

Transparency International Anti-Corruption Helpdesk Answer

Costs of corruption on gender equality, youth development, the environment and security issues in Commonwealth Caribbean countries

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Corruption remains a major challenge in Commonwealth Caribbean countries, as shown by governance indicators such as the Corruption Perceptions Index. Evidence in the latest Global Corruption Barometer for Latin America and the Caribbean has also indicated the deleterious impact of corruption on Caribbean women who are the main targets of bribery when seeking public services and are subjected to gendered forms of corruption, such as sextortion. Corruption has also grossly affected the youth and compromised state security due to its proximate link with organised crime in the region.

Caveat: There is little information on the true financial, quantitative costs of corruption on gender, youth, environment and security issues in the Caribbean region. In general, there is a scarcity of recent corruption research in the region. There is a need for more resources to be made available with a focus on anti-corruption in the region.

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Query

Please give an overview of the costs of corruption on gender equality, youth development, environmental and security issues in the English-speaking Caribbean countries

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Extent of corruption

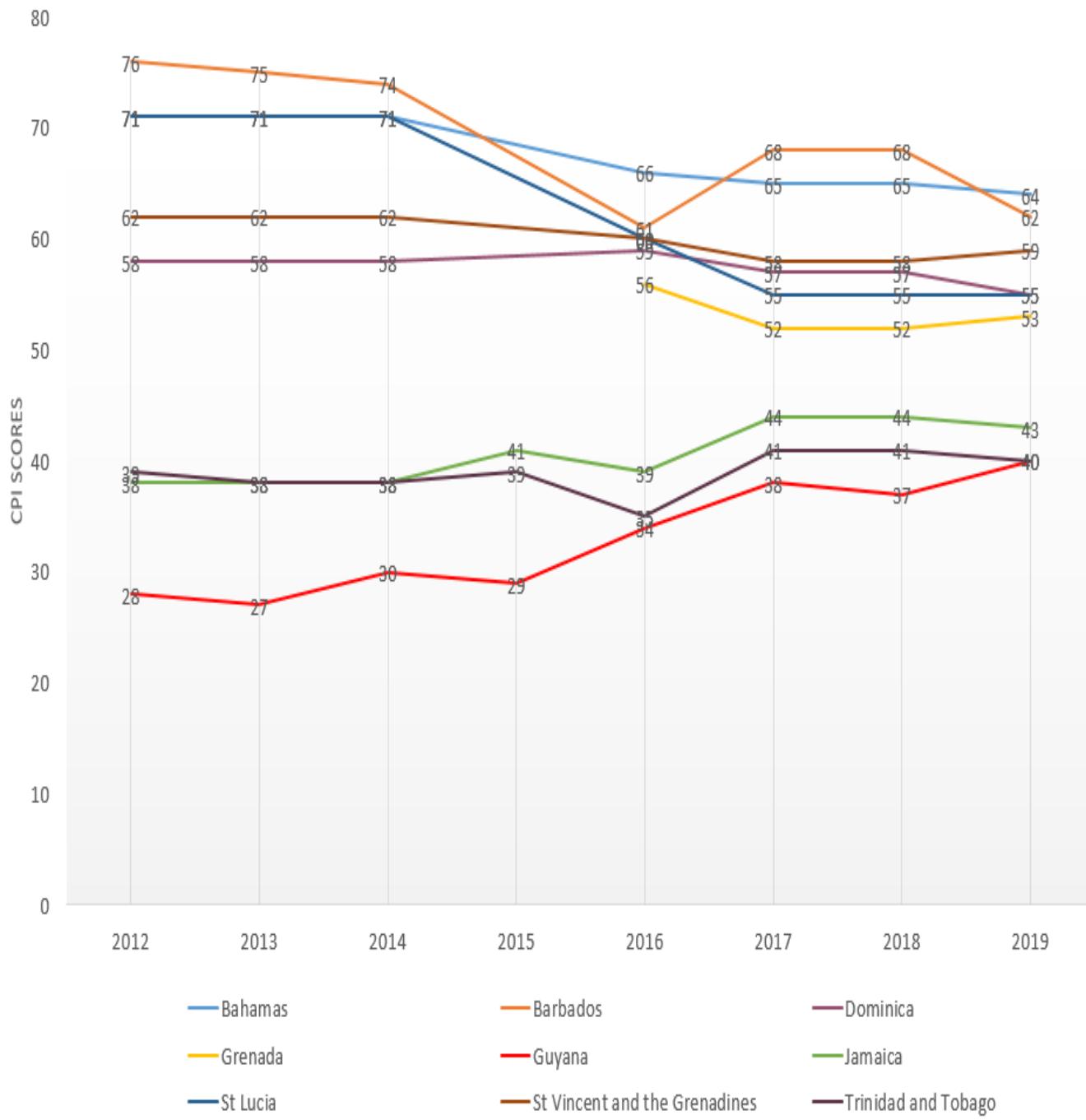
Corruption still remains a huge challenge to the Commonwealth Caribbean countries of Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Barbados, Dominica, Guyana, Grenada, Jamaica, St Lucia, St Vincent and the Grenadines, and Trinidad and Tobago. It manifests in different forms, such as bribery, cronyism and political corruption, as well as facilitating money laundering and organised crime in the region (Bak 2019).

