



The Atlas of Impunity 2025: The Great Divergence

Summary

Impunity is not experienced equally across the globe. Where accountability is strong, citizens benefit from institutions that protect human rights and personal freedoms and impose just consequences on those who abuse power. Where it is weak or wholly absent, repression deepens and conflict intensifies, leaving those most vulnerable exposed to violence and exploitation without redress. In 2025, these divides continue to widen.

Now in its fourth edition, the Atlas of Impunity tracks these disparities across nearly 200 countries, measuring the degree to which ordinary people experience the consequences of power without accountability. Impunity—in its starkest form, the commission of crimes without punishment—is assessed across five dimensions: unaccountable governance, the abuse of human rights, economic exploitation, conflict and violence, and environmental degradation.

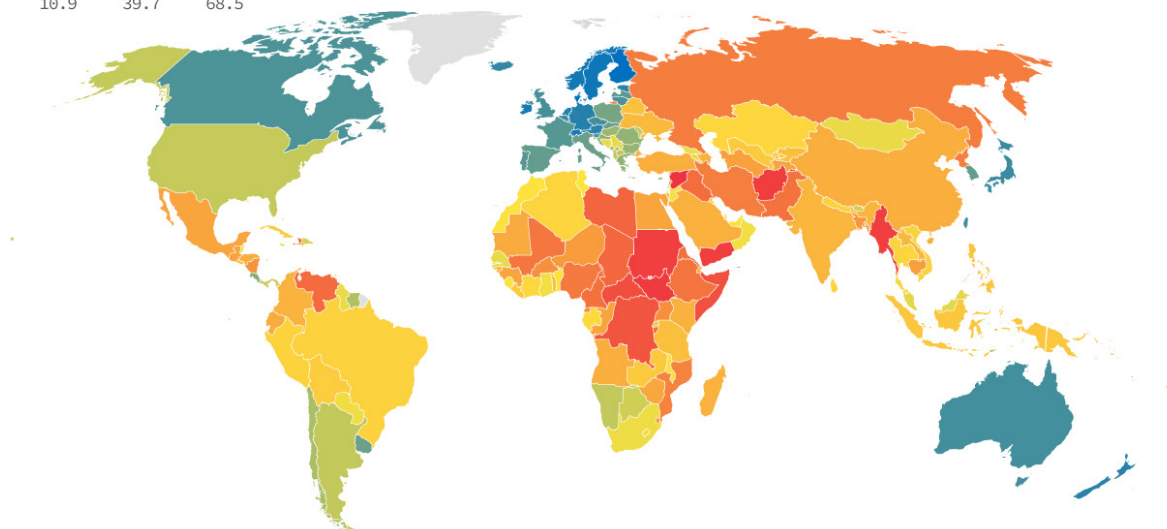
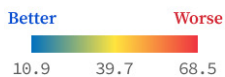
The 2025 Atlas draws on 60 indicators from 24 independent datasets to score and rank 172 countries. An additional 25 countries have partial, indicative scores. Building on previous editions, this year's Atlas introduces a rescaled 0-100 scoring system, where higher scores correspond to higher levels of impunity. It also introduces a mid-year publication date to incorporate more timely data and a new analytical framework that sheds light on the structural causes of impunity. Key findings from the report include the following.

- **The “great divergence” in global accountability is widening.** While the global average impunity score has remained virtually flat since 2020 (moving from 40.04 to 39.50 out of 100), this stability obscures a deep inequality. Accountability is improving in the middle and bottom segments of the distribution but deteriorating rapidly in the most repressive and conflict-ridden states.
- **Unaccountable governance is the single largest driver of global impunity.** Institutional decay—particularly the erosion of press freedoms, personal liberties, and democratic political culture—is the primary engine of rising impunity. The erosion of press freedom, which recorded the steepest decline of any single indicator, degrades the information environment on which accountability depends, leaving abuses hidden and citizens without the means to challenge unchecked power.

- **The devastating toll of conflict is concentrated in just a few territories.** Despite a sharp rise in the number of active conflicts, average conflict and violence scores remain stable because the pain of war is not borne equally. About two-thirds of ranked countries have seen their scores on this dimension improve since 2020, while 61 states—roughly the same number involved in state-based conflicts—have seen their scores deteriorate. Even among states in conflict, violent events are heavily skewed. For instance, Ukraine alone accounted for 46% of all recorded battles in 2025, and Myanmar accounted for 31% of all state-perpetrated violence against civilians. Most of the world thus remains insulated from war's devastation, while a small number of high-impunity states absorb a disproportionate share of its human cost.
- **Impunity stems from four distinct underlying causes.** Economic rebalancing has empowered autocratic regimes and a rising class of ultrawealthy elites. Rapid technological change has expanded the infrastructure of repression. The advance of illiberalism is eroding democratic checks domestically while coordinating transnationally to obstruct accountability mechanisms. Lastly, a “G-Zero” leadership deficit has created conditions that allow regional conflicts to emerge and actors to break rules without consequence.
- **Impunity spreads through the systematic erosion of four interdependent pillars of accountability.** These are the rules and norms that define acceptable conduct; the information environment that helps citizens identify breaches; the deliberative forums that examine violations and establish facts; and the enforcement mechanisms that impose consequences. When one pillar weakens, the others come under greater strain.
- **The US has emerged as a bellwether for rising global impunity.** The only Western country among the ten with the greatest rise in impunity over the past year, the US's ranking deteriorated by six places to 117th. Moreover, Washington's dismantling of the US Agency for International Development, effectively defunding its accountability-focused contractors, has weakened the global infrastructure of accountability. Those cuts have dealt severe blows to the global network of actors that uphold rules, norms, and human rights worldwide.

