

GLOBAL RULES MATTER AND PROGRESS AGAINST CORRUPTION IS STILL POSSIBLE

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As the shock of the United States' military intervention in Venezuela continues to reverberate, [Transparency International is calling](#) for the restoration of democracy to be prioritised, the rights of Venezuelans protected, and the country's entrenched corruption crisis addressed.

It is concerning that the US administration appears to be seeking control of Venezuela's oil and giving US companies privileged access to extract this. No country should abuse its military power to intimidate another country and gain exclusive economic advantages.

Years of democratic checks and balances being dismantled have left Venezuela one of the world's most corrupt countries, [ranking 178 out of 180 in the most recent Corruption Perceptions Index](#), with severe consequences for its population.

Despite escalating repression that forced Transparency International's [chapter in Venezuela into exile in March last year](#), it has continued to raise these concerns internationally. On Monday, its Executive Director Mercedes de Freitas [briefed the United Nations Security Council on the situation in Venezuela](#) and the links between corruption and threats to international peace and security.

A view of Caracas, Venezuela, from the San Agustin neighbourhood. Venezuela's president, Nicolas Maduro, was captured in a US strike on 3 January. Photo: Federico Parra/AFP

International laws exist to protect all of us, and governments must respect the rule of law and fundamental rights. These principles are embedded in the global agreements and standards states sign up to – and are tested in moments of crisis.

Against an often gloomy international outlook, last year closed with a positive step for global anti-corruption efforts, as governments meeting under one such global framework agreed a long-awaited breakthrough.

States gathered in Doha, Qatar for the UN's biennial anti-corruption conference, culminating in something missing for two decades since the UN Convention against Corruption came into force: the first-ever resolution on transparency in political finance. A resolution is a negotiated agreement that guides how governments interpret the convention and put it into practice at home. In this case, it covers the money used to run election campaigns and support political parties.

For Transparency International, this was the result of years of sustained advocacy to force one of the most important corruption issues onto the global agenda. We have [shown how weak](#)

[regulation, permissive loopholes and poor enforcement](#) allow opaque money to shape politics around the world. The logic behind the resolution is long overdue: if political power is for sale, it cannot credibly fight the abuse of power. Voters have a right to know who pays for the politicians who ask for their vote, and safeguards are needed to prevent money quietly buying access, influence or policy outcomes.

Through persistent engagement with governments, evidence-based advocacy and coalition-building, political finance was kept firmly on the table before and throughout the conference. Credit is due to Norway, Albania, Ghana and Mongolia for driving the resolution through negotiations, but the broader lesson from Doha is that sustained pressure works.

But agreement is only the first step. A resolution does not clean up politics on its own. Governments now need to implement it, updating laws and closing the channels that allow anonymous or illicit money to flow through the political system. The start of a new year brings a clear test: will these commitments become enforceable national rules, or remain words on paper?

Progress on other Transparency International priorities at the conference were more limited, but still meaningful. On professional service providers – the lawyers, accountants and other intermediaries who enable corruption and illicit financial flows – governments agreed modest advances. Language adopted under a resolution on preventing and combatting corruption as it relates to crimes that affect the environment calls for stronger internal controls and oversight to prevent professional services being misused.

This reflects direct advocacy by Transparency International and its partners, and momentum is building towards a dedicated resolution on professional service providers at the next conference in Uzbekistan in 2027. Transparency International will continue pushing to ensure ambition is not diluted.

Governments also adopted a resolution recognising corruption as a driver of environmental destruction and climate harm, alongside a complementary resolution on Small Island Developing States that reinforces the need for integrity and accountability as climate finance scales up.

Taken together, the outcomes in Doha show that progress against corruption is possible when sustained advocacy meets political will. As 2026 begins, Transparency International will be watching closely – and pressing hard – to ensure that the gains made in Doha translate into real change.