The latest Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) shows that the levels of corruption in the region are still perceived as relatively high (Transparency International 2019). The graph below gives a picture of how Commonwealth Caribbean countries have scored on the CPI between 2012 and 2019, with 0 denoting the most corrupt and 100 the least corrupt.

Main points

- According to the 2019 Corruption Perceptions Index, Bahamas is the least corrupt Commonwealth Caribbean country, with a score of 64 out of 100. The most corrupt countries from the group are Guyana, and Trinidad and Tobago, with a joint score of 40 which is below the world average of 43.
- The latest Global Corruption Barometer for Latin America and the Caribbean indicates that Barbados has the highest percentage (30 per cent) of citizens who experienced sextortion or know someone who has. This is followed by Guyana (22 per cent), Trinidad and Tobago (19 per cent), and Jamaica (18 per cent).
- According to a study in Jamaica, 74 per cent of the youth respondents perceived corruption as harmful to their section of the youth population.
- Corruption and organised crime are mutually reinforcing in the region, which compromises state security and weakens public confidence in security forces

Corruption Perceptions Index 2012-2019



As can be seen from the graph above, most Commonwealth Caribbean countries had negative changes to their CPI rankings between 2012 and 2019. The Bahamas and Barbados are the two least corrupt countries in the region, with scores of 64 and 62 out of 100 respectively. However, as the graph shows, their scores significantly dropped between 2012 and 2019 (-7 for Bahamas and -14 for Barbados). St Lucia (-16) was the biggest loser in the region between 2012 and 2019, whereas Guyana improved its score (+12) to 40 but still performs below the global average score of 43.

The majority of Caribbean countries perform modestly on the latest Worldwide Governance Indicators (World Bank 2019). Guyana is the best performing Caribbean country on the Government Effectiveness indicator (measured on a -2.5 [worst] to 2.5 [best] scale) with a score of 0.63, followed by Jamaica (0.50), Bahamas (0.49), Guyana (0.26), St Lucia (0.23), Trinidad and Tobago (0.10), Antigua and Barbados (0.00), Grenada (-0.14) and lastly Dominica (-0.26). On the Control of Corruption indicator (also measured on a -2.5 to 2.5 scale), Guyana again performs best with a score of 1.26, followed by Bahamas (1.18), Dominica (0.53), St Lucia (0.52), Grenada (0.34), Antigua and Barbuda (0.26), Jamaica (-0.06), Guyana (0.09) and lastly Trinidad and Tobago (-0.19).

According to Freedom House's Freedom in the World index (2020) – which measures civil liberties, political rights and the rule of law – the Caribbean countries score between 74 and 95 (out of 100) and are considered free. The highest scorers are Barbados (95), Dominica (93) and St Lucia (92) where citizens seem to enjoy civil liberties and freedoms similar to those in most developed countries. The lowest scorers, Guyana (74), Jamaica (78) and Trinidad and Tobago (82)

are the three most flawed (but free) democracies in the region, indicating significant progress by governments to ensure civil liberties and freedoms for their citizens. Nonetheless, the latest Democracy Index by The Economist (2020) categorised Caribbean countries as having flawed democracies (out of 10), with Guyana (6.15), Jamaica (6.96) and Trinida and Tobago (7.16).