2025 impunity score

(Ranked and unranked countries)



Highest level of impunity

Rank	Country	Score
1	Syria	68.48
2	South Sudan	67.14
3	Afghanistan	66.58
4	Myanmar	66.50
5	Yemen	66.40
6	Sudan	66.39
7	CAR	63.91
8	Somalia	63.58
9	Congo - Kinshasa	62.93
10	Haiti	60.86

Middle ten

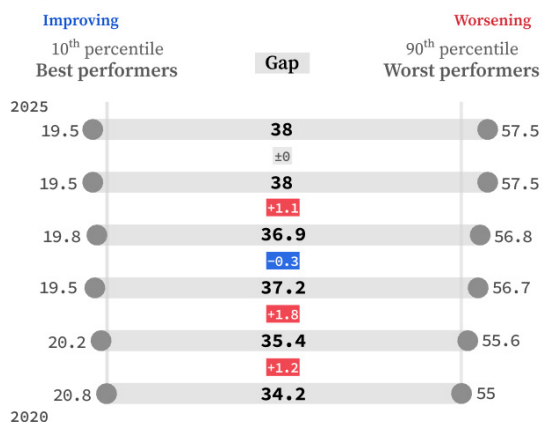
Rank	Country	Score
82	Kazakhstan	41.80
83	Côte d'Ivoire	41.78
84	Gabon	41.33
85	Trinidad & Tobago	41.17
86	Qatar	40.65
87	Malawi	40.41
88	United Arab Emirates	40.31
89	Morocco	40.15
90	Sierra Leone	40.00
91	Tunisia	39.50

Lowest level of impunity

Rank	Country	Score
163	New Zealand	15.62
164	Germany	15.15
165	Netherlands	15.07
166	Luxembourg	14.66
167	Ireland	13.65
168	Switzerland	13.43
169	Norway	13.12
170	Sweden	12.70
171	Denmark	11.38
172	Finland	10.91

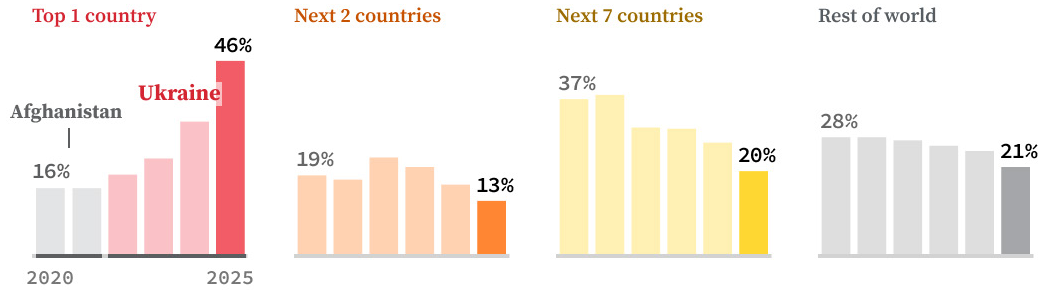
The gap between the best and worst-performing 10% is widening

(Dispersion (90-10 gap) of impunity score (2020-2025))

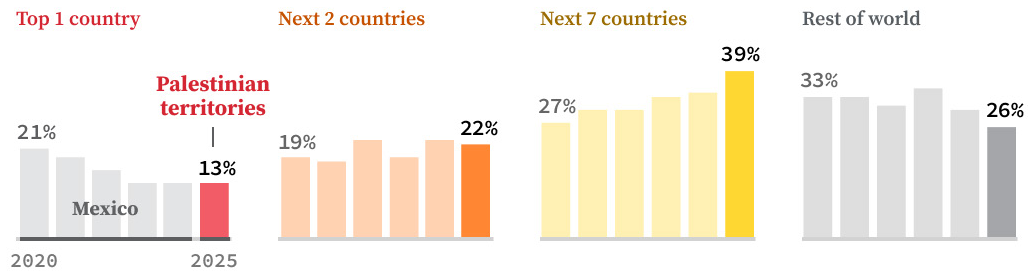


The violent events recorded in the Atlas are concentrated in a handful of countries

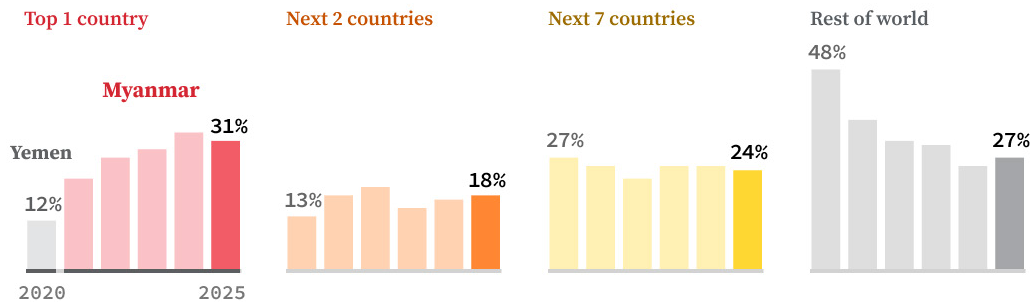
Share of total battles by country group



Share of violence by non-state actors against civilians by country group



Share of state-based violent events against civilians by country group



Source: ACLED