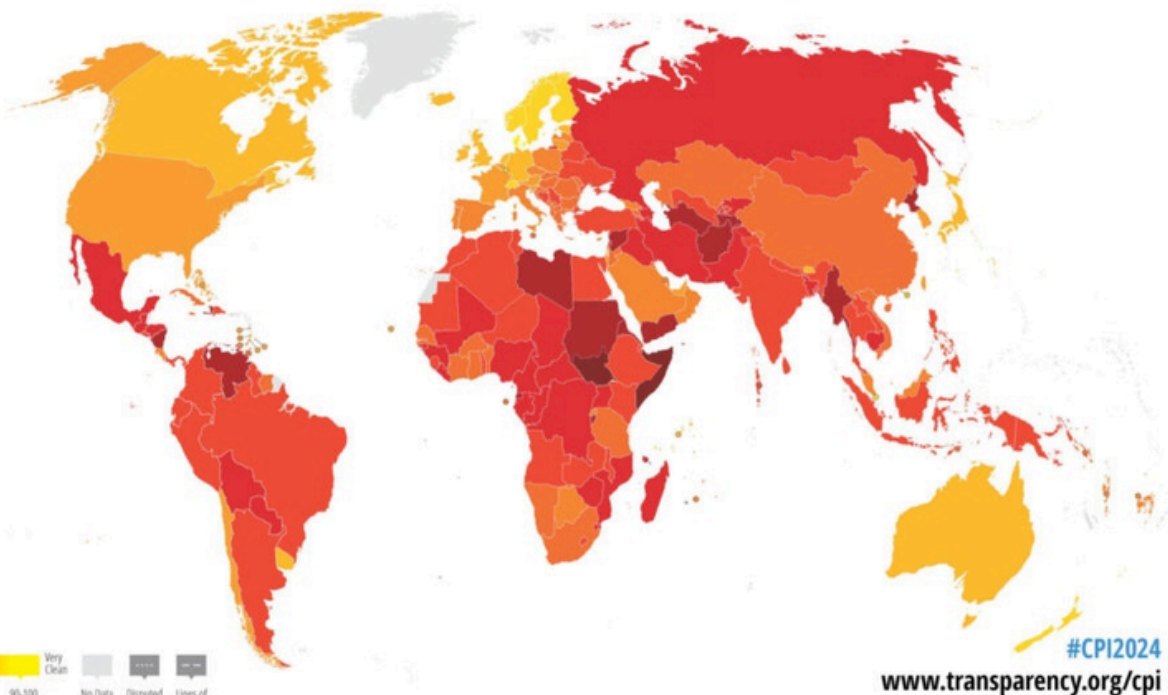




CORRUPTION PERCEPTIONS INDEX 2024

The perceived levels of public sector corruption in 180 countries/territories around the world.



#CPI2024

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ANALYSIS OF NIGERIA'S PERFORMANCE IN THE CORRUPTION PERCEPTIONS INDEX (CPI) 2024

Prepared By

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Introduction

Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) 2024 ranked Nigeria 140th out of 180 countries, with a score of 26 out of 100, reflecting a marginal improvement from 25 in 2023. While this indicates slight progress, Nigeria remains among the lowest-ranked countries, and point to a persistent governance challenge. A deeper analysis reveals systemic weaknesses that continue to hinder Nigeria's anti-corruption efforts.

The theme of this year's CPI launch, "Corruption and the Climate Crisis," also highlights the devastating impact of corruption on environmental sustainability and climate resilience. Corruption continues to exacerbate the degradation of the natural environment, weaken climate policies, and divert critical resources meant for climate adaptation and mitigation. Given Nigeria's vulnerability to climate-related disasters such as flooding and desertification, addressing corruption in climate governance is essential for sustainable development and resilience-building. This year's theme also serves as a call to action for stronger transparency, accountability, and anti-corruption measures in Nigeria's climate response efforts.

This report critically examines some perennial issues and challenges that continue to militates against Nigeria's anti-corruption efforts and performance. Recommendations are also provided to improve Nigeria's performance in future CPI rankings.


Perennial Issues in Nigeria's Anti-Corruption Fight

One of the most glaring challenges Nigeria faces in its fight against corruption is **judicial corruption**. The Nigerian judiciary is plagued by allegations of bribery, case delays, and undue political influence, which undermine public confidence in the legal system. According to the 2023 Afrobarometer Survey, over 45% of Nigerians perceive most judges and magistrates as corrupt¹. This perception significantly affects the efficiency of the judicial system, as many corruption-related cases either stall or result in lenient judgments due to external pressures or financial inducements. Without an impartial and independent judiciary, anti-corruption efforts become largely ineffective, as those responsible for graft can evade justice with ease.

State capture and nepotism are also significant impediments to Nigeria's progress in fighting corruption. Governance structures in Nigeria are often manipulated to serve elite interests rather than the broader public good. Political appointments are frequently based on personal loyalty rather than merit, which weakens institutional independence and erodes efficiency. Political elites use appointments to consolidate power and reward loyalists, ensuring that state institutions serve their interests rather than the public good. This practice undermines the effectiveness of government institutions and perpetuates inequality and exclusion. Overall, it has led to inefficient service delivery and policy distortions, making it difficult for genuine reform initiatives to take root and yield meaningful results in governance and public administration.

