



**Independent Joint Anti-Corruption
Monitoring & Evaluation Committee**

NEWS RELEASE: Afghanistan Fails to Show Progress in Transparency International's Annual Corruption Rankings

Kabul, Afghanistan, January 27, 2016 – Today, Transparency International (TI), the world's leading anti-corruption body, issued its annual Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) for 2015. Despite a slight improvement between 2013 and 2014, Afghanistan's score declined in 2015, and the country remains one of the world's most corrupt. This year's CPI ranked Afghanistan 166 out of the 168 countries evaluated by TI, ahead of only North Korea and Somalia.

The CPI measures perceptions of public-sector corruption from the perspective of business people and experienced country experts. To produce the CPI, TI gathers data from independent institutions specializing in the overall governance and business climates within a given country.

In 2013, Afghanistan finished tied for last place with North Korea and Somalia, with an overall score of 8 out of a possible 100. In 2014, Afghanistan received a score of 12 out of 100. The latest iteration of the CPI gives Afghanistan a score of 11. As in 2014, the reasons for Afghanistan's repeated poor performances in this survey are many. They include, but are not limited to, the low capacity of its law-enforcement and judicial institutions; the continued interference of politically powerful people; the rampant purchasing of appointments, including military and police positions; land grabbing; the byzantine process aspiring entrepreneurs must go through to open a new business or to sell their land; and a lack of political will on the part of many high-ranking officials to make anti-corruption efforts a priority.

In December 2014, the last time the CPI was released, MEC was encouraged by the new administration of President Ashraf Ghani and CEO Abdullah Abdullah – the leaders of the National Unity Government (NUG) – and its apparent willingness to focus on improving Afghanistan's anti-corruption regime. In the first few months of the NUG, the Kabul Bank case was reopened and the President ordered governmental institutions to implement all of MEC's recommendations. Since that time, however, there are increasing concerns and doubts regarding their ability to address corruption, let alone other critical areas, such as security or unemployment. One such concern was the appearance of high-level government officials on stage with one of the two main convicted criminals behind the Kabul Bank scandal, during the inauguration of the Smart City Project in November 2015.

MEC remains hopeful that progress in fighting corruption is still possible in Afghanistan, even with the numerous political, social, economic, and security challenges facing the country. However, with confidence in the NUG at a much lower level than one year ago, a thriving insurgency, and further evidence of Afghanistan's floundering efforts to fight corruption, the government is quickly running out of time to show concrete efforts and the necessary political will to turn around the country's fortunes.

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