



## **About 1 in 3 people using public services in Latin America and Caribbean paid a bribe in past year**

*New Transparency International report shows fewer than 1 in 10 bribe payers reported corruption and almost 1 in 3 of those who did suffered retaliation*

**Berlin, 9 October 2017 –**

A C  
meet their citizens' demands to combat corruption, according to a Transparency International survey of more than 22,000 people in 20 countries across the region. Despite protests against corruption in countries such as Brazil, Guatemala, the Dominican Republic and Venezuela in the past year, close to two-thirds (62%) of those surveyed said that corruption had increased.

Transparency International's new report *People and Corruption: Latin America and the Caribbean*, which is part of the Global Corruption Barometer series, found that 29 per cent of citizens who had used six key public services – school, hospitals, acquiring ID documents, utilities, police and courts – in the past 12 months paid a bribe. This is equivalent to an estimated 90 million people in the 20 countries surveyed.

"The people of Latin America and the Caribbean are being let down by their governments, their political class and their private sector leaders. The Lava Jato case, which has made a tremendous impact in the region, demonstrates that corruption is far too prevalent. Bribery represents a means for enrichment of the few, and a significant barrier to accessing key public services, particularly for the most vulnerable in society," said José Ugaz, Chair of Transparency International.

28 per cent of people who reported corruption suffered from retaliation. This could explain why although whistleblowing is seen as culturally acceptable across the region, and 70 per cent of citizens believe that they can make a difference in the fight against corruption, only nine per cent come forward to report bribes.

People do not trust the police. Along with politicians, the police were seen as the most corrupt public institution, with 47 per cent of respondents saying that most or all officers were corrupt.

"The past year has seen governments across the region rocked by corruption scandals, and Venezuela descend deeper and deeper into crisis. But this report shows that citizens' demands for accountability and transparency are not being met by their leaders. Governments must do more to root out corruption at all levels, especially in law

**Embargoed until October 9, 2017, 09:00 Berlin time (03:00 EST)**

enforcement agencies, which should play a key role in fighting impunity. They must strengthen mechanisms for the investigation and prosecution of the corrupt and increase the protection of those who speak out against corruption,” said Ugaz.

Transparency International calls on governments to strengthen their judicial systems, fight police corruption, and support their citizens who are willing to report corruption. They must create accessible and anonymous reporting channels for whistleblowers, and protect them and their families from retaliation.

Across the region governments get bad marks for fighting corruption. On average more than half the people surveyed said their government performed poorly. In Venezuela and Peru, over 70 per cent of those questioned gave a negative verdict.

Other key findings include:

- Mexico has the highest bribery rate across the region, followed by the Dominican Republic and Peru. In Mexico, one in two people reported having to pay bribes when they accessed public services, with schools and hospitals, ID document provision especially prone to bribery.
- In Honduras, people reported the highest level of bribery when dealing with the courts: 56 per cent of respondents who used the judicial system said they had paid a bribe in the past year.
- Brazil leads the region in terms of citizens’ confidence that they can create change. 83 per cent of people there feel that ordinary people can make a difference in the fight against corruption.
- In crisis-stricken Venezuela, 73 per cent of respondents regarded the police as highly corrupt – the highest in the region.
- Bribery rates were similar for both rich and poor, but bribery has a heavier impact on the poor who have fewer resources and are often more dependent on state-run services.

###

*Transparency International is the global civil society organisation leading the fight against corruption.*

Note to editors: To see the full report click [here](#). To see the previous reports from the Global Corruption Barometer series on Asia Pacific, Europe and Central Asia, Africa, and the Middle East and North Africa click [here](#), [here](#), [here](#) and [here](#).

**Media contacts:**

T: +49 30 34 38 20 666

E: [press@transparency.org](mailto:press@transparency.org)

*For daily anti-corruption updates follow us on:*

Twitter: [twitter.com/anticorruption](https://twitter.com/anticorruption)

Facebook: [facebook.com/transparencyinternational](https://facebook.com/transparencyinternational)

Flickr: [flickr.com/transparencyinternational](https://flickr.com/transparencyinternational)

Instagram: [https://www.instagram.com/transparency\\_international/](https://www.instagram.com/transparency_international/)

Or subscribe to: [www.transparency.org/getinvolved/stayinformed](http://www.transparency.org/getinvolved/stayinformed)