The oil sector remains a major conduit for corruption in Nigeria, with billions of dollars lost annually to oil theft and subsidy fraud. According to the Nigeria Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (NEITI), between 2014 and 2023 alone, Nigeria experienced a loss of 362.28 million barrels of crude oil, attributed to measurement errors, sabotage, and production adjustments. This translates to an average daily loss of approximately 992,547 barrels of crude oil over the ten-year period. Additionally, the controversial removal of fuel subsidies in 2023 exposed deep-seated financial mismanagement as billions in subsidy payments remain unaccounted for. These loopholes sustain a cycle of corruption, weakening Nigeria's revenue base and limiting economic growth. Despite the government's repeated commitments to reforming the oil sector, weak enforcement mechanisms and powerful vested interests have ensured that corruption in this industry remains entrenched.

Another key area of concern is corruption in the **power sector**. Despite multiple reforms, Nigeria's power sector remains inefficient, largely due to corruption. The alleged mismanagement of over \$16 billion in power projects since 1999 has resulted in poor electricity supply, with millions of Nigerians still lacking access to stable power.


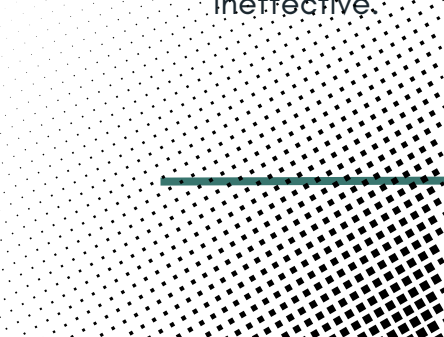


Nigeria's civic space has been shrinking, further undermining anti-corruption efforts. Civil society organizations (CSOs) and journalists face increasing restrictions, with laws targeting free speech and activism becoming more common. The 2023 World Press Freedom Index ranked Nigeria 123rd out of 180 countries, citing numerous attacks on journalists and instances of media censorship. The shrinking civic space limits public scrutiny of government activities and weakens accountability mechanisms that are essential for exposing corruption. Without an active and empowered civil society, the fight against corruption loses a critical ally in holding leaders accountable.

Lack of political integrity has also played a major role in Nigeria's perennial struggles with corruption. Election financing in Nigeria remains largely unregulated, allowing corrupt individuals to influence the political landscape through vote buying and illicit campaign funding. The 2023 general elections saw widespread allegations of electoral malpractice, including financial inducements to voters and manipulation of results. Political corruption weakens democratic institutions and produces a governance system where accountability is largely absent. When public office holders prioritize self-interest over national development, policies and reforms aimed at tackling corruption remain superficial and ineffective.

The security sector in Nigeria has not been spared from corruption, with procurement fraud, ghost soldiers, and misallocation of defense budgets continuing to weaken the country's fight against insecurity. Despite increased military spending, insecurity persists due to poor oversight and mismanagement of resources. Corrupt practices within the security sector not only endanger national stability but also embolden criminal elements that exploit the country's weak enforcement systems.

Opaqueness in activities of public institutions further exacerbates Nigeria's corruption challenges. Access to government-held information remains a challenge despite the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) 2011, which was designed to enhance transparency. Many public institutions either deny or delay responses to information requests, making it difficult for citizens and watchdog organizations to track government spending and decision-making processes. The 2023 Open Budget Index ranked Nigeria 92nd out of 125 countries, making her among the lowest in transparency. This shows a lack of commitment to open governance. Data from the Center for Fiscal Transparency and Public Integrity's Transparency and Integrity Index 2024 indicates that only 3 federal institutions scored above 50% out of the over 500 MDAs ranked. The lack of transparency allows corrupt activities to thrive within government institutions and erodes public trust.



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Finally, it's important to note that government expenditures continue to be characterized by wastefulness, with extravagant spending on non-essential items diverting resources from critical development needs. Lavish allocations for travel, vehicles, and allowances for public officials at the expense of key sectors like education and healthcare exacerbate corruption concerns.

Until Nigeria implements stringent fiscal responsibility measures, public funds will continue to be misused at the expense of national development.

The above are among the reasons Nigeria continues to perform poorly in the CPI, which is also reflected in our outing in 2024. Until there is a commitment from leaders across board, the fight against corruption may continue to be farfetched.

Recommendations for Improved CPI Performance and Anti-Corruption Efforts

To improve Nigeria's performance in the CPI and its overall fight against corruption, significant reforms are needed. Strengthening judicial independence, enforcing anti-corruption measures within the judiciary, and enhancing digital case management systems will help reduce delays and increase the integrity of legal proceedings. Political and electoral reforms must also be prioritized by enforcing strict campaign finance regulations and ensuring transparency in political donations to curb electoral corruption. In the oil sector, real-time tracking technology should be implemented to monitor crude oil production and subsidy payments, while empowering NEITI to enforce compliance.

Public procurement reforms are crucial in tackling corruption, and digitizing procurement processes while enforcing competitive bidding can improve transparency. Strengthening press freedom and civic engagement is also vital, and this can be achieved by protecting journalists, repealing restrictive laws on free speech, and encouraging public participation in governance. In the security sector, conducting independent audits of defense will improve resource allocation.

Enhancing public sector transparency is essential, and enforcing FOIA compliance while publishing government expenditures in real-time can increase accountability. Lastly, eliminating wasteful government spending through fiscal responsibility measures and prioritizing social development programs over extravagant expenditures will ensure more efficient use of public resources. If these measures are implemented with strong political will, Nigeria can significantly improve its standing in global transparency rankings and make meaningful progress in its fight against corruption.