



CYRUS R. VANCE CENTER  
FOR INTERNATIONAL JUSTICE



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## **The Fight Against Corruption in Latin America is Not Effective Due to Lack of Independence and Capacity of Institutions, Legal Experts Conclude**

New York, March 16, 2022 –Efforts in Latin America to counter corruption are insufficient and ineffective, according to the [Latin America Anti-Corruption Assessment 2021-2022](#) by the Lawyers Council for Civil and Economic Rights of the Cyrus R. Vance Center for International Justice.

The report, available in English, Spanish and Portuguese, assesses legal efforts and shortcomings in preventing and redressing corruption in seventeen countries, identifying three main issues:

1. There are legal efforts to counter corruption, but these efforts are unproductive if laws aren't accompanied by actions to implement those laws.
2. There are many efforts to punish corruption, but efforts to prevent it are insufficient and ineffective.
3. Institutions in charge of countering corruption are not independent and do not have the capacity to investigate and punish corruption.

This 2021-2022 edition does not identify specific differences in efforts against corruption compared to the first edition of the Latin America Anti-Corruption Assessment 2020, and some setbacks in the independence and capacity of authorities were detected in Guatemala, Mexico and Peru.

Significant differences exist among the seventeen countries, according to the assessment, which employs quantitative and qualitative criteria to rank the countries on the success of their anti-corruption efforts from zero (lowest) to ten (highest), based on data from legal experts in the countries. Uruguay is the top-ranked country, and Venezuela the lowest. (See annex)

The criteria focus on key aspects of the fight against corruption: public vs. private sector corruption; complaint mechanisms; whistleblower protection; specialized agencies; institutional coordination mechanisms; civil society engagement and participation; and transparency and access to information. It relies on the legal expertise and practical experience of lawyers engaged in anti-corruption practice in various sectors, including law firms, businesses, academia, civil society organizations, human rights defenders, and others.

According to Vance Center Latin America Policy Director Jaime Chavez Alor, “Efforts to combat corruption in the region are insufficient, particularly because authorities are not independent and do not have the capacity to implement existing legislation; we see significant setbacks in some countries. The legal community must play a more active role in ensuring that the application of the law is more effective.”

In the assessment, the [Lawyers Council for Civil and Economic Rights](#) calls on the legal community to address regional and country-level challenges that the assessment identified. The recommendations highlight the importance of technology in mechanisms to prevent corruption and regional cooperation of the private sector and the legal community to promote best practices.

The Lawyers Council brings together private-practice law professionals in the Americas to combat corruption and to support the rule of law and the work of civil society. The Lawyers Council consists of 18 lawyers from 14 countries, distinguished in private legal practice nationally and regionally, with demonstrated civic commitment.

Read the full report here: <https://bit.ly/LCEALE21>

The executive summary, factsheets per country, and infographics are available here: <https://bit.ly/LCEAL21M>

#### **About the Vance Center**

*The Cyrus R. Vance Center for International Justice of the New York City Bar Association advances global justice by engaging lawyers across borders to support civil society and an ethically active legal profession. The Vance Center is a unique collaboration of international lawyers catalyzing public interest innovation that brings together leading law firms and other partners worldwide to pioneer international justice initiatives and provide pro bono legal representation to social justice NGOs. [www.vancecenter.org](http://www.vancecenter.org)*

#### **About the Association**

*The mission of the New York City Bar Association, which was founded in 1870 and has approximately 24,000 members, is to equip and mobilize a diverse legal profession to practice with excellence, promote reform of the law, and uphold the rule of law and access to justice in support of a fair society and the public interest in our community, our nation, and throughout the world. [www.nycbar.org](http://www.nycbar.org)*