Costs of Corruption

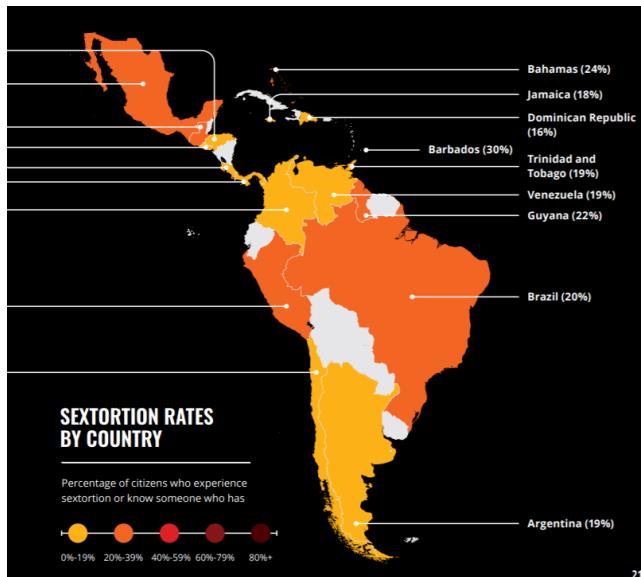
Corruption and gender equality

Women in Latin America and the Caribbean region are easier targets of bribery and other forms of corruption, due to their role as primary caretakers for the families who depend on public services (Transparency International 2019b: 20). The latest Global Corruption Barometer (GCB) for Latin America and the Caribbean, which was released in 2019, took an important step to deeply understand how corruption affects women. According to the GCB, corruption hits the most vulnerable people the hardest, with women more likely to pay bribes for health services and public school education than men. In contrast, men are more likely to pay bribes for police and utility services and identity documents (Transparency International 2019b: 20).

There are also gender specific forms of corruption which are disproportionately experienced by women, such as sextortion (Chêne and Rheinbay 2016: 7; Transparency International 2020), and the Caribbean region is not an exception.

According to the GCB, one in five citizens in Latin America and the Caribbean region has experienced sextortion, or knows someone who has, and 71% of respondents think that sextortion happens at least occasionally (Transparency International 2019b: 21). Women are the main victims of such

extortion, as they are coerced to provide sexual acts in exchange for receiving public services.



Source: Transparency International. 2019. Global Corruption Barometer, p 21.

Barbados has the highest percentage (30 per cent) of citizens who have experienced sextortion or know someone who has. This is followed by Bahamas (24 per cent), Guyana (22 per cent), Trinidad and Tobago (19 per cent) and Jamaica (18 per cent) (Transparency International 2019b: 21). The high percentages of sextortion clearly depicts the gendered costs of corruption in the region.

Research for a gender-based guide to corruption by the Women's Resource Outreach Centre's found that women in Jamaica experienced corruption differently from men (USAID 2015: 18). Due to their greater economic, social and political vulnerability, Jamaican women were found to be more vulnerable to sexual exploitation in exchange for goods and services (Wilson 2014).

Sexortion undermines gender equality as most victims of sextortion, who are usually women, are

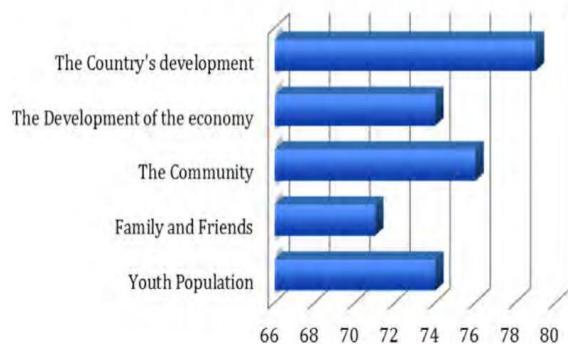
afraid to report it due to social stigma and cultural taboos that may lead them to be shamed, excluded, retaliated against or even attacked. In addition, as the corrupt usually fight back, sextortion victims run the risk of secondary victimisation, suffering financial costs and being prosecuted as a bribe giver (Transparency International 2020).

Corruption and youth development

Corruption has for a long time been a challenge for Caribbean youth. For instance, a report by the United Nations Development Programme (2012) indicated that young people in Antigua and Barbuda and in Jamaica perceived corruption as one of the most serious challenges in their countries. According to the GCB, young people aged 18 to 34 in Caribbean countries are more than twice as likely to pay a bribe than people aged 55 or over – as evidenced by the bribery rate of 26 per cent for young people and 11 per cent for older people (Transparency International 2019b: 19).

Corruption has a deleterious effects on the youth as it limits resources aimed at developing young people. In 2016, Jamaica's Office of the Contractor General commissioned a study on Youth and Corruption in Jamaica to capture how Jamaican youths between 10 and 19 years old perceive or view corruption in the country (Waller et al. 2017). One question asked whether or not the youth perceived corruption as harmful to the society; the results are shown below.

The Lack of Integrity as Harmful (Percentages)



Source: Waller et al. 2017 The Perception of and Views on Corruption among Jamaica Youth, p17.

As the results show, the majority of the young Jamaican people surveyed perceived that the lack of integrity, such as that found in connection with corruption, is harmful to national development (79 per cent), the community (74 per cent) and the youth population (74 per cent) (Waller et al. 2017: 19).

