

Africa Divided: Rwanda, Botswana, and Senegal Rise as Sudan and DRC Sink in Global Rule of Law Index 2025

The prominent report reveals the majority of countries worldwide saw a drop in their rule of law score, with Sudan and Democratic Republic of the Congo coming bottom of the African jurisdictions featured.

Over two thirds of countries across the world witnessed a decrease in their rule of law in 2025, with jurisdictions including Sudan, Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Egypt and Cameroon among the worst performers in Africa. However, it was not all bad news for the continent, which represented four out of the top 10 global improvers.

The World Justice Project (WJP) *Rule of Law Index 2025*, unveiled yesterday (28 October), showed rule of law performance fell for 68% of countries, up from 57% in 2024. While this is the eighth consecutive yearly drop, the 2025 index warns that this recession is accelerating, with those countries that deteriorated seeing an average score decline of 1.07%, compared to the average score gain of 0.52% for those that improved.

The index, which employs expert and household surveys to measure the rule of law in 143 countries and jurisdictions across the globe – covering 95% of the world's population – uses a points score from 0 to 1, with 1 signifying the highest score and strong adherence to the rule of law. The index's framework is built around eight key factors: constraints on government powers; absence of corruption; open government; fundamental rights; order and security; regulatory enforcement; civil justice; and criminal justice.

The drivers

The decline has been attributed to several factors, including a rise in authoritarianism, a reduction in civic space and weakening checks and balances, while judiciaries are “losing ground to executive overreach, with rising political interference across justice systems”. Indicators measuring whether the judiciary limits executive power, and whether civil and criminal justice are free from improper government influence, decreased in 61%, 67% and 62% of countries, respectively. Civil justice weakened in 68% of countries, driven by longer delays, less effective alternative dispute resolution mechanisms – such as mediation – and increased government influence.

Key findings

While Denmark came highest in the table, with a score of 0.90, the top-ranked African country was Rwanda in 39th place, with a score of 0.63, followed by Namibia in 45th place (0.61), Botswana in the 50th spot (0.60), Georgia in 52nd (0.58), and Senegal coming 58th (0.56).

The bottom-ranked country was Venezuela, which logged a score of just 0.26, with the worst African performers being Sudan and DRC, which took the 137th and 136th spots, respectively, both scoring 0.34. They came in just below Egypt in 135th (0.35), followed by Cameroon, Mauritania and Ethiopia, which each scored 0.36.

The findings somewhat echo the [2025 Africa Financial Markets Index](#) (AFMI), published earlier this month. That index, which measured the financial development of 29 of Africa's leading economies,

saw Ethiopia remaining bottom of the performance table, with DRC and Cameroon also featuring in the bottom pile. Meanwhile, Rwanda had the biggest score increase year-on-year.

Risers and fallers

Of the top improvers in the WJP index, Africa represented four of the top 10 countries, with Senegal achieving a 1.6% year-on-year rise in its score, followed by Sierra Leone (1.4%), Gabon (1.3%) and Botswana (1%).

The most significant decliners included Sudan, which suffered a 4.4% fall in its score from 2024, while Mozambique saw a 3.9% score drop, and Togo a 2.9% decrease. Other countries that bore at least a 2% fall included Tunisia, Niger, Ethiopia, Burkina Faso, Mali and Georgia.

WJP executive director Alejandro Ponce said this year's findings were sobering. "The rule of law is the bedrock of peace, justice, human rights and sustainable development," he stated, adding: "Yet the 2025 [...] index shows that this foundation is under growing strain. A tentative recovery seen in recent years has reversed sharply: the global rule of law recession is deepening. Even so, the index is also a tool for action. The WJP stands ready to work with governments, policymakers, businesses, civil society and academia to halt the decline and strengthen rule of law resilience."

The [2024 Ibrahim Index of African Governance](#), published by the Mo Ibrahim Foundation in October last year, revealed that Africa's governance progress had screeched to a halt, with the continent's rule of law controls declining over the last decade (2014-2023). A total of 11 countries experienced a worsening reduction in governance progress over the second part of the decade, including Sudan, Mozambique, Burkina Faso and Tunisia.

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