The costs of corruption were also reiterated by young people consulted during an analysis of the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 16 in the region presented by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (CEPAL). According to key regional statistics on SDG 16, 100 per cent of consulted young people regarded corruption as “a latent problem that was limiting development” in the region (CEPAL 2019: 1).

Corruption and the environment

There is scant evidence on the costs of corruption for the environment in these Caribbean countries. Nonetheless, it is worth mentioning the recent oil boom in Guyana, where it has been reported that Guyanan officials badly negotiated a recent lucrative oil deal, with the country now set to lose up to US\$55 billion (Global Witness 2020).

According to the report by Global Witness, the US oil giant Exxon discovered oil off the coast of Guyana and hurriedly negotiated a licence deal, which was signed by the Natural Resources Minister Raphael Trotman though it had weak fiscal terms. It was alleged that Trotman had knowledge of the new oil discovery which could have been used to negotiate better terms, but he rushed to sign the deal despite advice from experts to seek more information (Global Witness 2020: 16). Global Witness questioned the generosity of Exxon since it was alleged that at one point, Trotman was flown first class, slept in pricey hotels, ate at exclusive restaurants and was chauffeured in luxury cars – all at the expense of Exxon. In addition, it called for closer scrutiny of the relationship between Trotman and Nigel Hughes, who worked as a lawyer for Exxon. (Global Witness 2020: 15-16).

According to Global Witness (2020: 7), Guyana will receive US\$168 billion instead of the possible US\$223 billion. Such huge figures could have been used to protect the environment, including the Green State Development Strategy: Vision 2014, which is Guyana’s twenty-year national development policy (Global Witness 2020: 10). Details also show that the final deal reduced the company’s annual environmental and social obligations from US\$800,000 to US\$300,000 (Global Witness 2020: 17). Hence, corruption and poor management leading to bad deals in the extractive industry could have negative costs on the environment due to unsustainable exploitation of resources and allocation of insufficient budget to environmental protection programmes.

Corruption and security

Corruption and organised crime are mutually reinforcing in the region, with corruption in

security-sensitive areas, such as border control and law enforcement, facilitating the growth of organised crime (Bak 2019: 19-21). According to InSight Crime (2017), drug-related corruption within Caribbean security forces allows organised criminal groups to evade law enforcement. In Barbados, corruption among border officials has been identified by the country's police as an impediment to capturing the large inflow of illegal guns (Joseph 2019). Previous research has shown that members of the Jamaican Constabulary Force (JCF) were corrupted by criminal networks who sought police protection and facilitation of their illegal activities (Leslie 2010: 2, 44).

A research study in the Caribbean showed that 64 per cent of the respondents believed there was a close relationship between organised crime and corruption in Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Jamaica, St. Lucia, and Trinidad and Tobago (Wallace 2017: 22). Organised crime was perceived by 64 per cent of the respondents as potentially undermining democratic and political institutions within the Caribbean through corruption of public officials (Wallace 2017: 21). In addition, organised crime was regarded as leading to increased fear of crime (80 per cent), anxiety, silence, loss of the ability to move freely within communities (66 per cent), distrust of neighbours and security forces, and encouraging of residents to become involved in illicit criminal activities (77 per cent) (Walles 2017: 16).

Security issues undermine the ability of Caribbean countries to compete economically on the global market. For instance, the World Economic Forum ranked Jamaica 131 out of 141 countries on security (organised crime, homicide, terrorism and reliability of police) but the country performs better on other components such as skills (70),

labour market (27) and financial system (50). Due to security issues, its average rank is 80 out of 141 countries on the Global Competitiveness Index (World Economic Forum 2019: 303-305). It is the same with Trinidad and Tobago, which is ranked 79 out of 141 on the index, performing badly on the security component (130) (World Economic Forum 2019: 556).

Corruption weakens public confidence in security forces. According to the GCB, police officers are regarded as one of the most corrupt institutions in the region. The figures below shows the percentage of respondents who paid bribes to police, as well as the percentage of respondents who perceived that most or all police officers in the mentioned Caribbean countries are corrupt.

Country	Bribery rate for police in the previous 12 months	Percentage of people who think that most or all police officers are corrupt
Barbados	2%	31%
Guyana	40%	42%
Jamaica	18%	49%
Trinidad and Tobago	9%	51%

Source: Global Corruption Barometer for Latin America and the Caribbean, 2019.

As shown above, a high percentage of citizens in most of the countries perceived that the police are very corrupt, which affects their trust and confidence in the police as part of the security forces.

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